PROJECT MUSE®

Stripping Away the Masks of Identity: Adorno and Fanon's Negative Dialectics

Sid Simpson, Ryan Curnow

Theory & Event, Volume 27, Number 3, July 2024, pp. 457-480 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2024.a932018*

For additional information about this article
https://muse.jhu.edu/article/932018

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

Stripping Away the Masks of Identity: Adorno and Fanon's Negative Dialectics

Sid Simpson and Ryan Curnow

Abstract This article stages a critical dialogue between Theodor Adorno and Frantz Fanon, arguing that their writings on negative dialectics and (non)identity thinking reveal the *political* non-identity of negative dialectics itself. First, we contend that Adorno and Fanon's negotiations of the violence inherent in identity thinking is paramount to their respective oeuvres. Second, we address criticisms of Adorno and Fanon's political response to the violence of identity thinking: that Adorno is an elitist conservative and Fanon an identitarian lover of violence. Finally, we interrogate how both exhibited their radically democratic commitment to the people's self-creation through their work on radio.

> I am not a prisoner of History. I should not seek there for the meaning of my destiny. I should constantly remind myself that the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence. In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.
>
> — Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

> Although [the magician's] task was impersonation he did not claim to be made in the image of the invisible power, as does civilized man, whose modest hunting ground then shrinks to the unified cosmos, in which nothing exists but prey. Only when made in such an image does man attain the identity of the self which cannot be lost in identification with the other but takes possession of itself once and for all as an impenetrable mask.
>
> — Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

At first blush, Theodor Adorno and Frantz Fanon appear almost entirely unalike. Adorno was a mid-twentieth-century Jewish émigré to the United States who spent his time writing on the aesthetics of avant-garde and pop culture, and whose political commitments were so painfully cautious that he was dismissed as having resigned himself to the proto-fascist status quo so decried in his dense writings. To his detractors, he was a left-wing elitist at best and a closeted conservative

Theory & Event Vol. 27, No. 3, 457–480 © 2024 Johns Hopkins University Press

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

at worst. Fanon, on the other hand, was born in the then-French colony of Martinique and studied psychoanalysis in France, before moving to Algeria and Tunisia in order to join the Front de Libération Nationale in their anti-colonial struggle during the Algerian War of Independence. Worlds apart from Adorno's musings on high culture and ostensible political quietism, Fanon did not shy away from the cleansing ontological force of strictly anti-colonial violence. Despite their differences, however, Adorno and Fanon root their analyses in a distinctly heterodox Hegelianism: negative dialectics, which rejects Hegel's famed "end of history" and instead uses its dialectical method to confront the violence inherent in the modern world and think through ways that it might be overcome. In this article, we stage a critical dialogue between Adorno and Fanon, paying specific attention to their writings on the relationship between the critical edge of negative dialectics—(non)identity thinking—and emancipatory struggle.

To be sure, Adorno and Fanon have been fruitfully placed within each other's contexts before. Namita Goswami, for instance, identifies in Adorno conceptual resources valuable for postcolonial thinking,[1] while Robyn Marasco has placed Fanon within the dialectical tradition of critical theory after Hegel.[2] Nonetheless, we argue that there is specific reason to read Adorno and Fanon directly against one another: their various writings on the relationship between negative dialectics and (non)identity thinking reveal the *political* non-identity of negative dialectics itself. We take as our inspiration the method of "creolization" as articulated by Jane Anna Gordon,[3] and extended by Michael Neocosmos.[4] For Gordon, creolization provincializes Europe, decentering Eurocentric concepts and ways of knowing in favor of bringing into conversation voices from outside of the colonial core. Neocosmos affirms this aim but insists that creolization be dialectical, in that the encounter explicitly seeks liberation by pushing beyond the boundaries of each thinkers' epistemological and ontological frameworks. Here, we intend to satisfy both Gordon and Neocosmos's intentions for creolization: first by demonstrating that "negative dialectics" is not merely the province of Western Marxism and instead animates various struggles in myriad places, and second by arguing that putting these two conceptions of negative dialectics into conversation dialectically frees them from the reified receptions each receives its respective context. More specifically, creolizing Adorno and Fanon's writings on negative dialectics forecloses the premature charges that the concerted rejection of identity thinking leads to political quietism (in Adorno's case) or a reactive advocacy of violence (in Fanon's case), and makes clear that the critical edge of negative dialectics is precisely the non-identity of its politics: the same critical method seeks different routes to emancipation in different material, social, and historical contexts.

In what follows, we proceed in three parts. In the first, we contend that Adorno and Fanon's negotiations of the violence inherent in identity thinking is paramount to their respective oeuvres; in Adorno's case identity thinking is inextricably intertwined with Western bourgeois subjectivity, culminating in social homogeneity and ultimately genocidal barbarism. In Fanon's case, the colonized intellectual and internalized inferiority complex described in *Black Skin White Masks*[5] issue from a certain kind of racial identity thinking: that the European white man is the archetypical human, and that ontological recognition is to be gained by faithful assimilation.

Though of course writing in vastly different contexts and from radically different positions (Adorno in his American exile, Fanon in colonial Martinique, the academy in Lyon, and the ferment of Algerian revolution), both identify the temptations above as masks. For Adorno, the stable of identities fabricated by the culture industry perpetually defer the individuality, happiness, and autonomy that they resolutely promise. The 'mask,' then, is the ostensibly happy semblance of autonomy that distracts from a bourgeois subjectivity fundamentally turned against itself. For Fanon, the 'mask' is that which he made famous in his first book: the mask of the white man, which the colonized with their internalized inferiority complex yearn to wear. Thus, in Adorno and Fanon's heterodox Hegelianisms it is identity thinking that must be undermined and destroyed.

In the second section, we turn our attention to the various criticisms of Adorno and Fanon's political response to the violence inherent in identity thinking: that Adorno is no more than an elitist conservative (by Jürgen Habermas,[6] various Leninists,[7] Jean-François Lyotard,[8] Georg Lukács,[9] the 60's student movements, and so on) and Fanon an identitarian lover of violence (most notably by Hannah Arendt[10]). In this precise context, creolizing Adorno and Fanon's negative dialectics and commitment to non-identity thinking exposes the superficiality of these charges and thereby illuminates the political non-identity of negative dialectics. The relevant concepts this section reads against each other are art (Adorno) and violence (Fanon). Of course, it would be a mistake to equate these categories for the aestheticization of violence is surely a route to fascism, as Walter Benjamin reminds us.[11] More important is their function in terms of demystifying the foundational violence of identity thinking. Art of the right kind, according to Adorno, holds the capacity to crystallize the tensions of social reality and in doing so safeguards the promise of a more humane future. In a similar way, anti-colonial violence for Fanon is a cleansing force: it forces the colonized to recognize the ontological trap of colonial identity thinking.

However, Adorno and Fanon's prescriptions are complicated in differing ways. Adorno's continuing negativity and anxiety about abstract articulation of utopia form the illusion that he sinks into a conservative resignation, even though he explicitly denies this charge. Fanon, on the other hand, writes at length about the necessity of absolutizing one's negativity: in his case, the necessity of embracing the Negritude movement and "losing himself in the night of the absolute"[12] for the sake of a new humanism. Nevertheless, while these two political prescriptions are distinctly different, they similarly function in a way that we might recognize through this exercise of creolization: dispelling the violence of identity and waging a war against reification as well as our own unknowing collusion in it.

Lest either Adorno or Fanon be written off as fighting for an inconceivably distant future, the final section of this article interrogates how they both exhibited their radically democratic commitment to the people's self-creation through their work on radio. Adorno's Radio Research Project was an attempt to form democratic leadership through a particular kind of democratic pedagogy. Fanon's famous participation in the *Voice of Algeria* was likewise an experiment in radical democratic self-creation: according to Nigel Gibson, the truth of the nation was produced through the program's sporadic absences and in the conversations of the Algerian people.[13] Put even more strongly, those who claimed to have heard the *Voice* represent a revolutionary Reason.

Yet again, our intention here is less to place these two projects in a relationship of equivalence (or identity), but rather to fortify the insight from the previous section: negative dialectics yield *neither* conservatism *nor* reactionary violence, even if the various forms of non-identity thinking appropriate to their historical and geographical contexts appear this way. Negative dialectics, as seen in Adorno and Fanon, rather proves to be non-identical in terms of its own political prescriptions. It does, however, always tend away from the violence of reification and toward the freedom inherent in non-identity.

Masks of Identity

Though it may be tempting to organize a missed encounter between Adorno and Fanon around their renegotiations of Marxism, we contend that it is their respective heterodox Hegelianisms that provide the best vantage point from which to creolize these thinkers. On first glance, Adorno and Fanon appear to take up and rework quite different aspects of Hegel's thought: Adorno's well-known rebuke to Hegel that "the whole is the False" (*Das Ganze ist das Unwahre*) animates his conception of negative dialectics, while Fanon's most noted mediation of Hegel is found in his critique of the master-slave dialectic.

Nonetheless, Adorno and Fanon find crucial common ground in that apprehending and subverting the violence of identity thinking is *the* motivating factor in their critical philosophies. It is for this reason that we claim both Adorno and Fanon as negative dialecticians: they both broadly take up the Hegelian dialectical conception of history, wherein history progresses through the continuous process of overcoming the contradictions inherent in social totality, but eschew the Hegelian faith in any specific telos at the end of history (and especially in constitutional monarchy, as Hegel himself contends)—a faith they find inextricably intertwined with identity-thinking.

Adorno's critique of identity thinking is a facet of his broader inversion of Hegel. On the Hegelian view consciousness is compelled by reason to transcend itself, gradually overcoming the insufficiencies of unreflected concepts. This self-overcoming occurs through a process of determinate negation, which takes stock of both the conditions of possibility as well as the limits of concepts, as opposed to mere abstract negation, a position of pure skepticism. For Hegel, the dialectical history of consciousness coming to know itself through Reason culminates in the "positive" totality of Bourgeois society. However, for Adorno this totality must itself be historicized and negated lest we forfeit what is properly dialectical about Hegel's method: just as each determinate negation is a single aspect in history, so too is any positive moment. A positive totality, then, stands in contradiction with a method of determinate negation.[14] Moreover, Adorno's break from Hegel is both logical *and* historical. As it turned out, the ostensible climax of reason coming to know itself in bourgeois society did *not* produce the conditions wherein one could feel at home in the world. Instead, Adorno and his Frankfurt School counterparts were writing in the wake of the Holocaust and the calamity of the World Wars. As he famously put it in *Negative Dialectics*, "No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb."[15]

A further wrinkle is that humanity's *capacity* for determinate negation has become disabled under modern capitalist society; the relationship between concept and object has reified. As Adorno puts it, "concepts are no longer measured against their contents, but instead are taken in isolation, so that people take up attitudes toward them without bothering to inquire further into the truth context of what they refer to."[16] In other words, determinate negation is no longer possible if consciousness readily identifies concepts as rationally identical with their objects, i.e. *engages in identity thinking*, despite the manifestly barbarous state of the world under capitalism. In more concrete terms, it is a distorted identity thinking that makes social and economic relations appear as natural laws rather than contingent processes in

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

motion. Worse still, this reified form of cognition under capitalism prevents people from recognizing the continuities between the capitalism blooming in America and the fascism raging in Germany.

For Adorno, then, it is of the highest importance to articulate and critique the social institutions that serve as obstacles to making determinate negation possible again. For precisely this reason Adorno famously spends much of his attention dissecting the inner workings of what he calls the culture industry, which fabricates and reproduces the false identity of universal and particular.[17] As Adorno explains, its function is to provide the semblance of freedom and style while in reality "infecting everything with sameness."[18] The culture industry succeeds in this swindle by selling a kind of *mask*; it enflames consumers' desires with sleek advertisements and sexual innuendo on the silver screen, then promises them pleasure and freedom should they only buy the product being advertised. Unsurprisingly, when the consumers' wildest dreams are not fulfilled they are told that a *newer, better* commodity will surely bring them what they so desire. This endless treadmill of disappointments and further promises "inescapably reproduces human beings as what the whole has made them,"[19] causing individuals to "experience themselves through their needs only as eternal consumers, as the culture industry's object."[20]

The irony, of course, is that consumers convince themselves of their autonomy and happiness amongst this directionless shuffle, emulating the various stereotypes that make up the "style" of the day. More perverse still, these pseudo-individualities pose as explicit breaks from the homogeneity of everyday life. That is, the culture industry *makes identity-thinking appear as non-identity thinking.* In Horkheimer and Adorno's characteristically caustic formulation:

> From the standardized improvisation in jazz to the original film personality who must have a lock of hair straying over her eyes so that she can be recognized as such, pseudoindividuality reigns. The individual trait is reduced to the ability of the universal so completely to mold the accidental that it can be recognized as accidental. The sulky taciturnity or the elegant walk of the individual who happens to be on show is serially produced like the Yale locks which differ by fractions of a millimeter.[21]

In other words, the culture industry posits a false identity between concept and object by conflating pseudo-individuality with individuality, commodified style with style.

Thus, the culture industry reifies thought in at least three ways: it homogenizes consumers' desires and experiences, it translates the desire for freedom into the language of capitalist Hollywood cliché, and in its resolute sameness it excludes the new by "reject[ing] anything

untried as a risk."[22] In other words, by falsely collapsing the distance between the concept and the object, it renders determinate negation impossible. Nevertheless, the culture industry persists because it postures as the antithesis to the unfreedom that it itself generates. As Adorno puts it, "the culture industry presents that same everyday world as paradise. Escape, like elopement, is destined from the first to lead back to its starting point. Entertainment fosters the resignation which seeks to forget itself in entertainment."[23] For Adorno, then, we must break out of this cycle by refusing the semblance of freedom promised by the culture industry and identifying it more accurately as a mask that obscures the violence inherent in false identity.

Fanon's critique of identity thinking likewise involves a mask, though it was forged by European colonialism rather than the American culture industry. Writing as a Martinican studying the psychological effects of European colonialism in France itself, he explains that white civilization and European culture have imposed and enforced through violence an ontological division fundamentally organized by the color of one's skin. As Fanon describes this view, "Black and White represent the two poles of this world, poles in perpetual conflict: a genuinely Manichaean notion of the world. There, we've said it—Black or White, that is the question." [24]

Of course, this racist system and its attendant categories are the historical constructions of coloniality; from the point of view of the racist gaze, blackness is a negation of the European's foundational whiteness rather than an identity unto itself. In Fanon's words, "the black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. From one day to the next, the Blacks have had to deal with two systems of reference. Their metaphysics, or less pretentiously their customs and the agencies to which they refer, were abolished because they were in contradiction with a new civilization that imposed its own."[25] Thus, the white gaze of colonialism denies blackness its ontology. Stefan Bird-Pollan articulates the stakes clearly: "The problem is simply that racism prevents the black man from appearing to the white man as a *man*—that is, as someone to be considered in his human possibility."[26] What's worse, this ontological inferiority is "epidermalized"—signified inescapably by one's skin. The superficial evaluation and interpellation into colonial categories by the white gaze animates Fanon's well-known description of the white child exclaiming to his *maman*, "Look, a Negro!" upon seeing him.[27] For Fanon, the colonial denial of black ontology occurs at this moment of his perception; in this "suffocating reification"[28] Fanon does not even have the ontological standing to contest its denial.

This colonial Manichean division is a pathological view for both colonizer *and* colonized.[29] Much of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* is

dedicated to describing how the colonized black man pathologically tries to achieve recognition—or ontological existence—through assimilating into precisely the colonial categories that deny his existence in the first place. This attempt to achieve ontological existence may occur through gaining the love of a white partner—what Fanon dismissively calls "lactification"[30]—or in the case of the colonized intellectual through gaining expertise in the literature of Europe. From this vantage point, for the black man "there is only one way out, and it leads to the white world."[31] It is not hard to see, given the Manichean ontological division internalized by the colonizers and colonized, how the colonized feel the need to don the titular "white masks."

It is in this context that Fanon re-reads Hegel's well-known master/slave dialectic. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* describes the struggle of the subject to gain recognition; it develops in various stages, beginning with the subject's consciousness and later attainment of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is characterized by a constitutive tension between its self-understanding as both whole *and* divided, which precipitates a fruitless fight to the death with the Other. However, the subject realizes that it cannot be satisfied through domination of the Other. Rather than destroying the Other, then, the subject enslaves it with the intention of gaining its recognition. In this dialectic, the master demands recognition from the slave but does not reciprocate; the slave is a non-entity in the master's eyes. The slave, through their fear and toil for the master, gains a sense of independence and essentiality knowing that the master depends on their efforts. The initial relationship flips into its opposite: the master becomes dependent on the slave, whereas the slave develops individuality through their struggle.

Fanon deftly points out that Hegel's story does not fit into the colonial context. It is worth quoting him at length here:

> For Hegel there is reciprocity; here the master scorns the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work. Likewise, the slave here can in no way be equated with the slave who loses himself in the object and finds the source of his liberation in his work. The black slave wants to be like his master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. For Hegel, the slave turns away from the master and turns toward the object. Here the slave turns toward the master and abandons the object.[32]

That is, Fanon identifies a "double blockage"[33] in the master/slave dialectic when applied to the colonial context: the master does not turn to the slave because they do not need their recognition, and the slave cannot turn away from the master for they see in them their salvation. For this reason, even though the black man has historically been

set free by the master,[34] they enjoy only an illusory freedom—a false universal: "the black man did not become a master. When there are no more slaves, there are no masters. The black man is a slave who was allowed to assume a master's attitude. The white man is a master who allowed his slaves to eat at his table."[35] That is, the liberty and justice which the black man has been promised are merely "values secreted by his masters,"[36] values that nevertheless continue to negate the ontological being of blackness.

This false promise is the core of Fanon's critique of identity thinking; Hegel's master/slave dialectic fails in the colonial context because it universalizes a distinctly racist conception of freedom and the subject that can attain it. When the colonized subject attempts to realize the promise of freedom extended by white society, they yearn for the very ontological recognition that European colonialism denies. In this way what Fanon termed the colonized's "inferiority complex," though profoundly different, bears a functional parallel with Adorno's description of life under the culture industry insofar as colonialism preserves its own existence by continuously extending a false promise of liberation through assimilation. In order to break out of this cycle, in which proficiency in whiteness or entrance into white culture ostensibly guarantees freedom, Fanon argues that colonial identity thinking must be fractured. The colonized must no longer look to white culture as the route to ontological recognition, for it is a dead end. Put simply, the white mask must be lifted.

In the final analysis, for both Adorno and Fanon identity thinking functions in the service of domination insofar as it reifies emancipation as something attainable within the system that produces the domination in the first place. The primary issue is that non-identity thinking, or the capacity to identify the falsity of the universal promised by these systems, is blocked by the system in question. It should be no surprise, then, that both thinkers articulate the need to restart the dialectic that had become stalled by staging a break with the self-contained systems of fascistic capitalist excess and colonialism, respectively. However, as we will discuss in the next section, their mechanisms for staging this break are radically different.

Art and Violence

Following Robyn Marasco, both Adorno and Fanon can comfortably be understood as negative dialecticians insofar as the critique of identity-thinking is central to their work. For each, the work of determinate negation is a sort of "unmasking"—of either the commodified pseudo-style of the culture industry or the whiteness that promises recognition. However, Adorno and Fanon take two strikingly different paths

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

in their attempt to outline a strategy of non-identity thinking: Adorno through his infamous embrace of abstract art and Fanon through his unapologetic advocacy of politically-organized counterviolence—or anti-colonial violence—as a cleansing force. In this section, we interpret both of these responses to identity thinking as specific political attempts to make determinate negation possible again, notwithstanding the fact that these prescriptions seem quite obviously different, if not opposed. In doing so, we respond to the superficial critiques of non-identity thinking as quietist or complacent (in Adorno's case) or identitarian, reactionary, and unreflectively violent (in Fanon's case). Moreover, by offering these interpretations we argue a further point: non-identity's political forms are themselves non-identical, and the space between Adorno and Fanon's political prescriptions makes clear the multitudinous variety of political forms of non-identity thinking. In this way, we critique the reification at the heart of claims that negative dialectics is a reactionary dead end.

For Adorno, looking to artistic media may at first appear a perplexing choice. Why, given the way that the culture industry fabricates art with the primary intent of homogenizing thought, should we look to a medium that has been so effectively enlisted in our domination? Adorno is quick to point out that it is only art of a certain kind that holds radical potential; rather than the glossy, mass manufactured goods of mass culture, it is avant-garde art that contains a moment of negative truth. In his unfinished *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno describes its function:

> Art is semblance even at its highest peaks; but its semblance, the irresistible part of it, is given to it by what is not semblance. What art, notably the art decried as nihilistic, says in refraining from judgments is that everything is not just nothing. If it were, whatever is would be pale, colorless, indifferent. No light falls on men and things without reflecting transcendence. Indelible from the resistance to the fungible world of exchange is the resistance of the eye that does not want the colors of the world to fade. Semblance is a promise of nonsemblance.[37]

In its esotericism and steadfast refusal to conform to what his Frankfurt School colleague Herbert Marcuse would eventually call "affirmative" culture, certain kinds of modern art interrupt the cycle of reification that produces the consumerist "masks" described above and in doing so afford a glimpse at a less barbarous future.

To be sure, this kind of art functions critically precisely because it breaks so sharply with the pseudo-style of the culture industry, upending the falsity of harmony and beauty in favor of dissonance and negation—a process Adorno calls "de-aestheticization."[38] A case

in point is one of Adorno's preferred musicians, Arnold Schönberg, whose forays into atonality and serialism "expressed a refusal to compromise with the unresolved dissonances of contemporary society."[39] In Schönberg's musical compositions, as well as in the work of other artists such as Pablo Picasso, Franz Kafka and Georg Trakl, Adorno identified a refusal to submit to commodified life under the culture industry. That is, in their dissonance and defiance of instrumental rationality these pieces of art crystallize the tensions in social reality obscured by the endless march of advertising and consumerism. On Adorno's analysis, art that de-aestheticizes the culture industry is engaged in the work of de-reification—lifting the mask of pseudo-individuality from consumers who convince themselves that by wearing it they are happy.

It is not difficult to see why many were critical of Adorno's position. Though it may follow from his critique of pop culture, his embrace of high culture was easy to construe as a form of left-wing elitism.[40] More worrisome, however, is the charge that looking to the aesthetic realm for its ability to portray the unreason of social reality under capitalism does not yield any tangible form of praxis. Indeed, this is the tack that most of Adorno's sharpest critics take. Georg Lukács, whose criticism stings all the more because his reformulation of the concept reification was so influential in Adorno's work, put it memorably: the Frankfurt School resides in the "grand hotel abyss," enjoying the niceties of high culture while the liberalism around them threatens to collapse into fascism at any moment.[41] Jürgen Habermas, whose own account is particularly significant given his position *within* the Frankfurt School, called Adorno's seeming political quietism a "strategy of hibernation."[42] A final nail in Adorno's critical coffin was his condemnation by the student movements of the late '60s, which had begun to protest his lectures on the grounds the he had given up his radical critique of the status quo in favor of a defeated conservatism.

These critiques would have been damning had it been true that Adorno believed avant-garde art represented *the* singular reprieve from capitalist domination. However, in the broader context of Adorno's critique of identity thinking these charges miss their mark. Adorno remained adamant that there was work left to be done carving out space in the totally administered society for determinate negation. Even in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, what Habermas called Horkheimer and Adorno's "blackest, most nihilistic book,"[43] he maintains that Enlightenment still contains a positive moment: "We have no doubt—and herein lies our *petitio principii* – that freedom in society is inseparable from enlightenment thinking."[44]

In a dialectical twist, this "positive" moment is relentlessly negative. "Intellect's true concern," write Horkheimer and Adorno, "is a

negation of reification."[45] Or in other words, intellect's true concern is *negating identity-thinking*. This is why when Adorno was accused of resigning himself to a cowardly life detached from politics, he responded that the unreflective embrace of praxis over theory represents precisely the prohibition on thinking that risks reifying political action.[46] He went so far as to call the protests "pseudo-activity," explaining that freedom can only be obtained through the concerted effort to lift the mask of identity thinking:

> When the doors are barricaded, it is doubly important that thought not be interrupted. It is rather the task of thought to analyse the reasons behind this situation and to draw the consequences from these reasons. It is the responsibility of thought not to accept the situation as finite. If there is any chance of changing the situation, it is only through undiminished insight. The leap into praxis will not cure thought from resignation as long as it is paid for with the secret knowledge that this course is simply not the right one.[47]

It was not true, then, that Adorno had given up on political praxis. Rather, he understood praxis to be inseparable from the work of de-reifying identity thinking. He was so thoroughly committed to this position that it encompassed even purely theoretical articulations of political emancipation. In *Minima Moralia* Adorno writes that "abstract utopia is all too compatible with the most insidious tendencies of society," admitting only that emancipation would require the "realization of universality in the reconciliation of differences."[48] Put simply, Adorno saw utopian thinking as easily coopted by identity thinking, and thought that actual freedom would be realized through the true identity of object and concept rather than the false equivalency peddled by the culture industry.

Thus, through the lens of his negotiation of identity thinking, Adorno is not at all resigned; he continually tried to keep the acts that felt political to millions from being woven into the fabric of the mask of identity thinking. While superficially we might think of Adorno as demonstrating the tired claim that non-identity thinking leads to a sort of complacence or conservativism, the truth is quite the opposite: his work revolves around a concerted effort to *avoid* complacence or conservatism, as his negative dialectics are attuned to the way that both the culture industry and the pseudo-activity protesting it work to the benefit of capitalism.

If Adorno's critics associated his negative dialectics with a complacent and quietistic conservatism, we might look to his fellow un-masker Frantz Fanon for a negative dialectic that "reeks of red-hot cannonballs and bloody knives."[49] As we argued above, Fanon's writing revolves around articulating and subsequently destroying the identity thinking

embedded in the Manichean categories of colonialism. The colonized Black man is trapped in a never-ending cycle, he wrote, attempting to embrace the white world in the hopes that it would afford him ontological existence. Fanon's political response is to break out of the vicious cycle, though in a way that attracted almost entirely the opposite critiques that Adorno endured.

For Fanon, violence *is* the answer—but only when organized politically in the struggle for liberation against the colonizers. The colonial world is racially compartmentalizing and ontologically totalizing, and the only way out is to destroy it totally. As Nigel C. Gibson puts it, "there is no need for nuance."[50] Crucially, such anti-colonial violence is no mere outlet for frustration. Rather, it serves a critical ontological role: violence against the colonizer destroys the system that produces the white mask in the first place, exposing it as a fraud, a false hope for recognition. In this way, such violence is what Fanon calls a "cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them, and restores their self-confidence."[51] That is, anti-colonial violence allows the colonized to "decipher social reality"[52]—it is *enlightening*.

More important still, the negative of destroying colonial categories is dialectically intertwined with the positive of forging a new people. At the same time that Fanon writes that decolonization is "always a violent event," he also explains that "the 'thing' colonized becomes a man through the very process of liberation."[53] In this way, the creation and realization of Fanon's "new humanism" is inseparable from the physical, violent reintroduction of non-identity into a system animated by a racist false universality. For this reason, Gibson explains that "it is not violence *per se* but the process of liberation that is central to the 'embodiment of history' and the creation of a revolutionary agency that begins to strip away colonial reification."[54] Summarizing Gibson's position elegantly, Marasco writes simply that Black consciousness "is the work of determinate negation."[55] Thus, reading Fanon as a critic of identity thinking allows us to successfully correlate his writings on violence, liberation, and the ontological trap of the white mask.

Given his open embrace of anticolonial violence, Fanon has predictably been subject to critique. The more common form takes issue simply with the political use of violence as such, dialectical or otherwise. Hannah Arendt is perhaps the most well-known and sympathetic of these voices; in her essay "On Violence" she remarked at various points that Fanon was doubtful of violence even as he promoted it,[56] though in the end she could not help but count him as one of the few thinkers who "glorified violence for violence's sake."[57] Such interpretative confusions and slippages may, as Kathryn Batchelor has argued, been a consequence of considerable nuance and context being lost

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

from Fanon's writings in their translation from French into English. As she points out, Fanon was ever careful to refer to anti-colonial violence as "*cette praxis violente*," which situates it in his dialectical exchange with Sartre and more importantly clarifies that this political tactic's *praxis* is oriented towards the goal of detoxifying the colonized of European justifications for colonization: ontological, material, and so on.[58] For Batchelor, Fanon is clear in the original French that anti-colonial violence is *work* oriented towards a liberatory goal, rather than the ongoing violence of the colonial status quo perpetuated by Europe. In the context of the argument above, then, Arendt's characterization—as well as Fanon's broader English reception—could not be further from the truth; what Fanon meant by anti-colonial violence was a political strategy that dialectically razed the system responsible for the erasure of Black ontology at the same time that it produced a *tabula rasa* upon which a new humanism might emerge. The charge that Fanon embraces violence for the sake of violence portrays him as an anti-dialectical reactionary, whereas his writings on national culture and Black consciousness prove decidedly otherwise.

A second, considerably more careful critique leveled against Fanonian violence is that it risks a certain romanticism or essentialism—that it flees into its own identity thinking. Fanon, after all, wrote of the revolutionary importance of Négritude, the anti-colonial Pan-Africanist literary movement whose co-founder Aimé Césaire mentored him as a youth in Martinique. Négritude on its own was radical, but proceeded on the basis of a homogenizing identity of Black men and women's identity across the entirety of Africa in a nostalgically imagined past. That is, the movement relied on a retrograde and essentializing identity-thinking in order to negate European civilization.

Fanon, ever the astute critic of identity thinking, knew better than to counter European identity thinking with one of his own. Rather, his engagement with Négritude is characteristically Hegelian: given that Blackness and whiteness were categories constructed by colonialism, he identifies the Pan-African history celebrated by the movement as a projection of European civilization. As Kwame Anthony Appiah puts it, "the purportedly essential qualities of the Negro Spirit that were celebrated by the writers of Négritude were in fact a European fantasy."[59] At the same time, however, Fanon simultaneously defends the subjective need to embrace that constructed identity, if only temporarily. That is, Fanon adopts a *strategic* essentiality in the fight to destroy colonialism. If a white mask was being torn off, a Black mask had to be donned in battle.

Of course, Fanon ultimately transcends Négritude in favor of his new humanism—one that relies on determinate negation and endless self-creation. In his words,

> I am not a prisoner of History. I must not look for the meaning of my destiny in that direction. I must constantly remind myself that the real leap consists of introducing invention into life. In the world I am heading for, I am endlessly creating myself. I show solidarity with humanity provided I can go one step further.[60]

Nevertheless, significant portions of *Black Skin* are dedicated to Fanon's own negotiation of his dialectical journey into and beyond Négritude. Famously, Fanon regarded Jean-Paul Sartre's characterization of the literary movement as a "weak stage" in the dialectic of liberation as a betrayal: Sartre's Hegelian view of Négritude robbed Fanon of his spontaneity and autonomy, dragging him back down to earth by emphasizing Négritude's mere relativity in History. Rather than unreflectively accept or reject Sartre's position, however, Fanon painfully reproaches him for being insufficiently dialectical. As he wrote in *Black Skin*, "For once this friend, this born Hegelian, had forgotten that consciousness needs to get lost in the night of the absolute, the only condition for attaining self-consciousness."[61] And only a few paragraphs later, "I needed to lose myself totally in negritude. Perhaps one day, deep in this wretched romanticism… In any case I *needed* not to know. This struggle, this descent once more, should be seen as a completed aspect."[62] It is in this exchange with Sartre that Fanon's *knowing* and *strategic* essentialism—his use of identity thinking against identity thinking in order to bring about the possibility of non-identity thinking—is clearest. To use the Hegelian turn of phrase, Fanon knew it was necessary to tarry with the negative if the colonized were to ever make themselves anew.

To be fair, some of the colonized *did* allow their negativity to become reified. *The Wretched of the Earth* singles out colonized intellectuals in particular for remaining reactive in their anti-colonial struggle, ultimately doing nothing more than inverting the identity thinking that they opposed. Inversion, even in its most vociferous form, does not yet destroy colonial categories themselves. As Fanon warns, the colonized intellectual "accepts the cogency of these [Western] ideas and there in the back of his mind stood a sentinel on duty guarding the Greco-Roman pedestal."[63] Fanon himself, however, cannot be painted with the same brush. His account of violence takes as its bearing the destruction of colonial identity thinking, even if it must tarry with its own for a time.

As with Adorno, Fanon's project of unmasking is the process of revealing the false universality of concept and object that keeps people in subjection. Though Adorno's turn toward avant-garde art and Fanon's reliance on violence seem opposed at first—the former lambasted for its perceived quietism and the latter dismissed as reactionary or merely bloodthirsty—both of these political strategies are

foundationally attempts to negotiate the violence of identity-thinking and the subject's unknowing participation in its perpetuation. In this way, the political nature of non-identity thinking is *itself* non-identical, appearing in *both* the dissonance of Schönberg's 12-tone compositions as well as the blood-filled pools on the colonial battleground. The politics of non-identity are thus mediated by the conditions of possibility against which identity thinking ossifies. On these grounds, the usual dismissals of negative dialectics as politically vacuous or dangerously reactive both miss the mark, but in the same way: they reify the political commitments of a critical approach to social reality that proceeds by de-reification. Put simply, such detractors apply identity thinking to the non-identity thinking of negative dialectics, and in doing so forfeit what is truly critical in thinkers as varied as Adorno and Fanon.

Democratic Praxis on the Radio

Though art and violence may appear as opposing extremes of non-identity thinking, the continuity of Adorno and Fanon's negative dialectics is laid bare in their overlapping analyses of the promise of a new technology: the radio. The two find in the radio, for non-identical yet not totally dissimilar reasons, a genuinely popular means of actualizing their respective interconnected values of free thought and revolutionary self-creation. In other words, toward the end of invigorating non-identity thinking and the path towards genuine emancipation, both see the radio as a dialectical vessel of democratic possibility. Adorno's writings on and participation in radio broadcasting, through its practical accessibility, combines his critical view of art with his broad aim of real self-emancipation. Likewise, in the practice of listening with *The Voice of Algeria* Fanon finds his own outlet for the imperative to decolonize through collective self-invention.

As we argued above, for Adorno the practice of challenging the reified mask of the culture industry relies on the capacity of avant-garde art to de-aestheticize commodified pseudo-style. This call for non-semblance, fighting against the sameness of the totally administered society's cultural arm, reflects the imperative to actualize determinate negation in society—the act of critical thinking in the minds of people in general. Following the same logic, Adorno's regard for *democracy* extends the value of critique to the real, practical realm of people's self-administration. On his analysis, to avoid identity-thinking in the realm of political or social organization and thereby make room for the non-identical requires us to abandon the false styles, needs, and beliefs of mass society, which he and Horkheimer argue in *Dialectic* represses anything that is different. This is why, for Adorno, "Not only does democracy require the freedom to criticize and need critical impulses.

Democracy is nothing less than defined by critique."[64] In this way, the people's ability to critique must not only be allowed, but fostered in order to dispel the illusion of pure identity rooted in dogmatic fear and mystified by reification, and renew our capacity for transcendence via determinate negation. It is no mere interdisciplinary coincidence, then, that as soon as we begin to look at Adorno's treatment of radio-broadcast music, it is clear that he is focused on providing a "critical and pedagogical forum directed toward the *consumers*…"[65]

Adorno's initial engagement with the radio as a social phenomenon is defined by his observation of "pseudo-democracy" at work in its traditional structure and distribution. Having in mind both the right-wing populism of Nazi Germany and the similarly homogenizing force of the culture industry in America, Adorno detects in the medium of the radio the ability for listeners to be overwhelmed and consumed by the seeming authenticity and intimacy of status quo-reinforcing radio addresses and cultural products.[66] For this reason, he and Horkheimer write in *Dialectic* that the radio "takes on the deceptive form of a disinterested, impartial authority, which fits fascism like a glove. In fascism radio becomes the universal mouthpiece of the *Führer;* in the loudspeakers on the street his voice merges with the howl of sirens proclaiming panic, from which modern propaganda is hard to distinguish in any case."[67] With this critical foundation, Adorno sought to counter these authoritarian practices of conformity by writing on how they can be challenged through the already culturally-influenced minds of the listeners who nevertheless directly engage with the radio.

As Shannon Mariotti argues insightfully,[68] Adorno saw in the radio an opportunity for programs oriented around the listener's critical thinking for purposes of both cultural and political non-identity thinking. She explains that Adorno finds "countertendencies" in "the way people respond to and interact with radio, highlighting the various tactics that listeners employ to assert their own autonomy over and against the authority of radio, showing how their ways of interacting with it contain a latent frustration and a nascent critique that might be drawn out as a vaccine."[69] "Vaccine" is Adorno's own metaphor, suggesting the medical technique of cultivating stronger immunity through exposure to lower concentrations of the threat. In thematic terms, the radio harbors the possibility for critical thought insofar as it brings into relief the non-identical through vaccine-forms of the identitarian condition. Among a handful of other counter-tendencies intertwined with the act of radio listening, one radically basic impulse in particular will prove to resonate with Fanon: the simple act of "[a]djusting the dial to get 'good reception'… Behind this desire lies another 'hidden resistance' to the static authority represented by the radio. Here, the listener connects with, interacts with, tries to work

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

the machinery himself to exert some agency over it."[70] Of course, this tendency must be conceptually qualified in order to account for a real and valid moment of autonomy.

On the one hand, we may read this disposition of radio-listeners as a classic instantiation of the futile view that one may "vote with one's dollars" in a capitalist society, pretending that one's desires are not already deeply manipulated consciously by external forces. However for Adorno, ever the dialectician, this phenomenon's significance is not what it is merely in itself, but what these events represent for real autonomy's potentiality. Although turning the dial and wishing through one's own will for something different from what is presented to them beyond their will, "doesn't really accomplish anything and is a fruitless gesture of opposition, Adorno is interested in the impulse that lies behind it, the desire to resist, the rejection of the standardization that radio offers."[71] As a self-contained agential act, the turning of the dial does not offer much, yet it is animated by the desire for non-semblance and the real particularity of non-identity. In spite of the culture industry's efforts, there remains a latent will to difference, and that, by Adorno's view, must be seen as a possible avenue for illuminating the culture industry as it really is and systematically de-aestheticizing it. Though everyone turns the dial, it is up to democratic leaders and educators to help point out the meaning of this simple act with regards to mass culture's contingent, yet deeply authoritarian, character.

With Fanon we see a similarly dialectical perspective on the radio as a vehicle for both preserving and challenging the status quo, yet in this case within the context of colonization and the will to decolonize. Like radio's authoritarian tendencies in acting as the extended voice of the *Führer* or the administered society in general, radio in the context of colonial Algeria helped to serve as a facilitator of colonial domination. The ability of the French administration to more easily communicate with itself as well as extend French culture into the colony made radio into an initial device of antagonism, thus leading to a "rejection of the radio" which, as Gibson writes, "expressed the resistance among the colonized to the extension of the colonialists' 'sensorial powers.'"[72] However, this "reactionary reflex"[73] of initially rejecting the radio gave way to a dialectical appropriation of the technology and French language. When appropriated by the Algerian people and used to form *The Voice of Algeria*, the radio would become an essential tool in strengthening the decolonial movement.

According to Fanon, by using the radio for the revolutionary movement's communication and coordination, the Algerian people contributed to their own self-liberation through their attempts to interpret the static-ridden radio transmissions—thereby enacting a radically self-creative subjectivity following the deconstruction of the

Manichean worldview. The static, and thus the vagueness of the transmissions that were nonetheless integral to maintaining communication at important strategic junctures, presented a challenge to the non-militant Algerian people playing this role. It became a matter of both interpretation and deliberation, attentively and creatively listening to the static of the radio in order to suggest possible transmissions and submitting these suggestions to an assembly of other interpreters in pursuit of a common consensus that would go on to play its communicative role in the revolution. In this act, "The idea of truth now took on a different character as it was invented in a social and revolutionally democratic context: in this collectivity, truth becomes subjective and subjectivity acquires a dimension of truth."[74] With no other forms of empirical or logical truth available, the social context fell entirely upon the self-conscious agency of the interpreting listeners and their discourse. It was not a matter of manipulating truth as such in any way, but of *creating* it. In this act of ultimate subjectivity, enslaved to neither an oppressive sense of objectivity nor an undialectical outright rejection of objective truth, the people's autonomous self-invention became concretely characterized, demonstrably defeating the Manichean colonial logic of good European subjects and inferior African followers. Moreover, Fanon notes that an additional radical element of Algerian radio praxis, equally essential to the prior aspects in the long term, is the relative independence that the Algerian people are able to maintain from the militant revolutionary leaders during the course of decolonization. When the people interpreted the radio transmissions, it could not have been a matter of merely following commands given by the National Liberation Front (FLN); rather, the FLN explicitly depended on the cooperation of non-militant listeners. Unlike the relation of colonial master and colonized slave, a relation onto which the emancipatory potential of Hegel's master-slave dialectic could only be mapped spuriously, this relationship between militants and assemblies was veritably reciprocal.[75]

As with Adorno's demand for art's non-semblance in the desire to manipulate the radio and its offerings from the culture industry, we can glimpse a reflection of Fanon's principled argument for violence. Not only does violence autonomize the colonized, it does so in a way that is durable against opportunistic would-be demagogues and dictators: "Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic, and even if they have been demobilized by rapid decolonization, the people have time to realize that their liberation was the achievement of each and every one and no special merit should go to the leader."[76] Both in the real mutual suffering of decolonial violence and the integral collective hermeneutic of the people's assemblies, one may see the people's concrete ability to act as the organizing foundation in more than just

name. When the people topple the colonial regime and create truths to be relayed in the formation of such historic events, there is no need for a leader to speak for them and claim power.

Adorno and Fanon's analyses of the radio demonstrate their commitment to non-identity thinking, and by extension contextualize their accounts of art and violence within the broader negative dialectical project of un-masking identity thinking. What formerly conveyed the voice of the fascist leader or colonizer was instead recast as a stage upon which radical and self-critical autonomy might be founded. It is telling that despite his characteristic anxiety to articulate non-reified forms of thought and action, Adorno's writing on the possibilities of radio listening make clearest his commitment to critical thought. As Mariotti points out, in his essay "Radio Physiognomics" Adorno counters the seeming pessimism of his well-known image of critical thought as messages in bottles to some distant future: "We want to face the danger of this sea, not for the sake of fleeing to cultural islands, but for better navigation. Any investigator who does not see the dangers of that sea and who simply allows himself to be drugged by its grandeur, and who sees its waves as waves of unbroken progress, is very likely to be drowned."[77] Likewise, Fanon's battle cry for violence is but one aspect of a larger dialectical project; the act of violence is not an end in itself, but a necessary condition for the emergence of a new humanism. For both thinkers, then, the radio is both a reflection of the historical conditions in which they are writing and a microcosm of the dialectical possibility of autonomy through the act of un-masking.

Conclusion

Creolizing Adorno and Fanon does more than simply bring the two thinkers into productive conversation across colonial asymmetries of power: it also keeps the emancipatory edge of their writings relevant by historically situating their conceptions of negative dialectics, freeing them—and their method—from charges of reactionary conservatism. Here, in creolizing their conceptions of negative dialectics we draw attention to the double meaning of identity: both the version of it that we associate with Hegel—identity thinking, and so on—as well as the broader sense of the interplay of the self that you create and the self that you are prescribed. These two definitions necessarily intersect; identity thinking reifies certain colonial or consumerist identities, while non-identity thinking lifts these "masks" of pseudo-subjectivity.

To this end, Adorno and Fanon both engage in a politics of "unmasking," though with significantly different articulations of political actions and their possibilities. Their attempts to work through their respective totalizing worlds of identity thinking—the totally

administered society and the Manichean colonial division—understandably drove them to find political possibilities in the extremes: in the dissonance of avant-garde art or in the cleansing act of killing the colonizer. It is because of these extremes that non-identity thinking has found many varied critics. For those who set their sights on Adorno, non-identity thinking appears hopelessly solipsistic and aporetic, if not also elitist. For Fanon's critics, the violent prelude to a new humanism is shorn of its dialectical function and panned as reactionary and essentializing.

As we hope we have shown above, neither charge is true. Instead, Adorno and Fanon demonstrate the political non-identity of non-identity thinking. In other words, they explain why lifting the mask of identity thinking requires different modes of praxis under different historical and social conditions. The charges against the two thinkers, then, prove not only to be superficial, but also insufficiently dialectical: by reifying the political possibilities outlined by Adorno and Fanon, they miss the generative flexibility and self-criticality of negative dialectics.

It is for this reason that we also creolized Adorno and Fanon's writings on the radio. If avant-garde art and violence seem like non-identity thinking pushed to the extreme, their writings on the democratic and self-constructive capacities of re-appropriating radio technology serve to further highlight the interconnection of un-masking and self-determination motivating both thinkers. Adorno's conceptions of democratic leadership and the counter-tendencies of radio listening make clear that he is no mere quietist, while Fanon's interpretation of how the Algerian people constructed the truth of the revolution in the static gaps of *The Voice* rebut any charges that he fetishized violence for its own sake.

In the final analysis, reading Adorno against Fanon and vice versa not only clarifies their motivations and dispels the dismissive critiques that continue to plague them, but also gives us a better view of non-identity thinking's political capacities. The mask of identity thinking seeks always to appear natural, and non-identity thinking—in whichever form it takes—is necessary for us to escape its barbarism.

Notes

1. Namita Goswami, "The (m)other of all posts: Postcolonial Melancholia in the Age of Global Warming," in *Critical Philosophy of Race*, *1*(1) (2013): 104–120.
2. Robyn Marasco, *The Highway of Despair* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
3. See Jane Anna Gordon, *Creolizing Political Theory: Reading Rousseau through Fanon* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

[152.97.31.11] Project MUSE (2024-10-29 16:50 GMT) University of the South

4. Michael Neocosmos, "The Creolization of Political Theory and the Dialectic of Emancipatory Thought," in *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy,* XXV(2) (2017): 6–25.
5. Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008).
6. Jürgen Habermas and T.Y. Levin, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading Dialectic of Enlightenment," in *New German Critique*, (26) (1982): 13–30.
7. Geoff Boucher, *Understanding Marxism* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014), 105.
8. Jean-François Lyotard, "Adorno as the Devil," *Telos* 19 (1974): 127–137.
9. Georg Lukács, *Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), xv.
10. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 69.
11. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 241.
12. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 112.
13. Nigel C. Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 152.
14. For a concise, yet more detailed version of Adorno's inversion of Hegel see Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (Vol. 8) (London and New York: Verso Books, 2014), especially chapter 4. Also useful is Alexander M. Stoner and Andony Melathopoulos, *Freedom in the Anthropocene: Twentieth-century Helplessness in the Face of Climate Change* (New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2015), chapter 2.
15. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (Vol. 1) (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 320.
16. Theodor W. Adorno, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics: Fragments of a Lecture Course 1965/1966* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 23.
17. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 95.
18. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 94.
19. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 100.
20. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 113.
21. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 124–125.
22. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 106.
23. Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 113.
24. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 27.
25. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 90.
26. Stefan Bird-Pollan, *Hegel, Freud and Fanon: The Dialectic of Emancipation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 91–92.
27. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 93.
28. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 89.

29. See Fanon, *Black Skin,* 42.
30. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 29.
31. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 33.
32. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 195n.
33. See George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 59.
34. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 194.
35. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 194.
36. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 195.
37. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970 [1998]), 404–405.
38. See Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 129.
39. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 183
40. See, for instance, Bruce Baugh, "Left-wing Elitism: Adorno on Popular Culture," in *Philosophy and Literature*, *14*(1) (1990): 65–78.
41. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of The Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), xv.
42. Jürgen Habermas, Philip Brewster, and Carl Howard Buchner, "Consciousness-raising or redemptive criticism: The contemporaneity of Walter Benjamin," *New German Critique*, (17): 43.
43. Habermas and Levin, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment."
44. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* xvi.
45. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* xvii.
46. Theodor W. Adorno, J.M. Bernstein, J.M., "Resignation," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (New York/London: Routledge, 1968 [2020]).
47. Adorno and Bernstein, "Resignation," 200–201.
48. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (New York: Verso, 1951 [2005]), 103–104.
49. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove/Atlantic, 1963 [2007]), 3.
50. Gibson, *Postcolonial Imagination,* 131.
51. Fanon, *Wretched,* 51.
52. Christopher J. Lee, *Frantz Fanon: Toward A Revolutionary Humanism* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2015), 165.
53. Fanon, *Wretched,* 2.
54. Gibson, *Postcolonial Imagination,* 117.
55. Marasco, *Highway of Despair,* 147.
56. See Hannah Arendt, *Crises of The Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 116, n19.

57. Arendt, *Crises*, 162.
58. Kathryn Batchelor, "Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre:* Translations, De-Philosophization and the Intensification of Violence," *Nottingham French Studies* 54(1) (2015): 16.
59. Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Foreword," *Black Skin, White Masks*. (New York: Grove Press, 2008), viii.
60. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 204.
61. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 112.
62. Fanon, *Black Skin,* 113–114.
63. Fanon, *Wretched,* 11.
64. Theodor W. Adorno, "Critique," *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 281. Emphasis ours.
65. Thomas Y. Levin and Michael Von der Linn, "Elements of A Radio Theory: Adorno and the Princeton Radio Research Project," *The Musical Quarterly*, 78(2) (1994): 318.
66. Levin and Von der Linn, "Elements of A Radio Theory," 427.
67. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 129.
68. Shannon L. Mariotti, "Adorno on the Radio: Democratic Leadership as Democratic Pedagogy," *Political Theory*, *42*(4) (2014): 415–442.
69. Mariotti, "Adorno on the Radio," 428.
70. Mariotti, "Adorno on the Radio," 429.
71. Mariotti, "Adorno on the Radio," 430.
72. Gibson, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 149.
73. Gibson, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 149.
74. Gibson, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 151.
75. Gibson, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 152–153.
76. Fanon, *Wretched,* 51.
77. Theodor W. Adorno and Robert Hullot-Kentor, eds., "Radio Psyiognomics," in *Current of Music* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 62, as cited in Mariotti, "Adorno on the Radio."