SAMPLE ARTICLE 2

The Cry of the Self as a Call from the Other:
The Paradoxical Loving Subjectivity of Frantz Fanon

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> Philosophy does not become suspect at just any moment in the spiritual history of the West. To recognize with philosophy—or to recognize philosophically—that the real is the rational and that the rational is alone real, and not to be able to smother or cover over the cry of those who, the morrow after this recognition, mean to transform the world, is already to move in a domain of meaning which the inclusion cannot comprehend and among reasons that reason does not know, and which have not begun in philosophy.
>
> Lévinas

Frantz Fanon has achieved the status of an icon in the academy. In contrast to the late 1960's and the early 1970's, today his books and essays tend to be more in the hands of what Kierkegaard disparagingly called "assistant professors" than in study groups of radical political movements.[i][i] The moments appear long gone when people approached Fanon's texts as a recipe for immediate political action. Now, with the academy taking for many the privileged locus of significant political activity, Fanon's texts have moved from the ghettos into the classrooms. This move is not by itself a negative one, since, even though this has not been entirely the case so far, it invites Fanon's readers to focus on his thought and ideas, and no longer to reduce his work to his biography or to a preconceived political agenda on his commentators' parts.[ii][ii] It also brings the opportunity to study the philosophical and political implications of what arguably constitutes one of the darkest sides of "our" ordinary existence—precisely the opposition between ghettos and classrooms. Yet, the recent academic turn in Fanon studies carries with it a problem of its own, the biggest temptation of all, i.e., the desiccation of Fanon's lively words and the annulment of the intense pathos contained in his work. As Kierkegaard once warned in the context of reading biblical stories, so, too, we should not pass over "the anxiety, the distress, and the paradox" in Fanon's texts (cf. Kierkegaard 1982: 66). We should not ignore the existential drama that finds expression in Fanon's words, and we should not remain oblivious to the "cry of ethical revolt" that alone explains the emergence of his discourse and gives meaning to his narrative. *Listen* to the voice that introduces us to the body of Fanon's oeuvre:

> The explosion will not happen today. It is too soon . . . or too late.
> I do not come with timeless truths.
> My consciousness is not illuminated with ultimate radiances.
> Nevertheless, in complete composure, I think it would be good if certain things were said.
> These things I am going to say, not shout (*non les crier*). For it is a long time since *the cry* ["*le cri*"] has gone out of my life.
> So very long. . . (1968: 7, italics mine, translation modified).

Fanon's discourse opens with a clarification and with a remembrance. It comes into being only by first asserting its ineluctable, enigmatic character. Fanon adopts the "composure" of discourse. But what is a natural stance for many is for him only the result of a mysterious prehistory. A cry has preceded the emergence of words. What is the meaning of this cry, and what role does it play in the emergence of the Fanonian narrative? I will attempt to elucidate the meaning behind this enigmatic

conversion of the cry into words, of crying/shouting into the serenity of discourse. What is at stake here is the tracing of the "saying" behind what Fanon has "said," of the fundamental inspiration or passion animating Fanon's rhetoric.[iii[iii]] In short, the challenge is to clarify why Fanon is no longer crying/shouting.

Toward a Phenomenology of the Cry

The remembrance of a cry long gone at the beginning of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* locates the text and its author in an intriguing existential predicament. The "serenity" of organized discourse is not preceded by a period of contemplation or neutral observation of reality, but by a time of urgency in which the subject cannot take his recognition as a human being for granted and has to attract attention simply to the fact that he *is there*. The cry is, indeed, precisely that, a sound uttered as a call for attention, as a demand for immediate action or remedy, or as an expression of pain that points to an injustice committed or to something that is lacking.[iv[iv]] The cry is the revelation of someone who has been forgotten or wronged. Before the word reaches the horizons of meaning, where the world is unveiled and the meaning of reality becomes clear, the cry becomes a call for the recognition of the singularity of the subject as such. The cry indicates the "return of a living subject" who impertinently announces his presence and who by doing so unsettles the established formations of meaning and challenges dominant ideological expressions.[v[v]]

Crying is linked with both shouting and weeping. Shouting and weeping are at the same time associated with expressions of grief, sorrow, and anger on one hand, and with joy, happiness, and love on the other.[vi[vi]] A clarification of why Fanon is no longer crying by the time of the essay requires the analysis of these themes in his work. The mention of the cry at the beginning of the text becomes precisely an invitation to trace the presence of these themes and to uncover dimensions of meaning that are not obvious. It is revealing that these themes appear in what may arguably be considered the backbone of *Black Skin*—its fifth chapter, "The Lived Experience of the Black." The "Lived Experience of the Black," not "The Fact of Blackness" as the Markmann translation has it, clearly alludes to the living subjectivity of someone who alone can utter a cry.[vii[vii]] If "lived experience" refers to the existence of an interiority, the cry is the call for attention to this idea, that a subject has an interiority. This affirmation only makes sense in a context where the subjectivity of the subject in question is denied. It is precisely in this fashion that chapter five begins: "'Dirty nigger!' Or simply, 'Look, a Negro!'" (1968: 109). The signifying gaze of a subject—in this case, a white child—denies the presence of interiority in a subject who is typically defined by others according to exterior appearance alone—in this case, the most patent and obvious dimension of one's exteriority, the color of one's skin.

The *remembrance* of the objectifying gaze of the child in the opening lines of the "Lived Experience of the Black" introduces a paradoxical moment in Fanon's text. The paradox consists in, as Gordon has well put it, Fanon announcing "the absence of his interiority *from the point of view of his interiority*" (2000: 33). The description and remembrance of the event of the negation of Fanon's interiority presupposes precisely what is denied, an interiority. This interiority is what is clearly rendered invisible by "The Fact of Blackness." This invisibility is most unfortunate since the paradox is not merely a concept among others, but the axis around which Fanon's ideas revolve. The paradox is at the core of Fanon's entire text/existence, which is narrated/lived in terms of the affirmation of the very possibility of affirmation and negation in a context that confines him to the status of an inanimate object. Gordon's words are also enlightening on this point: "[Fanon] experiences his historicity as a false history and his struggle with Theory, with Reason, as a cat-and-mouse game. Between Reason and History, Theory and Practice, there is experience, which in this case is the existential struggle against sedimented, dehumanized constructions " (2000: 33).

Paradox represents a challenge to reason, a self-contradictory stance that interrupts the flow of the clear and distinct logic of identity and difference. Paradox is irreducible to the abstraction and neutrality of knowledge as well as to systematic renderings of reality. The paradox is the anti-systematic resistant par excellence. That is why Kierkegaard opposed Hegel's speculative and systematic philosophy with diverse portrayals of paradox. In *Fear and Trembling*, he explores the paradoxical nature of the knight of faith, represented by its well-known prototype, the old Abraham. Abraham incarnates the

paradoxical tension introduced by the situation of his having been commanded by God to sacrifice the son through whom God himself promised to make Abraham the father of nations. Without allowing himself to rest on the arms of sweet resignation—that is, accepting the encroaching loss of his son Isaac—Abraham not only obeys the command, but eagerly receives the son whose life was later spared by the commander. Abraham's interiority, his faith or trust in God (that God *will make him father of a nation through Isaac*, appears as no less than a mystery for Johannes de Silentio—Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author in this occasion. Abraham is paradoxical, and as such poses a limit to a project that aims to identify the rational with the real and the real with the rational.

Fanon's subjectivity is, like Abraham's, paradoxical. His condition, however, reflects more the situation in which Abraham's son, Isaac, found himself: Fanon embodies the paradox of someone who is sentenced to death, but who nonetheless continues living, as it were, *by virtue of the absurd*. Existence becomes in his case the negation of the negation of existence. It is "the anxiety, the distress, and the paradox" brought by this condition that is often left out in our readings of Fanon. We also forget that this paradoxical condition emerges not in a context where Law and Reason call us to stop "murder," as it did in Abraham's case, but in conditions in which they ultimately justify or are complicit with murder.[viii][viii] The paradox of Fanon's existence becomes no less than a declaration against the imperial gestures and the totalitarian ambitions of a system that transforms reason into murder and inter-human contact into the evisceration of difference. Fanon's cry, the call for attention to a wrong committed, becomes here the expression of this paradoxical stance whose primary significance is posed in the form of a command, "Don't kill!" In this case, the system does not appear primarily as a prison to a subject that sees his particularity violated by the universal, but as an imperial formation that can offer the universal to some at the expense of the negation of a truly human existence to others.

The cry of Fanon is the expression of his paradoxical existential stance. The cry does not emerge out of any particular unsatisfied demand, but out of the impossibility to demand anything whatsoever. It gives expression to a fundamental contradiction between the existence of the world at large and one's own existence. Yet, if this were the only or even the more fundamental dimension of the cry, if the cry merely reflected the desire to continue living and be recognized as a subject, then its paradoxical character would be significantly reduced—Fanon, the paradoxical subject, would be lost. Even if we could not understand why Fanon keeps on living, it would be clear to us that he cries because he wants to keep on living. The same would be true of Isaac. If Isaac would have known his father's plans, it would have been simply natural for him to cry and beg for his life. Although the nature and profundity of Abraham's faith would have been untouched by this, the event would have thrown a shadow of doubt upon his successor and upon the upcoming generations born through Isaac. Isaac would be lost. But all this is true only if the cry were only the expression of an individualistic urge for life. In this case we would expect Isaac/Fanon to continue crying until dead or until finally liberated. Fanon, however, realizing that his liberation may not come as yet or even very soon ("the explosion will not happen today"), transforms his cry into the composure of discourse. In the interval between the knife and his body, Fanon's discourse is born. The opening lines of *Black Skin, White Masks* unveil the particular temporal character of Fanon's discourse: he writes with death and suffering vigilantly on his side. There, under the knife, with a death sentence upon him, he writes. But, why write and no longer simply cry?

Fanon is clearly aware of the paradoxical nature of his act. And so he continues in the opening lines of *Black Skin, White Masks*, "Why write this book? No one has asked for it. Especially those to whom it is directed" (p. 7). On the altar, about to be sacrificed, Fanon writes, and he writes *for others*. He is not merely looking for an interlocutor who may carry with him the memories of a glorious but disgraced subjectivity. He is writing as if he were answering a question or responding to a demand. Yet he writes for others who have not themselves articulated a question or solicited his words. Is Fanon ultimately listening to his own cry? Is it possible that beyond a demand for individual self-recognition and for the preservation of his life, the cry represents a call for the Other? The paradox emerges again, and now in a more intensified form, as Fanon not only lives against all odds, but as he lives his life in response to Others.

The Cry of Ethical Revolt and the Paradoxical Nature of Love

There seems to be thus an ethical dimension of the cry irreducible both to the universal and to the egocentric claims of the subject. The "Don't kill!" that finds expression in Fanon's cry is not properly translated merely as a demand for individual preservation, but as a general and more categorical demand to fight against a reality where Others are killed. But how is this possible? If the cry arises out of the pain of a violated subject, how is it that it ultimately becomes a call for attention to something that ultimately resides *outside* of the subject—something extrinsic, not intrinsic to him? This can only be the case if the subject is himself originally outside of himself. In this case, the cry would represent the expression of a subject who has been violated precisely in regard to the possibility of being outside of himself—that is, of loving, giving, and of communicating. Fanon's main object of inquiry in *Black Skin, White Masks* is, in fact, the set of barriers that inhibit inter-human contact in a colonial world. It is not strange that the first three chapters of the book deal with language and love. It is not surprising either that Fanon opens the first chapter proclaiming the central importance of language: "I ascribe a basic importance to the phenomenon of language. That is why I find it necessary to begin with this subject, which should provide us with one of the elements in the colored man's comprehension of the dimension of *the other*. For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (1968: 17).

Now we can finally turn again to "The Lived Existence of the Black" in order to decipher the links between crying, shouting, and weeping, and their connection with their most basic fundamental motivations—anger and love. First, consider that in Fanon's cry (shout) there is as much anger as love—indeed, one could argue that his anger stems from love. After the first episode of anger narrated by Fanon, when he finally "makes a scene" in response to an event of degradation, he explains,

> What? While I was *forgetting, forgiving, and wanting only to love*, my message was flung back in my face like a slap. The white world, the only honorable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger. I *shouted* a greeting to the world and the world slashed away my joy. I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged (1968: 114-5, italics mine).

Fanon enters the world with a clear impetus to enact a relation. He shouts, and his shout becomes like a lover's declaration of love. He greets to the world as if announcing his presence, *saying*, "Here I am!" Anger—"Kiss the handsome Negro's ass, Madame!" (1968: 114)—only emerges as a result of a most radical dismissal and violation of this loving subjectivity.

"What does the black man want?" Fanon inquires throughout the work. Here he advances his own response (as a black man); he wants "only to love." Fanon believes that ultimately what the black man wants is to be a man—an ethico-political form of the Nietzschean call "to be oneself"—and that to be a man is to love. Given that Fanon's black body, his race, is the crucial element in the articulation of a system that violates the living subject and that inhibits the emergence of a world of love, Fanon decides to transform his cry of anger into a "Negro cry." The persistence of evil in face of the free offering of self and love is behind this new turn. Fanon explains,

> There will always be a world—a white world—between you and us. . . . The other's total inability to liquidate the past once and for all. In the face of this affective ankylosis of the white man, it is understandable that I could have made up my mind to utter my Negro cry. Little by little, putting out pseudopodia here and there, I secreted a race (1968: 122).

The question of racial identity emerges out of a deep concern for the construction of a world of love. With the "Negro cry," Fanon announces a step forward in the search for recognition. Since he is not welcomed in the world, he attempts to build his own dwelling. Confronting a radical lack of hospitality, he aims to have the means that will allow him to be hospitable. After an incessant search, Fanon finally seems to find a place of his own in *Négritude*, where he can truly love. Yet, his illusions are shattered as Jean-Paul Sartre illustrates how his "Negro cry," the cry of *Négritude*, represents only a movement in the Hegelian and Marxist dialectic:

> What is certain is that, at that very moment when I was trying to grasp my own being, Sartre, who remained The Other, gave me a name and thus shattered my last illusion. While I was saying to him:
>
> "My negritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral,
> it thrusts into the red flesh of the sun,
> it thrusts into the burning flesh of the sky,
> it hollows through the dense dismay of its own pillar
> of patience¼"
>
> While I was *shouting* that, in the paroxysm of my being and my fury, he was reminding me that my blackness was only a minor term. In all truth, in all truth I tell you, my shoulders slipped out of the framework of the world, my feet could no longer feel the touch of the ground. Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible for me to live my Negrohood (1968: 138).

In the midst of his disillusion, at the point where reason has given the final word, Fanon paradoxically rises up again and elevates his cry once more. It is his desire to love, his passionate loving subjectivity, that, stronger than logic and Reason, defies the Sartrean attempt to reduce existence and recognition to the movement of the dialectic: "But the constancy of my love had been forgotten. I defined myself as an absolute intensity of beginning. So I took my negritude, and with tears in my eyes I put its machinery together again. What had been broken to pieces was rebuilt, reconstructed by the intuitive lianas of my hands. My cry grew more violent: I am a Negro, I am a Negro, I am a Negro. . ." (1968: 138).

Like Abraham, the knight of faith himself, Fanon resists incorporation into the System and its movements. The excess of the loving subjectivity cannot be subordinated to the order of Reason. Fanon shouts to the world affirming his identity and wanting "only to love." Yet Fanon discovers that the cry of self-affirmation finds its limits, not in the dialectic, but in the expression of love itself: "I am a Negro, I am a Negro, I am a Negro. . . . And there was my poor brother—living out his neurosis to the extreme and finding himself paralyzed . . ." (1968: 138).

The cry of self-affirmation suddenly comes to a stop. The moment of upsurge is interrupted as Fanon perceives that his "poor brothers" are still behind. He realizes that the cry of self-affirmation is not exempt from the powers of mystification. There are others who have not even emitted such a cry. Imaging Isaac about to be sacrificed and elevating a voice of protest. This Isaac, however, soon realizes that his brother, another prospective victim in a not much different Mount Moriah, is simply there, quiet, paralyzed. He then turns to his brother and attempts to analyze what is it that makes him remain in this condition. Suddenly, the point of reference changes and his "Negro cry" is left in the background. Fanon observes the psychological character of Black characters in works of literature and films. They remind Fanon of the one who is behind, and who cannot even cry. "A feeling of inferiority? No, a feeling of nonexistence. Sin is Negro as virtue is white. All those white men in a group, guns in their hands, cannot be wrong. I am guilty. I do not know of what, but I know that I am no good" (1968: 139).

Emerging out of love, Fanon's "Negro cry" survives any intellectual challenge. His love is stronger than any logical argument. Yet, it is precisely this love that, leading him to pay attention to his "poor brothers," reveals the limits of the cry and its ambiguous character. Leaving the exaltation of the cry behind, he recognizes himself in those less fortunate. About to be sacrificied, with the knife over his chest, Fanon no longer cries for his life, but decides to live—in that interval of time before the knife finally takes his life—*for the Other*. It is his brother that worries him the most, and he feels responsible for him, to the point of *substitution*[ix[ix]] At this point a new self emerges, and the cry begins to turn into a paradoxical discourse:[x[x]] "The crippled veteran of the Pacific war says *to my brother*, 'Resign yourself to your color the way I got used to my stump; we're both victims.' Nevertheless with all my strength *I* refuse to accept that amputation" (1968: 140, italics mine).

The "I refuse" denotes the transformation—perhaps better, transubstantiation—of a subject who now has substituted himself for the Other. A new paradox emerges here. A self confronting a vicious death and who struggles against his enemy suddenly turns toward another in a worse condition and

responds to and for him. Unable to account for this (ethical) event, reason is now more baffled than before. An ethics emerges beyond the realm of the universal. The problem, to be sure, is not about the rescue of authenticity in front of an alienating totality, but about the affirmation of life and about the very possibility to be in-love-with-others confronting an homicidal System. Fanon clearly opposes the forces of what is known in Heideggerian parlance as the "They" (Heidegger 1962: 149–68). But he only does it insofar as this *They* inhibits the possibility of love. By virtue of love, he ultimately is more *concerned* about the *Them*—privileged objects of hate through which the *They* gains definition—than about the preservation of his own self.[xi[xi]] Yet it is precisely in this act of love that his subjectivity is truly affirmed.

Individuality and sociality emanate for Fanon out of love and responsibility. They both begin in the act of substitution whereby a loving subjectivity *gives* itself for an Other. At the end of the fifth chapter, after an intense existential struggle, Fanon finds himself again where he began, confronting the opposition between his majestic loving subjectivity and a world that resists the radical expression of love. Without a "Negro cry" to utter, beyond anger and joy, the cry turns from shouting to weeping. The cry of anger and joy is finally transformed, by virtue of substitution, into tears.

> I feel in myself a soul as immense as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest of rivers, my chest has the power to expand without limit. I am a master [literally gift, "*je suis un* don," from the French "*donner*," to give] and I am advised to adopt the humility of the cripple. Yesterday, awakening to the world, I saw the sky turn upon itself utterly and wholly. I wanted to rise, but the disemboweled silence fell back upon me, its wings paralyzed. Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep (1968: 140, italics mine).[xii[xii]]

From the end of the fifth chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, we should turn again to the initial lines of the introduction. "These things I am going to say, not shout. For it is a long time since shouting has gone out of my life. So very long . . ." (1968: 7). Shouting has gone away, but this only indicates a deeper realization of the pain and suffering undergone by the many Isaacs of this world. As Fanon observes the situation of Others, he realizes the magnitude of the perversity and evil that finds home in this world. He weeps. He comes to terms with the situation. Only now he becomes acutely aware of the fact that "the explosion will [simply] not happen today." It is only after weeping that his liberating pedagogical discourse can begin. It is then that he can adopt the composure of discourse. But he knows that he is still sentenced to death. Reaching a paradoxical climax, Fanon no longer shouts or weeps, but decides to speak. *Black Skin, White Masks* is the expression of his love. Dare we not lose sight of "the anxiety, the distress, and the paradox" contained in his work/words.

The 'cry' as the love of love

Fanon's loving subjectivity is paradoxical. He is a paradox when he cries, and a paradox when he cries no more. In both cases it is the irruption, rebellion, and challenge of otherness that posit a limit to attempts at systematization and egocentric expressions of selfhood. In the cry of ethical revolt, the "beyond Being" is announced. The cry points to an irreducible exteriority that signifies as a command. For this reason, it cannot become a positive ground of a self-centered selfhood. The cry of the self signifies as a call from and for the Other. The *I* finds a place in the world only insofar as it serves the Other. The evisceration of this loving subjectivity is made manifest in *Le damnée,* the one who cannot give precisely because things are taken from him.[xiii[xiii]] Love loves love and cannot stand its evisceration. Fanon speaks to and for the *damnées*. Patience is required for the needed critical activity, since the subject must maintain the paradoxical stance of someone who lives against all odds and who substitutes his self for an Other—to the point of writing, as Fanon reminds in the opening lines of *Black Skin*, when no one has asked him to write, "especially those to whom [the writing, *Black Skin* itself] is directed" (1968: 7)—and when it simply appears to be too soon or too late for an "explosion" to occur. The paradoxical cry turns, with patience and vigilance, into a text. Why has Fanon written *Black Skin*? There seems to be no reason. *Black Skin* is a *gift* as much as an act of faith—that the explosion may come one day and that a world of love may finally emerge:

> Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? Was my freedom not *given* to me then in order to build the world of the *You*?
>
> At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door to my consciousness.
>
> My final prayer:
>
> O my body, make of me always a man who questions! (1968: 232, bold-italics mine)

Black Skin, White Masks ends as it begins, with the serenity of a paradoxical subject who can only marvel us, with a prayer (p. 232). Fanon prays to his (black) body (yet another paradoxical gesture), the indicator of passivity and exposure to the other and bearer of the marks that testify to the perversity of the system and the cries of those whom his paradoxically loving subjectivity will unceasingly try to respond.[xiv[xiv]]

Notes

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i[i]. The opposition between activists and assistant professors becomes transparent with the following portrayal of the latter: "With security in life, they live in their thoughts: they have a *permanent* position and a *secure* future in a well-organized state. They have hundreds, yes, even thousands of years between them and the earthquakes of existence; they are not afraid that such things can be repeated, for then what would the police and the newspaper say? Their life task is to judge the great men, judge them according to the result. Such behavior toward greatness betrays a strange mixture of arrogance and wretchedness—arrogance because they feel called to pass judgment, wretchedness because they feel that their lives are in no way allied with the lives of the great," Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 62–3.

ii[ii]. On this point see Gordon's insightful "A Problem of Biography in Africana Thought" in his *Existentia Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought* (New York: Routledge 2000), pp. 22–40.

iii[iii]. On the distinction between the "Saying" and the "Said," see Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or, Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 1998), pp. 5–8, 45–60.

iii[iv]. Consult *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993), for these and related senses.

v[v]. This interpretation of the cry is developed by the theologian of liberation Franz Hinkelammert in a recent book conveniently titled *Grito del sujeto: del teatro-mundo del evangelio de Juan al perro-mundo de la globalización* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial

Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones, 1998), see particularly pp. 197, 210. In English, the main title is "The Cry of the Subject). Another theologian of liberation, Enrique Dussel, advances a similar interpretation in his *Teología de la liberación: un panorama de su desarrollo* (Mexico, DF: Potrerillos Editores, 1995), pp. 10–18. For Dussel, "*La noción de ideología se descubre por su contrario: la revelación no-ideológica. Si hay una expresión que permite irrumpir la exterioridad a todo sistema ideológico constitutido es la proto-palabra, la exclamación o interjección de dolor, consecuencia inmediata del traumatismo sentido. El '!Ay!' del grito de dolor producido por un golpe, una herida, un accidente, indica de manera inmediata no* algo *sino a alguien. El que escucha el grito de dolor queda sobrecogido porque irrumpe en su mundo cotidiano e integrado el signo, el sonido, el ruido casi permite vislumbrarla presencia ausente de alguien en el dolor. No se sabe todavía quétipo de dolor ni el* por qué *del grito, y por ello es inquietante hasta tanto no se sepa quién es y por qué se lamenta.* Lo que *dicho grito dice es secundario; lo fundamental es el* decir *mismo, el que alguien* dice *algo. En el grito de dolor no se avanza* lo dicho *sino un* decir, *la persona misma, la exterioridad que provoca: que 'voca' o llama al auxilio*" [The notion of ideology is discovered by its contrary: the non-ideological revelation. If there is an expression that allows the irruption of the exteriority of any ideologically constituted system is the proto-word, the exclamation or interjection of pain, which arises as a consequence of the trauma. The 'Ouch!,' result of the cry of pain produced by a shock, a wound, an accident, indicates immediately not *something* but *someone*], p. 10, partial translation mine. These reflections clearly stand behind Dussel's interpretation of the content of the "speech acts" that emanate from the victims of a System—or "interpellation of the poor," see Dussel "The Reason of the Other: 'Interpellation' as Speech-Act," in Dussel's *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, ed. and trans. by Eduardo Mendieta (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996), pp. 19–48. . Dussel extends his reflections further in the context of a discussion with the German philosopher Karl-Otto Apel; see Dussel, *Debate en torno a la ética del discurso de Apel: Diálogo filosófico norte-sur desde América Latina* (México, D.F., Siglo Veintinuno Editores, and Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana–Iztapalapa, 1994). For a more systematic treatment of these themes in Dussel's oeuvre see his recent *Etica de la liberación en la edad de la globalización y de la exclusión* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta; México, DF: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana–Iztapalapa, and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998).

vi[vi]. The link between crying and these variety of feelings is made particularly evident in black music like the Spirituals and the Blues. In his classical work on these two musical expressions, James Cone shows how joy and sorrow, love and hate, hope and despair are united in the 'cry' elevated by black people in the Spirituals and the Blues; see James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972). Cone argues that the unity of these strong feelings and emotions in music "moves the people toward the direction of total liberation. It shapes and defines black being and creates cultural structures of black expression," p. 5. With this enigmatic link between the reconciliation of the contradictory and the possibility of action Cone points to the intrinsic paradoxical nature of the 'cry,' which is going to be made more clear as our phenomenological exploration unfolds.

vii[vii]. I follow Gordon in taking the literal translation of the title as a key to the reading of the chapter (see Gordon: 33). It is not difficult to see the philosophical and the political

problems raised by Markmann's translation. "The Fact of Blackness" erases the reference to the interiority of the subject, and ultimately adds support to the idea that "blackness" is something merely "out there," like a stone. By doing this Markmann not only obscures the existential phenomenological approach adopted by Fanon, but confirms the objectifying look that is at the origin of the perverse politics of racial discrimination.

viii[viii]. I am indebted here to Hinkelammert's depiction of the story of Abraham and Isaac. For him, Jesus occupies a position similar to that of Isaac. Opposing murder and violence, Jesus rebels against the homicidal tendencies of a reified Law. He represents the "living subject" who protests against a divinized system of laws (see Hinkelammert: 38–46).

ix[ix]. On *substitution* see Lévinas: 113–118.

x[x]. This paradoxical discourse is qualitatively different in character from the rational discourse through which Fanon initially attempted to analyze his situation and to communicate with white people, Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1968; original in French, 1952), p. 117 ff. The "composure" with which Fanon begins *Black Skin*, comes into being as a result of a series of paradoxes and is far from reflecting the "enthusiasm" with which he begins "cataloguing and probing" his surroundings previous to the cry, p. 119.

xi[xi]. For this reason we find Hinkelammert arguing that "*El sujeto es el otro. Por eso no es el individuo*" [The subject is the Other. For this reason it is not the individual] (Hinkelammert: 197). With this paradoxical expression, Hinkelammert voices what I ultimately want to establish here, that the cry of the self finds its ultimate expression at the point when it takes the paradoxical form of a call from the Other.

xii[xii]. I revise here again Markmann's unfortunate one-sided translation of the second sentence of this passage in which he translates the French "*don*" by master. This way of rendering the meaning of "*don*" makes invisible the paradoxical character of Fanon's subjectivity. The paradoxical event of substitution and the transubstantiation of the self are betrayed by this attempt to integrate Fanon's words with the logic of a powerful and self-centered self. To be sure the translation of "don" as master is not completely misleading since the root *do-* makes reference both to take and to give; see Émile Benveniste, "Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary." In *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. by A. D. Schrift (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 34. Yet, if we put the term in context it is clear that the "taking" plays a role in Fanon's narrative only, if at all, in the sense of "taking hold of something in order to give" (see Benveniste: 34). The paradox thus remains intact. This paradoxical conception of the formation of the ethical self clearly differs from the Hegelian conception of possession, struggle to death, and war found in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) and *Philosophy of Right*, trans. H.B. Nisbet and ed. by allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). I am currently developing this theme in a longer work.

xiii[xiii]. In Indo-European languages, as Émile Benveniste has revealed, the concept of "*don*" is linguistically and semantically connected with the notion of "*damné*." Both originally

emerge from the roots *do-* and *da* (Benveniste: 34). While "*donner*" is to give, "*damné*" refers to "the 'loss' which is prejudicial and no longer a voluntary service" (Benveniste: 40). The connection between "*don*" and "*damné*" is preserved in French, but not in English—in which "*don*" is translated as master or gift, and "*damné*" as condemned or wretched. It is therefore easier in English to remain unaware of the idea that the end of chapter five serves as a propaedeutic not only to the book but to the whole of Fanon's oeuvre, from *Black Skin* to *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963; in French, *Les damnés de la terre* and published in 1961).

xiv[xiv]. For a complementary view see Gordon's reflections on the Fanonian prayer and the openness of the body in Gordon: 35, 132.

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