

- 2 For discussion, see Hansen's *Frantz Fanon* (1977: ch. 5), and Jinadu's *Fanon* (ch. 4).
- 3 For his sustained discussions on society with the use of characters in myths and classic tragedies, see Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* (1961), and *Character and Culture* (1963). See also his *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1969).
- 4 For Hegel's discussion of tragedy, see *The Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art* (1886) as well as *The Philosophy of Fine Art* (1920) and *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977).
- 5 For developed discussion on crowds, see Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1984).
- 6 For the entire story, Sophocles (1954).
- 7 Blacks hold a special place in the people of color designation because of the mythology that emerged around blackness and sin, wherein black people have been historically synonymous with "cursed" people. For discussion, see Eulalio Baltazar (1973), and Gordon (1995a: Parts III and IV).
- 8 For a summary of Fanon's usage and citation of the literature on violence, see especially Hansen (1977: 116-21 and 168 n. 1) and Jinadu (pp. 14 and 44-52).

## Afterword

# "Bread and Land": Frantz Fanon's "Native Intellectual"

*Joy Ann James*

The people . . . take their stand from the start on the broad and inclusive position of bread and land: how can we obtain the land, and bread to eat? And this obstinate point of view of the masses, which may seem shrunken and limited, is in the end the most worthwhile and the most efficient mode of procedure.

*Frantz Fanon*

The essays that comprise *Fanon: A Critical Reader* testify to Fanon's significance for contemporary thought and contribute to the continuing debates on Fanon the liberation theorist. Fanon in turn offers his own assessment of the writers and readers of this volume. In *Les Damnés de la terre*, he distinguishes between the "civil servant" or state intellectual and the "native intellectual" or revolutionary thinker. Reminding intellectuals that radical liberatory theory serves those lacking sufficient land and bread, Fanon presents the native intellectual, the thinker committed to justice, as a mirror for our reflections. In placing the mirror squarely before us, Fanon warns us not only of intellectual concealment, but against an intellectualism that distances itself from the specificity of justice struggles in order to offer truncated concepts of liberation and a myopic view of repression.

For Fanon, the issue of the intellectual's rejection or welcome by "the people" is inconsequential. What matters to those struggling against material, cultural, and spiritual oppression is that "all resources should be pooled." For Fanon, "pooling" our intellectual, spiritual, and material resources enhances the development of the privileged intellectual.

The pooling of the resource of intellectuals for a liberation effort is often problematized by the limitations of their training which inhibit their ability to communicate with non-elites. The people, Fanon writes, are not hostile to the analyses of intellectuals; rather, they oppose technical speech alien to their lives. The specialist, preoccupied with details, is liable to downplay the importance of instrumental politics and speech in organizing, and thereby, Fanon observes, "forget the real object of the struggle."

Noting that intellectuals who use inaccessible language "can easily prove that the masses have to be managed from above," he maintains: "Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand." Whereas a language of concealment excludes the disenfranchised, self-criticism — which Fanon defines as a "communal process" and an "African institution" that supports critical thought, rather than individualistic introspection — expands democratic politics. In fact, he argues, "the village understands with disconcerting rapidity" what isolated or alienated individuals struggle to comprehend. Consequently, self-criticism among peoples working for their rights can transform elites by breaking through their aloof stances and dissimulation.

Unlike today's fashionable popular cultural intellectual, Fanon's native intellectual is disciplined by the daily revolutionary struggle for independence, freedom, bread, and land. Perhaps the affinity that progressives, blacks, or Third World peoples feel toward Fanon is that he neither argued for sophisticated critiques as a surrogate for activism nor romanticized black or mass culture as inherently revolutionary. Instead, Fanon set high standards reflecting the even higher stakes for the native intellectual engaged in social change. Measuring the usefulness of theory and the efficacy of intellectuals by their ability to deliver, he writes with conviction: "Truth is that which hurries on the break-up of the colonialist regime." For making such declarations in favor of liberation theory, Fanon has been criticized and dismissed by intellectuals on both the native and dominant-cultural divide. Sometimes, as Lewis Gordon notes, he is dismissed without serious consideration for his political thought by intellectuals who write "as though there is nothing to be liberated from but liberation discourse itself" (1995b: 146).

Our time of heightened racism and repression, manifesting itself in punitive policies toward the poor and incarcerated, has spurred some intellectuals to grapple with the challenges of Fanon's revolutionary theory. In our critical readings of Fanon, we may consider what Fanon's dissection of the polarized existence of colonizing master and colonized servant suggests for the polarities of our time: the social stratification in

wealth and poverty, racial castes, and sexual abuse. In this postcolonial or neocolonial era, Fanon's legacy remains influential for intellectuals confronting the neocolonial, globalized economy, the debt crisis, and the genocidal policies of so-called postcolonial governments.

Since the political life and work of Frantz Fanon advocate the decolonization of not only language and imagination but also the materiality upon which language and the mind reflect, we might also, in reconsidering our relationship to Fanon's legacy, reassess our relationships with radical intellectuals incarcerated for their revolutionary intent. In the US, Mumia Abu Jamal, Geronimo Pratt, Susan Rosenberg, Marilyn Buck, Leonard Peltier, and Carmen Valentin all followed the "obstinate view of the masses" for bread and land as well as the Fanonian dictum that "the minimum demands of the colonized" and a successful revolutionary struggle mandate "a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up." Fanon's native intellectual strategically responds to human oppression as if the life of the mind experiences political ethics and revolutionary politics as more than tropes.

Viewing the political agency of intellectuals through the framework of Fanon's "revolutionary intent," we invariably find ourselves connected to those most vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. Since the prey of the police, the military, the prisons, state executions, and wars are foremost in Fanon's reflections, he sees the relevance of engaged intellectuals as tied to their proximity to political struggle. Fanon writes that the Algerian revolution benefited Algerian intellectuals by allowing them to encounter "the extreme, ineffable poverty of the people" as well as "to watch the awakening of the people's intelligence and the onward progress of their consciousness."

In the US the civil rights, human rights, and poor people's movements of the late 1950s and 1960s, and the American Indian Movement of the early 1970s, similarly enabled critical thinking and democratic politics among US intellectuals by placing them in a contact with America's "colonized." Today, the struggles of the people — red, brown, black, yellow, white, in reservations, barrios, ghettos, sweatshops, labor camps, and penal institutions — will provide new meanings for understanding the significance of Frantz Fanon and his native intellectual for the next century.