

viously described it, the fragments of this mechanism are "put together by another me," one already well along the path of the absolute—a path leading in the direction of a fuller self-consciousness.⁸¹ This was a radically decolonial and dialectical path in which the rebuilt "mechanism" of race, the central term, was granted the necessary weight to operate.

But rather than closing in on itself, Fanon's dialectic opens outward onto an unpredictable future in which the horizon of universal reconciliation is infinitely deferred.

I am not a prisoner of History . . .

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.⁸²

"A Society to Be Replaced"

Fanon's critique of the ontological circularity of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic—its presumed reciprocity, symmetry, and reversibility—sets the stage not for his rejection of dialectics but instead for the total decolonization and reconstruction of Hegel's approach from the ground up. Or more precisely, from beneath the Ground: diagnosing the existence of a subontological realm to which the racialized are condemned points toward the need for predialectical struggle, for a counterontological violence that creates the basis for truly dialectical opposition. Against Hegel's smooth view of inevitable progress toward universal self-consciousness, Fanon instead sees the need to project blackness subjectively and to do so "violently" in

a way that shakes both (Black) slave and (white) master from their respective undialectical slumbers. Fanon does not stop after having set the dialectic into motion anew, however, but instead presses forward, diagnosing the danger that this movement will grind to a halt in the present through the false universalism of formal emancipation, or find its future enclosed in a teleological view that subsumes race to class.

The "untidy dialectic" that emerges from this process is as radically subjective as it is decolonized, building on Sorel's reformulated dialectic of class struggle while also leaping decisively beyond it.⁸³ Like Sorel, Fanon privileges the moment of rupture, diremption, and division that unleashes dialectical motion, and like Sorel he shuns reconciliation to place weight on the present moment. Like the irrational rationalism of Sorel's myth, which underscores the nonrational aspects of human action, Fanon similarly proposes an unreasonable resort to Black identity against the double irrationality of the white supremacist world. Where Sorel inverts the Marxian formula to pose the primacy of class-for-itself as a projected identity that brings the class-in-itself into being, Fanon turns to Hegel as a source for a dialectic in which the for-itself is already present as a "subjective certainty (*Gewissheit*)" to be transformed through combat into "objective truth (*Wahrheit*)" as one step on the path toward the universal self-consciousness of the in-itself-for-itself.⁸⁴ But this unified humanity, away from which Fanon was driven by force, remains an as-yet undefined horizon, orienting while not determining a process of combative rupture that revolutionizes even the structures of the world itself.

Those who would divide Fanon's oeuvre—distinguishing *Black Skin, White Masks* from *Wretched of the Earth*—often do so by neglecting his decolonized dialectical vision. In the next chapter, however, I argue that it is precisely this dialectical framework that Fanon would later transpose in an attempt to understand the Algerian revolution and decolonization more broadly. Both the Algerian context and the historical moment were different, however, and these differences would fill Fanon's dialectics with new content. The Negritude Movement had passed, in his view, from dialectical vanguard to a conservative force in African political life. In its place, Fanon would turn to national consciousness, but despite the unifying or totalizing significance many associate with the concept of "the nation," the basic contours of Fanon's decolonized dialectic—its attentiveness to nonbeing, the violent projection of identity to set frozen history into motion, and a radical open-endedness that foregrounds rupture at the expense of closure—would remain intact.

At least according to its author, *Black Skin, White Masks* was largely concerned with the alienation of middle-class racialized subjects, often those living in the metropole. But as he drew toward a conclusion, Fanon turned his eyes toward Africa and the colonized, recognizing that

the motivations for disalienating a physician from Guadeloupe are essentially different from those for the African construction worker in the port at Abidjan. For the former, alienation is almost intellectual in nature. It develops because he takes European culture as a means of detaching himself from his own race. For the latter, it develops because he is victim of a system based on the exploitation of one race by another . . . For the black working in the sugarcane plantations in Le Robert, there is only one solution: the struggle . . . because quite simply he cannot conceive his life otherwise than as a kind of combat against exploitation, poverty, and hunger.⁸⁵

Both are condemned, although the parameters of that condemnation may differ. The colonized subject to whom Fanon would now turn was condemned to an exploitative constellation fusing race to class as elements of a global hierarchy, and condemned as well to an unavoidable struggle that would craft of both elements a future nation. Despite Fanon's transposition of race, class, and nation—a shift in his object of dialectical combat—the distance between the two texts is not so great. It is not just any Ivorian who grasps their condition of exploitation, just as not every Caribbean subject is a physician, and whereas the early Fanon diagnosed the Eurocentric escapism of Martinican elites, the later Fanon would identify similar delusions among European-educated African elites.

This criticism was also, moreover, a self-criticism, a tacit concession that his first book was an outgrowth of *his own* reality: between the alienated “physician from Guadeloupe” and the alienated psychiatrist from Martinique, the distance was not so great either. But it would not be long before Fanon came into more direct contact with the broader parameters of colonial reality. In late 1953—less than two full years after publishing *Black Skin*—Fanon found himself running the Psychiatric Hospital of Blida-Joinville in colonial Algeria. But his own philosophy, and in particular the potent theory of *sociogeny* he had formulated in *Black Skin*, according to which social structures are themselves the root cause of many neurotic afflictions, soon drove him to resign.

Fanon's 1956 letter of resignation—penned in the same year that Césaire resigned from the Communist Party—stands as a testament to the

insufficiency of not only psychiatry, but indeed of any individualized intellectual endeavor to build a future universal in the absence of constant dialectical struggle: "If psychiatry . . . aims to allow man to no longer feel like a stranger to his environment . . . the Arab, permanently an alien in their own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization . . . The social structure existing in Algeria contradicted any attempt to put the individual back in their place . . . The function of a social structure is to set up institutions to serve man's needs. A society that corners its members into desperate solutions is a non-viable society, a society to be replaced."⁸⁶ This moment above all others marked Fanon's transition from philosopher to revolutionary, but paradoxically this break occurred as a sort of slingshot effect of his philosophy itself: a philosophy which privileges the generative effects of social structures can only remain in the contemplative mode for so long before it must transcend itself.

And in this transition from philosopher to revolutionary, moreover, Fanon hurdled the barrier that he had so self-critically posed at the conclusion of *Black Skin*. From confronting intellectual alienation, he threw himself into combat as an active participant in the Algerian Revolution. Fanon's practical leap to the armed struggle would not be without its implications for that theory of leaps that is dialectics. From this point on, rather than simply theorizing rupture against ontological apartheid, and certainly beyond attempting to "put the individual back in their place" in a fundamentally broken world, Fanon instead became an active participant in deepening the dynamic oppositions that might one day reconstitute human unity. But in shifting from race to decolonial nation, Fanon also dramatically displaced the unit of analysis grounding these divisions, projecting dialectical combat to the global level.

...my own projection in which the future nation is already indivisible."³⁸ Consistent with its decolonized Hegelian foundations—and echoing Sorel's dialectics of class combat—this creative function of violence also impacts the opposite side of the colonial divide: striking fear into the heart of the colonizer, and thereby creating the basis for a symmetrical struggle. In other words, violence, the essential precondition for national identity, stands at the very center of the dialectic of decolonization as its only source of motion.

The Expanding Circle of the Nation

The fact that the decolonial nation emerges in a fragmentary way from but a single part—the peasantry—and the generativity of the violence that brings it into being point toward the imperfect, mobile, and dynamic character of that nation. But these are not enough to fully allay fears that the decolonial nation—as nation—*aspires* to wholeness, to closed unity. Fanon makes the task even more difficult when he repeatedly describes this violence as “totalizing,” and even more so when he suggests—with a sort of playful brutality—that the first task of that violence is to establish a unity of the most troubling sort. If colonization “inflicts” a “dichotomy” on the world, the first stage of decolonization not only inverts this division, but furthermore “unifies this world by a radical decision to remove its heterogeneity, by unifying it on the grounds of nation and sometimes race.”³⁹

Fanon immediately presses outward with both hands, however, in a surprisingly deft two-sided critique of both vulgar Marxism and the essentialist understanding of race that this simplification might suggest: “In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you

are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue."⁴⁰ Here begins the dialectical spiral that will characterize much of *Wretched*: if, on the one hand, distinguishing who resides on either side of the Manichaeian division couldn't be easier, in another sense it could scarcely be more complex. If Fanon is here insisting that race matters (richness depends on whiteness), he is also simultaneously insisting on an antiessentialist understanding of race as codetermined by class (whiteness depends on richness) and further complicated by the global geography of the "elsewhere."⁴¹

On the surface of things, decolonization consists of two stages: the "national" stage characterized by inverted Manichaeism, followed by a subsequent "social" (or socialist) stage, with the two bound together by the transition from force to violence. This elegant simplicity is visible even in the structure of *Wretched of the Earth*: from violence and spontaneity, Fanon moves to national culture and national consciousness, opening out toward the universal in his conclusion. But even here we find hints that all is not so simple. Spontaneity has its "weakness" and national consciousness its "pitfalls." Even the *need* to unify the nation in such a way testifies to a foundational lack at its heart, and the progress of the dialectic appears littered with obstacles, makeshift barriers strewn across our path and dangerous shards of the world we are leaving behind.

No sooner does the nation begin to emerge, solidify, and unify in the oversimplistic first stage of decolonization than the stages themselves disintegrate, and this collapsing unity reveals its intractable imperfections and the openness of the dialectic at its heart. The first obstacle to be overcome manifests above all geographically. Whereas Fanon had in his first few pages described the simplicity of the Manichaeian world, the disconcerting first moments of the decolonial struggle immediately test this simplicity. Not all join in the struggle from the outset, and there exists a deep mutual suspicion between component parts of the future nation, a Manichaeism-within-a-Manichaeism—no longer colonized versus colonizer but rural versus urban—that poses an intradialectical struggle before the colonizer can successfully be confronted. Many educated urbanites bring their Eurocentric education to an unaccommodating reality, seeing the peasantry in essentially the same terms as had Marx, that is, as a fundamentally reactionary "brake on the revolution."⁴²

The existential reaction of the peasantry to these Europeanized elites is the correspondent inverse: viewed as essentially European, the urban population is always-already suspected of treason to the not-yet nation.

"Dressed like a European, speaking his language," the rural masses see in this figure "a defector who has given up everything which has constituted the national heritage" to reap the benefits of colonialism.⁴³ Fanon even goes so far as to suggest that "each side" of the urban-rural divide "evolves according to its own dialectic."⁴⁴ But like the broader dialectic within which it is inscribed, the subaltern side—here the peasantry—bears within itself the kernel for overcoming this division: in their anticolonial and proto-national traditions, the rural masses carry the future nation embryonically within themselves as "the gestation of the national consciousness."⁴⁵

The first stage of decolonization consists in overcoming this apparent division between town and country, but this opposition is not transcended simply through conversion or the suspension of hostilities in the face of a common enemy. Rather, this division can only be overcome through an intradialectical struggle that centers a concept of nation irreducible to geographical territory: the splintering of urban-based nationalist parties by colonial repression drives the more radical and uncompromising militants underground and into the interior. It is there, far from the cities, that these militants retreat "deep into the rural masses," whose embrace "wraps him in a mantle of unimagined tenderness and vitality." With this fusion, the rural "masses" enter into struggle as a "coherent people" ready to "sharpen their weapons."⁴⁶ By becoming a proto-"people," these revolutionaries are prepared to forge "the nation" wherever they go. But while the nation is born in the heart of the countryside, it is only the invasion of the cities that "completes [*consacre*] the dialectic" by overcoming the geographical division of (most of) the colonized and expelling the colonizer.⁴⁷ In other words, it is not that Westernized native elites are convinced to rejoin the nation en masse, but instead they are subjected to a dialectical *reconquest* of sorts in Fanon's equally controversial description of the semiurban lumpenproletariat as the "urban spearhead" of national liberation.

If the unification of the decolonial nation represented the completion of the dialectic tout court, however, this would lead to a very different and strictly nationalist vision—and *Wretched of the Earth* would come to a close less than one hundred pages in. If the imperfection of the embryonic nation disintegrates the simplicity of the Manichaeian stage, the component parts of the future nation fragmented and in need of an intradialectical unification in the early stages of the struggle, that struggle then opens immediately onto a similar outward disintegration, toward the universal, which begins to emerge *prior* to the stage of formal liberation. This disintegration—and the radical heterogeneity it entails—is most vis-

ible in the peculiarly flexible, mobile, and expansive nature that Fanon ascribes to the decolonial nation. And it is this pre- and postrevolutionary incompleteness of the nation, its sheer mobility and mutability, its dynamic imperfection, that shields Fanon from the surprisingly frequent charge of vulgar nationalism.

This decolonial nation emerges first spontaneously and in a fragmented—even pointillistic fashion—in disparate peasant revolts, before acquiring an expansive dynamic with the constitution of a rebel army.

The rash of revolts born in the interior testify, everywhere they break out, to the nation's ubiquitous and generally dense presence. Every colonized subject in arms represents a fragment of the nation which is alive from this point forward . . . They obey a simple doctrine: make the nation exist. There is no plan, no speeches, no resolutions, no factions. The problem is clear-cut: the foreigners must leave . . . Initiative is localized. On every hilltop a government in miniature is constituted and assumes power. In the valleys and in the forests, in the jungle and in the villages, everywhere, one encounters a national authority. In their actions, everyone makes the nation exist . . . If the nation is present everywhere, it must then be here.⁴⁸

The simplistic and mythical projection of national unity here glosses over the fragmentary nature of the nascent nation, overcoming that fragmentation through its very projection. That a nation could be described by quality like density, that it could be posed as a project in becoming, that its authority could surge forth from ostensibly isolated hilltops already tells us that it is not a substance at all but a contagious collective will and practice. It aspires to unity, certainly, but while this may seem "clear-cut" in the sense that myth is indivisible, it remains to be seen *what* precisely is being unified, according to what parameters, and *for how long*. For now, what is clear is that this is no merely essentialist nationalism wherein a preexisting quantity functions circularly as both beginning and end of a nondialectical movement.

The circle of the nation, its apparently self-enclosed Manichaeian circuit, is nevertheless radically expansive from the outset. From its initial localization in sovereign hilltops, this formerly petrified mass gains a new motion and rhythm as it draws together: old enmities are transcended, intertribal communications are reestablished, and the imperatives of guerrilla warfare force a reevaluation of this rooted and impetuous localism. "The national circle widens and every new ambush signals the entry of

new tribes. Every village becomes both an absolute agent and a relay . . . Every new group that is constituted, every new volley of cannon fire signals that everybody is hunting the enemy, everybody is taking a stand."⁴⁹ Through the expansive myth of the nation, spontaneous revolts are knitted together into a complex revolutionary tapestry and the people rear up in unison. Localized spontaneity gives way to a "pragmatic realism" that sees a shift from local self-defense to the hypermobility of guerrilla war, in which the sovereign hilltop has been transcended and "every fighter carries the homeland to war between his bare toes."⁵⁰ If the nation is "everywhere," then I need not remain "here" to defend it.

But if the nation expands territorially according to the reunification of the rural and the urban, it also expands in a second sense as well that is too often overlooked in caricatures of Fanon as a hermetic nationalist. The simplicity of unmitigated war on an absolute enemy cannot survive if the struggle is to be victorious in the long run, and the transition from rebellious upsurge to revolutionary war requires that the insurgents "rediscover politics." This is no longer politics "as a sleep-inducing technique or a means of mystification, but as the sole means for intensifying the struggle and preparing the people to lead the country lucidly."⁵¹ This new politics stands as a way station between the simplistic inverted Manichaeism of the first stage and a deeper process of education and consciousness that is simultaneously a rediscovery of nuance, multiplicity, and complexity. Unreflective simplicity, the absolute opposition to the colonizer that was the *sine qua non* of the liberation struggle, now becomes a strategic—not to mention a human—liability.

The "spectacular voluntarism" of the earliest stage of the struggle, "which was to bring the colonized people to absolute sovereignty in a single blow, the certainty one had of being able to carry together all the pieces of the nation at the same pace and according to the same perspective, and the strength grounded in this hope," soon becomes a political liability. "As long as he believed in the mirage of the immediacy of his muscles, the colonized achieved no real progress along the road of knowledge. His consciousness remained rudimentary."⁵² We are at the tipping point between the "grandeur" and "weakness" of spontaneity, at which the stages of the revolutionary struggle disintegrate entirely, since the transition beyond simplistic national consciousness both *precedes* and *cuts across* the moment of formal liberation that nominally marked its threshold. Before the enemy is expelled and the nation fully consolidated, the inverted Man-

ichaeism at its foundation begins to itself collapse and fall away, inaugurating an outward motion toward a still-deferred universal.

Violent Enlightenment

The dialectic had been pressed into motion, but as Fanon lay dying he saw new dangers looming that threatened to halt that motion and close off the emergence of national consciousness. If formal emancipation and equality had once served to conceal continued white supremacy, with Black subjects "acted upon" as objects by the white world rather than themselves acting, the same threat loomed on the "post"-colonial horizon. The danger was a dual one: threatening to trap the young nation within the simplistic nationalism that had been its initial motor, while harnessing it globally into the neocolonial continuity of the capitalist world-system. The two faces of this threat are embodied in a single figure, as threatening as it was illusory as a class: the national bourgeoisie.

Fanon is among the best diagnosticians of the particular position occupied by dependent, colonial economies in the world-system, and the danger of the national bourgeoisie as a "class" is rooted in this global constellation. Against the standard Marxist account that Sorel had sought to reinvigorate—in which society was increasingly divided into a civil war between proletariat and bourgeoisie—for Fanon, neither class plays this paradigmatic role in the colonized world. The industrial proletariat, he famously insists, is not only small but "pampered"—a judgment that would earn him much posthumous scorn from the Left.⁵³ The limited size of the proletariat, moreover, is the direct consequence of the weakness of the national bourgeoisie, which cannot truly accumulate, has little incentive to reinvest profits domestically, and instead is condemned to and embraces its "historical mission as intermediary" in colonial extraction.⁵⁴

The national bourgeoisie cannot, in other words, perform the historic function of a bourgeoisie, and thereby embodies the motionless petrification that its existence threatens to introduce into the dialectics of decolonization. It is bourgeois but not bourgeois, national but not national, and is therefore confronted with a choice or, better put, a challenge: to abandon a full half of its contradictory self and commit class suicide.⁵⁵ "In an underdeveloped country, the imperative duty of an authentic *national* bourgeoisie is to betray the vocation to which it is destined, to learn from the school of the people . . . We will see, unfortunately, that the national bourgeoisie often turns away from this heroic and positive path, which is both fertile and

just, and unabashedly sinks to the antinational, and therefore abhorrent, path of a classical bourgeoisie, a *bourgeois bourgeoisie* that is dismally, inanely, and cynically bourgeois."⁵⁶ Whereas Fanon would famously insist that "each generation must discover its mission, fulfill or betray it," the situation of the national bourgeoisie is more complex, since it is precisely its "historical mission" that *must*, in fact, be betrayed.⁵⁷ And yet the national bourgeoisie is unlikely to walk the path of the people, opting instead for the double determination of a "bourgeois bourgeoisie" that is nevertheless an objective impossibility.

For Sorel, it was possible for a revitalized European bourgeoisie confronted with a combative proletariat to drive history forward through mutual enmity. There is no such possibility in Fanon's account: bourgeoisie and proletariat can choose to stand on the sidelines of the national struggle or to join it, but in neither case do they constitute leading sectors. Despite Fanon's quasi-Sorelian nostalgia for the "dynamic, pioneering aspect, the inventive, discoverer-of-new-worlds aspect" of a truly bourgeois bourgeoisie, this desperate gamble would prove futile, because the national bourgeoisie enters the global dialectic at a different stage: "It follows the Western bourgeoisie in its negative and decadent aspect without having accomplished the initial stages of exploration and invention . . . At its outset the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries identifies with the last stages of the Western bourgeoisie. Don't believe it is skipping stages. In fact it starts at the end. It is already senile, having experienced neither the petulance, the intrepidity, nor the voluntarism of youth and adolescence."⁵⁸

Apparent echoes of Sorel are thus purely hypothetical: the bourgeois phase, for Fanon, is "only justified if the national bourgeoisie is sufficiently powerful, economically and technically, to build a bourgeois society, to create the conditions for developing a sizeable proletariat, to mechanize agriculture, and finally pave the way for a genuine national culture."⁵⁹ Since this is impossible for a class that represents not "a replica of Europe but rather its caricature," the question is moot. Against the accusation that he advocates skipping historical stages, Fanon deftly flips the script: it is the latecoming national bourgeoisie itself that hopes to skip stages, and since this is impossible, we must look for something different.

The mere impossibility of the national bourgeoisie's mission does not, however, reduce the danger this class poses as the spearhead of neocolonial continuity and an agent of antidialectical stasis. The national bourgeoisie, lacking the "homogeneity of caste" necessary to rupture the national totality and set it into motion, literally "serves no [dialectical] purpose . . .

the bourgeois phase in the history of the underdeveloped countries is a useless phase."⁶⁰ This uselessness is a positive threat, posing as it does the twin—and often complicit—dangers of a simplistic nationalism and neocolonial continuity. It is only by barring the way to the national bourgeoisie that the young nation can avoid preemptive closure and maintain the momentum necessary to transcend the merely national stage of its development and open outward toward the universal.

Explicitly applying Sartre's analysis of negritude in *Orphée Noir* to the travails of the young nation, Fanon assumes a lyricism more characteristic of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Whereas "Antiracist racism, the determination to defend one's skin which characterizes the response by the colonized to colonial oppression, clearly represent sufficient reasons to engage in the struggle," in other words to fuel the first stage of revolt, Fanon nevertheless adds that "Racism, hatred, resentment, and 'the legitimate desire for revenge' cannot sustain a war of liberation. These flashes in consciousness which hurl the body down tumultuous paths, which launch it into a quasi-pathological dreamlike state where the face of the other induces me to vertigo, where my blood calls for the blood of the other, where my death through mere inertia calls for the death of the other, this powerful passion of the first hours [of the struggle], disintegrates if it is left to feed on itself."⁶¹

There is no better proof than this that Fanon understood his task in *Wretched* as a repetition of his earlier dialectical argument vis-à-vis Black identity in the context of decolonial war. But while it may seem strange for Fanon to cite the very text that had previously cut him to the bone, he clearly maintains both the necessity of this prior "racist" stage and grants it a dialectical weight—a mythical "dreamlike" and vertiginous quality—that exceeds Sartre's formulation. And more important still for this thinker resolutely "grounded in temporality," unlike Sartre's prognosticative subsumption of negritude, Fanon is writing from the center of the dialectic at the cusp of this necessary turning point. The recognition that "hatred does not constitute a plan of action" introduces a new torsion into the dialectic of decolonization that undermines Fanon's own best attempt to cleanly distinguish stages.

In the process, it gives rise to an intradialectical helix, according to which the nation, which cannot emerge except through an initially inverted Manichaeism, here disintegrates outward along the fine dialectical line between uncritical universalism and racial essentialism, an *antiessentialist Manichaeism*. As formal, de jure independence approaches on the heels of the de facto expansion of the nation from the interior toward

the towns, nowhere is this disintegration clearer than in the sudden and jarring appearance of "multiple realities" within the young nation. "It was once all so simple with the bad on one side and the good on the other. The idyllic, unreal clarity of the early days is replaced by a penumbra that dislocates consciousness. The people discover that the iniquitous phenomenon of exploitation can assume a black or Arab appearance. They cry treason, but need to correct this cry. *The treason is not national, it is a social treason*, and they need to be taught to cry thief."⁶²

The species distinction that had constituted the colonial system and structured the early period of resistance to it begins to devour itself: "The racial and racist level is transcended on both sides . . . One no longer grabs a gun or a machete anytime a colonist appears. Consciousness stumbles upon partial, limited, and unstable truths. All this is, one can guess, extremely difficult."⁶³ Blacks can be traitors and whites can be comrades, and the shift from national to social treason marks a transition between stages of the struggle, however imprecise these may be: "The people, who had at the outset of the struggle adopted the primitive Manichaeism of the colonizer—Blacks and Whites, Arabs and *Roumis*—realize en route that some blacks can be whiter than the whites . . . At this exact moment in the struggle clarification is crucial as it leads the people to *replace a total and undifferentiated nationalism with social and economic consciousness*."⁶⁴

As if to hammer the dialectical point home, Fanon insists that this transition toward socioeconomic consciousness—from hermetic nationalism toward universal humanism—can come neither too early nor too late. If it arrives prematurely, that is, prior to the national phase, it runs the risk of short-circuiting national identity before it even coalesces, as Sartre had done to Blackness. "The second phase, i.e., nation building," Fanon insists, "is facilitated by the existence of this mortar kneaded with blood and rage."⁶⁵ But the specific threat posed by the national bourgeoisie in power is that social consciousness will arrive late or even not at all: "If nationalism is not clarified, enriched, and deepened, if it is not transformed very quickly into social and political consciousness, into humanism, then it leads to a dead end. Bourgeois leadership of underdeveloped countries confines national consciousness to a sterile formalism."⁶⁶

If this feels like a traumatic shift in direction, one that requires the overcoming of the centripetal stumbling block posed by identity itself, it nevertheless draws upon and is catapulted forward by both the momentum of the revolutionary struggle and the continuity of "collective consciousness in motion." This "enlightened and coherent praxis" is but another

name for decolonial violence extended forth in perpetuity, and which is itself a source of Hegelian self-consciousness, clarity, and lucidity: "Violence alone, perpetrated by the people . . . allows the masses to decipher social reality, only it provides the key. Without this struggle, without this knowledge-in-praxis there is nothing but a carnival parade and a lot of hot air. A minimal readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag, and down at the bottom the undivided and still medieval mass continues its perpetual movement."⁶⁷ Violence, the generative Rosetta Stone of the decolonial struggle, provides the most trustworthy vaccine against both remaining trapped within Manichaeism and the global continuity of neocolonialism.

"To politicize the masses," for Fanon, "is to make the nation in its totality a reality for every citizen . . . to link up with the nation as a whole, to embody the *constantly dialectical truth of the nation*, and to will here and now the triumph of the total man . . . Then, and only then, is everything possible."⁶⁸ And in so doing, this praxis opens the decolonial dialectic outward in the "long term" toward the universal, breaking down what divisions remain among the people while also raising them to the same level as their new leaders, whom they relentlessly interrogate, prying open a generative space to ground an interminably dynamic motion. "Enlightened by violence, the consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification. The demagogues, the opportunists and the magicians now have a difficult task. The praxis which pitched them into a desperate man-to-man struggle has given the masses a ravenous taste for the tangible. Any attempt at mystification becomes, in the long term, virtually impossible." Through the struggle, "the people realize that life is an endless combat," and that combat is no more and no less than the motor force of an equally endless dialectics.⁶⁹

"We Have Better Things to Do . . ."

This opening of an interminable dialectics within the nation, between mass and leadership, coincides with Fanon's projection of that dialectic outward onto the global plane. After all, the almost inevitable failure of the national bourgeoisie, its opting for "sterile formalism" rather than filling the eyes of the nation with truly "human things," is above all a failure rooted in its own global condition of impossibility.⁷⁰ Here Fanon takes up in many ways the radically comparative task that I derive from C. L. R. James. In *Black Jacobins*, James draws an explicit analogy between the distinct class constellations present in revolutionary France and preindependence Haiti: white colonists are to the metropolitan aristocracy as mulattoes to the French bourgeoisie and ex-slaves to the poor French "masses." The Jacobins, by