Notes for On Violence In *The Wretched of the Earth*

Fanon in his chapter On Violence speaks to decolonization as a necessarily violent historical process in which the colonized imbue violence with the freedom-bearing reciprocal power against the colonizers, and thusly, the reciprocal power to the western world. Within this, violence inverts the social relation of both the colonized and the colonizers in so far as the disorganizing power of violence stridently disassembles the “compartmentalized world” (Fanon 3) of the colony and later channels this violence in a collective movement towards “direction and organization” (Fanon, 21). For Fanon, the ends to these violent means result in the asphyxiated collapse of global capital through a trade embargo by the Third World, and accordingly, the fall of the reign of the western world as well as the socialist, capitalist opposition; and through the example *en act* of the new found power of third world, Fanon presents us with the potential for the whole-sale transformation of humanity.

The impetus for violence, and consequently what makes it necessary, is what Fanon describes as the Manichaean world, a world in two, absolutely opposed to one another; the colony. The Manichaean colonial structure which creates and maintains the kind of subjugation that allows for consideration of the colonized as inhuman, as an un-individualized mass, as dangerous brutes, in short, as a potential threat, makes a necessity of the threat, within the colonized themselves by the duplication of a Manichaeism of the colonized. This threat *en act*, due to the complete lack of social political conditions, becomes the violence which unifies the masses of the colonized collectively (this process most clearly shown on page 44 and 50, however it permeates the text), into a new species, against the colonizers, and it is at this self affirming point that the people effectively cease to be “colonized”, the point where they gain an identity, national, and independent of the colonial situation. “The violence of the colonial regime and the counterviolence of the colonized balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity.” (Fanon 46).

Why this violence is else wise effective is easily seen; it benefits neither the colonial system, because it displaces it, but it is also detrimental to the “burgeoning national bourgeoisie” (Fanon 25) of the colony as it severs the proliferation, and maintenance of their business ventures. This is the danger, in Fanon, marked by compromise and the false objectivity of the national parties and the colonized intellectual (Fanon 24-25). The relationship is again reciprocal; not only is the action i.e. violence of the de-colonizers injurious to the new bourgeoisie etc. but conversely, their lack of action is injurious to the de-colonizers in so far as is perpetuates and strengthens those subjugating structures of the colonial system. Therefore the need for action, in the form of violence as was deemed necessary, is given yet another shove.

The violence of decolonization also brings the colonized into a real political relation, in the most global sense, “the colonized have adapted to this atmosphere. For once they are in tune with their time.” (Fanon 40). The formerly colonial people thusly find their apotheosis in maneuvering this new global-political relation to first displace the colonial system and then for, what is seems, lifting up as in unison the third world to put, finally, the entire world into an relation of equivalence. (Fanon 60-62).