

Fanon Now: Singularity and Solidarity

by

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Abstract

In this essay, I engage with an aspect of Fanon's life and work that has generally been elided by even the most appreciative analysts: Fanon as, among the many other things that he was and is, a Caribbean writer, and, even more specifically, a Martinican writer. However, this is not intended as a way to simply lock Fanon into a particular place and time or to keep him trapped in the historical past. Quite the opposite, in fact, since, as I will argue, a re-evaluation of Fanon's life and work through this framework can provide us with a particular set of lessons about solidarity, lessons that are crucial for the contemporary political struggles that face us today. But this understanding of Fanon and solidarity can in turn only be understood through an engagement with his singularity.

Introduction: Remembering *Un écorché vif*

The current special issue of *The Journal of Pan African Studies* reminds us that 2011 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the untimely death of Frantz Fanon. It is an anniversary worth marking, and yet conjuring with numbers in this way can sometimes be a dangerous thing. Anniversaries, especially those commemorating the passing of those close to our hearts yet no longer with us, can all too easily become occasions for sentimentality, for burying the one being celebrated in meaningless praise. In the case of a figure such as Fanon, it is particularly important to avoid this danger. His work calls us to attention; it makes demands upon us. Upon first meeting Fanon in Paris in 1946, Edouard Glissant described his fellow Martinican as "extremely sensitive." Fanon was, to use Glissant's phrase, "*un écorché vif*," literally a man who has been flayed alive, whose every nerve and fiber has been exposed.¹ The characterization of Fanon, who was twenty years old at the time, as a man literally without skin is painfully apt in more ways than one.

A few years after this meeting, in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon was to describe the trauma of the Black man's lived experience of racism as a process of, quite literally, epidermalization: "the body schema, attacked in several places, collapsed, giving way to an epidermal racial schema."² Fanon's speaker looks to the Other for recognition, to "give me back the lightness of being I thought I had lost, and taking me out of the world put me back in the world." Instead, "the Other fixes me with his gaze, his gestures and attitude, the same way you fix a preparation with a dye."³

As Fanon suggests, the Black man confronted with the white gaze cannot escape from this process of racial fixing, which is precisely a process of epidermalization: as a result of this process, the Black man literally becomes his skin, "overdetermined from the outside."⁴ Fanon describes the aftermath of this trauma, in the most graphic terms, as an enforced self-flaying that leaves him *un écorché vif*:

Disoriented, incapable of confronting the Other, the white man, who had no scruples about imprisoning me, I transported myself on that particular day far, very far, from myself, and gave myself up as an object. What did this mean to me? Peeling, stripping my skin, causing a hemorrhage that left congealed black blood all over my body. Yet this reconsideration of myself, this thematization, was not my idea. I wanted quite simply to be a man among men.⁵

Should we be surprised that the man stripped of his skin proves to be "extremely sensitive"? Sensitive, of course, in the colloquial sense: "Hey, say hello to my friend from Martinique (be careful, he's very touchy)"; but sensitive too in the fullest sense of the word, a man forced to become painfully alert to all surrounding sensations: "I slip into corners, my long antenna encountering the various axioms on the surface of things."⁶

Thus, when we reach the end of *Peau noire, masques blancs* to encounter Fanon's "final prayer," the self-exhortation that has become one of his best-known lines – "O my body, always make me a man who questions!" – it is worth remembering that this is the cry of the *écorché vif* to the body that has been peeled and stripped of skin.⁷ As David Macey puts it, "*Peau noire* is many things, and it can be read as a self-exploration or even as a wild self-analysis; to the extent that it is a socio-diagnostic or an analysis of the social origins of psychological phenomena, Fanon is his own case-material: the *écorché vif* encountered by Glissant and others."⁸ After the self-detonation caused by the traumatic look of the Other, Fanon presents us the book itself as a response: "I explode. Here are the fragments put together by another me."⁹ But we must never forget that this "other me," once having been exposed to the traumatic fixing process of racial identification, has forever lost the opportunity to return to "the lightness of being I thought I had lost," of being put back in the world through being taken out of the world.

After the annihilation of Fanon's initial dream of the Other who had the power to restore him to himself, the subsequent disillusionment is irreversible; the skin that has been stripped off will not heal.

The same sense of idealism followed by disillusionment can be heard in the letter sent home by the nineteen-year-old Fanon fighting with the French army in 1945, informing his parents: "It is a year since I left Fort-de-France. Why? To defend an obsolete idea. . . . I've lost confidence in everything, even myself. ...*I was wrong!* Nothing here, nothing justifies my sudden decision to defend the interests of farmers who don't give a damn."¹⁰ The voice that we encounter throughout all of Fanon's writings, even his most polemical treatises on behalf of the Algerian Revolution, contains the traces of this disillusionment, this sense of skinlessness, of utter sensitivity. Fanon demands a similar sensitivity from us; his legacy demands that his reader also become *un écorché vif*. Encountering his work, and his example, leaves us no room for relaxation; it is, as they say, unsparing.

Simone de Beauvoir tells us of the meeting between herself, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Fanon in Rome in July 1961, shortly before Sartre wrote his notorious introduction to *Les damnés de la terre* and just five months before Fanon's death. Fanon and Sartre began their conversation at lunch and continued until two in the morning, at which point Beauvoir cautiously hinted that Sartre perhaps needed a bit of sleep. Fanon was outraged at the suggestion, and later declared, "I don't like people who spare themselves"; he proceeded to keep Sartre talking until eight the next morning.¹¹ Fanon will not allow us to spare ourselves, just as he refused to spare himself. His voice demands attention and vigilance. Accordingly, even in marking this anniversary, we must be wary of giving way to hagiography. If we are to truly keep Fanon's legacy alive, it means treating him as a contemporary, testing and critiquing his work accordingly. He will not spare us, and we must not spare him.

"Fanon, Our Contemporary": The Work of Singularity

"Why is Frantz Fanon, who died in 1961, our contemporary? Why are new generations of readers attracted to his writing, especially *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*?"¹² This question, asked by the British writer Deborah Levy in 2000, remains the relevant one to ask as I write this in 2010; indeed, it has been the question asked about Fanon's work since the time of his death. Fanon's great influence is almost entirely posthumous: *Peau noire, masques blancs* received little attention when it was published in 1952 and soon went out of print, and *Les damnés de la terre* appeared only days before Fanon's death in 1961.

L'an V de la révolution algérienne, Fanon's account of the state of the Algerian Revolution published in 1959, was the most influential book published during his lifetime, although largely among a younger generation of French readers who were disillusioned with the war in Algeria and looking for sources speaking from inside the Revolution. Indeed, it is in the words of one of Fanon's early French readers, who deserted from the French army and joined with opposition forces in France, that we can find the vision of "Fanonism" that would be born in the years following Fanon's death: "My vision of the world was Fanonist... that is, the reawakening of the wretched of the earth. In so thinking I had a romantic and almost mystical vision which was that the salvation of the world would perhaps come from the Third World."¹³ But it was only after the publication of the American translation of *The Wretched of the Earth* in 1965 that Fanon's influence as a voice of Third World revolution achieved anything like the status it has today; indeed, the first edition of *Les damnés* had sold only 3,300 copies in France (the fact that it, like *L'an V de la révolution algérienne*, was seized by the French police may have had more than a bit to do with this).¹⁴

The subsequent and growing influence of Fanon's work since his death has relied, as Levy suggests, on generations of readers who have regarded him as "our contemporary." What this has meant, in practice, is that Fanon's readers have produced an ongoing series of appropriations of Fanon's work. I do not mean "appropriation" to be taken in a negative sense, but in a much more ambivalent way than that used by Cedric Robinson, who sees the work of contemporary theorists (especially those whose main engagement is with *Peau noire, masques blancs*) as an active attempt to subvert and depoliticize Fanon's legacy.¹⁵ Writing about the reception of Fanon's work for the introduction to a collection of critical perspectives published in 1999, I asked the following questions: "must we assume that every appropriation is a *misappropriation*? ...can there today be anything other than various kinds of appropriations of Fanon's work, appropriations which would need to be judged individually to determine their accuracy, their usefulness, and their political valences?"¹⁶ These are obviously rhetorical questions, and I would by and large stand by the suggestion that we are better off choosing among various appropriations of Fanon's work rather than fighting over the "authenticity" of particular readings or interpretations. Stuart Hall has made a similar point: "Rather than trying to recapture the 'true' Fanon, we must try to engage the after-life of Frantz Fanon."¹⁷ This implies an active, unsparing, and sensitive (in the Fanonian sense) engagement with his work, which is the best way to address Fanon as "our contemporary."

However, the remainder of this essay will attempt to argue a point that may at first appear to be paradoxical: the most productive way to revisit Fanon today, and to engage with him as a contemporary, is not to simply wrest him from the past into the present, but precisely to deal with his life and work in all its singularity. Specifically, I will engage with an aspect of Fanon's life and work that has generally been elided by even the most appreciative analysts: Fanon as, among the many other things that he was and is, a Martinican writer.

However, this is not intended as a way to simply lock Fanon into a particular place and time or to keep him trapped in the historical past. Quite the opposite, in fact, since, as I will argue, a re-evaluation of Fanon's life and work through this framework can provide us with a particular set of lessons about solidarity, lessons that are crucial for the contemporary political struggles that face us today. But this understanding of Fanon and solidarity can in turn only be approached through an engagement with his singularity.

Levy, I should note, would not totally agree with me on this point. The passage I quoted above comes from her review of David Macey's biography of Fanon, published in 2000. Levy criticizes Macey for "position[ing] Fanon firmly in the past" and goes on to suggest that "the fact that Fanon's problems are still ours, and that his writing is relevant to anyone who has been described in language that doesn't fit them, does not seem to be of much interest" to Macey.¹⁸ "Fact" is a key word for Levy; when she complains about Macey's "plodding" account of Fanon's birth and childhood, she counters with what she calls "two interesting facts": "Malcolm X was born one month after Fanon in 1925, and the poet Aimé Césaire was at school with Fanon." In actuality, neither of these "facts" is quite accurate: Malcolm X was actually two months older than Fanon, and Césaire was Fanon's teacher, not his schoolmate. The existence of factual errors in Levy's article is not, however, the important point; more significantly, these inaccuracies suggest a larger weakness in her mode of argument, which is the same mode found in the work of some other contemporary admirers of Fanon as well. For Levy, the key point is Fanon's *immediate* applicability to the present moment, which is what makes him "ours," able to elucidate not just the injustices of the past but those of the present, such as the institutional racism displayed by the British authorities in investigating the murder of a young Black man: "Fanon is our contemporary because when he psychoanalyzed the way the French colonizer looked at Arabs, he is also describing the way the police looked at Stephen Lawrence."¹⁹

I completely endorse Levy's emphasis on engaging with Fanon as a contemporary who can provide us with crucial insights into today's political struggles. However, in an important way – a *politically* important way – "the way the French colonizer looked at Arabs" is simply *not identical* to "the way the police looked at Stephen Lawrence." Even within the first half of Levy's phrase – "the way the French colonizer looked at Arabs" – we find ourselves in a dangerous area of generality. Is the reference to the gaze of a French *piéd noir* or soldier upon a native of occupied Algeria, or that of a French police officer upon a North African immigrant in France? These two contexts, while related, are hardly interchangeable: the former is saturated with the particular violence of the colonial context, in which the tiny numerical minority of *piéd noir* employed sheer violence to suppress the will of the natives of Algeria, while the latter represents the experience of the member of a minority group identified as an "Arab" (rightly or wrongly – Fanon himself wrote about being mistaken for an Arab by the French police) even if s/he is actually a French citizen. Both analytically and politically, these differences matter.

When we move to the second half of Levy's equation, and to the case of Stephen Lawrence, more complications arise. Lawrence's murder is remembered, not so much for the facts of the case themselves (tragic though they are), but for the subsequent report of the government inquiry, headed by Sir William MacPherson, which concluded that the London Metropolitan Police force was "institutionally racist." This result, in turn, was only brought about thanks to the untiring organizing efforts of anti-racism activists in London, led by Lawrence's family, who refused to let the memory of the case, or the memory of Stephen Lawrence himself, die. The danger today, as Paul Gilroy points out, is that in evaluating the importance of this episode in the history of what he calls "post-colonial London," "the national and universal resonances of the Lawrences' campaign for justice can obscure the layers of neighborhood narrative in which their long battle was enveloped." By contrast, the more politically useful analysis would begin from this specific local context in order to move outwards towards a "reflect[ion] on the way that episode has changed our sense of our metropolis, its colonial histories and its post- and neo-colonial topographies."²⁰ Honoring the specificity of Lawrence's murder and the community struggles against racism that preceded it and were provoked by it, however, means resisting the temptation to use the Lawrence case "as illustrative material."²¹ But this is precisely what Levi's formulation does. That is, rather than using Fanon's theoretical framework to provide an analysis of the new situations and struggles arising out of the case of Stephen Lawrence, she uses the facts of the case as an illustration of the applicability of Fanon's theory, which is to say, as proof that racism is still alive today in London, as it was in French-occupied Algeria.

Racism is certainly still alive today in London, and throughout the globe, but nevertheless, Levy's is too easy a formulation. Fanon's work provides us an incredibly useful framework for understanding the fundamentally dehumanizing dynamics of racism and colonialism. But it is up to us to pick up and appropriate this framework in order to apply it to specific historical and political instances, including contemporary political struggles. To simply conflate two disparate instances in order to conclude that Fanon's work continues to be relevant in our contemporary context, in other words, is not just a matter of getting "the facts" wrong; more important, it prevents us from seeing the present as it actually is, and turns Fanon from an analyst into a prognosticator. Fanon himself was often wrong about the present that he lived through: as one of his Algerian comrades put it a decade after his death, "Fanon is one of the greatest revolutionaries that Africa has ever known, and yet almost none of his theories proved to be accurate."²² This is an exaggeration, but Fanon got "the facts" wrong in more than one instance, especially in terms of specific instances of the "African Revolution" to which he had dedicated his life: he was badly mistaken in believing that Guinea under Sekou Touré would "crystallize the revolutionary potential" of its neighboring countries; he was even more disastrously mistaken in backing an uprising in Angola that was crushed by the Portuguese army, resulting in the deaths of twenty to thirty thousand people; he failed to anticipate the forces arrayed against Patrice Lumumba in the Congo before Lumumba's assassination in January 1961.²³

For better or worse, however, the true test of a radical theory is not its predictive power, but its value for the analysis of specific situations. Simple comparisons are not enough; what is needed is an active engagement with the theory, in order to test its applicability to the present. This requires a great deal of work on our part. Like Fanon, we must be unsparing in carrying out this work.

“A Particular Case”: Fanon as Martinican Writer

The first step in this process, when it comes to revisiting Fanon’s work from our own time and place, involves engaging with that work in all its specificity and singularity, so let me turn to the question of the Antillean context of Fanon’s life and work. It is fair to say that even among his most scrupulous readers, Fanon is more often seen today as a generalized icon of postcolonial studies than as (among other things) a Martinican writer. The critical readings that have most closely addressed *Peau noire, masques blancs* have generally been interested in overarching theoretical issues, and have largely underplayed or ignored the fact that Fanon repeatedly and insistently reminds his readers that he is speaking of the Antillean context, and, even more particularly, the context of Martinique. While the book often speaks in general terms of the “the black man” and “the white man,” Fanon begins his introduction with the words: “I’m not the bearer of absolute truths,” and declares, at the end of this introduction, “our observations and conclusions are valid only for the French Antilles.”²⁴ This relentless specificity, which returns in other parts of the book as well, is generally downplayed or ignored by readers of *Peau noire, masques blancs*. On the other hand, much of the critical work that has in fact shown an interest in the specific historical and political context of Fanon’s writings has focused almost exclusively on *Les damnés de la terre* – that is, on the specific history of the Algerian Revolution and Fanon’s part in this revolution – once again eliding Fanon’s specific identity as a Martinican writer writing about (and participating in) what he called the African Revolution. This is a point to which I will return in much greater detail below.

One very powerful tool for this re-reading of Fanon through a revisiting of his Antillean context is provided by Macey’s biography of Fanon. While Macey’s book has been generally well received, it has not, by and large, had a strong influence upon critical and theoretical work dealing with Fanon.²⁵ It should. In addition to providing an invaluable historical and cultural context for an understanding of Fanon’s work, Macey also provides a series of strikingly original readings of Fanon’s oeuvre. This, I would argue, has everything to do with his focus on the singularity of Fanon’s life and work, which in turn opens his texts to a variety of new possibilities. Macey begins by noting the difficulty of “placing” Fanon or his work: “Fanon remains a surprisingly enigmatic and elusive figure. Whether he should be regarded as ‘Martinican,’ ‘Algerian,’ ‘French,’ or simply ‘Black’ is not a question that can be decided easily.”²⁶

Ways of dealing with this undecidability have been provided via the numerous attempts to efface the particularity of Fanon. Such attempts have often come from a strong sympathy with Fanon's work, and indeed, in most cases, actually reflect aspects that are undoubtedly in the work itself. Most have been strategic efforts – that is, appropriations, in the sense that I have been using the term – and all have been in the interest of particular positions.

One of the first of these effacings of Fanon's particularity came only days after his death, in an obituary tribute written by Maurice Maschino, a young French student who refused to serve with the French army in Algeria and chose to go into exile in Tunis. Maschino, who cited Fanon as one of the major influences on this decision, wrote:

Fanon is essentially a militant; more so than anyone else, he was what he did and existed in terms of his commitment – and the rest is of no consequence. . . . what is more, we betray him – this man who never said 'I,' who existed only through and for the revolution – if we make a front-page splash of elements of a biography which seem to turn this Algerian resistance fighter into a particular case (not everyone is a psychiatrist and not everyone was born in Martinique).²⁷

Macey finds a slightly later parallel to Maschino's contemporaneous characterization of Fanon as something other than "a particular case" in subsequent attempts to turn Fanon into a generalized figure of "Third World Revolution," which again involve Fanon "being given an abstractly heroic status worthy of Maschino's anonymous revolutionary."²⁸ He finds something similar in the readings of Fanon by a number of postcolonial theorists, in particular Bhabha's influential reading of *Black Skin, White Masks* as a book that "rarely historicizes the colonial experience." Bhabha adds: "There is no master narrative that provides a background of social and historical facts against which emerge the problems of the individual or collective psyche."²⁹ Macey has a certain amount of sympathy for these readings, but he makes a strong case, against each of these claims upon Fanon, for particularity, arguing against Maschino et al: "It is being forgotten that [Fanon] was also 'a particular case.' After all, Fanon *was* a psychiatrist and he *was* born in Martinique."³⁰

This emphasis upon Fanon as a "particular case" – specifically, a Martinican case – leads Macey towards some interesting and productive re-readings of Fanon's work. In terms of *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Macey states: "Growing up in Martinique was a very specific, even peculiar, 'colonial experience' and . . . *Peau noire* does provide an autobiographical background of social and historical facts. Fanon himself prefaces *Peau noire, masques blancs* by restricting the validity of his observations and conclusions to the French West Indies."³¹ Macey locates more specificities at the level of the text's language and techniques, specificities that are immediately apparent to readers of Fanon's original French text but which tend to get lost in translation.

Fanon notes, for example, that Martinican mothers would call their children “*tibands*” (a Creolization of *petites bandes*) to remind them that they should act in a way that was superior to the “little gangs” of children forced to work in the sugar-cane fields; he uses “*souventefois*,” the Creole version of the French *souvent*, to mean “often.”³² Such moments in the text are clearly intentional on Fanon’s part, and would have been immediately recognizable to a French audience. Macey takes particular note of Fanon’s use of the phrase “*crabe-ma-faute*,” rendered by Charles Lam Markmann, in his 1967 translation of *Black Skin, White Masks*, as “it’s all my fault”³³:

Its literal meaning is “a my-fault-crab,” but in English the beast is known as a fiddler crab. Martinique’s fauna includes an extraordinary variety of crabs, and the *crab-ma-faute* is a denizen of the mangrove swamps . . . One of its claws is much larger than the other, and the creature appears to be beating its chest and saying a *mea culpa*. Only a Martinican, or possibly a Guadeloupean, would use this expression. Fanon “lived, fought and died Algerian,” but he was also a product of French culture and French colonialism. He was also born a native son of Martinique.³⁴

Part of the reason for the effacing of Fanon’s specifically Martinican context, as Macey implies here, has to do with the way he has been translated into English. Indeed, Macey maintains: “The eradication of the specifically French and Martinican dimension of Fanon’s colonial experience has been a gradual process, and it began with Charles Lam Markmann’s seriously flawed translation of *Peau noire*”; he also notes the strong influence of “Constance Farrington’s flawed translation of *Les damnés de la terre*” upon generations of Fanon’s Anglophone readers. “The Americanization of Fanon” that has occurred as a result of such inaccurate translations, Macey concludes, “thus erases a very specific dimension of his text.”³⁵

There have been a number of results of this “Americanization,” including, as Carine Mardorossian has recently noted, the inclusion of Fanon as one of the few non-Anglophone voices in the milieu of postcolonial studies, although, as Macey adds, “alarmingly few of the theorists involved realize – or admit – that they read him in very poor translations.”³⁶ Again, however, this is not merely a question of producing more “accurate” readings of Fanon’s work. The more important question is what gets lost in our analysis when Fanon’s Antillean context is cut out of the picture. Bringing this Antillean context to bear on *Les damnés de la terre*, for example, leads to some very interesting and productive re-readings of this text. In considering the chapter “*Sur la culture nationale*,” first presented as “*Fondements réciproques de la culture nationale et des luttes de libération*” [“Mutual Foundations for National Culture and Liberation Struggles”] at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Rome in 1959, Macey notes:

“Although the Fanon who spoke in Rome can in a sense be regarded as speaking on behalf of the GPRA, there is surprisingly little in his speech that is specific to Algeria.”³⁷ Fanon’s references throughout the chapter to literary and artistic movements such as *Négritude* and surrealism “meant little in the Algerian context”; on the other hand, “they had been significant factors in Martinique.” Macey finds a number of other aspects of *Les damnés de la terre* that bespeak the Caribbean context. For one thing, the title of the book itself, which echoes the “Internationale,” comes more directly from the poem “*Sales nègres*” by the Haitian writer Jacques Roumain; the poem is a strong declaration of *Négritude* from one of the movement’s most influential practitioners. Macey also notes that the first chapter of *Les damnés*, “*De la violence*,” includes a long passage from Aimé Césaire’s tragedy *Et les chiens se taisaient* [And the Dogs Fell Silent], and points out that this passage was not included in the first version of “*De la violence*” published in *Les Temps modernes* in May 1961. This means that the passage from Césaire was “inserted as Fanon made his final revisions of the text, or in other words as he was dying,” implying a strong Martinican cast to his mind as he completed the book. It also means that “the final image of the revolt of the wretched of the earth is not that of an Algerian freedom fighter carrying a gun, but of a doomed Martinican *marron* with a blood-stained machete in his hand.”³⁸

There are two important points that I want to draw out from this re-visiting of the Antillean context of Fanon’s commitment to the Algerian Revolution. Both points have to do with the question of solidarity, and both are quite salient to our contemporary political conjuncture. The first point has to do with nationalism, and with Fanon’s championing of a form of “national culture, which is not nationalism” in *Les damnés de la terre*.³⁹ Against those who would simply attempt to recuperate Fanon as a supporter of a *volkish* nationalism,⁴⁰ or even as an unambivalent supporter of oppositional Third World nationalisms, Macey rightly insists upon Fanon’s particular formulation of national consciousness:

For Fanon, the nation is a product of the will, and a form of consciousness which is not to be defined in ethnic terms; in his view, being Algerian was a matter of willing oneself to be Algerian rather than of being born in a country called Algeria. . . . Fanon’s “nation” is the dynamic creation of the action of the people, and his nationalism is a nationalism of the political will to be Algerian, not of ethnicity. And it is this nationalism of the will that allows him to speak of “we Algerians.”⁴¹

What gets lost when Fanon’s Antillean context is effaced is the fact that this position on national consciousness as the product of the will has everything to do with Fanon’s own identity and experience. It is deeply affected by the experience of growing up in Martinique, by his experiences as a soldier and then as a medical student in France, by his work as a psychiatrist in Algeria, and by his work on behalf of the FLN in Tunisia, Ghana, and elsewhere.

Just as *Peau noire, masques blancs* can be seen as a form of self-analysis, albeit one that has wide applicability outside of the merely biographical, *Les damnés de la terre* can be seen as “in a very real sense a recapitulation of his own experience.” As Macey puts it: “His early work and indeed experience is characterized by a tension between being the object of the white gaze and proclaiming, like Aimé Césaire, that it is ‘good and fine to be a *nègre*’; from 1959 onwards, that tension was overcome by the will to be an Algerian.”⁴² In this sense, the formulation of “we Algerians” is the final step in the process of stripping bare that was first initiated by the trauma of racial identification, and the final subjectivity formed when the fragments of that earlier self were brought together by “another me”: “It had required the gaze of a white child to teach Fanon that he was a *nègre*; he needed no one to tell him that he was Algerian – he was Algerian because he willed himself to be Algerian.”⁴³

But of course, this act of the will is not merely an assertion of self-identity; it represents a decision to join a particular collective struggle, not simply as a sympathetic figure or an outside supporter, but as an active member of the struggle itself. It means assuming not just the identity of the struggle, but also the resultant risks. This was a position that Fanon came to gradually. The position of Fanon as a psychiatrist arriving in Algeria from France is best captured in an early essay on “The ‘North African Syndrome’” published in 1952; “there are tears to be wiped away, inhuman attitudes to be fought, condescending ways of speech to be ruled out, men to be humanized.”⁴⁴ Ironically, Fanon’s decision to apply for a position in Algeria, taken together with this sort of “humanitarian” attitude expressed in his early writings, “put him in the traditional position of the black citizen from an ‘old colony’ with a civilizing mission to perform amongst the North African or black African subjects of a ‘new colony.’”⁴⁵ This position gives way, after Fanon began working in Algeria, to a sense of the active need to support the struggle of the Algerian Revolution (it is reckoned that Fanon first made contact with the FLN in late 1954, and by early 1955 was providing medical care and supplies). But even when Fanon offers his letter of resignation to the Resident Minister in Algiers in the summer of 1956, which forced him into exile with the FLN in Tunis (as he knew it would), Fanon speaks “as an outraged French citizen,” albeit one who is “about to ‘become’ Algerian.”⁴⁶ By the time he writes *Les damnés de la terre*, Fanon had put himself completely at the service of the Algerian Revolution, which allowed him to speak of “we Algerians.” We might best describe this process of gradually increased commitment to the struggle as a process of solidarity.

“We Algerians”: The Work of Solidarity

My second point about the need to attend to the singularity of Fanon’s Antillean context bears directly on this issue of solidarity. Forgetting the Antillean context in considering *Les damnés de la terre* means losing sight of an important lesson about solidarity: Fanon, as a Martinican, was not just an outsider fighting alongside his Algerian comrades against the French; he was doubly displaced in the Algerian Revolution, neither French nor Algerian but Antillean. An outsider in Algeria from the moment he set foot there, he also found himself at a distance from many of the other outsiders in the revolution – that is, Europeans who had switched sides – in that he was perceived as being neither French nor Algerian – in being, in short, a Black man and French colonial subject fighting in Algeria. Glissant emphasizes this point by placing Fanon’s commitment to Algeria in a specifically Caribbean context:

ambiguity, discontinuity, traces, and remembering, creolization, with its unpredictable results, are not signs of weakness. They contribute to this unprecedented conception of identity that I have been discussing. . . . It is not a coincidence that so many people in the West Indies dedicated themselves to the Other: for example, the Jamaican Marcus Garvey in the United States, or the Trinidadian Padmore in Ghana, or the Martinican Fanon in Algeria. Open and strong identity is also a strong solidarity.⁴⁷

It is noteworthy that the characteristics Glissant puts forward here as aspects of what he calls creolization – “ambiguity, discontinuity, traces, and remembering” – are all characteristics that critics have generally associated with Fanon’s earlier work, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, rather than as part of *Les damnés*, which has been viewed as a more straightforward “blueprint” for the revolution. Seeing these forces of creolization at work in Fanon’s commitment to the Algerian Revolution thus allows us to refuse the too-simple choice between the “early” and “late” Fanon. It also allows for an important re-casting of our idea of solidarity as it can be read out of Fanon’s life and work, which can in turn inspire new kinds of postcolonial solidarity in the present and future. Taking account of how Fanon’s Antillean identity plays a part in this different understanding of solidarity, in other words, is a necessary prerequisite for fully understanding the legacy of *Les damnés de la terre*.

What needs to be noted here is how Fanon turned this particular positioning as an outsider within the revolution into a strategic and theoretical position. This is important, because I do not want to be understood as suggesting that Fanon’s position on solidarity simply emerged spontaneously out of his commitment to the Algerian Revolution or out of his Martinican identity.

Instead, it became part of his lifelong struggle towards the making of a new idea of the human itself. One of the most perceptive readers of this aspect of Fanon's work – that is, his struggle towards a new form of postcolonial humanism – has been Paul Gilroy. Gilroy's work on Fanon is also significant because it returns us to the question of solidarity, and specifically, solidarity now.

In his 2005 book *Postcolonial Melancholia*, Gilroy gives a good sense of the paradoxically ambivalent nature of the Manichean situation of the colonies, as reflected by Fanon in *Les damnés*: “the ruthless binary logic of colonial government placed black and white, settler and native in mutually antagonistic relation. They were separated spatially, but conceptually their common racialization ensured that they were bound to each other so tightly that each was unthinkable without the proximity and hostility of the other.”⁴⁸ There is an obvious relation here to the moment noted above in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, where the look of the Other, rather than giving oneself back to oneself, fixes one in an epidermal scheme; what Fanon notes throughout his work is that this is a dual fixing that locks both sides into their racial identities. In *Peau noire*, Fanon notes this mutual identity crisis in the book's first few pages: “The white man is locked in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness.”⁴⁹ In *Les damnés*, this same process of mutual fixing is found most clearly in Fanon's formulation of how the process of colonization is actually responsible for creating the very identities of “colonized” and “colonizer”: “It is the colonist who *fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject. The colonist derives his validity, i.e. his wealth, from the colonial system.”⁵⁰ In such a context, Fanon insists that “the spatial configuration of brutal colonial government was *not* a question of politics. The political as Europe knew it simply did not exist there. Instead, the emergence of race-coded duality marked the suspension of political relations and fostered their replacement by a rather different set of what we could call parapolitical technologies and procedures.”⁵¹ The two sectors of the colonial world, the native sector and the European sector, “confront each other, but not in the service of a higher unity,” Fanon argued. “Governed by a pure Aristotelian logic, they follow the dictates of mutual exclusion: There is no conciliation possible, one of them is superfluous.”⁵²

In a sense, this is the lived, spacialized version of the “double narcissism” that Fanon diagnosed as the core problem of racial identification in *Peau noire*.⁵³ Gilroy's conclusion about Fanon's political strategy for dealing with colonial Manichaeism, including his championing of a particular form of anti-colonial violence, comes from the understanding that what Fanon is describing is a realm outside of what is ordinarily understood as “the political”: “the emphasis that Fanon placed upon Manichaeism shows how the relationship between black and white, settler and native, colonizer and colonized, denies any possibility of a comforting dialectical resolution.”⁵⁴

Fanon's famous description of "the colonized's sector" emphasizes its absolute separation from not just the colonial sector, but even from what we ordinarily understand to be the world of the living, of the human. In Fanon's account, the world inhabited by the colonized is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people. You are born anywhere, anyhow. You die anywhere, from anything. It's a world with no space, people are piled on top of the other, the shacks squeezed tightly together. The colonized's sector is a famished sector, hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal, and light. The colonized's sector is a sector that crouches and cowers . . . It's a section of niggers, a sector of towelheads [*une ville de nègres, une ville de bicots*]. . . . This compartmentalized world, this world divided in two, is inhabited by different species.⁵⁵

There can be no crossing between these two sides, no compromises, no treaties, no dialectical sublation, no dialogue, no mutual recognition, no coexistence.

Macey notes, rightly, that the description of "the colonized's sector" in this passage "applies to Algeria rather than to Martinique or to African countries that were not settler colonies with a large European population . . . This is not the Martinique of Fanon's childhood; it is Algiers, where the Casbah was an Arab town embedded in a European city."⁵⁶ This is yet another important point about singularity; it helps explain why we cannot, when reading, for example, Naomi Klein's vivid descriptions of the "Green Zone" and "Red Zone" in U.S.-occupied Iraq, the former a walled sector containing "its own electrical grid, its own phone and sewage systems, its own oil supply and its own state-of-the-art hospital," the latter "a sea of violence and despair" where "you can get yourself shot just by standing too close to the wall," simply sigh and remark: "It's exactly as Fanon described."⁵⁷ It is, and it is not. Colonial violence took, and takes, a different form in Algeria than it did, and does, in Martinique or Senegal, or as it does today in Iraq, which is in turn different from the form it takes in Afghanistan. Attention to singularity matters.

But this is also the moment when our own readings of Fanon – our appropriations, if you will – can supplement this singularity. Returning to the passage from *Les damnés de la terre*, it is striking that Fanon begins his description of "*la ville du colonisé*" by giving it multiple names and, accordingly, multiple contexts: "*La ville du colonisé, ou du moins la ville indigène, le village nègre, la medina, la réserve*" ["The colonized's sector, or at least the 'native' quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation"].⁵⁸ The description, as Macey suggests, is in the literal sense not applicable to Martinique; the day to day policing of the line between these two worlds in colonial Algeria needs to be differentiated from the more metaphysical policing process of racial identification (although the effects of the latter, including very concrete police brutality, are themselves hardly metaphorical). But the grounding of both in a traumatic moment of dehumanizing separation, a separation that is narcissistic and therefore untraversable, undoubtedly exists, and the diagnosis Fanon provides of each is deeply interwoven with the other.

The response to both processes, each violent in its own way, must itself include a form of violence that is both real and also metaphysical. In the face of the dehumanizing Other, “I explode,” Fanon tells us in *Peau noire*; in the face of the absolute Manichaeism of the colonial world, there must also be an annihilation: “To dislocate the colonial world does not mean that once the borders have been eliminated there will be a right of way between the two sectors. To destroy the colonial world means nothing less than demolishing the colonist’s sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory.”⁵⁹ The violence here is undeniable. However, I suggest that what Fanon wishes to see at the end of this process is not just a destruction, but a birth of new subjects on both sides of the formerly uncrossable borders, after the double narcissism of racism and the Manichaeism of the colonial world have been obliterated. This is the vision of a Fanonian post-colonial humanism: on both sides, for a start, a new set of *écorchés vifs*.

Gilroy, in his reading of Fanon, takes up precisely this point: while on the one hand, “Fanon argued that those great racialized ‘encampments’ were permeated with neurosis and a ‘dual narcissism,’” on the other hand, “this, perversely, was also his route to a hesitant universalism and, perhaps eventually, to the evasive new humanism that he wrote so fondly, so urgently, and so inspirationally about.”⁶⁰ What Gilroy finds, at the end of this process, is a radically new (and difficult) humanist strategy: the anti-colonial violence of the initial response to Manichaeism yields eventually to a wider consciousness that can break with the alienated logic of epidermalization and open up oppositional, and for the first time fully human consciousness to a wider range of ethical and political sensibilities. This outcome, which, as I have said, is not the third term in a dialectical movement, is also spattered with blood. It provides a reminder that the association of blackness and whiteness is not just a site of ontological obstacles to the emergence of disalienated human consciousness among the oppressed and victimized (which was Fanon’s primary concern). He also recognizes that dominance can carry its own wounds, even if they are veiled in colonial privilege and postcolonial melancholia.⁶¹

Gilroy concludes by bringing the issue into our political present: “If we follow Fanon’s example and work toward creative possibilities that are too easily dismissed as utopian, our moral and political compass might profitably be reset by acts of imagination and invention that are adequate to the depth of the postcolonial predicament he described.”⁶²

One striking aspect of Gilroy’s reading of Fanon is that he sees him as an exemplary figure, not just in the re-casting of a new form of humanism, but also in fighting against a contemporary tendency towards “scholastic reflection.” Gilroy diagnoses in this scholarly orientation a turn away from anti-racist and anti-colonial politics, which has largely, he argues, been replaced by “polite” academic analyses of race and (post)colonialism. In place of this polite scholarly work,

Gilroy puts forth a model of intellectual labor with a strong orientation towards practical solidarity. In part, this involves re-constructive efforts to reinvigorate the impulses of socialist and feminist work that “understood political solidarity to require translocal connections” and “turned away from the patriotism of national states because they had found larger loyalties.”⁶³ In initiating this work, Gilroy expresses his particular variation on solidarity through the introduction of the term “translocal,” which implies the possibility of attachments to locations and communities either larger than, or smaller than, the space provided by the nation-state.

What happens when we introduce Fanon’s work into contemporary efforts to revive practical political solidarity, efforts that place us squarely within ongoing debates regarding nationalism and humanism? As I have noted above, Fanon has often been called upon to bolster arguments for various forms of anti-imperialist, third-world nationalism. This is the Fanon for whom the development of “national culture” and “national consciousness” is a necessary step in the fight against the Manichean violence of colonialism. Although he does not directly cite Fanon, a similar claim also lies behind the accusation of Don Robotham who, in arguing that Gilroy “offers to replace nationalism with ‘planetary humanism,’” accuses him of simply “seek[ing] a unilateral political disarmament by the black community.”⁶⁴ Fanon’s own support for national liberation movements, in his writing as in his life, is of course undeniable, and it represents a crucial current that runs throughout *Les damnés de la terre*. However, as I have argued above regarding Fanon’s conception of the nation as a product of the will, there is always a complexity at work in these engagements. Indeed, as with his arguments regarding colonial Manichaeism and anti-colonial responses to it, Fanon’s full argument regarding nationalism leads to his final position on humanism, one which can be seen as ultimately anti-nationalist without simply falling into a more traditional internationalism.⁶⁵ To develop a new vision of internationalist solidarity that is not beholden to the models of the past, one inspired by Fanon’s struggle with and remaking of humanism, seems to me to be one of the most crucial intellectual and political tasks of our time.

Any such contemporary strategic thinking about translocal solidarity necessitates a full reckoning with Fanon’s own ambivalent and complex place in the Algerian Revolution. This returns us to Glissant’s characterization of Fanon as one of those Caribbean figures who “dedicated themselves to the Other.” “Dedicating oneself to the Other” provides a good working definition of solidarity. It is particularly striking that the Fanon who was left literally skinned alive as a result of the first traumatic contact with the Other could still manage such an openness to the Other. But perhaps not; perhaps, as I have already suggested, it is only *un écorché vif*, the one stripped of skin, who can manage such dedication to the Other, which requires a form of true sensitivity. One important aspect of this sensitivity involves the refusal to too easily generalize, to avoid the temptation to describe different political contexts as “the same,” to resist declarations such as Levy’s statement: “Fanon is our contemporary because when he psychoanalyzed the way the French colonizer looked at Arabs, he is also describing the way the police looked at Stephen Lawrence.”

There is a great temptation to imagine that the different political struggles to which many of us are committed (or at the very least, those struggles that we endorse in theory) are of necessity related, that struggles against racism, sexism, Islamophobia, homophobia, colonialism are all in the end part of some larger entity, “the good fight.” Recent political experiences teach us that they are not. True solidarity, a true linking of struggles, a true dedication to the Other, demands of us an attention to the singularity of each individual situation, of each individual struggle. It necessitates a politics of particularity, and an avoidance of too-easy generalizations.

Fanon himself was not always able to resist the temptation to over-generalize, but his life and work still provides us with a powerful model of solidarity forged through an attention to singularity. One more point about the specificity of Fanon’s Antillean context is in order here. It has been argued by critics such as Albert Memmi and Françoise Vergès that Fanon’s commitment to the Algerian Revolution stemmed in many important ways from his inability to find the form of revolutionary politics that he was seeking in his native Martinique. Fanon’s identification with Algeria, his desire to say “we Algerians,” thus became, at least in part, a psychological substitute for “an impossible identification with the Martinican nation,” in Memmi’s words.⁶⁶ As Macey and others have argued, however, Fanon’s commitment to Algeria did not necessitate a turn away from political struggles in Martinique; on the contrary, as Glissant insists, Martinique was very much on Fanon’s mind during the last months of his life.⁶⁷ In fact, “Blood Flows in the Antilles Under French Domination,” one of Fanon’s last journalistic pieces published in *El Moudjahid*, the FLN’s official publication, dealt with a series of riots that broke out in Martinique in December 1959. Fanon’s fervent hope was that such an uprising might be a sign that, at last, “the old colonies, too, are taking the road to ‘rebellion.’”⁶⁸

While “Blood Flows in the Antilles Under French Domination” generally follows the mold of Fanon’s other (originally unsigned) pieces for *El Moudjahid*, a mode that partakes more of propaganda than of true analysis, there is something strangely moving about this piece. It stems from the shifts that can be noticed in Fanon’s own identification. “Every West Indian... wherever he may find himself today, will feel violently shaken,” Fanon declares at the beginning of the article.⁶⁹ Despite the distance imposed by his use of the third-person address, Fanon clearly includes himself among those Martinicans who find themselves somewhere else than Martinique but still linked enough to its struggles to “feel violently shaken.” By the end of the piece, Fanon has shifted back to the more common plural found throughout his late writings, linking himself to Algeria and to the Algerian struggle: “We know now that there are links between the Algerian war and the recent events that have caused blood to be shed in Martinique.”⁷⁰ Fanon’s fervent desire was that these links come into existence, and one of the places where they did, and do, concretely exist is in his own person, in the voice locating itself here between Martinique and Algeria, and identifying itself with both at once. We might say that the “other me” who re-assembled the exploded fragments in *Peau noire, masques blancs* gives way, in Fanon’s later writings, to “another we,” existing simultaneously among and between “we Algerians” and “all West Indians.”

To put it simply: solidarity, for Fanon (and for us) may require an attention to singularity, but it does not require an either/or choice — in the case of Fanon, a choice of identification with either Martinique or Algeria. Glissant, in words written a few months after Fanon’s death, both acknowledges Fanon’s commitment to Algeria (where Fanon’s body was buried, after being smuggled over the border from Tunisia) and at the same time returns him, in the full sense of the word, to Martinique, precisely through an acknowledgement of his dedication to the Other: “He died in the service of Algeria. He died Algerian, totally Algerian. And the West Indian people will cherish the memory of that Algerian because they can see in him the most exalted and sublime image of their own vocation.”⁷¹ Their vocation, and, if we are willing to make the effort of the will today, our vocation as well. If we are willing to make our own unsparing dedication to the other — that is, to solidarity — Fanon can be ours today as well.

I will cite one last obituary tribute to Fanon, this one from Francis Jeanson, who had been Fanon’s editor at *Seuil* when *Peau noire, masques blancs* was published and who wrote the book’s original preface: “This Martinican, who was turned by his transition through French culture into an Algerian revolutionary, will remain for us a very living example of universalism in action and the most noble approach to the human that has ever been made until now in this inhuman world.”⁷² Jeanson is an apt figure to praise Fanon’s model of universal solidarity, and he, like Fanon, provides a fitting tribute to the idea of solidarity as a dedication to the Other. As the leader of a network of French supporters of the FLN in Paris, Jeanson was hunted by the police and faced death threats before finally escaping to Switzerland; he was tried *in absentia* by a military court for “offenses against state security” and sentenced to ten years in prison. When he first met Fanon, Jeanson, like Glissant, found him to be *un écorché vif*, “extremely sensitive.”⁷³ While neither Jeanson nor Glissant explicitly link Fanon’s sensitivity to his life of solidarity, it is a connection that we, today, cannot miss. Fifty years after his death, Fanon challenges us, unsparingly, to strip away our own skin in order to better “touch the other, feel the other, discover each other.”⁷⁴ He calls us to a new form of solidarity: *les écorchés vifs* of the world unite.

Notes and References

¹ Edouard Glissant, “*Un Nouveau Sens de l’humanité pour les pays du Sud*,” *Antilla* 23 (1991), p. 38, quoted in David Macey, *Frantz Fanon* (New York: Picador USA, 2002), p. 119.

² Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2008), p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁸ Macey, p. 134.

⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 89.

¹⁰ Macey, p. 103-04, emphasis in original.

¹¹ Simone de Beauvoir, *La Force de choses*, Volume II (Paris: Livre de poche, 1971), pp. 425-29.

¹² Deborah Levy, “Dr. Fanon Prescribes Freedom,” *The Independent* (18 November 2000).

¹³ Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p. 135, quoted in Macey, p. 411.

¹⁴ Macey, p. 17. For an early take on the American success of Fanon’s work, see Aristide R. Zolberg and Vera B. Zolberg, “The Americanization of Frantz Fanon,” *Public Interest* 9 (1966).

¹⁵ Cedric Robinson, “The Appropriation of Frantz Fanon,” *Race & Class* 35 (1993): pp. 79-91.

¹⁶ Anthony C. Alessandrini, “Introduction: Fanon Studies, Cultural Studies, Cultural Politics,” in *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Anthony C. Alessandrini (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 1.

¹⁷ Stuart Hall, “The After-life of Frantz Fanon,” in *The Fact of Blackness*, ed. Alan Read (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), p. 14.

¹⁸ Levy, “Dr. Fanon.”

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Paul Gilroy, “London: Post-Colonial City,” <http://www.iniva.org/celluloid/gilroy.html>, accessed 21 November 2010.

²¹ Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 50.

²² Quoted in Macey, pp. 28-29.

²³ See Macey, pp. 383, 391, 435.

²⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin*, p. xi, xviii.

²⁵ One important exception is Carine Mardorossian’s recent essay “From Fanon to Glissant: A Martinican Genealogy,” *Small Axe* 30 (2009): pp.12-24.

²⁶ Macey, p. 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18. The quote is from Maurice Maschino, “Présence de Frantz Fanon,” *Le Petit Matin* (12 December 1961): p. 1, translated by Macey.

²⁸ Macey, p. 25.

²⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 41.

³⁰ Macey, p. 25.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³² Macey, p. 30; see Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p. 15, 73.

³³ Fanon, *Peau noire*, p. 10; *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967), p. 9.

³⁴ Macey, p. 30.

³⁵ Macey, p. 23, 29. This problem has been somewhat ameliorated by the excellent recent translations of Fanon by Richard Philcox; his translation of *The Wretched of the Earth* was published in 2004, and of *Black Skin, White Masks* in 2008.

³⁶ Mardorossian, p. 12; Macey, p. 26.

³⁷ Macey, p. 378.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 425-26.

³⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2004), p. 179.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Alain Finkielkraut, *La Défaite de la pensée* (Paris: Folio, 1989), pp. 98-99.

⁴¹ Macey, pp. 377-78, 389. Macey notes that the reality of national identity and citizenship in independent Algeria turned out to be a different story: "In practice, the Code of Nationality adopted in 1962 defined Algerian nationality in both ethnic and religious terms and made Islam the state religion, though it also specified that citizenship could be granted by decree to non-ethnic and non-Muslim 'Algerians.' ... Had he lived, Fanon would no doubt have been granted Algerian citizenship and an Algerian passport, but in a sense he would always have remained an honorary Algerian" (389).

⁴² Macey, p. 378-79.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁴⁴ Frantz Fanon, "The 'North African Syndrome,'" *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove, 1967), p. 16.

⁴⁵ Macey, p. 205.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁴⁷ Edouard Glissant, "Creolization in the Making of the Americas," *Caribbean Quarterly* 54 (2008): p. 87.

⁴⁸ Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 51.

⁴⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin*, pp. xii-xiv.

⁵⁰ Fanon, *Wretched*, p. 2, emphasis in original.

⁵¹ Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, p. 50, emphasis in original.

⁵² Fanon, *Wretched*, p. 4.

⁵³ Fanon, *Black Skin*, p. xiv.

⁵⁴ Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, p. 52.

⁵⁵ Fanon, *Wretched*, p. 4-5; *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), p. 69-70.

⁵⁶ Macey, p. 471.

⁵⁷ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007), pp. 522-23. Klein notes that a similar Red Zone/Green Zone division is being imposed throughout the world, including, for example, in post-Katrina New Orleans.

⁵⁸ Fanon, *Les damnés*, p. 69; *Wretched*, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin*, p. 89; *Wretched*, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, p. 51.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Don Robotham, "Cosmopolitanism and Planetary Humanism: The Strategic Universalism of Paul Gilroy," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 104 (2005): p. 575.

⁶⁵ The key phrase here would be the one found at the end of the penultimate chapter of *Les damnés de la terre*, translated as "On National Culture": "National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension" (Fanon, *Wretched*, p. 179). The distinction between "national consciousness" and "nationalism" (especially when it comes to forms of nationalism not directly linked to nation-states, such as anti-colonial nationalism and Black nationalism) is admittedly a complex one. In my own argument, for example, by making a case for Fanon as "Martinican," I am, needless to say, relying on a specifically national model (although not, I would argue, a specifically *nationalist* model). Gilroy, who disavows nationalism in principle, is clearer than Fanon on this point, but Gilroy's argument, by his own admission, veers away from Fanon in many ways. I address these issues at greater length in "'Enough of This Scandal': Reading Gilroy through Fanon, or Who Comes After 'Race'?" in *Retrieving the Human: Reading Paul Gilroy*, ed. Rebecka Rutledge Fisher and Jay Garcia (University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming).

⁶⁶ Albert Memmi, "La Vie impossible de Frantz Fanon," *Esprit* (September 1971), p. 254; François Vergès, "Creole Skin, Black Masks: Fanon and Disavowal," *Critical Inquiry* 23 (1997): pp. 578-95 and "'I Am Not the Slave of Slavery': The Politics of Reparation in (French) Postslavery Communities," in Alessandrini, ed., *Frantz Fanon*, pp. 258-74.

⁶⁷ Macey, p. 424.

⁶⁸ Fanon, "Blood Flows in the Antilles Under French Domination," *Toward the African Revolution*, p. 167. In private, Fanon was less sanguine about the lasting effects of the riots, suggesting to a friend, "They [Martinicans] are not going to do anything about it. They'll probably vote for some symbolic motion and then begin all over again to croak from misery. In reality, a flash of anger on their part reassures the colonialists. It will be a question of a manifestation and nothing more" (Macey, p. 420).

⁶⁹ Fanon, "Blood Flows in the Antilles," p. 167.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁷¹ Edouard Glissant, "*Culture et colonisation: l'équilibre antillais*," *Esprit* (April 1962): 595, quoted in Macey, p. 421.

⁷² Quoted in Macey, p. 494.

⁷³ Macey, pp. 158-59.

⁷⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin*, p. 206.