

Neither War nor Peace:
The Shared Sacrificial Militancy of Fanon and Gandhi

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You can reload your rifle, and that moment you're reloading it, that's peace.
*Bob Dylan*¹

Summary

Frantz Fanon's psychoanalytic endorsement of violence and Mohandas Gandhi's religious non-violence are usually considered opposed theoretical expressions of resistance. Given this apparent polarity, most analysts contrast rather than align their broader commitments and methods. But Fanon and Gandhi held similar militant views in several non-trivial ways, that is, beyond their strategic "realism," denunciations of imperial dehumanization, and anxieties over non-western postcolonial political orders. As one instance of divisive sovereign power, Fanon and Gandhi argue, imperial rule reduces humans to objects and replaces their multiple activities and complex identities with simplified – either obedient or chaotic – reactions. Fanon's violent revolution and Gandhi's non-violence *satyagraha* become ramifications of one principle: that decolonization, the retrieval of willful subjectivity from an objectified state, requires *physical militancy*. Fanon and Gandhi advocate force and coercion by means irreducible to militarism or pacifism. Fanon and Gandhi agree on two further principles that supplement physical obstruction. First, they dismiss cosmopolitan liberalism as a colonial ideology to re-subjectivize the colonized and prevent exertions of indigenous autonomy. For both, decolonization must resist imperial, viz. liberal-individualist, assimilation. Fanon and Gandhi thus situate subjectivity in national independence movements, insisting that colonial incentives to assimilation always fragment the colonized – a criticism that encapsulates their dismissal of corrupting European values. Fanon's "new man" and Gandhi's *swaraj* postpone native subjectivity until it forms a unified, single movement against temptations of colonial collaboration. Fanon and Gandhi hence situate anti-imperial militancy in non-negotiable refusal of bourgeois instrumentalism and classist liberalism. Their agreement that physical sacrifice grounds successful anti-imperial agency entails, then, a second principle: that effective anti-imperial struggle must pass through a stage of willful re-objectification. The strong and willful body of natives in revolt supplants the weak and impulsive body desired by empire. Thus Fanon and Gandhi believe that only a new body, a novel object, could defeat French and English domination; the collective will emerges in national sacrifice, embodying the immanent post-colonial subject by embracing threats to the colonized body-as-object. Fanon and Gandhi therefore insist that *re-objectification precedes re-subjectivization*. The self-re-inscription of the colonized body-as-object as a militantly anti-colonial body-as-new-object is the condition of possibility for post-colonial subjectivity. This convergence of our great apostles of violence and non-violence in physical-sacrificial militancy offers insight into current ethical and empirical clashes, e.g., between Islamist fighters and the premises of the human rights regime under the diffusion of monistic force projection.

I **Argument: *re-objectified, sacrificial bodies against empire***

I propose that in Fanon and Gandhi *physical sacrifice* is not just an effective means or inevitable stage of de-colonization; rather, coercive militant physicality evinces their political-theoretic convictions. One key to this claim is their insistence that militant agitators repudiate liberal-humanist interpellation by *re-objectifying before re-subjectivizing themselves* against colonial domination and exploitation. In short, Fanon and Gandhi disrupted the usual {objectification \Rightarrow re-subjectivization} activist strategy by seizing upon and re-inscribing the colonized body itself as the central barrier to imperial suzerainty. Their shared commitment to sacrificial re-embodiment conjoins Fanon's and Gandhi's famously discrepant normative interpretations of violence in a unified analysis of physical resistance.

This intermediary Gandhi and Fanon introduced between colonial reification and anti-colonial re-subjectivization is the often-overlooked kernel of their radicalism. They believed that the re-animation of physically brutalized and spiritually mortified people could not occur through the familiar revolutionary trajectory {native subject \Rightarrow colonized object \Rightarrow new native subject}. They believed physical-disciplinary re-definition was central in resisting notably the pressures to assimilate to imperial institutions. Fanon and Gandhi sought to prevent the premature re-subjectivization that tempted "native intellectuals" to imitate their way into acceptance. For many theorists and activists the alternative to mimetic assimilation was the more typical reduction of natives to near-objects ("*thingification*"). The consequent image of anti-colonial struggle was to a progressive reversal of imperial hegemony in the following sequence:

pre-colonial **subject** \Rightarrow colonial **objectification** (*dehumanization*) \Rightarrow post-colonial **re-subjectivization**

Simplifying this sequence for heuristic purposes, the familiar theory of revolutionary subjectivity is this:

colonial objectification \Rightarrow **anti-colonial re-subjectivization**

Emphasizing mass liberation movements Fanon and Gandhi interjected a similar *third* stage into the {subordination \Rightarrow emancipation} model: *willful re-objectification*. Experiential analysis alerted each to the paradox of an object revivifying itself, as against the facile integration of mimetic compradors. That is, Fanon and Gandhi discerned that any activist theory advocating an immediate reversal from colonial objectification to anti-colonial re-subjectivization would be "idealist" rather than "materialist"; it would yield an unearned rebellion, one that skipped over the self-possession that true liberation entailed. Instead, a rigorous, self-propelled mobilization had to achieve freedom, had to free itself, not be freed by colonial concession. This rigor had to welcome danger, to express fealty to life by risking death in sacrificial, physical action. So Fanon and Gandhi refused re-subjectivization until the colonized were re-constituted as physical militants. Anti-colonial resistance could produce real liberation – human transcendence of pre-

colonial subjectivity and colonial objectification – only under duress of a willful body politic that placed their human dignity over their biological lives. Fanon and Gandhi conceived willful re-objectification as a pivotal stage between colonial objectification and anti-colonial re-subjectivization. Genuine post-colonial transcendence required an intervening obdurate body: the colonized object had first to become a liberated object to then ground a post-colonial subject. Here, then, is their modified revolutionary trajectory:

colonial objectification \Rightarrow **self-re-objectification** \Rightarrow anti-colonial re-subjectivization

In the last instant of encroaching objecthood, then, Fanon and Gandhi inserted physical resistance between de- and re-subjectivization as a distinct preparation for release from imperial domination. This tactic, re-constituting bodies into militant obstructions as the necessary condition of subjective liberation, is usually blurred into the overall revolutionary process. But Fanon and Gandhi were dialecticians who held that re-subjectivization must be predicated on a preceding *radicalization of the objectified condition*. That is, militants had to create *within* their actually existing corporeal objecthood the immanent resources for genuine postcolonial subjectivity. The body-in-revolt had to sacrifice to prove the priority of humanity over biology, the minimal criterion for a dignified existence. Militant self-re-objectification fulfilled an imperial logic, then, by intensifying colonial reification. No longer willing to work, slave, and bow under the colonial yoke, the rebels must embrace by exacerbating objectification, make it their own by taking it beyond suffering to death, beyond bare life to no-life. This re-objectified body opens up a new gap within objectifying conditions; the beaten body now divides into enlivened revolutionary bodies and mummified corpses. This anti-colonial, stubborn, obstructive body thus intensifies experiences of life and death still within the colonized-objectified condition. For Gandhi and Fanon, actions of physical militancy *before* re-subjectivization enact the elements of a valuable life as a kind of practice or preparation for the real thing. The re-objectification of colonized bodies represents, then, a proleptic de-colonized subjectivity.²

A paradox in Fanon's and Gandhi's thought may explain why re-objectification, as the necessary condition of revolutionary re-subjectivization, remains obscure. The category "willful re-objectification" presents a conceptual paradox akin to that in the dehumanization thesis more obviously: how can objects re-animate themselves as willful subjects? How can objectified creatures, bereft of will, will themselves into action? We can imagine minimal or necessary conditions of willful action, such as Odysseus's tying oneself to a mast; to facilitate our subjectivity we must partially constitute ourselves as objects, removing bits of freedom (Hobbes's unfettered action) or license (Hegel's impulsive action) so as to achieve willful existence or subjectivity. It seems that "subjectivity" cannot be "free" as it must come into being through an objectifying confinement. Here Fanon and Gandhi anticipate psychoanalytic disdain in, e.g., Žižek, of "prohibitions on prohibitions" in the concepts of liberation or subjectivity. But from the outset, then, we might ask how the deliberate generation of objectified, sacrificial bodies help and which hinder processes

of emancipation or re-subjectivization. The need for a social mechanism that could convert an objectified colonial condition into a postcolonial subjectivity – viz. the paradox of a self-reclaimed thing – impelled Gandhi and Fanon to develop their distinct conceptual and analytical versions of re-objectification.

I would stress re-objectification as a further immersion in physical materiality, a going-through that disavows the reflexivity in rationalist and recognition paradigms. Fanon and Gandhi reject immediate {object \Leftrightarrow subject} re-humanization, renouncing philosophies of subjectivity that burden activists with incoherent liberal commitments to detached reason. Re-objectification replaces the imposed reification not with new liberal subjects but new material objects that are for that reason more willfully resistant to coercive force. *Re-objectified* militants may resist more effectively because they re-mobilize objectified conditions while rejecting the productively docile agency of liberal assimilation. Gandhi and Fanon, with their superficially opposed tactics, demand immersion in material, determined, physical re-humanization that forge a deeper objectification than one demanded by apparatuses of productive docility grounded in instrumentalized subjectivity.³ Fanon and Gandhi intensify or purify the bare-life condition of colonized people, here, by sharpening but re-appropriating social reification. Each may be read as re-orienting social simplification to resist simultaneously (1) colonial objectification *and* (2) liberal re-subjectivization – i.e., the *body and mind* desired by imperial hegemony. Fanon and Gandhi decreed that anti-colonial resistance could not confront reification with a new subject but with a new object willfully surrendering its will as a determinant material force.

As to situated and symptomatic *differences* between Fanon and Gandhi, liberal-humanism inserts such legendary figures into the concepts it needs by fictionalizing those figures, appropriating them in plausible but distorted forms. This process has produced the ideological binary: *violent Fanon* versus *non-violent Gandhi*, the great antinomian symbols of anti-imperial alternatives. This framing parallels, and is often invoked by, the binary: *violent Islamism* versus *non-violent humanitarianism*,” notably embattled in sites of foreign military occupation. These poles affix the parameters of the global human rights regime, embedding practical ethics in disciplinary criteria for subjects worthy of political regard. Gandhian non-violence and humanitarian cosmopolitanism, in other words, are the recognized membership requirement that defines institutional ascent from dehumanized beasts to recognizable persons. In this constellation, adherence to Gandhi (peaceful, cerebral, active) as the condition of humanitarian recognition requires rejection of Fanon (violent, physical, reactive). This opposition establishes included and excluded terms: “*Gandhi*” *expels* “*Fanon*” *as humanitarianism expels Islamism*. These robust expulsions obscure core commonalities in their doctrines, as I have suggested. As the symbolic order requires misrecognition of its *own* traits, it must simplify itself *and* its other(s). Gandhi’s anti-modernist spiritual militancy is morphed into an enlightened humanistic pacifism that condemns Fanon’s nihilistic aggressions, blotting out the latter’s strained melancholic universalism and explicit loathing of violence.

The shared militancy of Fanon and Gandhi, emphasizing sacrificial corporeal intransigence in resisting imperial oppression, defy these liberal-humanist distortions and appropriations. Their political works reveal Fanon and Gandhi as eventual figures of singular-universality based in site-specific material conditions⁴, not in general human consciousness.⁵ Fanon and Gandhi were anti-imperial psychotics whose dissociation from the fictive symbolic order accepted by radicalizing the reality of ideologically repressed material violence.⁶ They attend, however, to *material* exploitation driving colonial (and already-visible neocolonial) reification *and* to universal *ideals* offended by liberal-democratic membership criteria. My mode of address in this paper is unorthodox because I wish to approach more than conclude the matter of Fanonian and Gandhian material-physical resistance; that is, I aspire to probe the normative paradigms or theoretical premises in their commitments. Thus I will present distinct “topics” concerning resistance that converge in their practical and critical ethics but without over-determining the convergence itself. So I’ll (1) critically assess the dehumanization thesis, and introduce Fanonian and Gandhian physical militancy. My general hope is that the sections roughly mirror anti-imperial dialectics theoretically and practically, that is, at the nexus of cognitive and physical life.

II **Problematic: *dehumanization thesis***

Whether statist or imperial, tyranny forms a necropolis in which survivors – sustained by values, ideals, or hopes from *beyond* their regime or society – emerge, coalesce, and revolt in defense of their humanity.⁷ The uprising proves the failure of thanatopolitical despotism to eradicate life.⁸ This city-of-the-dead coming to life articulates a *dehumanization thesis*, which commends a compelling if problematic causal mechanism⁹ behind social violence and peace. With Fanon and Gandhi, I would affirm the logic of this thesis, that dehumanization tempts or produces violence. But, also in their line, I would explain discrete outcomes under despotic rule by emphasizing situated evaluations of inhumane conditions, re-inscribing social agents as subjects, not merely objects, of internally differentiated coercive regimes in multiple cultural contexts. To explore these ideas, it helps to take up the analytical leverage gained from revising the dehumanization thesis, still the governing premise in leading accounts of violence. This will help me to specify the familiar {objectification \Leftrightarrow re-subjectivization} paradox, as well as the concept and practice of re-objectification that Gandhi and Fanon deploy to overcome it.

Dehumanization refers to political disenfranchisement, material dispossession, or social expulsion that erodes collective or individual abilities to achieve consciously defined objectives willfully and reliably in a compulsory social system. It denotes diminished *agency* or *subjectivity*, conceived apart from enlightenment notions of *freedom* predicated on the universal potential for rational-reflective detachment. In sophisticated dehumanization theses, agency and subjectivity comprise two components of a successful and reliable exertion of will to realize self-articulated demands: *material provisions* that permit physical

endurance and *political resources* that guarantee efficacious expression of grievances. Denial of these biological and expressive needs dehumanizes people. The causal argument built up from these concepts is that sustained social violence is a double movement of repression and revolt, of suffocation and gasping for air.¹⁰ It occurs when people have been dehumanized by a system that must be broken to reverse this process and *re-humanize* their lives. Put another way, people resort to violence when reduced from acting subjects to acted-upon objects, when as humans-into-things they cannot improve their welfare using only the means established and accredited in hegemonic political arrangements.¹¹

Fanon gave us a lucid and stirring vision of the dehumanization thesis in his dramatic deathbed recitation, *The Wretched of the Earth*, which will be my model of this model:

A world compartmentalized, Manichean and petrified, a world of statues: the statue of the general who led the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge. A world cocksure of itself, crushing with its stoniness the backbones of those scarred by the whip. That is the colonial world. The colonial subject is a man penned in; apartheid is but one method of compartmentalizing the colonial world. The first thing the colonial subject learns is to remain in his place and not overstep his limits...The dreams of the colonial subject are muscular dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality. I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, and climbing. I dream I burst out laughing, I am leaping across a river and chased by a pack of cars that never catches up with me. During the colonization the colonized subject frees himself night after night between nine in the evening and six in the morning.¹²

This passage bristles with poetic images of eruptive resistance to strangulation. It describes a violently enforced, class-defined institutional racism – *apartheid* is a term too kind, he said, for France’s Algerian colony – whose inhumanity typified the indifference and prerogative of one people to another.¹³ When Algerian demands for civic, racial, and economic equality after WWII had yielded only more brutal expressions of these inequities, the colonized revolted. Fanon’s rendering contains a social-psychological *explanation* of refused objectification. Cobbling together observations from his clinical and anti-imperial activities, Fanon claimed that inhumane circumstances cause their victims *neuroses when internalized* and *violence when externalized*. Echoing his earlier analysis of racism in *Black Skins, White Masks*, written before the revolution, he provides a sort of hydraulic theory of personhood. A social system, he says, can compress but not extinguish our identity and will, our capacity to realize our personal and social desires.¹⁴ If social arrangements stop us from being who we are, who-we-are will take refuge in our unconscious – sustaining itself in dreams of physical superiority – until survival forces who-we-are out of hiding to fight back. Militancy marks the symptomatic shift from internalized to externalized effects of dehumanization, that is, a *qualitative* change in the symptom itself. At *some* pressure point, re-humanization occurs *through* the transformation from internal dream to external war – a “new man” arises.¹⁵

The analysis here concerns Fanon’s contribution to a human ontology that grounds our model of social or political violence in the desire for release from dehumanization. It is a view Gandhi embraces; in

so strenuously advocating non-violence, he too recognizes the “natural” tie between dehumanization and violence, if not obstructed by the transcendent exertion of an equally physical practice or discipline of refusing violence. Given this pivotal convergence it seems worthwhile to round out Fanon’s more explicit account of dehumanization.¹⁶ In simple terms, Fanon reports that dehumanization first represses and then radicalizes its victims. The repression phase manifests symptoms on the couch – anxiety, frustration, fury, and more broadly estrangement, dislocation, and melancholia. The radicalization phase manifests on the battlefield – certainty, satisfaction, discipline, but also integrity, wholeness, mourning. So Fanon portrays two phases of dehumanization inhabited by distinct persons. *Re-humanization* converts the subordinated, neurotic object into the radicalized, willful subject. We must ask what explains this abrupt, disjunctive reversal, in which repression¹⁷ becomes rebellion, and object subject; or rather we need to scrutinize Fanon’s implicit view that the gradual suffocation of identity and subjectivity reaches a tipping point on a line between subject and object where the subject recoils from reification.

To critique this simple version of his account, I have to pause over some details. Fanon perceives a qualitative asymmetry in the two symptoms of inhumanity. He thinks it is *not* the case that repression and rebellion are similar but sequential effects of dehumanization, since it is not the same person whose fantasies become realities of power and prowess. Fanon rejects the scenario where the dreamer-turned-fighter is one continuous agent stretching from repression to revolution. This seamless progression is just the image Fanon dismisses on the imperishable premise that it is through our actions that we become subjects – in essence, that we as beings¹⁸ do not exist before we as doings¹⁹, a position that echoes Gandhi’s ethics of embodied belief. Fanon implies here that revolutionary liberation is *not* the result of reflective decisions by objects (things do not decide) *or* subjects (agents do not decide their agency²⁰). His radical psychoanalysis sees Algerian de/re-humanization, rather, as an instinctive, physical rejection by the human will of an animalized, objectified existence deprived of will. Fanon thinks that, on the verge of extinction, subjectivity protects itself and that this is a universal mechanism of human life.²¹

Fanon offers here an explanation: compression is not only the context of escape but its cause: *dehumanization causes re-humanization*.²² “Decolonization...transforms the spectator crushed to a non-essential state into a privileged actor,” he says. “It infuses a new rhythm specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and a new humanity...The ‘thing’ colonized becomes a man through the very process of liberation.”²³ The poet Czesław Miłosz reiterates Fanon’s reverie in rejoicing at “the moment when [Polish] society learned to consider itself as a *subject*, rather than as an object manipulated by those who govern.”²⁴ For Gandhi this subject is realized through suffering, i.e., physically: “For *Satyagraha* and its offshoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance are nothing but new names for the law of suffering,” in turn the source of “salvation.”²⁵ Fanon adds to the human ontology delineated here in two ways. First, his dehumanization thesis extends our inherited conceptual landscape, which reduces tyranny to violence and

democracy to peace; Fanon invokes the triptychs tyranny-violence-object versus freedom-peace-subject. In the process of re-humanization violence and liberation are symbiotic but this is a median stage on the way to post-colonial freedom. Second, more significantly, he insists that people respond to tyranny and freedom not as violent or peaceful mimes but as willful (not “intentional”²⁶ or “free”) subjects albeit at various levels of diminishment. Fanon believes people do not reproduce hegemonic social orders as if they are distilled mimetic instances of them; they follow their irrefragable drive to reclaim their humanity. Conceiving a primal desire for liberation from tyranny, Fanon explains revolutionary violence to bolster his therapeutic inference that subjectivity arises from the elemental, universal need to be human.²⁷

Fanon’s dehumanization thesis is a good launch into accounts of social violence/non-violence, less for the specific theses about racism, empire, and revolution than for the crystalline, if all-too-casual, conceptual architecture. My sense is that the empirical research on social violence and collective action rejects or complicates Fanon’s claims while retaining its structure and principles. The literature invokes resource mobilization, repertoires, framing, and political opportunity as variables that intervene between grievance and deprivation, as institutions or practices that definitively mediate political reactions to inhumane conditions, often in a quasi-Gandhian biopolitical preference for survival over freedom. There is no direct causal connection between dehumanization and violence or recuperation of subjectivity, *pace* Fanon’s thesis, since these variables are defined, animated, ameliorated, and resisted in myriad ways. Because institutional histories differentiate subjective evaluations of objective dehumanization, we need a corrective agenda to the standard thesis. So I will ask if we have refined or qualified the dehumanization thesis; but accepted its logic; and critiqued that logic insufficiently. I will advance three linked arguments.

First, retaining the scaffolding of the dehumanization thesis likely reveals a significant, valuable truth about social explanation: it *requires* a human ontology of the kind under severe attack for decades among scholars concerns with reliable social explanation. The content of this scaffolding is equally revealing. Fanon depicts a confrontation between internal and external conditions; he thinks this “inessential thing” – the colonized object – results when subjective identity and will are snuffed out by material and social deprivation. But this relationship between subjective and objective conditions opens up a gap, as activists like Gandhi insisted and social movement theorists affirm. My internal-subjective wellbeing and external-objective wellbeing do not make direct and causal contact, short of outright eradication of my person; they reach each other only through highly particular interpretive and normative prisms. But for a crucial reason this is *not* Fanon’s perspective, which is that violence is a purely physical phenomenon in cause and effect. Physical deprivation suffocates the inextricable human need for willful subjectivity, which is physical. It is easy to surmise that Fanon feels we are reduced to mere physicality only when objectified, but this is what he rejects in explaining the liberating violence of the “new man.”²⁸ We are always physically willful, i.e., so dehumanization does not reduce one to but denies one’s physical

state. Repression and violence are intensities at the vanishing point between subject and object, between internal and external energies.

A *second*, related argument, significant for the causal elements in Fanon and Gandhi, is that this tension in social scientific practice – crudely, between difference and explanation – should be disinterred and analyzed explicitly, even at the risk of social explanation itself. Writing *within* and not *about* a method, Fanon was insouciant about the philosophical precision and methodological status of his prolific theses. This lack of self-conscious hesitation permitted him to foreground the claims to physical human ontology that social causality needs but rarely speaks. This eerie silence raises two more critical points. *Third*, dehumanization remains the muted substrate in explanations of social violence because of, not despite, its political rarity and social extremity. To locate a necessary universal basis for comparative political analysis, so the logic goes, we should build up from physical duress to more mentally mediated offenses to, say, cultural dignity. This order of things mirrors the effort to define a “minimal” conception of human rights²⁹ or human security³⁰ for intuitive reasons. It seems reasonable to think that if there is a general human characteristic, a universal baseline useful for causal explanation, it must be our repulsion over physical brutality; we absolutely ban torture, rape, and genocide in our political imagination, but not profound threats to traditional or personal integrity. Putting it the other way around, if denied dignity as a variable can support a causal explanation of violence, it would seem to entail that physical degradation is causal as it denies dignity. Following from this, a *fourth* view I would press is that the dehumanization thesis, based on a physical human ontology, is necessary but insufficient as a credible explanation of violence and non-violence. It seems to me that Fanon’s explicit, and our leading theories’ implicit, reliance on the dehumanization nexus needs to be specified to shift the site of human ontology to physical subjectivity.

There are evident flaws in the dehumanization thesis that urge us to relocate its logical edifice to a new terrain – specifically, that its universal or ontological category be moved from general human needs and desires (physical and cultural) to processes of subject formation. To put this provocatively, a critique of the dehumanization thesis forces us either to develop material subjectivity rather than idealist injury as our explanatory variable or to surrender the explanation of violence altogether. The reason for these stark alternatives is likely obvious. If dehumanization refers to severe wounds to body or dignity, it fails as a causal variable because even as physical injury inhumanity varies hermeneutically across settings. This is why we historicize violent and non-violent movements, in part to explain the possibility for differences between theorist-activists like Gandhi and Fanon. But if the concept dehumanization is recalibrated to accommodate diverse assessments of inhumanity for greater social accuracy and explanatory force, it leads to Babel – to countless particular reactions to specific experiences of multifarious deprivations. As a universal, dehumanization cannot explain; as an explanation, it cannot be universal. If a social ontology is

needed for causal explanations of political violence, and if dehumanization is the strongest candidate we have, we must examine alternatives between heaven and Babel. Critiquing the dehumanization thesis clears a path to other options and, I speculate, promotes processes of subject-formation as the optimal mechanism for explaining violence in line with Fanon's and Gandhi's sociologies.

Three objections to the {repression \Rightarrow revolution} thesis arise on analytical and empirical grounds, which I will discuss succinctly. The main analytical vulnerability concerns the volatile line between subject and object under dehumanizing conditions. Fanon's model has contradictions, but I would prefer to examine the most generous reading of his text, and of the thesis in general. The glaring weakness in "On Violence" is that Fanon does not explain how a "thing" or "beast" reclaims its own, presumably lost, subjective will. If imperialism renders the colonized subject an object, presumably its subjectivity is destroyed, leaving it inert, an object acted upon but not acting in any subjective sense. Fanon seems to say that objects bereft of will can miraculously will their own will back into being, which seems to be a theological recourse external to his method and model. But I will raise a more probing issue, dismissing that one to emphasize an intuitive sense of Fanon's idea. He evidently means that dehumanization is approached but not achieved, that people are never dehumanized in the revolutionary process. Note that dehumanization can refer to either process or outcome, which is more significant than it may appear.³¹ The thesis turns on the difference between "I am being dehumanized" and "I am dehumanized." Fanon thinks people revolt when almost, not fully, dehumanized. That makes more logical sense but exacerbates the analytical impasse. If revolt signals impending rather than achieved dehumanization (assuming Fanon thinks rebels react to dehumanization, not merely to suffering or sadness), then rebellious subjects must link immediate to imminent conditions. Resistance expresses, in his view, an interpretation of ominous dehumanization, but such an interpretation would surely depend on multiple non-universal social or cultural factors. In sum, the dehumanization thesis must refer to: a subject protecting itself, not an object transcending itself; an approach to "thingness"; and a situated interpretation of the future, not a universal condition of a present reduction of subjects to objects. A dehumanization thesis must explain how objectified humans can will their own subjectivity or how particular perceptions of inhumanity can be generalized in line with the idea of physical and moral dehumanization.

Because the subject \Rightarrow object \Rightarrow subject sequence is logically excluded, we are left with a relatively flimsy dehumanization thesis: that people revolt when they suffer. This version of the thesis depends on interpretations of suffering, for instance, its meaning, progression, prospects, causes, and solutions.³² Once we resituate dehumanization from objective injury to subjective evaluation we surmise that dehumanization *per se* cannot provide the ontology that social explanation requires. We ascend to this general claim from extreme cases of starvation and indignity. It is difficult to see hunger strikers, torture victims, prisoners of conscience, casualties of war, or self-immolators as, in any axiomatic or objective

sense, less or more free or humanized on a spectrum of suffering. We detect in such cases an “exogenous bias” in the dehumanization thesis that emphasizes conditions over perceptions of deprivation but even in situations of horrid injury we should “give an enhanced role to people’s critical appraisals of their own experiences and choices as important determinants of new and different choices.”³³ This gap between objects and subjects of suffering may account for a vexing fact about brutality: it may mobilize *or* silence, as in the Warsaw uprising or post-genocide Guatemala.³⁴ There are two inversions in this second objection that impair the dehumanization thesis. Re-humanization can occur through willful submission to inhumane or even fatal treatment. Conversely, recalling that the thesis is about the near extermination of subjects, we see that dehumanization destroys people as often as it inspires them to resist. This reality does not refute the dehumanization thesis but it cautions us against trivializing brutality and domination or celebrating it as a new beginning.

The third objection, pertinent to the first two, derives from my comparative reading of modern Polish and Algerian political history. Polish and Algerian activists suffered similarly before and during martial law but responded differently to dehumanization. The strengths of the thesis in light of such divergent cases, to recapitulate, are its views that social explanation requires a human ontology; social violence reflects the reduction of willful subjects into objects; and social action involves historically defined subjectivities. These claims define Fanon’s and Gandhi’s activist theories. The weakness is the paradoxical nexus of object and subject that throws us back into relativistic judgments of suffering that betray the substrates humanity/inhumanity. Fanon and Gandhi each attempted to sustain these strengths and compensate the weaknesses by claiming that political evaluations that motivate protest decisions derive from regimes that endow or deny colonial subjects social recourses. Both would agree that the differential effects of imperial domination on experiences of subjectivity-into-objectification determine whether activists experience systemic life or death – whether crisis and coercion sustain or eradicate their subjectivity, reducing them to objects. In this sense, even their strategic responses to the dehumanization process may be reconciled as distinct experiences Fanon and Gandhi had in the impediments imposed by different colonial regimes to physical subjectivity.

III Comparison: *Gandhi, Fanon, and physical militancy*

One contrast between Gandhi and Fanon concerns the relationship between violence and emancipation, or the capacity of peace or violence to humanize oppressed or ordinary people and the admissibility of violence as an instrument of peace. It is easy to trivialize this distinction; e.g., Gandhi and Fanon acknowledge that some violence X could end violence Y. Rather the point of difference is about the subjective creation of violence, and it is a precise differentiation. Fanon thinks violence as an instrument of emancipation with two overlapping mechanisms: it not only defeats imperialists militarily

but also reconstitutes the humanity of those resisting. Note that this process embeds in the violent militant the immanent agent of universalism.³⁵ This is the view Gandhi, closer to Benjamin and Arendt, denies. For the latter theorists, violence is objectifying, unpredictable, or regressive, and reduces subjects to objects, behavioral things dissociated either from agential self-legislation (Benjamin and Arendt) or from ethical self-transcendence (Gandhi). For Fanon near-objects, forced by colonial coercion, revolt violently, eventually re-constituting subjectivity through creative destruction. For Gandhi, violence re-objectifies by miming violence, categorically preventing “new men” from becoming. In turn, Fanon sees non-violence under *apartheid* as an instance of liberal subjectivity or inter-subjective recognition: as detachments from realistic situations that resort to reactionary authenticity or escapist meditation while stabilizing repressive apparatuses. The antinomy is clear between Gandhi and Fanon on the ability of injurious violence or conciliatory non-violence to realize political objectives. Still, if Gandhi denies that violent processes can generate new subjects, he agrees with Fanon’s underlying logic that the colonial object can transcend rather than reiterate colonial violence via physical exertion.

Incarceration, torture, murder, and forced labor crush humans into “bare life” beasts who cannot oppose their condition just by activating revised consciousness. Gandhi and Fanon insist that objectified conditions be reflected and resisted by a revolutionary re-objectification, a process that escapes colonial apartheid not by a direct or immediate re-subjectivization but by willful (non-agential) re-appropriation of human material objectification. Neither Gandhi nor Fanon believes the will is ever extinguished even when subjectivity nearly is.³⁶ Hence in their broader projects, their differences (non-violence v. violence) fade in light of underlying agreements about physical militancy and its grounding in radical, permanent anti-European ethical commitments. For Gandhi and Fanon, statist empires institutionalize one kind of reification. To escape the colonial vice-grip, Fanon and Gandhi identified within colonial objectification sources of resistance; for Gandhi the return to ennobled and spiritual bare life, for Fanon a visceral, physical vitality residing in the suppressed unconscious recesses of colonized peoples.

In short, Fanon and Gandhi were *militant* anti-imperialist agitators who realize that the colonial order already structures the colonial subject as an object of power. Here an intriguing similarity-in-difference occurs. For Gandhi re-objectification as self-contained and religiously-culturally resituated had to occur as the pre-condition of emancipation. That is, one had to free oneself *first*, to the extent that Gandhi called off existing mass protests when he concluded that popular violence against Britain showed his adherents were not “ready” for the fight – not ready, to be properly disciplined, “manly” militants. In a typically militant remark, Gandhi said,

There can be no friendship between the brave and the effeminate. We are regarded as a cowardly people. If we want to become free from that reproach, we should learn the use of arms... There was a danger of those who put faith in my word becoming or remaining utterly unmanly, falsely believing that it was *ahimsa*. We

must have the ability in the fullest measure to strike and then perceive the inability of brute force and renounce the power.³⁷

Fanon held, in contrast, that a combination of revolutionary violence and the re-oriented objectification of physical action set the scene of anti-colonial emancipation. This difference may obscure the commonality in their material militancy: the object of striated statist power revolts when the pressure on physical, material life prompts a counter-physical, material resistance – Fanon’s physicality is martial, Gandhi’s is spiritual, but both extend while re-valuing the material and physical basis of human life and launch resistance from within that material-physical radicalism. Gandhi and Fanon situated struggle in militant and culturally local affinities that surged toward ideals of universal human dignity. Each also prioritized re-objectified life-in-death over objectified death-in-life. Finally, under closer inspection their putative polarity “on violence” breaks down into discrete philosophies of militant sacrificial action. In terms of the reclamation of human life against colonial reification, their material militancy was of a piece.

Gandhi

Orwell reckoned Gandhi’s teachings³⁸ “ethical rather than religious,” and “never felt fully certain

whether his teachings can have much for those who do not accept the religious beliefs on which they are founded[,] the other-worldly, anti-humanist tendency of his doctrines. But one should, I think, realize that Gandhi’s teachings cannot be squared with the belief that Man is the measure of all things and that our job is to make life worth living on this earth, which is the only earth we have. They make sense only on the assumption that God exists and that the world of solid objects is an illusion to be escaped from. It is worth considering the disciplines which Gandhi imposed on himself and which - though he might not insist on every one of his followers observing every detail - he considered indispensable if one wanted to serve either God or humanity...This attitude is perhaps a noble one, but, in the sense which - I think - most people would give to the word, it is inhuman.³⁹

In the middle of a punishing Gujarati tax struggle in 1918, whose details he managed closely, Gandhi declared, as if to buttress Orwell’s revulsion: “The salvation of the people depends upon themselves, upon their capacity for suffering and sacrifice.”⁴⁰ Indeed, what may startle those who know his principles, if vaguely or topically, is how militant and religious Gandhi’s thinking was. Among contemporaries Gandhi most resembled Islamist anti-imperialists in his doctrinaire and inflexible disciplinarity. The Syrian-born Palestinian ‘Izz ad-Din al-Qassam, for instance, provoked by Italy’s 1911 invasion of Libya, declared a *jihad* against European and Ottoman corruption, coercion, and complicity. With suasion and support akin to Gandhi’s for purity of purpose, “Al-Qassam practiced and encouraged self-sufficiency as one of the moral elements, along with humility, courage, and asceticism, for training in *thabit* (steadfastness). This was understood by his disciples to mean the willingness to sacrifice, and the practice of moral-ethical behavior”⁴¹ comparable to Gandhi’s activism particularly following the Rowlatt Bill (18 Mar 1919).

The situation of Gandhi's 1920-1922 Non-Cooperation Movement comprised draconian postwar British actions to limit or prevent Indian national ambitions: the Jalianwala massacre (13 Apr 1919) and series of *hartals* (boycotts) when Rowlatt awarded "arbitrary powers to the authorities to arrest, confine, imprison or otherwise punish persons...suspected of [involvement] in movements prejudicial to the security of the state" and consequent⁴²; protests against the "wholesale and indiscriminate arrests and prosecutions" imposed under British criminal regulations to protect a visiting UK dignitary (Nov 1921)⁴³; mobilizations by Muslims and Sikhs⁴⁴ as well as Hindus against local and British state violence, such as the atrocious Nankana Sahib massacre of Sikh non-violence activists (20 Feb 1921).⁴⁵ These events are usually framed in terms of the Chauri Chaura violence of Feb 1922 that persuaded Gandhi that his constituents in the non-cooperation movement were unprepared for *ahimsa*, in an assessment close to Fanon's criticisms of the urban-nationalist party's detachment from the peasantry.⁴⁶ Gandhi had enlisted "satyagrahi-volunteers" for "two dramatic affirmations – *swadeshi* and *ahimsa* – ...to presage in tandem the transition from British Raj to *swaraj*" by converting "demonstrators" into "volunteers," that is, "mobocracy" into democracy; in Gandhi's words, "We must train these masses of men who have a heart of gold, who feel for the country, who want to be taught and led."⁴⁷ In these actions, we find in Gandhi a military general rallying his troops, much as he toured India raising money for the British in WWI. Thus, "Gandhi heaped praise on the 'reckless courage' that soldiers displayed in battle and wanted 'to learn...the art of throwing away my life for a noble cause.'"⁴⁸

Gandhi had, of course, a strange sort of religiously grounded formal perfectionism that shaped his relationship to the ethics and aesthetics of *ahimsa*: the fast for the millworkers on strike at Sabarmati seemed flawed because he knew the mill-owners, as if he had cheated. The defense of Gujarati peasants disappointed him because it "lacked the grace with which the termination of every Satyagraha campaign ought to be accompanied." For Gandhi rigor itself constituted right conduct that conferred or minimally contained the proper ethic of the emancipated subject:

By refusing to collaborate with an unjust and oppressive – the epithet he preferred was 'satanic' – regime, his compatriots might recover some of the self-respect and moral purity they had lost by allowing themselves to be subjected to foreign rule. Non-cooperation was, for him, a struggle for hegemony, a struggle to prove that coercion exceeded persuasion in the organic composition of Britain's power over India and, conversely, that the nationalist leadership derived its authority from popular consent.⁴⁹

In this light the "Gandhian Self-Rule Movement," was an "agentive moment...contain[ing] the signs of human being," "the traces of the human habit of habit-change that is alive in the interstices" of a movement or its doctrines.⁵⁰ This implies several concatenated equations: "if the self is part and parcel of semeiosis, and semeiosis is an ongoing process of making inferences from experience, from encounters with the non-self, then inferences also generate expectations, and expectations are the nature of habit."⁵¹

Gandhi even described his explorations in emancipatory action in this way, as scientific experiments on culture and modernity.⁵² Also close to Fanon, an innovator of a novel “cultural” psychoanalysis, Gandhi examined his convictions as a set of *tests* of reason and experience, assailing the caste system outside the “history of the practice”: “It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger, he remarked.”⁵³

In Gandhi, we find the self-described *sanatani* or orthodox religionist “who believed that Hindu scriptures such as the Vedas sprang from the same ultimate divine inspiration as the Bible, the Qur’an, and the Zend Avesta” and “saw a universal, essential morality in these scriptures,... We see a ‘pluralist’ Gandhi who proclaimed an all-embracing Indian spirituality as a defining characteristic of the nation.”⁵⁴ But in line with “a long tradition of Hindu expansion that operates through hierarchical incorporation and assimilation but has, in the end, little to do with a pluralist acceptance of the equality of different traditions,” he subscribed to the view that untouchables were *harijans*⁵⁵ “who should be incorporated into the Hindu nation through purification and moral uplift” and seemed to hold the same view of Muslims.⁵⁶ *Satyagraha*, truth force based on experiments in truth, applied to all areas of life but especially celibacy; “according to Gandhi, Hinduism is a religion of renunciation of the flesh,” which “recapitulates a dominant theme of Hindu asceticism: retention of semen bestows supernatural power (*shakti*).”⁵⁷ The definition of power is at stake here, as Gandhi replaced masculine/militant anti-colonial nationalism with a “higher” self-assertion in a feminine/sublimated movement. All this is notably a syncretic, improvised, and practical “political philosophy...of a layman...based on an orientalist reading of Hindu scripture, combined with the contemporary Western utopian visions of Ruskin and Tolstoy...It is important to note that this ‘laicization’ and ‘ethicization’ of religious communication has taken place almost entirely outside of the established religious communities...”⁵⁸

Poignantly, the Hindu nationalist RSS movement, which sought to create its “new man” by “imparting a martial, masculine accent to the spiritual tradition,” appear to be a Fanonian “antithesis to Gandhi’s nonviolent, ‘effeminate’ bhakti-inspired Hindu.”⁵⁹ Yet we find an overlap in Gandhi’s and the RSS’s disciplinarity⁶⁰:

In a move that in many ways encapsulates the entire Hindu nationalist endeavor, the RSS tried to bring... together these two traditions [the akhara institution – the long-standing popular tradition of young men meeting at wrestling pits and doing physical exercises – as well as the institutional form of a religious sect gathered around a spiritual authority] together...The central tool was the shakha, where boys and young men would meet one hour a day for physical exercise, drill, inculcation of ideals and norms of good and virtuous behavior (*samskars*), and ideological training (*baudhik*)....The guiding idea was to inculcate a national spirit as the ultimate and supreme loyalty and to build up a strong fraternal bond [among] the volunteers...⁶¹

Jinnah indeed accused Gandhi of hoping to “subjugate and vassalize the Muslims under a Hindu Raj.”⁶² “Fundamentalism” was material and spiritual in Gandhi’s discipline: “...Gandhi’s idea of machinery, commercialization, and centralized state power as the curses of modern civilization, thrust upon the Indian people by European colonialism. It was industrialization itself, [he] argued, rather than the inability to industrialize, that that was the root cause of Indian poverty.”⁶³

This politics was attached, notably, to his intricately evolved interpretations of tradition. For example, Gandhi “defended the cast system for a variety of reasons. He was in favor of hereditary occupations, which worked against competition and class warfare and provided efficient means for the reproduction of traditional skills. He also accepted the doctrine of rebirth and the law of *karma*, which made each individual’s occupation conform to his or her actual ability,” and guarded caste’s preserving “elements of Indian culture and civilization in the face of foreign invasion and rule over the centuries.”⁶⁴ More critical, Dirks describes Gandhi’s effort to reform caste attitudes and embrace “a general notion of *varnashramadharma* [social/religious duties tied to class and stage of life], coupled with his opposition to what he saw as divisive tactics of anti-Brahmin movements and untouchable agitations and conversions” as marking his “unique...political capacity to maintain equally strong commitments to nationalist objectives and social reform..., a middle ground between revivalist traditionalism and reformist modernism.”⁶⁵ In sum, Gandhi found grounds to argue “that the ancient sastras could not be held in higher esteem than the universal dictates of reason and morality” so that “he frequently would observe that caste itself was not the problem, only its degradation in modern India.”⁶⁶ It may be critical that Gandhi “distinguished between caste as a system of social discrimination and *varnashramadharma* as a principle of value and order.”⁶⁷

The complexities of Gandhi’s theories of proper Hindu or religious re-subjectivization should not obscure the lifelong effort he exerted to wed a practice of spiritual and activist affinity to an experience in everyday life of the infinity of God, or love, amidst physical militant resistance.⁶⁸ Indeed, non-violence is in this sense surely an ethos of the warrior, the pose of the militant risking his body for the higher calling of humanity over biology. In this sense, of course, Gandhi would not call a life lost in defiance, refusing dehumanizing conditions, a sacrifice in the familiar sense of a loss for a noble end; he would say that it is a gift rather than a sacrifice, the typical claim of religionists who endanger their bodies for a cause. But it is this otherness to an unjust world, supplemented by the relentless experience rather than evasion of that world, that gives Gandhi’s non-violence its corporeal ferocity. Indeed, his very “essence is fearlessness”; when he canceled his non-cooperation activities, it was because his adherents “resort[ed] to violence because they are still afraid of death.”⁶⁹ Gandhi’s overall spiritual life and daily experience, as we have seen, thoroughly imbricated physical and ethical living, focused on intransigent willfulness. Thus, it only follows that when Gandhi turned to political grievances against unjust rule, his non-negotiable demands

were bolstered with the immovable physical militancy, the weaponized body of non-violence. In this light those seeking to emulate or import his attitudes must never “miss the crucial insight that this ethical position is necessarily intertwined with the discursive disruptiveness of a warrior-like position. Conscious consumers can easily miss out on the fact that Gandhi’s ethical position always reminds us of the warrior’s duties to which it is constantly attached; neither of these parts can be extracted from the whole.⁷⁰ In resisting British rule, Gandhi’s position entailed, as I have suggested, militarization of this always-already disciplined, trained body, now traversing a series from self-rigor, to other-objectification, to the re-objectification of the imperiled body that stands before rifles with impassive resolve.

Fanon

Two years after he died at thirty-six of leukemia Frantz Fanon’s *Les damnés de la terre* appeared as *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁷¹ Choosing *wretched* over *damned* bleaches moral affect and political energy out of the title.⁷² “*Damned* of the earth” would return to *damné* its ethical weight by reclaiming its sense of willful subjugation through divine command.⁷³ “To damn” (*damner*) and “to be damned” link embodied degradation to moral judgment, hence a sufferer to a judge. *Les damnés* suggests a verbal subject-object relationship between divine judge and those He damns: God is the grammatical subject of the condemned object of judgment. Do these verbal positions produce a social subject-object relationship as well, rendering the divine judge a subject, the damned as objects?⁷⁴ If *damnés* confers subjectivity on the divine judge and objectivity on the miserable, then *Les damnés de la terre* is a portal, ironic or poetic, to the substance of Fanon’s intricate argumentation.⁷⁵

Les damnés de la terre interjects divine and terrestrial figures into a trinity with a missing third term, the source or nature of damnation. So he does mean by *damnés* something like “wretched”: poor, starving peasants (*fellah*) amenable to Marxist⁷⁶ and atheist⁷⁷ rhetoric that vaguely inspired the phrase *les damnés de la terre* in the first place.⁷⁸ Memmi reports that colonists called deviants “the damned,” “the dwellers beneath the earth,” “because one should avoid naming the demons by their real name unless one does it with music and...offerings.”⁷⁹ But *wretchedness* removes subjects, actions, and causes from dehumanization, depoliticizing or naturalizing it.⁸⁰ A similar logic occurs in translating Palestinians’ *an-Nakba*, referring to the 1948 war and expulsions.⁸¹ To recall the victims, *al-mankubin*, the naturalizing “catastrophe” could become “the catastrophe-d.”⁸² The Iranian activist-theorist Ali Shariati rendered Fanon’s *damnés* as *mustaz’afin*; hence “the Disinherited of the Earth, a term that was to occupy a central position in the Islamic revolutionary rhetoric.”⁸³ Shariati “disagreed with Fanon over the necessity for abandoning religion before national progress can be made” but adopted the less religious term.⁸⁴ Fanon “left a lasting impression on him...intellectually and politically”⁸⁵ but “Shariati’s notion of the active Islamic society and need for discipline and leadership” evinced relative elitism.⁸⁶ Indeed, Shariati

explicitly warned against populism, believing that “intellectuals, not the popular masses, constituted the revolutionary force.”⁸⁷ Yet in re-distributive or class terms “Shariati’s version of Islam was somewhat more radical than the radical nationalism of Fanon.”⁸⁸ This is so for two main reasons. Fanon was no nationalist but a universalist whose militancy constituted a psychoanalytic dialogism without apotheosis in a political whole (again, recalling Gandhi’s claims that truth-force revealed an infinite unfolding of human becoming visible in all faiths and liberated subjectivities). Second, Fanon’s therapeutic, racial, and rebellious experience persuaded him of the primacy of the symbolic and imaginary as well as the physical in human struggles, which immunized him from nationalist-cultural adhesions and mystifications.

Fanon’s psychological and anti-imperial praxes sought to recuperate the lost subject of colonial compartmentalization and dehumanization in material-physical and psychic-spiritual terms. His writing comprises overlapping and inextricable discussions of racial, psychic, and human subjectivity within and beyond imperial domination; it is useful to disaggregate these areas of his work or reconfigure them in a “dramatic dialectical narrative” of resistance.⁸⁹ Fanon’s earlier writings focused on race and informed the literature in multicultural and identity theories, and his later work concentrated on the politics of political struggle and state formation. In a sense, “the binarisms of *Black Skins, White Masks* became replaced by a more far-reaching and wide-ranging sense of liberation. In order to understand Fanon’s project, it is necessary to differentiate *Black Skins, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.”⁹⁰ The distinction between the early and late Fanon is not, however, only topical but methodological and conceptual, a move from “identity” theories based on racial statics of particularity-as-alterity (stable, polar, and fixated) to “dialectical” dynamics of universality-as-subjectivity (mobile, convergent, vital). For the sake of space, I will elide discussions of race and cultural particularity to address Fanonian dialectic emancipation, but it is crucial to note that whatever periods delineate Fanon’s concerns, his focus on the body as the central site of political contestation remained constant. Similarly, his concern for universal transcendence never wavered. even within his relatively youthful writing on identity, he conceived *negritude*, for instance, as an immanent universal, a site of subjectivity that would be transcended and that itself represented a move inside the trajectory from particular African to the universal Human. This move, often criticized as a Eurocentric gesture with considerable hypocrisy, fully forms in his account of revolution as an emergence of subjective freedom from objective unfreedom.

If we conceive of coercion as Fanon did⁹¹, we see it as a dialectical series of *capturing* and *dislodging*. In his essay, “On Violence,” Fanon famously described:

A world compartmentalized, Manichean and petrified, a world of statues: the state of the general who led the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge. A world cocksure of itself, crushing with its stoniness the backbones of those scarred by the whip. That is the colonial world. The colonial subject is a man penned in; apartheid is but one method of compartmentalizing the colonial world. The first thing the colonial subject learns is to remain in his place and not overstep his limits.

But in the succeeding passages, Fanon traces the escape from this capture – *as if the capture itself forced the escape*.

The dreams of the colonial subject are muscular dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality. I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, and climbing. I dream I burst out laughing, I am leaping across a river and chased by a pack of cars that never catches up with me. During the colonization the colonized subject frees himself night after night between nine in the evening and six in the morning.

The dream begins the revolution; this quiver of unconscious muscularity externalizes itself in the world: through “blood feuds” among the colonized that symbolically *ignore* the colonizer; through re-“incorporation into the traditions and history” of their land; and finally, through “the ecstasy of dance. Any study of the colonial world therefore must include an understanding of the phenomenon of dance and possession. The colonized’s way of relaxing is precisely this muscular orgy during which the most brutal aggressiveness and impulsive violence are channeled, transformed, and spirited away.” The “dance circle” is permissive, protective, empowering. Finally, he reports: “During the struggle for liberation there is a singular loss of interest in these rituals. With his back to the wall, the knife at his throat, to be more exact the electrode on his genitals, the colonized subject is bound to stop telling stories.”

All of this is stirring, enough to obscure its complexity. The colonized is a subject hounded into objectification, subjectivity reduced to objectivity, in a stony land of statues inhabited “by different species,” one full and one famished, where, as Fanon says, “the ‘thing’ colonized becomes a man through the very process of liberation.” Note again the paradox: the rebel must liberate herself in order to begin the liberation process. But how does a “thing” liberate itself in the first place? How does an object make itself a subject? How does a “thing” dream of rebelling? How does a dream about laughing become laughter, a dream about muscularity become a dance? How does this *thing* of apartheid dream at all, such that oppression delivers revolution? Locating this enduring urge to freedom in *dreams*, Fanon denies that the subject is ever extinguished. The subject evidently takes refuge in the unconscious. Indeed, it is in this account that Fanon details the escape from the paradox of the object-into-subject revolutionary tale.

Fanon here offers a social-moral psychology of protest, uprising, and finally revolution that has been rarely noted. He presents it in the essay on violence.⁹² Here Fanon shows the stages by which a near-objectified population emancipates itself, by moving through a series of staged expulsions of the French presence in increasingly concrete ways, while internalizing Algerian re-subjectivization. In the first stage, Algerians dream their freedom, “jumping, swimming, running, climbing,” outpacing the French. They are objects fantasizing subject-hood, in this sense, retaining or storing their subjectivity or humanity in their unconscious. In the second stage, Algerians turn on one another, they “beat each other up...The native’s muscular tension finds outlet regularly in bloodthirsty explosions – in tribal warfare, in feuds between

sects, and in quarrels between individuals.” The standard reading of the irrationality of internecine self-murder or violence on one’s own reverses here, where Fanon claims that intra-Algerian fighting expresses the absence of the French while embodying the physical preparations needed to achieve it. That is, Fanon thinks that the objectified body is acting as the subject-object of violence, in the process symbolically ignoring France. As Fanon says, “By throwing himself with all his force into the vendetta, the native tries to persuade himself that colonialism does not exist, that everything is going on as before, that history continues.” In the third stage, a “death reflex” takes over, a “suicidal behavior that proves to the settler...that these men are not reasonable human beings”; again they “bypass the settler.”

In the next phase of their re-subjectivization, the Algerians return to their terrifying “myths,” yet another apparent regression that actually returns them to a time pre-colonization, steeling themselves in the discipline of their own images and traditions. Fanon says this is a way, still in the mixture of body and memory, that traditions are restored, revived, and given power to militarize the near-objectified. In these fearsome images they are moved to rebel on their own historical-cultural terms. In the fifth stage or revolt, Fanon says, the communal spirit is externalized into military practices, while also being secularized into worldly struggles. The sixth stage is one of dance, in “the native’s emotional sensibility exhausting itself in dances which are more or less ecstatic.” Here an inversion is completed from the first stage, where the “out of place” dream referred to dancing, running, and the like; now, toward physical resistance we find the exertion is outside the unconscious, in the training and releasing body. In these moments, “there are no limits – for in reality the purpose in coming together is to allow the accumulated libido, the hampered aggressivity, to dissolve as in a volcanic eruption...One step further,” he says of the seventh stage, “and you are completely possessed.” Peace returns to the village, meaning they are ready to fight – they have practiced, trained, and readied their minds and bodies, gradually expelling all images of the French along with their fear of them. In the final stage, the colonized attacks, a cohesive body-psyche of concentrated force forged by violence into a counter-violence that creates the possibility of release.

Colonialism crushes the colonized into nearly an object whose subjectivity is never snuffed out and re-constitutes itself through resistance. But Memmi heaps scorn on the notion that this resistance through violence restores human dignity: “As for most social romantics, [in Fanon] the victim remains intact and proud within the oppression that he endures while suffering but without being harmed. And the day that oppression ceases, the new man has to immediately appear. But, and I say this without any pleasure, what decolonization precisely shows us is that this is not true.”⁹³ Note a contrast of sorts with Gandhi, who was obsessed with pre-resistance discipline, an army training before engaging the enemy. For Fanon, *before* the battle is a stagnant colonial swamp of objectified humanity, an account he accrued initially in his psychoanalytic encounters with Algerians. Thus, as Bouvier puts it,

Une dissemblance ontologique sépare le dieu blanc du mortel noir. Vis-à-vis de son alter ego, cette haine déviée va éclater. Ne sachant se dresser ensemble contre l'occupant le colonisé à l'étonnement et à la joie du colonisateur, se déclare à lui-même la guerre: lutte tribales, pratiques magiques, assassinats, délations contribuent à exorciser cette violence immanente à l'ordre colonial. Elle veut nier le présent pour renvoyer à un passé antécolonial, masquant ainsi la cause première: le joug étranger qui courbe les plus fiers, la peur des chiens policiers et des voitures blindées.^[1]⁹⁴

We see here the real meaning of violence for Fanon, again far closer to Gandhi than is usually recognized. Violence is a kind of discipline in which the subject is formed in a new ethics of conduct that embeds the moral commitments in corporeal practice. In Gordon's phrasing, "The ontological appeal is immediately apparent. One cannot give an Other his freedom, only his liberty."⁹⁵ For Fanon, violence is necessary because the "new man" must actively – as a subject – remove himself from colonialism. Were "liberty" to be handed over time, say through the self-willed de-colonization by a European occupier, the Algerian would have been freed *as an object*. As Gordon elaborates in a passage worthy of its length:

Violence is fundamentally an activity that emerges from the categories of agency [related to] our discussion of action; where there is no subjectivity, there is no violence. There has to be consciousness of an imposition that is not, or has not been, requested. In violence, or violation, there is a crossing of a threshold, there is the squeezing of options from the realm of choice. In this regard, violence is a relative intentional or situational phenomenon; there is a world of difference between simply slicing through another's chest with a sharp blade and [performing] surgery. What mediate the relativity of violence phenomena are both intentional apprehension of violence phenomena and contextual norms of justice and injustice that constitute the meaning of such phenomena. Thus, it is the all the intentional features that transform behavior into action, constituting the surgeon's activity as surgery.⁹⁶

One must *re-objectify oneself*: it is *neither* the violent rebellion (as negation) nor the peaceful succession (as neutralization or imitation) that reconstitutes the self-willed subject {we may say that either of these is mimetic but with a distinct mimesis}. Rather, it is a third moment, *the moment of will itself emerging in the body and mind nearly bereft of its own essence*. And so Fanon "reminds us that the thing that he is not is realized *as* him when he jerks. Shakes. Fears. Trembles. Desires. Resists. Fights."⁹⁷ Note these are purely physical and psychic manifestations of the subject repressed but writing its way free. As Fanon says, this quaking core speaks "a definite complex of psychic organization in which identities and rejections are constructed and acted upon in the very depth of body and aspiration."⁹⁸

¹ "An ontological asymmetry separates the white god from the black mortal. As its alter ego, this desultory hatred will erupt. Not knowing how to rise up as one against the colonial occupier, the colonized, to the surprise and delight of the colonist, declares war on himself – tribal struggles, magical practices, assassinations, and denunciations help exorcise the violence immanent in the colonial order. These actions seek to hide the present by returning to a pre-colonial past, thus masking the fundamental cause: the foreign yoke that breaks the proudest natives, the fear of police dogs and armored cars" [my translation].

An uprising is “an act in-itself and for-itself that creates so much trauma that is must immediately be contained in symbolic terms,” but it shows that “only such an ‘impossible gesture’ of pure expenditure can change the very coordinates of what is strategically possible within a given historical constellation.”⁹⁹ Pithouse traces Fanon’s Hegelian account of historical action as containing value-rational purposiveness, that is, each moment exists in itself but also on a historical line of truth, freedom, and subjectivity. Fanon’s theory of violence as the re-invention of *will* recalls Hegel’s statement, “Anything that exists *an sich* is demoted to a mere moment.”¹⁰⁰ It is itself politics in that it recuperates the experience of value-rational, for-itself politics; it contains the dialectic of ethics and violence as co-extensive, the very definition of reclaiming political subjectivity; the demand cannot be then for saintliness but for political action in a moment of possessing the entire realm of the political, which always combines militant physicality and ethical reflection; the separation of these is itself a form of violence, in which the subject is asked under conditions of dehumanizing repression to constitute himself *beyond* or *without* politics by acting “ethically without violence.” Hence the requirement to submit to instrumental strategic calculations while still within a condition of apartheid or sub-human existence as the mode of progress is insidiously regressive; it asks the oppressed to suspend the inherently *human*, valuing aspect of desire/action before but in a way that then precludes emancipation. Value-driven politics expresses in itself or for itself the desire to act on values, on the human condition, to rebuff the fragmented state of mere instrumentalism in the diremptive act of violence.

Which comes first—militancy or scrupulousness? The ideal answer is to say that they go together and that if their registers are too different for them to be fused then they should at least be in permanent dialogue from the moment that a struggle beings. Fanon’s answer, because he is interested in thinking through the dialectic of experience rather than in generating principles in idealist abstraction from the lived experience of struggle, is that engaged scrupulousness emerges from militancy and that there must then be a struggle within the struggle to subordinate militancy to scrupulousness. In other words the project of militant revolt produces, through its defeats and failings, an opportunity to struggle for a praxis of reflection and dialogue which can then become the project to which militancy has the relation of a tool to consciousness.¹⁰¹

Sartre had earlier enunciated a principle crucial to Fanon’s philosophy of action-toward-freedom:

For us, man is defined first of all as a being ‘in a situation.’ That means that forms a synthetic whole with his situation – biological, economic, political, cultural, etc. He cannot be distinguished from his situation, for it forms him and decides his possibilities; but, inversely, it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within and by it. To be in a situation... is to *choose oneself* in a situation, and men differ from one another in their situations and also in the choices they themselves make of themselves.¹⁰²

Fanon’s analytical trajectory of “choosing oneself” is not a liberal conception of autonomy as in Sartre but of the will itself willing itself. In the sections in “On Violence” where he tracks the revolution from muscular dreams to internecine feuds to cultural myths/magic and, finally, to ecstatic dance, “This people who were once relegated to the realm of the imagination, victims of unspeakable terrors, but content to

lose themselves in hallucinatory dreams, are thrown into disarray, re-form, and amid blood and tears give birth to very real and urgent issues...practical tasks the people are asked to undertake in the liberation struggle.”

IV Conclusion:

It is increasingly common to hear that non-rational features of human experience such as affect or sensation or perception constitute alternative, physical-material definitions of social life. Merleau-Ponty’s “radically new materialism,” as such, posits an “existential phenomenology...to return to lived experience before it is written over and objectified by theory...To be faithful to [nature] one must pursue an ontology that ‘defines being from within and not from without,’ where ‘Nature, life, man’ are understood as manifestations of diverse folds rather than as essentially separate [Cartesian] categories.”¹⁰³ And as Rajchman points out, the entire conception of the subject, for theorists like Deleuze (dating back to Hume), is an over-coding of primary, *empirical* human life:

What the young Deleuze found singular in Hume’s empiricism is then the idea that this self, this person, this possession, is in fact not *given*. Indeed the self is only a fiction or artifice in which, through habit, we come to believe, a sort of incorrigible illusion of living; and it is as this artifice that the self becomes fully part of nature – *our* nature. Hume thus opens up the question of other ways of composing sensations than those of the habits of the self and the “human nature” that they suppose...and the question then is: can we construct an empiricist or experimental relation to the persistence of this zone or plane of pre-subjective delirium and pre-individual singularity in our lives and in our relations with others?¹⁰⁴

But it seems not of mere intellectual-historical concern that Fanon and Gandhi imbued their activist and ethical engagements with these simultaneous commitments to physicality and subjectivity as the nexus of militant politics. The global regime of exception, imposing a totalized and radical material-physical as well as ideal-psychic bare life on human sociality and reflexivity, is currently protected by ruling elites with a human rights liberalism that forecloses commitments like those of Fanon and Gandhi. They opposed this bare life objectification with a militant politics inextricably corporeal and concrete, a kind of immovable blunt object of pure inviolable will. Neither posture could be pacified, assimilated, or dominated by re-subjectivizing liberal schemata that subsidize the gate-keeping human rights regime.

Fanon and Gandhi confronted conventional Weberian states, however imperial in extended form: hierarchic, legible, bounded, military-capitalist-statist constellations that constituted the object-subjects of protest. Minimally, Gandhi and Fanon identify clear targets of their activities – the violent revolution aims at the opposing military formation, the non-violent resistance targets the moral conscience of the imperial magistrate, and so on. In the age many now posit as the post-sovereign breakdown of this mutually contained statist-militarist-capitalist formation, we may infer a revision of the object-in-revolt. I

propose that post-sovereign power exacerbates conditions of objectification while also removing fixed targets of revolt. In post-sovereign power objectification occurs without a target for re-objectification. For this very reason, Fanon's and Gandhi's readings of absolutism in the colonial order offer an interpretation of physical resistance that must be radicalized under post-sovereign de-territorialized force projection.¹⁰⁵

¹ Bob Dylan, Interview, *Rolling Stone* TK http://bobdylantalks.blogspot.com/2007/03/bob-dylan-rolling-stone-interview-by_5060.html.

² See Nigel Gibson, "Beyond manicheism: dialectics in the thought of Frantz Fanon," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 4:3 (1999), 340ff.; George Ciccariello-Maher, "To Lose Oneself in the Absolute: Revolutionary Subjectivity in Sorel and Fanon," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* (Sum 2007), 108ff.

³ Michel Foucault shows that discipline generates docile subjectivity through productive activity {*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, A. Sheridan, tr. (Vintage 1979 [1975]), 136ff.}. If disciplinary apparatuses constitute subjectivity (via subordination to a panoptic), alternative re-subjectivizations could mobilize resistance. The liberal-rationalist distinguishes, on the same scheme, productive nomads (market actors) from repressed monads (factory cogs). One resistant mode is to invert these terms, *rejecting productivity or embracing docility* – as in the general strike, "passive" resistance, or hunger strikes. One becomes a *resistant object* by removing, then, modes of subjective interpellation and retaining the force of objective will.

⁴ Thus in another context still, Nelson Mandela remarked, specifically concerning Gandhian non-violence:

Others said that we should approach this issue not from the point of view of principles but of tactics, and that we should employ the method demanded by the conditions. If a particular method or tactic enabled us to defeat the enemy, then it should be used. In this case, the state was far more powerful than we, and any attempts at violence by us would be devastatingly crushed. This made nonviolence a practical necessity rather than an option. This was my view, and I saw nonviolence in the Gandhian model not as an inviolable principle but as a tactic to be used as the situation demanded. The principle was not so important that the strategy should be used even when it was self-defeating, as Gandhi himself believed. I called for nonviolent protest for as long as it was effective [*Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography* (Little, Brown, & Co./Back Bay 1995), 127-128].

Indeed, in the end Mandela blamed the ANC's resort to violence on the intransigence of South Africa's *apartheid* regime: "In India, Gandhi had been dealing with a foreign power that ultimately was more realistic and farsighted. That was not the case with the Afrikaners in South Africa. Non-violent passive resistance is effective as long as your opposition adheres to the same rules as you do. But if peaceful protest is met with violence, its efficacy is at an end. For me, non-violence was not a moral principle but a strategy; there is no moral goodness in using an ineffective weapon" (158). Mandela ignores Gandhi's denunciation of "passive resistance" as connoting a "weapon of the weak," *in contrast to non-violence* [see Dhirendra Datta, *The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Wisconsin 1953), 128-129].

⁵ Hira Singh, "Confronting Colonialism and Racism: Fanon and Gandhi," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* (Sum 2007).

⁶ Renata Salecl claims, "Lacan's famous definition of psychosis is that what is excluded from the symbolic returns as the real. Psychotics are the ones who do not identify with the fiction of the symbolic order, since for them the symbolic falls into the real" ["Cut in the Body: From Clitoridectomy to Body Art," (*Per*)versions of Love and Hate (Verso 1998), 152]. The psychotic rejects not the symbolic order, but the *fictionalization of the social world*, i.e., he accepts the symbolic

order as real and rejects fantasy. Fanon and Gandhi could be considered psychotics in a partial way: two activists who, unlike their imperial enemies, *accepted the truth of universalism* that the *symbolic order fictionalized* – they refused the *fiction* of imperial universalism, or that universalism was itself fictional, taking the universalist repertoire *literally*.

⁷ In most European and Anglo-American political theory (and ideology) authoritarianism precedes “free” political constitutions, i.e., is the generic regime that liberty must overcome and purge. In this view authoritarianism’s *internal dissidents* must choose to support or impede enlightened principles and practices, by either adopting or refusing norms *external* to the tyrannical regime. In this impression, the inhabitants of authoritarian political systems must draw their liberating commitments from elsewhere, outside the political system. This seemingly obvious premise has critical implications. First, it suggests that authoritarian regimes do not offer *internal* resources for resistance or negotiation, which is dubious. Second, it suggests that, for “reasons of state,” rulers could be *justified* in repressing dissent, on the grounds that dissidents *necessarily* represent foreign values, desires, or objectives.

⁸ Note the implication, resonant in human rights discourses, that physically coercive uprisings against authoritarian regimes are not meaningfully violent because they seek to *undo dehumanizing violence*; conversely, liberal-democratic regimes opposed with physical means are seen as confronting violence or terrorism that undermines the conditions of human flourishing.

⁹ Technically, mechanisms are causal by definition, as universal statements with robust causal properties.

¹⁰ This theory is vividly portrayed in the film “Total Recall,” in which a corporation has monopolized and charged a fee for the oxygen in a space station on Mars. When rebels resist the fees, the company cuts off the air supply, mutating and crippling the inhabitants, and leading to a Maoist revolt. Crucially the native inhabitants have been dehumanized *beyond* autochthonous uprising, requiring an *outsider* still strong enough to lead their militant uprising.

¹¹ Note that contrasting psychoanalytic accounts link violence to the *removal* or “weakening” of external authority, provoking a physically performed *jouissance* of reactivated, ritualized authority and community {Julia Kristeva, *The Sense and Nonsense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis*, J. Herman, tr. (Columbia 2000 [1996]), 23ff.}.

¹² Frantz Fanon, “On Violence,” *The Wretched of the Earth*, R. Philcox, tr. (2004 [1963]), 15.

¹³ This indifference was usually exacerbated by instrumental familiarity [see Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence* (2006), 234-235].

¹⁴ The status of Fanon’s psychoanalytic revisionism exceeds this study, but his rejection of standard Freudian models alludes to “the difficulties [of] seeking to ‘cure’ a native properly, that is to say, when seeking to make him thoroughly a part of the a social background of the colonial type. Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly, ‘In reality, who am I?’...It seems to us that in the cases here chosen the events giving rise to the disorder are chiefly the bloodthirsty and pitiless atmosphere, the generalization of inhuman practices, and the firm impression that people have of being caught up in a veritable Apocalypse” {*Wretched of the Earth*, C. Farrington, tr. (Grove 1963 [1961]), 250-251}. French-trained analyst Fanon condemned the equation of strong mental health with normalized, pacified adjustment to domination. Slavoj Žižek insists that such political objections *define* the opposed logics of psychoanalytic theory and practice, which – as Fanon says – ought *not* to be fused. “The theoretical ‘regression’ of revisionism,” Žižek writes, in his Adornian vein,

emerges most clearly in the relationship posited between theory and therapy. By putting theory at the service of therapy, revisionism obliterates their dialectical tension: in an alienated society, therapy is ultimately destined to fail, and the reasons for this failure are provided by theory itself. Therapeutic “success” amounts to the “normalization” of the patient, his adaptation to the “normal” functioning of existing society, whereas the crucial achievement of psychoanalytic theory is precisely its explanation of how “mental illness” is based on a certain “discontent” endemic to civilization as such. The subordination of theory to therapy thus requires the loss of the critical dimension of psychoanalysis [“Is There a Cause of the Subject?” J. Copjec, ed., *Supposing the Subject* (Verso 1994), 88].

Žižek holds that a hermeneutic of suspicion is endogenous, not external, to psychoanalysis. Quoting Russel Jacoby, he stresses, “*Psychoanalysis is a theory of an unfree society that necessitates psychoanalysis as a therapy*” [*Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Harvester 1977), 122; Žižek, “Is There a Cause of the Subject (1994) 88]. This is an important sub-argument to have in place here about contested theories of subjectivity.

¹⁵ Fanon’s practical-theoretical views betray a conventional enlightenment moral psychology in which militant action restores the truth of the whole person. Revolutionary moments overcome the split between *conscious object* and *unconscious subject* within the colonized. These alignments *invert* the liberal binary, *conscious subject* and *unconscious object*, but retain the potential for revolutionary re-unification of conscious subjects. As Françoise Vergès writes,

In Fanonian psychology, difference can only be invidious, and the unconscious is the negative of consciousness; it masks the consciousness. The goal is therefore to destroy the white mask on black

consciousness. Behind the mask is the truth...To Fanon, emancipation was the recovery of a wounded masculinity. In Algeria, Fanon found the virile male that would belie the colonial construction of emasculated masculinity. With the Algerian nationalist fighter, Fanon found a man whose masculinity had been wounded but who had, in contrast to the black man of the Antilles, the courage to attack the castrating master, the Frenchman, and to castrate him in return [*Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage* (Duke 1999), 210]

¹⁶ I take it for granted that Fanon's "pro"-violence and Gandhi's non-violence differ significantly; indeed, my wish is not to deny this difference but locate it properly. Hence, Fanon and Gandhi agree on mechanisms of *de*-humanization as it *tempts* violence, but they disagree on *re*-humanization as it *entails* violence. This makes their commitments to violence and non-violence, respectively, a secondary reaction (disagreeing) to a primary mechanism (agreeing). But even here, in their "pro" and "non" stances, Fanon and Gandhi may have differed because their situations mediated their conclusions.

¹⁷ I am deliberately conflating distinctions in Fanon's analysis among oppression, suppression, and repression. *Repression* is the right concept for the redirection of urges into the unconscious. Fanon appears uninterested in creative processes of sublimation, perhaps since racist violence foregrounds physical-psychic trauma over cooperative social repression. Hence, his essay, "Colonial War and Mental Disorders," in *Wretched*, records destructively repressed but not productively sublimated traumas: impotence after a wife's rape, "undifferentiated homicidal impulses" after surviving a "mass murder," "anxiety disorders of the depersonalization type" after murdering a French woman, and so on.

¹⁸ It is central to Fanon's vision, and to my project, to envisage *human being* as *human becoming*, but not as a trendy post-modern wink. I think Fanon shared Sartre's "existentialist" position that subjects are *neither* radically autonomous nor imprisoned; rather, *belief in only those options* showed "bad faith," where "good faith" consists in living through our situated and immanent selves simultaneously [Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, H. Barnes, tr. (Washington Square 1966 [1943]), 56ff.]. Where Fanon departed from Sartre – and, I suspect, causal and ethical thinking must depart from axioms of rational detachment – is in partitioning subjectivity as free/un-free, or willful/habitual. Fanon does not endorse Sartre's distinction between accidental actions and those that "intentionally realize a conscious project" (529).

¹⁹ Fanon assimilates, I believe, Nietzsche's monistic subjectivity to a Marxism adjusted for colonial race and class composition:

A quantum of power is just such a quantum of drive, will, effect – more precisely, it is nothing other than this very driving, willing, effecting, and only through the seduction of language (and the...errors of reason petrified therein), which...misunderstands all effecting as conditioned by an effecting something, by a 'subject,' can it appear otherwise. For just as common people separate the lightning from its flash and take the latter as *doing* as an effect of a subject called lightning, so popular morality...separates strength from the expression of strength as if there were behind the strong an indifferent substratum that is free to express strength – or not to. But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is simply fabricated into the doing – the doing is everything" {Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, M. Clark/A. Swensen, trs. (Hackett 1998 [1887]), 25}.

²⁰ Fanon makes this point strongly, whether or not the point is strong. Objects cannot will objects, subjects cannot will subjects; the key point is that subjects cannot will *themselves*, at least not in the dualistic sense that at time T¹ there is a subject and at a later time T² this subject has, *qua* agential decision-maker, willed her own subjectivity. Fanon's view is that subjectivity and willing are *not* agential *in this sense*. Agitators will as subjects, from within their subjectivity; they do not choose but express this subjectivity. This does *not* imply that their capacity to exercise their subjective will is constant; conditions permitting or impeding subjective will vary. But this variation does *not* suggest, Fanon thinks, that there are conditions of more or less "freedom" in deciding what one's subjective will is.

²¹ Again Fanon echoes Nietzsche, here the last line in the *Genealogy of Morality*: "man would rather will *nothingness* than not will..." (op. cit., 118). In a simple sense, Fanon reiterates the view that humans are willful creatures that defend *willing itself*; between not exercising my will and exercising it destructively, I would rather destroy. This drives not only Fanon's theory of *violence*, but also his anxiety that violence can express a will-to-nothingness, in Nietzsche's words "an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life [that] is and remains a *will*." For Fanon, this negation would take the form of post-colonial nationalism, parochialism, and regression from the project of *universal* human emancipation.

²² Fanon scholars debate whether this claim just means *dehumanization re-humanizes*. But this claim has two meanings, one cynically fatalist, one cheerfully open-ended. For some, "On Violence," a seminal but inadequate guide to Fanon's social-psychology, deploys Hegel's master-slave dialectic to say, cynically, that dehumanization is a necessary stage in achieving fully human, i.e., self-conscious freedom. If so, Fanon must think the Algerians owe France a debt of gratitude for freeing them. Judith Butler accuses Sartre of this vice in his preface to *Wretched*: "[H]is view makes the colonizer into the primary subject of violence. And this claim seems to contradict his other claim, namely, that under these

conditions, violence can be understood to bring the human into being. If we subscribe to his first thesis, we are left with the conclusion, surely faulty, that colonization is a precondition for humanization, something that civilizational justifications for colonization have always maintained, and a view which...Sartre wanted vehemently to oppose" ["Violence, Non-Violence: Sartre on Fanon," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 27:1 (2006), 12]. Fanon's account avoids Butler's reproach. He seems to think that people naturally struggle with all virtual and actual limits and promises of human life; it is *necessary in Algeria, not in general*, to achieve this existence in a horrifying war of independence from imperial dehumanization. The near-object who rebels, re-subjectivizes or re-humanizes herself, transcends a cruel condition; this does not entail that cruelty is a necessary condition of transcendence.

²³ Fanon, "On Violence" (2004 [1963]), 2.

²⁴ Czesław Miłosz, "Foreword," Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and other essays*, M. Latynski, tr. (California 1985), xi.

²⁵ Mohandas Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections*, K. Kripalani, ed. (Continuum 1980), 95.

²⁶ On problems of intentionality, see Jerry Fodor, *The Elm and the Expert: Mentalese and its Semantics* (MIT 1996).

²⁷ Refining this argument, Goodwin writes that "the formation of strong revolutionary movements is found in peripheral societies in which especially repressive and disorganized states possess geographically and socially delimited power [*No Other Way Out* (Cambridge 2001), 26].

²⁸ Hence Fanon laments violence; he does not "defend" it. Indeed, his physicalism is pitched against ethical views that confuse justification and explanation on grounds that we can always choose our actions. It is this view Fanon attributes to collaborating "native intellectuals," a view anything but trivially polemical on his part. For Fanon, as psychoanalyst and Marxist, the belief in liberal or rational detachment is a political and analytical *error* in that it expresses without comprehending the elitism of its own premises. For Marx or, say, Dewey, this is to mistake the position and ideology of privilege with others', and *misunderstands the ideological basis of its own thought*, instantiating "pure ideology" (§2.e).

²⁹ See Michael Ignatieff's attempt at a universally acceptable "human rights minimalism" limited to physical security ["1. Human Rights as Politics II. Human Rights as Idolatry," The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, Delivered at Princeton University (April 2000)]; Wendy Brown's dismissal of it ["The Most We Can Hope For . . .": Human Rights and the Politics of Fatalism," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103:2/3 (Spr/Sum 2004)]; and Raymond Geuss's critique of any "universal right" [*History and Illusion in Politics*, (Cambridge 2001), 131-152].

³⁰ Conceived in the early 1990s among United Nations personnel to counter the perceived priority of military security, "human security" *should* comprise (1) physical [welfare]; (2) juridical [rights]; (3) subjective [power]. Physical safety and juridical rights do not secure resources to compel the state to respect civilian demands. Political subjectivity is one primal right that conditions effective demands for other rights, e.g., food, shelter, or speech. Which component of human security is the *primary* condition of the others is, however, indeterminate. Citizens need minimal caloric intake, legal space, and coercive capacity to advance their human security. They lack, and see themselves as lacking, these aspects of human security in varying ways across time and place. How physical, juridical, or subjective capacities are weighted objectively and subjectively in particular contexts needs to be specified, which remains a problem for efforts to *universalize* the concept of human security.

³¹ It is plausible to argue that all nouns convey process and endpoint. If I am in the process of driving I have achieved driving. This confusion plagues nouns ending in *tion* that "fall upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outline and covering up all the detail," as Orwell said, with "pacification" as his main example ["Politics and the English Language" (1946)].

³² Jamie Mayerfeld, "The Measurement of Suffering," *Suffering and Moral Responsibility* (Oxford 1999), 55ff.

³³ Albert Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action* (Princeton 1982), 6.

³⁴ Daniel Wilkinson, *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala* (Houghton Mifflin 2002); Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Duke 2000).

³⁵ See B. Marie Perinbam, *Holy Violence: The Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon, An Intellectual Biography* (Three Continents 1982).

³⁶ It is often said that *any theory of subjectivity* is inherently humanist, and while setting this characterization aside, the distinction between willing and subjectivity seems crucial in general and certainly for Gandhi and Fanon.

³⁷ Quoted in Yogesh Chadha, *Rediscovering Gandhi* (Arrow 1997), 231.

³⁸ I am using, inter alia, Mohandis Gandhi, "Religion and Truth" (RT), "Ahimsa, or the Way of Non-Violence" (A), "Self-Discipline" (SD), "International Peace" (IP), "Man and Machine" (MM), in K. Kripalani, ed., *All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections* (Continuum 1980).

³⁹ George Orwell, "Reflections On Gandhi," *Partisan Review*, VI:1 (Jan 1949), <http://www.readprint.com/work-1260/Reflections-On-Gandhi-George-Orwell>.

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- ⁴⁰ Quoted in Chadha, *Rediscovering Gandhi*, 229.
- ⁴¹ Abdullah Schleifer, "Izz al-Din and al-Qassam: Preacher and Mujahid," E. Burke and D. Yaghoubian, eds., *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East* (California 2006), 140.
- ⁴² Bharatan Kumarappa, editor's note in M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence Resistance* (Schocken 1951), 102; for a précis of these events, see Yogesh Chadha, *Rediscovering Gandhi* (Arrow 1997), 232ff.; Ravinder Kumar, ed., *Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Sayagraha of 1919* (Oxford 1971).
- ⁴³ Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Harvard 1997), 106.
- ⁴⁴ Cynthia Mahmood, *Fighting for Faith and Nation: Dialogues with Sikh Militants* (Pennsylvania 1996), 111-114.
- ⁴⁵ Alok Bhalla, "Moral Action in Times of *Duragraha*: The Representation of the Sikhs in Partition Fiction," *Social Scientist*, 34:5-6 (May-Jun 2006), 107. In this period Sikh non-violence was sustained against repeated state atrocities.
- ⁴⁶ See Fanon, "Grandeur and Weakness of Spontaneity," *Wretched of the Earth*, 65-68, passim.
- ⁴⁷ Shahid Amin, "Remembering Chauri Chaura: Notes from Historical Fieldwork," R. Guha, ed., *A Subaltern Reader, 1986-1995* (Minnesota 1997), 181-182.
- ⁴⁸ Mohandis Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India n.d.), v. 65, 361; quoted in Finkelstein TK 13. Finkelstein here usefully summarizes Gandhi's perfervid contempt for cowardice and multiple context of acceptable *himsa* (10-15).
- ⁴⁹ Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony*, 104.
- ⁵⁰ E. Valentine Daniel, "Suffering Nation and Alienation," *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropology of Violence* (Princeton 1996), 190ff.
- ⁵¹ Daniel, "Suffering Nation and Alienation," 190.
- ⁵² On Gandhi's self-sense as a scientific ethical experimenter, cf. Ashis Nandy with Shiv Visvanathan, "Modern Medicine and its Nonmodern Critics: A Study in Discourse," *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves* (Princeton 1995), 179-185.
- ⁵³ Mohandis Gandhi, quoted in Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton 2000), 246.
- ⁵⁴ Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (California 1994), 94ff.
- ⁵⁵ *harijan* means "person/child of god," in contrast to *dalit*, meaning "crushed or broken" without religious signification. This is salient in appreciating the word "wretched" in the title of Fanon's book.
- ⁵⁶ van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, 95-96.
- ⁵⁷ van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, 96. Specifying that Gandhi's "powers were acquired through disciplining the body," the author adds Gandhi "thought women...better qualified than men" for the "selfless devotion" required for nonviolence and "sacrifice" [cf. Purnima Bose, *Organizing Empire: Individualism, Collective Agency, and India* (Duke 2003), 119-120].
- ⁵⁸ van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, 98. Note the unverified accusation that "his idiom remained Hindu and has thus contributed substantially to Hindu nationalism" – an instance of the idealism we ought to avoid in such revisions.
- ⁵⁹ Thomas Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton 1999), pp. 93ff.
- ⁶⁰ On the "continuity" of doctrines between Gandhian and *hindutva* physical militancy, see Arafaat Valiani, *Militant Publics in India: Physical Culture and Violence in the Making of a Modern Polity* (Palgrave 2011).
- ⁶¹ Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*, 93.
- ⁶² Quoted in B. R. Nanda, *Jawaharlal Nehru: Rebel and Statesman* (Oxford 1995), 129.
- ⁶³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton 1993), 201. Significantly, one can trace Chatterjee's notion "political society" to this passage, and to Gandhi's political philosophy, which begins his account of the non-identity or non-coincidence *by definition* of institutional and social practices under the "development" project.
- ⁶⁴ Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton 2001), 233-234.
- ⁶⁵ Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, 234-235. The author confirms the syncretism of Gandhi's Hindu readings.
- ⁶⁶ Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, 234.
- ⁶⁷ Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, 298.
- ⁶⁸ "For the first two weeks that mill-hands exhibited great courage and self-restraint and daily held monster meetings. On these occasions I used to remind them of their pledge, and they would shout back to me that they would rather die

than break their word... This exhibited non-violence, but the workers grew more “menacing as the strike seemed to weaken,” “just as physical weakness in men manifests itself in irascibility.” [M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or The Story of Me Experiments with Truth*, M Desai, tr., Gujarati text (Penguin 1987 [1927]), 388].

⁶⁹ Uday Mehta, “Gandhi on Self-Sacrifice and the Burden of Civility,” Paper presented at “Suicide Protest: Normative Intrusions,” Conference, Amherst College (4-5 Oct 2013).

⁷⁰ Farah Godrej, “Ascetics, Warriors, and a Gandhian Ecological Citizenship,” *Political Theory*, 40:4 (2012), 450.

⁷¹ Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, C. Farrington, tr. (Grove 1963 [1961]).

⁷² Richard Philcox’s recent version, with his essay “On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice,” retains the famous title, *The Wretched of the Earth*, without comment, presumably given its classic status (Grove 2004 [1961]). But it could be re-named *The Damned of the Earth* with some precedent. The canonical “iron cage” in Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* has been re-translated as “steel-hard casing” (“Aber aus dem Mantel ließ das Verhängnis ein stahlhartes Gehäuse”) [Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, S. Kalberg, tr. (Roxbury 2001), 123]. This correction indeed has drawn *greater* criticism than would revisions of Fanon’s title. Lutz Kaelber claims Kalberg’s “literalism” produces “more of a science and less of an art, and therefore lacks...the poignancy and rhythmical qualities of the first translation” [“Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic in the 21st Century, Review of Kalberg, tr. (2001), *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 16:1, Fall 2002), 141]. A discrepancy between “cage” and “casing” may seem trifling compared to that between “wretched” and “damned” in Fanon, but it is similarly advisable to reclaim Weber’s scientific precision. *Casing* conveys Weber’s uniform social enclosure better than *cage*, which connotes the binomial subject-object of juridical incarceration. As Philip Gorski remarks “steel-hard shell” is “more literal – and even more terrifying” [Review of Kalberg, op. cit., and P. Baehr/G. Wells, eds., trs., *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and other Writings by Max Weber* (Penguin 2002), *Social Forces*, 82:2 (Dec 2003), 834, cf. App 2, 839]. It is so because the phrase *stahlhartes Gehäuse* conveys “a machine housing or casing” with *no* outside – *not* a penal boundary or ethic of inside/outside [Alan Scott, “Modernity’s Machine Metaphor,” *British Journal of Sociology*, 48:4 (Dec 1997), 562].

⁷³ I thank Mark Kesselman for discussing this translation.

⁷⁴ It should be noted that Fanon has often been *gravely* mistranslated, not least as he did not participate in the process; his entire oeuvre is canonic; and he focused on language itself. Many bilingual analysts strain to correct *substantively* misleading translations of Fanon’s writing. David Macey, rectifying “The Fact of Blackness” (*Black Skin, White Masks*, C. Markman, tr. [Grove 1967 [1952]]) as “The Lived Experience of the Black Man,” remarks: “the point of Fanon’s exercise in socio-diagnostics is to demonstrate that there is no ‘fact’ of blackness [but rather] a form of lived experience. To mistake a lived experience for a fact is to betray Fanon’s text to such an extent as to make it almost incomprehensible” [“Fanon, Phenomenology, Race,” P. Osborne/S. Sandford, eds., *Philosophies of Race and Ethnicity* (Continuum 2002), 29]. In this vein, Charles Butterworth bristles that *mystification* implies a more precise ideological mechanism than “alienation” [“Frantz Fanon and Human Dignity,” *Political Science Reviewer*, #10 (1980), 261 fn. 4]. Fanon is translated, then, with possibly unique tendencies to invert or reverse his intended meaning, patterned by the desire to enlist him in an “identity”-thinking he abhorred.

⁷⁵ One imagines, similarly, retranslating Primo Levi’s *Se questo è un uomo* from the pallid *Survival at Auschwitz* to its literal and “ironically rhetorical” meaning: *If This Is a Man* [Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, *Homo Sacer III*, D. Heller-Roazen, tr. (Zone 2002 (1999), 47].

⁷⁶ Tony Martin, “Rescuing Fanon from the Critics,” N. Gibson, ed., *Rethinking Fanon* (Humanity 1999).

⁷⁷ E.g., Michael Lackey, “Frantz Fanon and the Theology of Colonization,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 3:2 (2002). Fanon is forced into this syllogism: religion ⇔ empire; empire ⇔ inhumanity; thus, religion ⇔ inhumanity.

⁷⁸ Composed in 1871 by Paris *communisard* Eugène Pottier, “L’Internationale” starts: “Debout, les damnés de la terre/Debout, les forçats de la faim/La raison tonne en son cratère/C’est l’éruption de la fin/Du passé faisons table rase/Foule esclave, debout, debout.” The second stanza avows atheism: “Il n’est pas de sauveur supreme/Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun/Producteurs, sauvons-nous nous-mêmes.” Strangely, the Russian version begins, “Get up, you who are branded by a curse,” restoring a religious sense of subject-object damnation of the “starving and enslaved” [cf. “The International,” *Wikipedia*, n.d., at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Internationale].

⁷⁹ Albert Memmi, *The Pillar of Salt*, E. Roditi, tr. (Beacon 1992 [1955]), 153.

⁸⁰ But see Jean Baudrillard, “L’Esprit du Terrorisme,” M. Valentin, tr., *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 101:2 (Spr 2002), 408.

⁸¹ The Palestinian Fatah leadership turned to Fanon’s idea of re-humanizing violence by the early 1970s [Cf. Yezid Sayigh, “War as Leveler, War as Midwife: Palestinian Political Institutions, Nationalism, and Society since 1948,” S. Heydemann, ed., *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East* (California 2000), 219].

⁸² Joseph Massad, “Resisting the Nakba,” *The Electronic Intifada* (16 May 2008), at

<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9549.shtml>.

⁸³ Cf. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Oxford 1988), 94; cf. RK Ramazani, "Shi'ism in the Persian Gulf," J. Cole/N. Keddie, eds., *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (Yale 1986), 33-34, 44-45.

⁸⁴ Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge 2000), 121.

⁸⁵ Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (NYU 1993), 110.

⁸⁶ Michael Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Harvard 1980), 156.

⁸⁷ Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic* (Stanford 2007), 30.

⁸⁸ Aijaz Ahmad, "On the Ruins of Ayodhya: Communalist Offensive and Recovery of the Secular," *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia* (Verso 2000), 199.

⁸⁹ Ato Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (Harvard 1996), 4.

⁹⁰ Pal Ahluwalia and Abebe Zegeye, "Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko: Towards Liberation," *Social Identities*, 7:3 (2001), 456.

⁹¹ The following discussion is from passages in Fanon (2004 [1961]), 14-21.

⁹² In the Farrington translation, 52-58.

⁹³ Albert Memmi, "Note On Frantz Fanon and the Notion of Inadequacy," *Dominated Man: Notes Toward a Portrait* (Orion 1968), p. 87; approvingly cited by Carroll (2007), 216, fn. 14.

⁹⁴ Pierre Bouvier, *Fanon* (Éditions Universitaires 1971), 89.

⁹⁵ Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 69.

⁹⁶ Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 77.

⁹⁷ Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, 10.

⁹⁸ Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, H. Chevalier, tr. (Grove 1994), 27.

⁹⁹ Richard Pithouse, "The Explosive Alliance," Paper Delivered at the Caribbean Philosophical Association, Barbados (May 2004) [available at <http://www.abahlali.org/node/3434>], 11-12; internal quote is from Slavoj Žižek, *Conversations with Žižek* (Polity 2004), 204-205.

¹⁰⁰ GFW Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, A. Miller, tr. (Oxford 1977), 574; quoted in Pithouse (2004), 12.

¹⁰¹ Pithouse, "The Explosive Alliance," 15.

¹⁰² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, G. Becker, tr. (Schocken 1948 [1946]), 59ff.

¹⁰³ Diana Coole, "The Inertia of Matter and the Generativity of Flesh," D. Coole/S. Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Duke 2010), 93, 96; cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, D. Séglaard, ed., R. Vallier, tr. (Northwestern 2003 [c. 1957]), 220.

¹⁰⁴ John Rajchman, "Introduction," Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: A Life*, A. Boyman, tr. (Zone 2001 [1995]), 12-13.

¹⁰⁵ Post-sovereign power, the diffusing and homogenizing smooth-space *politics of occupation* from urban warfare military interventions/occupations – constitutes the de-centralized and de-totalized regime of monistic realism. This regime of strategic de-territorialization evolves from [1] *sovereignty-building captures* of (a) capitalist, military, and statist excess in the core and (b) piratical, nomadic, and partisan excess on the frontier to [2] *sovereignty-overcoming releases* of those excesses. The experience of socio-political objectification (systemic vulnerability) across sovereign and post-sovereign regimes recurs in contrasting environments of capture, flight, and systemic mimesis: where rebellious forces once imitated the sovereign-state form to resist coercive integration or protect self-determination, post-sovereign economic and political forces now imitate de-territorialized opponents. Empire- and state-building have long *used all necessary means* to *territorialize* a dualistic global state system of bourgeois-military sovereignty based on the unstable capture of excess. The global regime now reverses this logic, generalizing tactical prerogative into a monistic system of pure force and weaponized institutional and territorial ambiguity that releases elements of the capital-military-state-rebel constellation. For this essay, my central empirical observation is that the current regime radicalizes social reification through monistic force; that is, while dualistic sovereign capture and monistic post-sovereign release of social energies reify people (they all experience arbitrary rule or force), the latter may uniquely eradicate spatial-temporal sites of reflective activity relative to previous epochs. Hence this regime of strategic ambiguity, a permanent Deleuzian war machine of sorts, produces a systemic physicality, materiality, affectivity, and vulnerability diagnosed and countered by the counter-humanism of the earlier post-colonial militants.