Roots and Routes of Maghrebean Voices in Literature and Art

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Edited by

Bootheina Majoul

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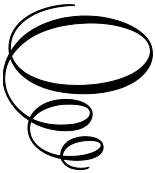

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FOREWORD 1

ROUTES BACK TO THE ROOTS

THARWAT MORSI

I have been pondering two related questions for long: first, the return to the Self and, second, the dialectics of regression or rupture with its sources. The basic crucial question that ʿAli Shariʿati attempted to answer to was: Which "Self" would we wish to harken back to or, even, to break with? Naturally, proponents of each of these two trends are not short on answers. There are those who believe in a return to the Self and usually list all the positive outcomes of such a return and their dissenting counterparts who do fixate on the negative consequences. In my opinion, we do have "sources of the self", as per Charles Taylor's concept and margins culture or unofficial culture, independent from the shackles of power are the most important of these sources. In addition, such a return should not entail mere "submission", but should embrace scrutiny, criticism and deconstruction, if relevant, in the search for ideas to uphold or build from the ground up.

Gazing at the Self through the eyes of the Other—or setting one self's eyes as an "Other" in Paul Ricoeur's words and looking at the sources of Self in its formative cultural, sociological and historical contexts are two significant and essential strategies of producing such a revelatory reading, on the one hand.

On the other hand, specialists in foreign languages play a pivotal role in this process of return. I have always envisioned their roles playing along two parallel lines: introducing us to the Other and vice versa. These are two critical tasks because they need an awareness of how the current moment in history dictates the terms and questions involved in such an "introduction" and how that process also hinges on the choices they make. As a practical example, we may never encounter an English fascination with an Arabic study of Shakespeare as much as we may find in the case of Taoufik Ben Brik's study and appropriation of Shakespeare and his works in The Hamlet Brothers.

I have been privileged to attend a full academic day in the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis (I.S.L.T), where a group of researchers from multiple disciplinary backgrounds joined forces to voice their opinions on the truly gripping theme of "Maghrebean Voices: Roots & Routes".

My expectations out of this day were largely met as I was fortunate to find some answers to my questions in their work. Most of the undertaken studies grappled with the margins culture, as reflected in: the one dedicated to Saliha the Tunisian singer, the study focused on the feminist spatiality of women's public baths (*hammam al-hareem*) as cultural spaces rather than mere convention points for women. Instances of studies aiming at presenting our culture to the Other include the examination of Taoufik Ben Brik's appropriation of Shakespeare's Hamlet and the critiques provided to the oeuvre of Kamal Daoud, Ahlam Mostghanmi and Fatma Mernessi.

Eventually, I have come to the realization that my intellectual preoccupations, as briefly touched upon in the opening of this foreword, were strongly present and fully developed in the aforementioned studies, only approached from different angles that do enrich and develop my ideas rather than negate them. In addition to the proper organization of the event, I was truly impressed with the academic ambiance as evident in the quality of presented academic papers and the participation of young graduate students who were given the chance of discussion and argumentation. We are in a dire need of this exemplary academic atmosphere and I give my greatest regard to Tunisian universities for fostering it.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Bootheina Majoul, not only for her hospitability and warm welcome but also for giving me this opportunity to write this foreword. I am also looking forward to the publication of this work and anticipating the kind of questions it would stir and the epiphanies it would bring to other works. Such an expected effect would truly contribute to the journey of the "return to the Self", an existential issue that transcends being a mere intellectual exercise or an act of academic exclusionism.

FOREWORD 2

MAGHREBI MODES OF BEING

EDWIGE TAMALET TALBAYEV

Through its cultural entanglements with other spaces and cultural logics, the mediating space of the Maghreb benefits from its unique position at the crossroads between North and South, Europe and Africa, the Mediterranean and the Sahara. In this continuum between land and sea, thinkers, artists, texts, and concepts have endlessly circulated, forming new philosophical regimes and aesthetic affinities.

Thinking the Maghreb today means delving into the complexities of its positionality beyond the regimentation performed by colonial and nationalist paradigms. It means crafting syncretic narratives that shed new light on the increasingly diverse corpus of literature produced on the Maghrebi shores and, beyond, in its diaspora. By attending to the fundamentally unstable nature of Maghrebi cultural identity, the essays in this volume perform an important critical task. The fluidity at the core of Maghrebi culture proceeds from the region's long-standing history as a space of contact, exchanges, interactions, and fundamental hybridization. A site of connectivity, cultural interpenetration, and mutual imbrication, the Maghreb lays bare the multiple points of fracture of a discrepant modernity. For the Maghreb embodies the principle of heterogeneity inherent in all cultures that bear the mark of displacement. Whether in the form of diaspora or the many waves of conquest that have historically washed over the region (Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, Europeans, as well as the various Jewish diasporas), mobility seems to occupy a central place in the makeup of Maghrebi identity. Resting in equal parts on stasis (belonging, rootedness, localism) and movement (displacement, translation, globalism), the tension at the heart of this volume defines the Maghreb relationally, that is in its interconnections to complex modes of agency.

At cross purposes with any restrictive concept of authenticity, the kinds of unpredictable encounters revealed in these pages spotlight the disruptions and reroutings intrinsic to Maghrebi literature. Teetering between displacement and dwelling, the authors examined in the book rethink Maghrebi modes of being in singular ways. Resonant with the fractured sense of identity inherited from colonialism, the localism that emerges in their work bears the imprint of a certain sense of worldliness, of an encounter with alterity either on the confrontational or seductive mode. Even in its most idiosyncratic instantiations, the rootedness delineated here is criss-crossed by currents of indeterminacy and fluctuations. The traces of these cross-cultural encounters offer a meditation on the texture of time, on the palimpsestic layering of subjective temporalities and levels of consciousness.

Ranging from studies of Maghrebi linguistic hybridity, women's agency and spaces, notions of belonging in contemporary Algerian fiction, historical uprisings, madness and disciplining, and diasporic identity to intertextual and intermedial readings of Tunisian culture, these multifarious essays delineate a Maghreb capacious enough to include Shakespearean soliloquies, Ibrahim al-Koni's desert, and Hisham Matar's Eastern North Africa. Through that gesture, they conjure a revigorated Maghreb that, in Tunisian poet Abdelwahab Meddeb's pronouncement, only fully thrives "through encounters in which letters and signs face off in a non-space that shelters many metamorphoses—a mirror where all origins are reflected and obliquely refracted."[1]

[1] Abdelwahab Meddeb, *L'Exil occidental*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2005.

INTRODUCTION

ON MAGHREBEAN ROOTS AND ROUTES

BOOTHEINA MAJOUL

> "I walk on with no destination"
> —Khatibi, *Love in Two Languages*

> "Adulte dès naissance, elle saute à pieds joints dans l'après-guerre de la littérature de la langue de la Métropole, se faisant du jour au lendemain l'héritière des acquis impressionants du long itinéraire de la littérature"
> —M'hamed Alaoui

Maghrebean writers took various paths, coming together and diverging but always returning to their roots: inherent traditions, beliefs, *joie de vivre*, and lightness of being. Their writings blend the past with the present, and while at times influenced by the West and marked by colonial remnants (evident in both texts and customs), this hybridity or *métissage* (Laroussi 80) actually gave rise to what Khatibi refers to as a "Maghreb pluriel" [Plural Maghreb]. In *Maghrebian Mosaic: A Literature in Transition*, Mildred Mortimer asserts: "Situated between East and West, drawing upon Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, the Maghreb as a geographical and cultural entity is capable of privileging cultural pluralism and multilingualism" (5). Indeed, this diverse array of languages, roots and customs, created a tapestry of voices that enriched the Maghrebean sense of self, and became a defining feature of Maghrebean identity.

In *Postcolonial Counterpoint*, Farid Laroussi claims: "Maghrebi readers have become outsiders to their own literature" (73) and unfortunately that is true. There is a kind of "blindness and deafness" (Bensmaia 7) towards our literature that cannot be explained and that needs to be addressed. Thus, this project announces the inception of a reconciliation with Maghrebean roots, as well as the beginning of a long road of reflection on Maghrebean texts and context. The journey started as just an academic event aiming at discussing selected Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian

narratives, to expand into the project of an edited volume examining the poetics and politics of the region. Indeed, some of the articles included in this volume were presented during a Maghrebean Seminar that I organized within the activities of the research laboratory "Language and Cultural Forms" affiliated to the High Institute of Languages of Tunis, University of Carthage in April 2019; the seminar was titled: *Maghrebean Voices: Roots & Routes* (in English), *Voix/Voies Maghrebines* (in French) and جذورٌ ودروبٌ مغاربيّة (in Arabic).

I am immensely grateful to Dr. Tharwat Morsi for contributing to this project. He was a visiting professor at ISLT in 2019. He attended the seminar and generously accepted to write a foreword under the title "Routes Back to the Roots" for this volume to ponder the question of identity, cultural heritage and belonging in the Maghreb and elsewhere in the Arab world. Heartfelt thanks also go to Dr. Edwige Tamalet Talbayev for joining this project and providing her valuable contribution, shedding light on "Maghrebi Modes of Being". She gives a historical overview of the region and links it to the hybrid nature of Maghreban literature. The generosity of both Dr. Morsi and Dr. Tamalet Talbayev exceeded all limits; they also accepted to share their knowledge and expertise with Tunisian young researchers. They met my students and collaborated with me on several occasions to nurture a new generation thirsty for knowledge about the importance of cultural heritage in the making of identity.

As mentioned above, *Roots and Routes of Maghrebean Voices in Literature and Art* started as a project to debate the question of Maghrebean roots, only to announce the beginning of a journey of self-discovery. I began learning about the specificities of the Maghreb; I invited my colleagues and students to join the "odyssey", and then different routes of reflection emerged. The main focus of this compilation of articles is Maghrebean literature of French and Arabic expression. A paper on Tunisian music is also included in this book in an attempt to shed light on other ways of preserving heritage and roots.

This volume is divided into four parts. The first part entitled "On Maghrebean Paradigms" is devoted to the invaluable contribution of my professor and mentor Nejet Mchela. She designed a Cross-Cultural program at the High Institute of Languages of Tunis (ISLT – University of Carthage, Tunisia) and introduced us to the realm of Maghrebean Studies. I am deeply indebted to her because she generously accepted to include her article "Fa(u)nonia and A(h)lam" in this volume. Her research invites us to examine Ahlem Mustaghanmi's writing and to reflect upon the

identitarian crisis in the postcolonial Maghreb. Professor Mchela's article takes us on a journey of learning how to read the Maghreb and its paradigms, and examine their implications and several routes.

The second part is entitled "Maghrebean Routes", which is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on the works of Moroccan and Algerian writers. Dr. Hanen Baroumi demystifies the feminine routes of Assia Djebar and Fatima Mernissi by examining controversial dichotomies in the Maghrebean context. She focuses on the precariousness of meaning when discussing the situation of women, shedding light on the deeply-rooted mindset of violence in the region. Dr. Baroumi brings back a discussion of "old roots" in an attempt to pave the way for "new routes" to emerge and adjust the framework for the new generation. The third chapter by Dr. Asma Dhouioui is entitled "Bridges & Beneath in Mustaghanemi's Trilogy & Beyond". The article analyses the Algerian writer's trilogy: *Memory in the Flesh*, *The Anarchy of the Senses*, and *Bed Hopper*; she builds a bridge between the writer's individual memory and the collective memory of all Arab readers. Dr. Dhouioui takes us through Mustaghanemi's works to make us reflect on the history of the region beyond the metaphor of the bridge. The fourth chapter in this first part of the book includes the valuable contribution of the Algerian scholar Prof. Dalel Sarnou, entitled "Re-rooting Algerian-ness in Kamal Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*". I personally discovered Kamal Daoud's texts during the Maghrebean Seminar when I invited Prof. Sarnou as one of the keynote speakers of the event in 2019. Her article focuses on the way Daoud adopted and adapted Albert Camus's *L'étranger* [*The Stranger*] to narrate Algerian realities. Prof. Sarnou shared her analysis of a text that builds a bridge between the past and the present and compels readers to establish a critical analogy between the poetic and the political in the works of Kamel Daoud and other similar Maghrebean iconoclasts.

The third part of this volume is entitled "Tunisian Roots/Routes"; it is divided into two chapters examining Tunisian identity portrayed through the voices of Tunisian activists: writers, scholars and artists. Dr. Leila Hejaiej (who is herself a Tunisian scholar and singer) participated in this Maghrebean project with an article entitled "Saliha: Legend and Legacy"; it highlights the important role of art in the making of the nation and the preservation of Tunisian heritage and identity. The last chapter of this third part is "Ben Brik's *The Hamlet Brothers*: Rerouting Shakespearean Soliloquies". It attempts to analyse the route taken by the Tunisian writer Taoufik Ben Brik to re-route the roots of Shakespearean soliloquies. His characters are "Hamletized" for the purpose of shaking and destabilizing

the Tunisian/Arab reader. Ben Brik, or as Edward Said calls him "The Arab Bandit", invited many voices and texts into his tale to tell what he calls "The Arab Tragedy". The article is an attempt at re-reading and analysing *The Hamlet Brothers* as a narrative taking its roots from Shakespearean tragedies among several other canonical works, to end up deviating from the 'route' of all genres.

Finally, the last part of this book is devoted to "Voices from the New Generation of Tunisian Researchers". I invited MA students in Cross-Cultural Studies at ISLT to participate in the Maghrebean Seminar. I asked these young researchers to write papers within the activities of a Maghrebean Studies Course, and I was impressed by the maturity of their texts. Then, I invited them to join the project. Their voices represent a very important contribution to ensure the continuity of the debate over Maghrebean roots. Prof. Mchela taught me that involving students in such exercises is like planting seeds for the roots of trees that have the potential to establish a memory.

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PART I

ON MAGHREBEAN PARADIGMS

CHAPTER 1

FA(U)NONIA AND A(H)LAM

NEJET MCHALA

National/Transnational Time

> L'espèce inférieure a tout couvert.
> —Arthur Rimbaud, *Une saison en enfer.*
>
> Mais on a oublié la constance de mon amour. Je me définis comme tension absolue d'ouverture.
> —Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire*, *masques Blancs.*

The epigraphs, lyrical as they may be, serve as guidelines for this reflection on the validity of Fanonia, a postponed eutopia (happiness) for the colonised. It is subsumed into the international cyberspace of postcolonial thought, and aspires to participate in its unthinkable, its "impensé" to again fall back on the Latinate. Interrogating Fanon in the current fashion, which informs on private paroles as virtual projects of restitution of meaning, places him in the position of an unhappy Timon of a postcolonial telos by his last preface writer, Bhabha, after he was rescued in former times from the unpredictable and stubborn anxiety of Orpheus, to be engulfed in empty certitude by his lapsed *préfacier* Sartre. Like the Third World, he had to be ideologized before he was culturalized. His narrative, repeatedly defined as a manifesto, exclusively addressed to the Third World, Sartre warns the European reader, still remains a colonial narrative, as Spivak rectifies. Because the contradictorial is the condition of domination and liberation, Fanon had to face the fact that in a dominantly positivist context where, since Auguste Comte, progress is defined by order, only the organisational or the ideological is formative as well as performative of plebeian spontaneity.

Ethnic or cultural destiny is therefore sacrificed to national destiny as a more intelligible concept of resistance and re-negotiation of identity in a context of domination (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (hereafter DT) 175). This

totemic sacrifice, to use the Freudian format of *Totem and Taboo*, is an ingurgitation of the overwhelming power of the coloniser and his rules of regimentation for empowerment and survival. National culture becomes a transformational process of the symbiotic cultural element in the symbolic order that exceeds it. The alchemy is revolutionary praxis and the finality is a change in the economy of the relation to cultural and temporal alterity, national and international. The change assumes new foundations for the individual, for the socius, and ultimately for global humanity. What he dubbed pathologies of liberation and past pseudopode fixes are fetishist affects specific to the colonial moment, mummified as a second nature and an immutable given by victim and victimiser. Only revolutionary praxis is formative of a meaningful culture that liberates the future from past entanglements and complicities. Culture is an individual in group, and by extrapolation a national in transnational experience that involves change in the oppressor and the oppressed. His global humanist vision is grounded in an ethical sense that transcends the particular.

The combination of subjective humanism with positivist Marxism defines his conceptualisation of the cultural realm. Culture becomes a human social-historical adventure in a system of production that is at the same time co-substantial and alienating to it. Fanon diverges from Marxist materialistic causality, and is closer to Hegelian free subjectivity, or Kant's self-determined transcendence of the given as an essential human drive. This may explain his constant indictment of the representational constructions, in their European and reversed African affirmations, as irresponsible negatives to be dispensed with (DT 160). A 'persistent instability', as Benita Parry formulates it in his aporia/possibility, interrupts his open yet amputated possibility when he writes: "tout a été prévu, trouvé, prouvé, exploité, mes mains nerveuses ne ramènent rien, le gisement est épuisé; trop tard", adding still, "Mais là aussi je veux comprendre" (*Peau noire, masques blancs* hereafter PNMB, 97). The desire to comprehend is posited as a radical demand and an anxiety. He retains human intellect as a link (91), agnostic reason as a solution (95), divide as a mode of struggle, and action as the possible impossibility (182): these are the very terms that subsume the system and the lineaments of colonisation. As he pointed out, the subaltern has no ontological resistance in front of power, and the terms of resistance like the terms of domination are defined by his rule. Fanon is colonised at the core and therefore hits hard. His merit is in facing his own equivocations, and while maintaining that he belongs to his time, he reaches for free terms, and a free time from within the laws of captivity. Socialism to which he adhered, was also the conviction of the times. It translated his primary concern for human experience in the socius, served the purposes of

an intelligible project for the wretched, and provided a way out of the mad senses of biological bonds and symbolic bondage.

Fanon's handling by French scholarship is part and parcel of the anticolonialism paradigm characterised by a blend of culturalism and economism. Very little distinguished first and last liberal humanists from radical socialists; they both shared the formalist credo of converting primitives into skilful democrats. Neither provided a solution for the colonies, which were merely an argument of the oppositional traps of the *imperium*. Camus declared that he would defend his mother first and then justice; the Second Internationale approved of colonialism in 1907 to precipitate the fall of capitalism and the Parti Communiste was extremely reticent to Algerian independence. Senghor and Rabe held the same position in spite of or perhaps because of their ravishing negritude. Right wing racists, such as Gobineau and Leopold de Saussure were, on the contrary, detractors of colonisation. Economic Carterism was an inaugural version of contemporary independentist theories. In the twenties, an 'exotic nationalism' of exile was born in French intellectual circles, with Lamine Senghor, Messali Haj, Ho Chi Minh, etc. largely concordant with the Pan Africanism of Garvey and Du Bois in America. For colonialists, the cultural virus and ferment represented greater dangers than class struggle (Biondi 153), communists disavowed racial solidarity and native nationalisms, and the League of Human Rights based on socialist and socialising formations held the same position. In 1929, The Communist Party disengaged from the bourgeois nationalism of Gandhi, Garvey, Tchang Kai Check, and Nehru (123, 134, 162). Fanon's location in this debate reflects the culturalist fix of oppression and attempts to resolve it by a particular sense of history that reconciles national sovereignty with global configurations. As a deracinated combatant, he experienced the futility of cultural differences and their unhappy perpetuation of more perverse differences. When he concludes: "Ne trouve donc pas étrange, frère aîné de la civilisation mondiale, que nous sauvegardions en l'indépendance nationale de ton peuple naissant, l'avenir de la race humaine toute entière dont nous sommes solidaires" (80), he returns the familiar discourse of modernity and its traps, but without its servitudes.

Third-Worldism as a form of radical anticolonialism found its best theorising in the godfather Sartre, who was largely inspired by Fanon's inside depiction of the insidious sediments of colonialism. Post-war existentialism was experienced as a betrayal by the socialist left, Sartre gave the bourgeoisie their last alibi, they said (Domenagh 774), and Fanon formulated his rebuke in quasi-identical terms: Sartre "m'a enlevé ma

dernière chance…Sartre a tari la source (…) contre l'histoire, il a opposé l'imprésivibilité" (PNMB107,109). But the Sartrian subject's condemnation to absolute freedom and an absolutely free project and sense, as much as it neutralised the Marxist deterministic system that orchestrates the organic class struggle, fractured the ontology of the status quo. The Algerian case was crucial in Sartre's examination of the hierarchical relationship between 'oppressive praxis' and 'oppressive process' in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (Lammouchi 82). Similarly, Fanon's struggle with Sartrian schemes is evident in his textual journey. The nothingness and inertia that characterize *Black Skin* dissolve in the revolutionary praxis of *Dying Colonialism* and *The Wretched.* Sartre's statement that "la révolution est une praxis qui forge ses idées dans l'action" and that "la praxis définira elle-même son idéologie" (Idéologies 294), was echoed in his reading of Fanon. The irreducibility and incommensurability of praxis, as formulated by Fanon and Sartre, are defined by a shared belief in the political alchemy of the socius. Revolutionary praxis reconciles the unpredictable with the historical, subjective reason with objective reason. The subjective and objective are race-based in Fanon, while Sartre dissolves it in class and reminds Fanon that negritude is merely a fleeing moment; an unhealthy solution. Fanon further adds that it is mere projections and retro-projections of black and white imago reflections. For both, existential and specific negritude must give way to a dialectic, positive movement.

Fanon's radical Third-Worldism and the Algerian struggle, a unique colonial narrative, are essential in shaping the concepts and crisis of the French intelligentsia led by Sartre. The latter met Fanon in Rome in 1961, who sent him a copy of *The Wretched* through Lanzmann, and he agreed to write its preface. Simone De Beauvoir articulated the Sartre-Fanon connection when she wrote, "Sartre avait réalisé à Cuba la vérité de ce que disait Fanon: dans la violence l'opprimé puise son humanisme. Il fut d'accord avec son livre: Un manifeste du Tiers monde, extrême, entier, incendiaire mais aussi complexe et subtil" (in Lammouchi 124). The unusual violence of the preface was also a statement against the violent events of the national day organised by Algerians to oppose the colonial partition projects, during which hundreds of people died. Sartre's preface represented a turning point in his intellectual journey and, by extension, radicalised the position taken by his companions, the French mediatic intellectuals and philosophers (Althusser, Lacan; Barthes, Foucault, Debré, etc.). Literary themes of blackness dissolved into more radical theories of global neocolonialism. The Algerian war and its horrors inspired a less costly and more profitable form of distant colonialism (Sartre, *Situations* V

196). Sartre's preface emphasised Fanon's lucidity in understanding the reinvented mechanisms of neocolonial indigenous servitude.

In his texts, Fanon engages in a continuous dialogue with his intellectual mentor. His recognition by his *maître à penser* was actualised in Hegelian terms of action, easily identifiable and more compelling due to the master's post-war interest in fundamental ontology. Hegelian recognition goes beyond just abolishing hierarchy; it involves an equation between the master and the slave. So, the putative paradigm of Sartrian being, neantised in the objectifying gaze of the other developed in *Black Skin*, of masses serialised and atomised in social context, is given a performative actional course in Fanon's Algerian texts and experience. Spontaneity is the mode of insurrection and the common destiny of dislocated beings, the axiomatic alchemy of fusion among the oppressed. It becomes the embryo of the prophetic counter destiny suggested by Fanon. The cement is atavistic, native, and specific. The mineral dehumanised form applied to the coloniser in Sartre's preface to Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé* (29). The negative incarnations of western society into gangs and closed societies in his preface to Fanon's text (DT 23) are a replica of the fusion of Algerian people during the revolution described in *Dying Colonialism* and *The Wretched*, an organic fusion of the disparate elements into a nation. Sartre, like Fanon, calls it coagulation or crystallisation, a passage from a state of dispersal to that of a compact organic body, whose ferment is symbiotic praxis and whose finality, the symbolic awakening for the nation. Ethnicity is a transient stage, and like the literary expressions of native presence, is a product of domination and its divisive scholarly and political manipulations. Its persistence derives from the vertical synchrony entertained by the impersonal structure of colonialism. For Fanon, only its fracture, by the death of the system and its waste, allows for the awakening to a national identity. For Sartre, the indifferent liberation of nationals is more than a warning to the blemished overfed coloniser, it is an opportunity for him to face his own truth as an object within the abject mechanisms unveiled by Fanon for the lower objects, and so a moment of decolonisation and cure arises precisely for the coloniser from his coloniser mentality. Only then, new thoughts and new skins will begin the next story of the human person, Fanon and Sartre resolve.

With lapsed French intellectuals who experienced the ambivalence of responsibility in supporting the fairy tales of native revolutions in Indo-China, and later in Iran, the Third World, which largely contributed in provoking the European intellectual crisis, withered away with it. The dialectic resolution is neither a tragedy nor a comedy, but a dialog, with

irony as the mode and clue. The descendants of French intellect grapple with more territorial neuroses. Althusser's interpellations interpellate their objecthood and Lacan's passes and impasses refurbish Hamletic recesses. Oedipal synchronies outwit Hegelian dialectics. Sartre states that colonialism is a system in which the colonised has to be considered subhuman or otherwise dissolve (Le colonialisme 123). Subsequent analyses view him as a synecdoche or as a different species. Referring to Fanon's description of the colonial divided species – reminiscent of fascist compartments and taxonomies fabricated in moments of capitalist trouble – Etienne Allemand explains the loss of the larger human link by the intrinsic racist necessity of Capital. Capital produces naturalised classes as well as races and perhaps also sexes; and in the absence of any visual or obvious distinctive features, is able to invent them when the need arises (Allemand 177). The ethos of the coloniser and the colonised is a socio-historical product founded on a well-defined powerful ethology that aspired from its early beginnings to dominate as in Ernest Renan's blunt formulation: "nous aspirons non à l'égalité, mais à la domination. Le pays de race étrangère devra devenir un pays de serfs, de journaliers agricoles ou de travailleurs industriels. Il ne s'agit pas de supprimer les inégalités parmi les hommes, mais de les amplifier et d'en faire une loi" (in Allemand 190).

Foucault's work is a demonstration of the historical montage of the system that has a certain sense, but is unable to account for its own object and meaning. When Fanon proposes the violent narcissistic solution for the colonised thing in *The Wretched*, he means the re-appropriation of the ego as the desiring machine or the *rhizome*, to use Deleuze's central concept in his *L'Anti-Oedipe*, virtually neantised, virtually neantising. A few years before Deleuze and Foucault, Fanon seizes desire, not as a hedonistic principle, but as a vital instinct to sabotage white work that never finishes as the Angolan proverb says. He writes: "je saisis mon narcissisme à pleines mains et je repousse l'abjection de ceux qui veulent faire de l'homme une mécanique. Si le débat ne peut s'ouvrir sur le plan philosophique, c'est à dire de l'exigence fondamentale de la réalité humaine, je consens à le mener sur celui de la psychanalyse, c'est à dire des 'ratés' au sens ou l'on dit qu'un moteur a des ratés" (PNMB 18).

Fanon's handling of Marx and Freud was also an anti-oedipal *pratique sauvage* and a break from paradigmatic monads. Psycho-analysis is applied to the alienating principles of capitalist production where work is a sign of servitude, and not of human exchange. His final totemic intent is to restore relatedness and the radical other, in personnalist terms reminiscent of Buber and Levinas's relation not in assassination or indifference, but in difference

and care, something like a civilisation of the other as the task of the human person (29). This is formulated in his final statement in *Black Skin* as the world of the you: 'Ma liberté ne m'est-elle donc pas donnée pour édifier le monde du *toi?*' (P.N.M.B. 188). Rousseauesque undertones, of course, but a meaningful measure in a Leviathanesque mega logic.

At the close of *The Wretched*, he writes "quittons cette Europe", "fuyons, camarades ce movement immobile où la dialectique, petit à petit, s'est mué en logique de l'équilibre" (DT 231). The European spirit is exhausted in its expanse in added value. Its fluffiness was administered *a coup de grace* by Foucault's erasure of its human thought in the proxemic metaphor of a face of sand effaced at sea shore limit (*Les mots*, 398). A change in being is a change of being. And to science for science's sake and pleasure, art was also applied to art's sake and pleasure, as in Barthesian ironic signs ameliorated by ironist Beaudrillard's. These became free cosmopolitan signs, wondrous for some and wretched for some others. Fanon's quote of Georges Balandier's parody of Hegel's definition of dialectic is prophetic of post-modernist scholarship. Individuals have become metaphysical and psychological selections and arbitrary abstractions of continuously analytical, analysing spirits, dragging behind them barking dogs that never bite but pacify. Fanon perceived the pacifying role of the colonised intellectual and his entrapment in the universal abstractions of the coloniser; he knew perfectly that no phraseology can be substituted to reality.

Fanon has been dropped into oblivion in francophone spheres. He is planted in a time he meant to desert and canonised in a place he learned to hate in French: "il ya deux siècles, une ancienne colonie européenne s'est mise en tête de rattrapper l'Europe. Elle y a tellement réussi que des États Unis d'Amérique sont devenus un monstre ou les tares, les maladies et l'humanité de l'Europe ont atteint des dimensions épouvantables" (DT 230). With lapsed European spirits in anti-humanist Homo Academica of no subjects and no truths save transcendental free spaces, without much damage to the French national habitus (Bourdieu 17) of production, one must admit, the Third World wreckage, alias postcolonial, a catachresis for the neo-colonial, is transferred to the last gate-keepers to speculate upon its endangered identitarian economies, which could otherwise be saved if, it goes without saying, they were possessed with an autonomous economic identity.

Considering the simulacrum of culture study consortium, considering its meaningful spectacles and parades for the U.S., and considering the meaninglessness of its terms for the rest of us, it is useless to search for an intellectual interference in the anglophone academic left, as Spivak clearly

demonstrated (Postcolonial 3). Sartre called the French left soft, the latest left is of the spuriously tempting sort. But returning the gaze, we may examine the way the researched and the researchers interfere as discursive mega machines in their introspective parlours between the national merged in the postmodern and the transnational in the outdated modern. "What does the Black man want?" asks Bhabha mimicking Fanon, mimicking Marie Antoinette's overfed honesty, in his postcolonial intersectional illuminating liminal interrogating Lacanian master narrative. Fanon might respond to Bhabha's onto-genetic hybrid fix and nomadic discrepancies that his drive was socio-genetic and sedentarily discrepant. In his reading, "all references to humanism, to revolution, to Hegel, to Marx and to Sartre – to Fanon's 'yearning' for a total social transformation – are lumped up as banal" (Gibson 106). And Stuart Hall's swift merging of culture study, Marx and Gramsci in his Fanon fetish *favori* is a short story without the unhappy ending. He barely scratched the surface of the essential question of the post-colonial State, Nigel Gibson observes, and his four-year historicism lapsed to psychologism.

In the heat of a battle of citations, Fanon is located in a once more racial, sexual, gendered indifferent position, divided between prophylactic Gramscian organics, and Foucauldian desirable specifics or deferred in Derridian spectral effects (Read 14), twisted in Stuart Hall's, lifted up by Gates's return of the repressed cultural, whose significations have become his patent occupation. As he stages it out: "the course we've been plotting leads us, then, to what is, in part, Spivak's critique of Parry's critique of Jan Mohamed's critique of Bhaha's critique of Said's critique of colonial discourse" (Gates 465). Françoise Verges brings in the feminist connection with Fanon's phallocentric erasure of female desire and his finding in the Arab male of Algeria, the restoration of a masculinity irrevocably lost in the feminised Martiniquan hybrid (593). The prescribed raptures of the postcolonial fanfare and the flying island's dialogue autistic fantasia, and intellectual productions over a globalised 'usable' Fanon (Gates's coinage) reach his initial base, i.e., our lower shores, in the unrecognisable guise of an endgame where nothing happens and nothing is to be done or, at best, as deferred ripples. The battle of negotiations over his black ghostly body is frighteningly thrifty; it aims, claim the new cosmopolitans, at repoliticising the moment, unaware or pretending to be unaware of the stark failure of the political in the economic momentum, and of the representational being a dazzling shield and Fanon's most hateful battlefield. Naturally, a dissonant critic rescues the theorist from the critics (Martin 381), and another rescues the totem text from being an oxymoron (Posnock 323), a state rightly reserved to Third World intellectuals, dubbed 'impossible life' by Memmi

(The Impossible 9), the more so today, because of the intuition of his/her performative mission being also informative and a trifle productive. My wistful preoccupation is to rescue Fanon from the swings and pendulums of the aforementioned culture study oxymora and the lures of irresponsibility in memory of his life as a possibility.

Nigel Gibson observes that post seventies invented Fanons are contextual to the 'end of struggle' conceptual framework (96). Indeed, Fanon's original internationalitarianism lapsed in metastasis market democracy and human rights, and his neo humanism is transvaluated in the anthropo-technological, as scandalously sincere Sloterdijk assumes in his response to Heidegger's letter (1999). Nationalitarianism, which he considered liberating for the people, has entrenched itself in micropolitical searches of the infinitely small and the exhaustingly different redefining in turn internationalitarianism. Invoking Althusser's ghost, the couple is interpellative. Fanon didn't view it in concurrency but in diachrony, and the Fanonia of post sixties have-nots sounds more like an endangered faunonia among post eighties overfed textualities, a topicality worthy of the attention of the ecological Club of Rome. Divisive ethnicity has suddenly become more vital than national identity. As the anonymous critic of the debate that brought hetero-genus Bhabha closer to homo-genus Hall put it, from an ex-revolutionary, the Fanon du jour is genetically modified into "some trendy postmodern bullshitter" (Read 41).

His beloved Algeria stands as the declared example of the search for sense and direction, with a raging return to an imaginary veiled revolution acting as a veil for a national state that acts as a veil for the international state. The divide planted by the divisive system of the coloniser is perpetuated in the nation, with half of it pitted against the other half. The end of the Cold War tore off the veil of the totalitarian egalitarian utopia that miserably contained misery, and spiritual politics, surged out as a hypo time of one's own opposed to a hyped up 'world time' of no one's. Local and Global orders do stabilise each other in a simultaneous objectless objecthood that brews up, as Fanon sensed, into suicidal involutions (PNMB 177). As in recent Algeria, and in numerous places of various shades and colours, insurgent postcolonial nationalisms are ideological expressions of a confiscated time and geography, but most importantly of a sense of a pre-invested future economy, objective and subjective. Storr observes that there are two channels for rage, the first is a paranoiac projection on the immediate environment, the other is depressive self-accusation. If, as Winnicott suggests, the Western society belongs to the depressive category (in Allemand 185), the rest of capitalist rage is of the paranoid or schizophrenic

sort. Psychoanalysis looks like a pacifying urgency, and the return to reason like an emergency, however risky.

The territorial retreat has become the collective or specific non-invested originary untainted past and space that evades containment in and by the organic. The moment is dated in pre-coloniality before things fell apart for some, and were epiphanic for some others difficult to pin down in taxonomies of age, class, gender or nationality. The site of confrontation is precisely that imaginary space charged with ambiguous fragments and unresolved memories of divide, and whose avowed and disavowed compromissions have become the law that serves to break traditional links or to exhaust their defences while offering no future cures, save perhaps the empty institutionalism brandished by the sheriff-thief. To its rightful homo sapiens actions, sovereign yet defenceless homo-demens retro-action their phagocytes to ensure their own immunity, and the buckle of causality is buckled. Clinical manifestations range from delayed aberrations to lethargic despair to sacrificial cleansing. As Chatterjee advances in his corrective criticism of Anderson's mimetic nation-state techno-capitalist modules, postcolonial nationalisms are nationalisms of divide founded on religion, customs and the family as the ideological filtering sieves (Chatterjee 5-7). They also bear the trace of Western postcolonial nationalisms and cults of ancestors, with their concern for purity. Their radical signs and 'final solutions' are as Memmi intimates grafted on females and infants as the past and future essences of the nation (*L'homme* 97), but also as heterophobic alterities whose neantisation or assimilation is salutary, and whose galloping sameness is a threat.

Fanon too, posits gynecea and territory as the site of esoteric/exoteric control/resistance in colonial Algeria (*Sociologie de la révolution* (hereafter S.R) 28). The claims as well as the reclaims of nationalism are these shared archetypal sites of nativity. When Appiah concludes that they make "real the imaginary identities to which Europe has subjected us" (150), he shows the mechanics of the trade in essences as sites of dispute dating back to the initial moment of contention between two old time acquaintances and anxieties. For both parties these are understood as the noblest but also the virtual basest. Such economy explains the tight rope liminality of postcolonial forefront informants when they, as Spivak authorises "take the risk of essence" (*Outside* 3) as a strategic agency to allow shuffling subjectivities to act as the odd private against mighty overdetermination. Naturally, with all rational discourses exhausted in irrational peripheralizing negotiations, economic reason excepted; only primary passions translated as cultural essences remain identifiable terms.

Partaking in the postcolonial debate assumes a deliberate strategic but still projectless compromission, whether constructive within Said's weary contrapuntal humanism, deconstructive as in Spivak's risky territorial inside outside-ness, or liminal as in Bhabha's hybrid in-between-ness, with their supra and infra determinist existential and psycho-analytical affiliations and derivatives. Fanon is no exception to a pre-defined pre-invested project-less course, trapped in the 'never again and the not yet' that perplexes neo internationalists, which, as much as they are liberating for the flesh, remain hungry for subaltern spirit. The same applies to neo-internationalists of history from below 'the cerebral desert' of the masses, to use Fanon's coinage, which, as much as they are high for the spirit, are hungry for subaltern flesh. The remaining course is the dialectic binding of nationalitarianist and internationalitarianist, high and low narratives to destabilise nationalitarian internationalitarian 'big cap' (Derrida's caption), as Neil Lazarus predicts when he at least instrumentalises postcolonial out-right in terms echoing former French P.C.'s precipitating rhetoric: "It is only on the terrain of the nation that an articulation between cosmopolitan intellectualism and popular consciousness can be forged; and this is important, in turn, because in the era of multinational capitalism it is only on the basis of such a universalistic articulation _ that imperialism can be destabilised."(216). This de-stabilising culture studies project located at the intersection of Jameson's rhetoric's of distance coloniality and Aijaz's counter rhetoric of distant colonialities is of the same sort that won the support of the last French leftists' chieftain by Sartre, when they marvelled at the enchanting wedlock of communism and nationalism in quiet charming China, before their mediatic mediation fell in discredit. The postcolonial past, like its future dreams, fades in the expectant dream of dormant doctrines and West Side Stories. If, alternatively, we venture to demarcate ourselves from prepossessed parlours and their discursive formats of production, we are even more stunted, if not silenced by the day-to-day surprise of our local multifarious multiform layered alterities with their muzzled hopes and frustrations, and in an end thought, feel for Fanon's disorderly errands outside of monads and signposts, and for his *glissements lyriques* as more pedagogical Memmi (*L'homme* 9) characterises the aporetic oddities of the psychiatrist phenomenologist, intellectual populist. He is nearest to the laboratory of people's ontic-ontological practices, and we realise that if anything is momified, it is certainly our productive thinking habitus and its reprocessing in the containable. Another hybrid clinical manifestation is that the divide traverses each one of us, victims and supporters of a system that feeds and consumes our bodies and our minds,

being as we are, wretched 'co-workers in the kingdom of culture' as Dubois qualifies his dark co-subjects.

Identity and its time are basically an intellectual political event, that is, an agency for presence and recognition; it soon expands in lower forms of ideology with different expressions among the same social formation. Ethnicity is a political ferment that translates the failure of the political itself as an exercise in civilisation. In Algeria, fundamentalism runs across all sorts of gender/ class/ ethnic free categories, as Algerian ideologue Harbi writes (L'Algérie 217), further arguing that the Algerian ancient history is laden with unresolved identitarian anxieties that were intensified by the 1830 fracture, intensified by the FLN state party. National identity was constructed on strategic ambivalences, if not political manipulations of Algerian citizens/believers. The backlash was not only a hungry symptom. In general, the hungriest find themselves more concerned with the expenditures of identity than with its tinned tragedies. Neo-coloniality, a variant of the global, equally ambivalent and manipulative, hardly accounts for the contradictorial as a day-to-day fracture but also possibility for survival. It is precisely that fractured condition that subordinated Fanon's developments, and what he proposed amidst the solidarity of the mad senses he was planted in, was the fracture of the logic of stasis for possibility. The price is of course, to some extent, a moral dissolution of the cultural being in revolutionary praxis, as he ventures to formulate in indirection via Marx's 18th Brumaire in the concluding chapter of *Black Skin*.

Against all odds, he attempts to re-assess the sites of négrité and arabité: Women, language, and race. He shows that in divide, these signs become essences of identity that prevail over the human socio-historical fact. One is black, Jew, Moslem, female, colonised etc. first and then human. The categorisation is acclaimed by whites and less white. Fanon aims to free the oppressed from project-less traps and to convert the essences and the being of the nation into some human and universal project within the state of knowledge of his time and, unlike the 'inferior species' who, as Rimbaud says, 'covered everything', plants the intuition of the life of the mind in the interrogating black body, knowing the relativity of the ontological defences of blackness in front of colourless power (PNMB 88). Now the sites of the nation have become violently unresponsive like their transnational counterparts. In the section below, and on the flipside of Fanon, we'll see how in disclaimed Ahlem Mustaghanimi's 1988 novel *Body Memory*, (*Thâkiratu-l-Jasad*), beloved mother nation/territory (*umma*/*watan*) has become unresponsive to her left arm amputee of a lover before collapsing in *The Disorder of the Senses* (*Fawdha-l-hawas)* in 1998. In 1988 as well,

more acclaimed Attahir Al Ouettar wrote his novel *Tajriba fil- 'Ishk*, an experiment in the mad love of mad man, *majnûn*, for an unresponsive telephone pole he unceasingly calls by dialling the only number he knows, his own. Nationalism and internationalism have become dead ends and blind allies; their time is the spectral effect of some face, effaced at sea shore limit.

Fanon's Time

> Let us ask… how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours…Rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted…We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. This would be the exact opposite of Hobbe's project in Leviathan.
> —Michel Foucault, *Power and Knowledge.*

> Mon ultime prière: mon corps, fais de moi toujours un homme qui interroge.
> —Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire masques blancs.*

Interrogating Fanon's cultural time, a poet and an ideologue, is an adventure in ambiguity. His definition of culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself, and keeps itself in existence. Like Cabral, for whom "national liberation is necessarily an act of culture" (143), Fanon views culture as a political site and man as a political animal. While he recognises the transient role of folk expressions, he sees them in movement. Culture is brought to the political public realm and serves as an agonistic reactive praxis, an on-going continuous process accompanying the "on-going, uninterrupted processes of subjection" dissected by Foucault. National resistance is defined by a culture of resistance, and not by a resistant culture of some Proustian syndrome. National culture is also for Fanon, as it is for Du Bois, the site of global consciousness. As a prose politician, Fanon is partly affiliated to the French tradition of the 'enfants terribles' who, from Voltaire's Callas to Zola's Dreyfus to Gide's Congo to Sartre's Jews, defined intelligence by responsibility, and took the risk of unpatriotic deracination in interfering with the affairs of the City; partly to their African counterparts and men of words such as Senghor and Césaire, his teacher and early mentor at Fort de France, for whom the return back to the roots means triumphant time. As a transnational combatant, he is his

own father and akin to Argentinian Che Guevara of Cuba, who read literature to and fought for Bolivian peasants. To his philosophy teacher who resolved that white wars are a benediction for Blacks, Fanon answered: "chaque fois que la liberté est en question, nous sommes concernés, blancs, noirs ou jaunes, et chaque fois que la liberté sera menacée en quelque lieu que ce soit, je m'engagerai sans retour." (Manville 16). Unlike his rage, Fanon's culture is colour free.

Sartre and Césaire are seminal to the originary moment of his thought on black bodies and minds, but his experience of the Franco-Arab-African multinational inferno, like that of XIX$^{th.}$ Century French Carribean Ismail Urbain, also a descendant of slaves, architect of Napoleon III's Arab kingdom and author of *L'Algérie pour les Algeriens* leaves deeper wounds than his military engagement in the Nazi war and fixes the colour of his rage. In the Algeria that he likens to a new Ireland, Urbain "abandoned his initial utopian socialist hopes for progress and biracial harmony… and remained a foe of settler greed and repression to his death in 1884" (Burke 329). In Algeria too, a century later, French decorated corporal Fanon realises that the 'Parler c'est agir', by Sartre intended to plant freedom in the abyss of language, along with Césaire's poetic contemplations of the "black hole" of "mother Africa" as sources of truth, are miraculating productions of the same nature as Muntu meaning "power in Bantu" and so of small weight in the unmagical context of the physical and moral battering of resistant bodies, individual or collective. In his early days, he joins the Parisian post-war existentialist versus Marxist debates at the Café Saint-Germain-des-prés and *Black Skin* is produced as an after-text to Sartre's *Juif et anti-sémite*, in 1952. In 1954, when he has to mend the shreds of wretchedness, he joins the FLN (national liberation front) and his middle text, *Sociologie d'une révolution, l'an V de la révolution algérienne,* informs on more peculiar in group/ out group practices. His own praxis brings him closer to the cannibalistic logic of reciprocal exclusivity. His intellectual divide reflects the other divide. The final text of wretchedness, written in ten weeks in 1960 when he discovers that he has leukaemia, is his last disclosure of the violent politics of split spaces and minds.

Fanon's unorthodox Freudo-Marxism is a *lieu commun* in the literature. He historicises psyche and ontologises history, blackens the Marxian Milky way with a 'historical racial schema', and lactifies the Freudian inner geographies with the historical grammar of oppression. As he observes, Freud's ontogenesis was a reaction to the constitutionalist phylogenetic tendency of XIXth century. In his turn, he develops a sociogenesis that accounts for both the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic, to bring the specific

to the organic. The result is a blurring of the boundaries of anthropologism and formalism, of the subjective and the positive that leave his critics in an object or subject primacy conjectures. Also, his multidimensional sense accounts for the unthought private in Marx and the unthought public in Freud, who in their desire for a final resolution buried their dead in antithetic ways. As marginal insiders, their *judeité* was processed in contrapuntal fashions. Marx's was an anti-culturalist flight from interior time to positivist certitude, and Freud's was a retreat to the inner territories. Fanon's resolution grounded in the positive given of *negrité* demanded a different interpretation. *Arabité*, another unthinkable, further complicated the anthropological given. His under texts emanate from within the brutal, objectless, and triumphant normative; they account for the intersecting experiences of *judeité*, *negrité*, and *arabité*.

As a psychiatrist, Fanon was closest to the homo-sapiens-demens machine and to its specific and organic human constituents. He was well-equipped to theorise on the narratives from below the skin or the veil that fix the racial dimension beyond the human dimension. Nominalism gives in and to de-constructivism which gives in and to constructivism. Fanon, like W.E. Du Bois, interrogates the "beyond the veil" impossible possibility as a possibility of invention and freedom. Unlike Memmi, a non-epidermic inside-outsider, who exposes the banality of the mechanisms of domination, unlike Arendt who, against their banal evil, set the public mask to shield the private skin, Fanon faced depersonalisation in its schizophrenic, exterritorialised forms as well as in its paranoid, territorialized manifestations, and sought for a solution that re-founds humanity at large. Where they believed in institutional right, he exposed its illusions and the limits of the legal independence of the national state. Freedom is neither a formal statement nor some regained 'before life' state of being.

The problematics of national culture in Fanon is highlighted by neo-colonialism. As he has demonstrated, the ambivalent *compradore* bourgeoisie, its well-trained intellectuals, the urban proletariat, the army, and the police constitute the neo-colonial machine. Power now has a black or an Arab face: "the empty title of citizen" (DT112) is applied to the vast majority of peasant proletariat, to whom are also applied, Fanon says, the very western, very bourgeois, and scornful idea of total incapacity at self-governance (DT 38). *Lumpen* bourgeoisie and *lumpen* proletariat are the neo-colonial social divide that supplants the colonial racial divide. The first are *jouisseur* and compromised, the second have nothing to gain and nothing to lose; they have been decolonised and detribalised, and their past is as meaningless as their present. Their spontaneity equals their despair, and