Chapter 6

'The Crisis of Europe and Colonial Amnesia: Freedom Struggles in the Atlantic Biotope'

Robbie Shilliam

Introduction

In 2011, many commentators of the Eurozone crisis began to utilize a grammar redolent of colonial rule. For instance, Ulrich Beck, a European cosmopolitan *par excellence*, wondered whether the European Union might have become "a European Empire with a German stamp". Beck (2011a) noted that German Chancellor Angela Merkel's sense of power "conforms to the imperial difference between lender and borrower countries". For many social democratic commentators, the danger of the crisis lay in the defeat of labour by capital, and in the new context of EU institutional "empire" and global capitalism, this defeat had quickened the erosion of social democracy, thus deciding the fate of the European project (Garton Ash, 2011; see also Georgiou, 2010; Giddens, 2012; Ryner, 2010). Against this fate, Jürgen Habermas mounted a plea to save the old "biotope of Europe" (Dietz, 2011). For Habermas, nation-states are the constitutive components of this threatened ecosystem, and their internal and collective democratization has been its key cultivating process. Habermas, like many others, identified the genesis of this European biotope in the collective continental fight against fascism waged during the Second World War.

But despite the worry that Europe might be "colonizing" itself, this angst-ridden imaginary of the Eurozone crisis has been absent of any sustained engagement with the substantive historical and global dimensions of European colonialism. European social democrats and cosmopolitans alike have been mostly unconcerned as to the colonial struggles that were inseparable to the time period that saw the rise of the European project.[1] Those commentators who have mentioned colonial legacies have tended to do so by adding some (worthy) comments on labour migration, multiculturalism and resurgent racism. Yet these issues are mostly discussed as recent developments and are not deployed to critically interrogate the generative moments of the European project itself.[2] Hence the implication is

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[1] Garton Ash, 2011; see for example, Georgiou, 2010; Giddens, 2012; Habermas, 2011; Habermas, "Merkel's European Failure".

[2] For example, Balibar, 2010. Beck, 2011b acknowledges the influence of de-colonization upon the European project as a self-critique and this is an important intervention. However, substantively, it does not inform his argument; indeed, colonization only reappears in a discussion on the new,

that colonial legacies are subsidiary to the core struggle for democracy and freedom in Europe. Fascism, Cold War, class struggle: yes; colonization, imperialism, decolonization and liberation struggle: not really.

Not all commentators have forgotten colonialism's formative influence in the European project. Jan-Werner Müller, for example, has reminded readers that, until the 1960s, the term Europe was "contaminated by the evils of colonialism" (Müller, 2012). Such commentary aligns with the work of a number of postcolonial-oriented scholars who have been arguing for some time now that, in key strands of post-War French political thought, the issue of colonialism and decolonization was historically integral to the agendas of European re-democratization. This engagement reached a peak in the Algerian war of independence in the late 1950s before falling into abeyance (Ahluwalia, 2005; Arthur, 2010; Sajed, 2012; Young, 1990).

It would not, then, be obtuse to suggest that a certain "amnesia" has allowed – and continues to allow – the majority of European commentators and policy-makers to conceive of the European project as a pristinely continental movement of post-fascist democratic enlargement segregated from struggles over Europe's colonial empires (Gregory, 2004; see also Trouillot, 1995). This colonial amnesia that presently accompanies the crisis of Europe directly relates to some of the key academic challenges laid down by the editors of this volume. In arguing for a global historical sociology, they moot a rescaling of objects of analysis such that boundaries are no longer presumed to be consonant with the dictates of methodological nationalism and, due to this rescaling, static attributes must give way to a focus on relational qualities. As the editors argue, "*global* historical sociology starts from the assumption of interconnectedness and spatially expansive social relations." And when thinking of interconnectedness and spatially expansive social relations in European history, colonialism and empire must come into view (see Bhambra, 2013).

A shift towards a global historical sociology of this kind problematizes the predominant narrative that structures responses to the Eurozone crisis. For instance, the prevailing analytical and normative unit of this narrative beloved by Habermas - the nation-state - would have to be recast as an imperial-nation-state. The singular marker "nation" implies a focus upon citizenship and attendant rights and duties provided by inclusion into a

potentially reversed, relationship between China and India and Europe. More recently, in "The Rise and Fall of the European Union" has briefly suggested a chronology that incorporates empire into the European project narrative.

polity. Alternatively, the duplex marker "imperial-nation" invokes the tension between segregations and gradations of rights and duties denoted by empire and the equity and unanimity of rights and duties suggested by nation (see especially Wilder, 2005).

In what follows I do not directly mobilize the concept of the imperial-nation-state in my analysis, but I do work in the conceptual space opened up by a shift in focus from nation-state to imperial-nation-state.. Inhabiting this space, I bring a different but related set of freedom struggles to bear on the European project than those supposed by Habermas et al to define the intra-European democratization process. In fact, I subvert Habermas's articulation of old Europe's "biotope" as an enclosed system with an emergent democratic matter bleached of colonial power and peoples. In its place I engage with a broader "Atlantic biotope" that has hosted a myriad of social, political and intellectual interactions and struggles over freedom across the European metropoles and Antillean and African colonies. And I focus on the time period where these interactions reached their most intimate and acute level – the Vichy Regime and the French Union that followed.

Specifically, I work through three aspects of the struggle for freedom against colonial segregations and discriminations that spanned the Antilles, Francophone Africa and Europe during World War 2 and its immediate aftermath. I engage with a struggle over aesthetic freedom represented by the relationship between Surrealism and Négritude; a struggle over political freedom, represented by the relationship between the Vichy regime and Martinique; and a struggle over the philosophical account of freedom represented by the relationship between Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon. Before discussing these struggles, however, I grapple with some of the recent literature on the relationship between metropole and colony in order to introduce the shape and content of the Atlantic biotope that I will be working in.

Through these inquiries I do not aim to provide an alternative historical sociology of the European Union (for this, see Hansen and Jonsson, 2013). I am more concerned with challenging the inadequacy with which European cosmopolitanists and social democrats conceive of and narrate the "European project". I would argue that any engagement with the current crisis of Europe must treat the colonial dimension as formative, present, integral and persistent. If global historical sociology is tasked with examining phenomena on a global scale and with a relational sensibility, then the political salience of this project lies, in good part, in chastening European self-conceptions of an innate continental capacity for leading freedom struggles.

From European to Atlantic Biotope

Following the lead of the editors, it is first necessary to re-think the scale and space of the European project through a relational sensibility. A number of historians and historical sociologists have now questioned the presumed separation of colony and metropole. Some, for example, have speculated comparatively upon the analytical differences and similarities between empire and nation-state (Doyle, 1986: 34–42; Kumar, 2010); and some have brought attention to the fictive nature of the linear grand narrative that runs from empires to nation-states to the global age (Cooper, 1997: 63; Shaw, 2001: 88; Shilliam, 2006). Others have brought to light the constitutive, albeit shifting, lines of gradation that, within an imperial nexus, demarcate differential rights and freedoms allocated to some political subjects, and exclusions and violence visited upon others (see especially Stoler and Cooper, 1997). Here, the relationship between colony and metropole is conceived less on formally separated terms but more so through lines of demarcation that run between *and through* these administrative areas including the metropolitan capitals (see for example Boittin, 2010; Hall, 2002; Magubane, 2004).

From this perspective the comparative differences between the European nation-state and its non-European colonial empire do not explain themselves; rather, "colonial difference" structures the political whole (see also Anghie, 2005). Paradoxically, colonial difference is a principle of (often violent) relating through "making different". Colonial difference is therefore not just instantiated rigidly as a geo-political artefact (although to some people in some situations it certainly takes on this quality), rather, colonial difference follows peoples, orders and the social spaces they inhabit as they travel from metropole to colony or vice versa. These movements intensify the tensions that already exist between national ideologies and practices of citizenship/equality, and imperial ideologies and practices of subjecthood/discrimination (see for example Dubois, 2000).

Taking colonial difference seriously as an ordering principle of "making different" also requires scholars to work with and through situated knowledges (DuBois, 1961; Mignolo, 2000). By the terms given above, it could be said that those peoples whose lived experience emanates in the main from inhabiting (*de jure* or *de facto*) colonial-subject positions rather than (or at the same time as) national-citizenship might situate themselves in terms of an expansive global colonial difference, that is, as part of the "wretched of the earth" (for example, Shilliam, 2013). This might remain the case even though their struggles over citizenship, rights, freedom and representation are grounded in a particular imperial-nation-state. Meanwhile, those whose lived experience in the main emanates from inhabiting national-citizenship would have the option of situating themselves within global colonial

difference as do, for example, Anglo-Saxon supremacists (Bell, 2007; Garner, 2007). But their other option would be to simply attenuate their cognitive, moral and political borders to the European milieu of nation-states as is the case, paradoxically, with many European social democrats and cosmopolitanists.

The Atlantic biotope comes into view when we situate ourselves with either the wretched or the imperialists both of whom conceive of relating through/as/against difference, but not if we entertain the worldview of European social democrats or cosmopolitanists who conceive of the world-historical difference of Europe absent its imperial and colonial relations. This, indeed, is the source of their amnesia. I use the concept "Atlantic biotope" not just as a counterpoint to Habermas's "European biotope" , but also because the notion of biotope usefully conveys a living ensemble of entities in dynamic and contentious relation. The key dynamic of the Atlantic biotope can be found in the tension borne of colonial difference between subjecthood and citizenship. Furthermore, this tension is expressed not just legally or politically but also aesthetically, psychically and epistemically (see also Cooper, 1997; Wilder, 2005). In what now follows, I briefly sketch out the Francophone contours and substance of this biotope through the resources of those who have thought through colonial difference, and not with those who have forgotten.

French enlightenment thought was always affected and constituted by its colonial and imperial ventures. In this respect, the Antillean slave plantations were a crucial site for philosophers and jurists to interrogate questions pertaining to humanity, agency, rights and freedom (see Dubois, 2006). For example, the Code Noir, the legal stipulations governing African enslavement in the colonies, says as much as - if not more than - Jean Bodin's work on sovereignty regarding the rights and obligations of the sovereign towards the governed (on the Code see Dayan, 1995; Lawson, this volume). Just as instructive in this regard is the *Histoire des Deux Indies,* published in 1770 at the height of the Republic of Letters, which detailed Indian and Caribbean colonial practices and environments. Over the next fifty years, this collective work of key *Encyclopédistes* (although commonly attributed only to l'Abbé Raynal) would become *the* text that translated the esoteric strands of Enlightenment thought into the vernacular for a general metropolitan readership (Aravamudan, 1993: 49; Israel, 2011: chapter 15).

More importantly, Black and African traditions of thought emerging out of the plantation systems across the Americas formed their own archipelagos. Here, language and imperial administrative boundaries provided no impermeable membrane. The Martiniquean Aimé Césaire – one of the chief progenitors of Négritude – recalls that as a child he heard

speak of the Jamaican (and Anglophone) Pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey, who had sojourned in the United States in the 1910s and 1920s to build there the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (Depestre, 2000: 86). Moreover, aside from the standard Francophone literature that a student heading for the prestigious Parisian institutions of Ecole Normale Supérieure and Lycée Louis-le-Grand was expected to read, Césaire also engaged with writers of the Harlem Renaissance, especially Langston Hughes and the Jamaican, Claude Mckay. The engagement with Hughes was also personal and took place in Paris (Depestre, 2000: 87; Rosello, 1995: 27–8).

In fact, this Atlantic biotope was already being explored by the white elites of 1920s Paris whom had entered into an anthropological love affair with African "primitivism" through the medium of African-American Jazz (Clifford, 1989; Edwards, 1998). The traces of this obsession remained in the work of white metropolitan intellectuals for some time afterwards. For instance, Sartre's celebratory announcement of the poetry of Négritude, *Black Orpheus,* (to which I shall turn presently), claimed that the Black soul is communicated through the "heavy Dionysian intuitions" of jazz (Sartre, 1965: 42–3).

By the inter war period, then, there existed an intense ecology of ideas, peoples and politics between the French metropole and colonies which, if largely delineated by imperial administration, nevertheless knew no clear boundary between different administrative areas. For the African-descended wretched of the earth, the Atlantic biotope connected three continents specifically through the global colonial differences instantiated by the plantation system and "humanitarian" imperial rule. This expansive sense of the contours and substance of the Atlantic biotope is evidenced clearly in the quintessential Négritude poem - Césaire's (1995: 91) homeward bound *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*:

> and I tell myself Bordeaux and Nantes and Liverpool and New York and San Francisco – not a piece of this world that does not bear my fingerprint – and my calcaneus on the backs of skyscrapers and my filth in the glitter of gems! ... What is mine too: a small cell in the Jura ... a man alone, imprisoned by whiteness.

This last thought is revealing. For Césaire, the impulse for freedom was situated elsewhere to the metropole – the standard and amnesiac assumption of French narratives of progress and civilization. Toussaint L'Ouverture, celebrated leader of the revolution against slavery in Saint Domingue, died in his Jura cell in the French Alps after having been duplicitously captured and spirited away by Napoleon's forces in 1803. In Césaire's (1995: 125) apprehension, the French metropole was a stronghold of morbidity and unfreedom; Europe, as an imperial project, was a perpetrator of lies and pestilence. Indeed, Europe had in

no way perfected humanity – perhaps it has achieved the opposite. And therefore the Republic itself had to be decolonized: "I only know one France", declared Césaire (1996: 81), "that of the Revolution. That of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Too bad for the gothic cathedral." But what were the struggles over freedom announced by Césaire that ensued within this Atlantic biotope during the Vichy and Union eras?

Aesthetic Freedom: Surrealism and Négritude

In the journal *Tropiques,* published back in Martinique under censorship during World War 2, Césaire and fellow intellectuals further developed the poetic musings that they had undertaken in Paris. Moreover, *Tropiques* was a journal that professed a deep engagement with French Surrealism, highlighting the often-close relationship between Négritude and Surrealism. Both poetic traditions provide an aesthetic of freedom. Yet it is often assumed that Surrealism created a new aesthetic while Négritude, the aesthetics of the "wretched", merely coloured it black. This assumption must be refuted when we leave the European biotope and, instead, apprehend the Négritude/Surrealism relationship as an articulation of the colonial difference that structured the Atlantic biotope (see especially Wilder, 2005).

 In the first place Surrealism owed much to the allure of primitivism and racial essentialism that was being imbibed in Paris with regards to Jazz and other Black art forms. André Breton (1995: 172) claimed that "the surrealist adventure, at the outset, is inseparable from the seduction, the fascination [resources of the primitive soul] exerted over us." But it was pointless for Antillean poets to presume that they could mount a similar voyage of exotic cultural discovery into European heartlands. After all, those heartlands and their civilizational aesthetics were already known in their idealised form as part of a colonial education. Therefore any voyage of Antilleans to Europe was first and foremost an internal one into the antinomies of the colonised self (Dash, 2003: 101).

Hence, any engagement with European aesthetics by Négritude poets tended to produce an impetus to travel in the opposite direction, to retrieve, in the words of Suzanne Césaire (1998: 130) the "too quickly forgotten … suffering of our slave forebears … [and] … forced submission under pain of death to a system of civilization more alien than the tropical earth itself." The recovery of these ancestral sensibilities was necessary even in the era of post legal emancipation. Suzanne Césaire was clear that this shift in direction did not need to be accompanied by an acceptance of en vogue white anthropological tropes that gleaned a primordial Africa. And in any case there was a strategic imperative to consider: "[s]ince the colonizers owe their superiority to a certain life style, we in turn, can triumph over the

colonizers only by mastering the technique of this 'style'" (Césaire, 1998: 130). Thus, the purpose of Négritude was to mobilize "all the mingled living forces on this [Martiniquean] soil "(Césaire, 1998: 133). "Only the poetic spirit links and reunites", argued Aimé Césaire (1996: 121), so as "to re-establish a personal, fresh, compelling, magical contact with things". Redeeming the suffering of his enslaved forbears to inform a contemporary aesthetics of freedom, Aimé Césaire (1996: 122) proclaimed: "I am calling upon the Enraged".

René Ménil, co-editor of the *Tropiques,* also admitted that the style of Antillean poetics would necessarily be influenced by the metropolis, "cast as we are into the current of French culture". Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that, from the perspective of Antillean poets, Surrealism was attractive in that its aesthetics also sought liberation from the false promises of rational enlightenment, revealed not in this case by the whip and sugar cane but by the trenches and poison gas. Nevertheless, pre-empting Edward Said's thesis on travelling theory, Ménil (1996: 132) maintained that "a form encountering an alien content adapts itself, through the mysterious processes of life, to become one with that content and so itself necessarily changes." For example, echoing Fanon's later critique of psychoanalysis, Ménil noted that, while Breton's surrealist Manifesto allowed for a route into the psyche (via Freud), Antillean poets had to deal not so much with the sign of the father but of the slave master. For what had been traumatically repressed was not a nuclear patriarchal relationship, but whole ways of life of enslaved Africans (Ménil, 1996: 131).

In short, Surrealism was received by Martiniquean poets as an expedient applicatory tool for collective Antillean re-personalization: hence Suzanne Césaire's (1996: 126) characterization of Surrealism as "tightrope of our hope". In the context of World War 2, Ménil, the Césaires, and other poets cultivated an aesthetic of freedom from the situatedness of the "enraged", or "wretched", wherein the struggle of European citizens against fascism became intimately related to the struggle of Antillean subjects against European colonialism. Thus, the aesthetics of both Négritude and Surrealism were cultivated in an Atlantic – and not provincially European – biotope.

Moreover, Négritude did not just re-articulate – or "indigenise" – the aesthetics of Surrealism for a separate life in the tropics but also influenced a transformation in the metropolitan Surrealist movement itself. Aimé Césaire, for one, had never embraced the abstract and individualistic surrealist methodologies of "automatic writing" or "cadavers exquis" (see Rosello, 1995: 32–4). Indeed, the Martiniquean poets by and large broke with Surrealism after Breton's second manifesto called for the "free play" of poetic signification

as a method to liberate the libido (Edwards, 1998: 93). Free play made no sense for a poetics designed to liberate the (collective) colonised self from the legacies of enslavement.

The world war forced a number of metropolitan intellectuals, including Breton, to become personal and conceptually acquainted with the Atlantic biotope. Breton's encounter with Aimé Césaire and *Tropiques* in Martinique forced him to come to terms with the fact that the exotic colonies were already contaminated with the shadows of civilization that the surrealists were trying to escape in the metropolis. And more still, Breton's very "discovery" of *Tropiques* impelled him to reconsider his rejection of specificity and historical subjecthood from the free-play poetics of surrealism (Dash, 2003: 94; Edwards, 1998: 132). Having voyaged to exotic latitudes, Breton was learning the lesson of those who lived there on the front line of colonial difference: the journey was first and foremost one into the interior of the colonial/colonized self. All these revelations were so profound as to cause Breton to exclaim, with regard to Aimé Césaire: "here is a black man who handles the French language as no white man today can." Fanon (1986: 39) would later look back on Breton's surprise as a sign of deep racial paternalism not yet fully discarded.

Political Freedom: Martinique and Vichy

Breton's sojourn in Martinique was made necessary by the collapse of the Third Republic and its replacement by the Vichy regime. When the German army invaded France in 1940, the resistance coalesced not only around De Gaulle, exiled in Britain, but also around groups and peoples in the Francophone colonies. Félix Éboué, a Black administrator from French Guiana, had been posted to Chad in 1939 and was instrumental in making the colony a bastion of support for "free France". To the white metropolitan elite the colonies offered the best possibility of an operational territory in which to base "greater France" (Jennings, 2001: 9). Alternatively, to the collaborating Vichy regime, headed by Philippe Pétain, the colonies were valuable assets to play off against Hitler in the event that he demanded too harsh a price for peace. Hence, as both Siba Grovogui (2006) and Eric Jennings (2001) demonstrate in different ways, World War 2 exposed the political integrity of French metropole and colony more intimately than ever before: to both collaborators and resisters, the colonies were of immense material and symbolic importance.

But the colonies also became the testing ground for new articulations of fascism with republicanism. The exigencies of occupied rule soon led Petain to displace the republican mantra of liberty, equality and fraternity for its repressed value matrix of fatherland, family and labour (Macey, 2001: 82). In the Francophone colonies, Petainism worked to support the

extant colonial elites and to encourage their long standing racist and paternalistic worldviews by unshackling colonial rule from the ideological veneer of republicanism that had been operationalised as an assimilationist urge to create the indigenous cadre of *évolués* (see Grovogui, 2006: 18–9). Here it is important to remember that colonial difference was less a static geo-political artefact than it was a mobile organizing principle. In fact, the movement of white Europeans into the Antilles in this period intensified the already existing tensions between national practices of citizenship/equality and imperial practices of subjecthood/discrimination.

This was the environment that met Breton as he disembarked at Martinique en route to exile in the United States, along with his fellow intellectual, Claude Lévi-Strauss, en route to the New School (Jennings, 2002: 315). They arrived as part of a steady flow of emigrants and refugees from mainland France, many of whom, like them, were dissidents, exiles and Jews. Most were effectively imprisoned in camps designed in the first instance to intern war enemies. The penal genealogy of these camps probably owes much to the old tropical prison colonies, such as Devil's Island in French Guiana. In this respect, the treatment of these refugees demonstrates the intimacy of colonialism and fascism that already existed in the Atlantic biotope (see especially Jennings, 2002).

Petainism was further compounded in Martinique by the arrival of around 2000 mostly white soldiers from the metropole who were integrated into the governance of the island and who brought with them a racism un-tempered by pragmatic experiences of living side by side with the "natives". Confrontations ensued. Fanon was witness to black Martiniqueans refusing to bare their heads to the Marseilles and subsequently being forced to stand to silent attention by armed white sailors (Macey, 2001: 86). This would later cause him to recognize the fundamental importance of Négritude in a context that obliged the Antillean "to defend himself" (Fanon, 1969: 31–3).

But Fanon was not the only one to be directly politicized by Petainism. By the end of the war, Aimé Césaire had decided to wield the politician's pen instead of the poets, and, with the support of the French Communist Party (PCF) and as a deputy of Martinique, he departmentalized the island in the pursuit of civic democracy and social equality over Petainism. The colonial difference that, for Martiniquans, structured metropole and colony now legally collapsed. True, many Antillean writers were embittered by this political decision: surely the erasure of colonial difference required Antilleans to become political independent of the metropole and not incorporated even more intimately into the imperial-nation-state? Nevertheless, from here on, as Fanon would muse, all – including Aimé Césaire

– would have to come to terms with the persistence of Republican racism in the direct presence of formal citizenship (see Wilder, 2004: 38). Césaire's decision, in fact, would create the conditions whereby Fanon, in his sojourns in the metropole, would have to grapple with the mobility of colonial difference and its inscription in the psyche as much as in the law.

It is no surprise, then, that by the mid-1950s Césaire had mobilized the aesthetics of freedom found in Négritude into a political tract on freedom – *A Discourse on Colonialism.* While the *Discourse* was polemical, it nevertheless articulated, alongside the Frankfurt school, key critiques of modernity. However, in Césaire's narrative, unlike Adorno and Horkheimer's, the pathologies of modernity were congenitally induced by colonial rule and not cultivated in a European heartland conceptually removed from its imperial circuits (see Broeck, Forthcoming). For Césaire (2000: 36), the war had proved that Europe, as a conceptual and geo-political imperial project, was morally and spiritually indefensible. Morever, Césaire was adamant that the war itself could not be separated from the colonial past both in terms of its practices and the enlightenment justifications for these practices. Thus, "at the end of capitalism ... there is Hitler", and "at the end of formal humanism and philosophical renunciation, there is Hitler" (Césaire 2000: 36).[3] As he had argued poetically with Négritude, so Césaire now argued ideologically: French humanism was a false enlightenment, saturated in a racism that supported unfreedom and oppression throughout the French imperial-nation-state.

Césaire's critique resonates with that which I am making of the colonial amnesia of present day European social democrats and cosmopolitans. However, in his own context, Césaire directed his argument towards his European communist allies. In his view, racial oppression was not a particular instantiation of a more universal process of class exploitation; hence, the PCF should not justify instrumentally sacrificing anti-colonial struggle for the sake of a fantastic white working-class revolution. In his resignation letter to the PCF, Césaire (2010: 147) stressed, "we are convinced that ... the colonial question ... cannot be treated as a part of a more important whole, a part over which others can negotiate or come to whatever compromise seems appropriate in light of a general situation, of which they alone have the right to take stock."

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[3] See also the recent literature on some of the colonial determinants of Nazism, for example Zimmerer (2008) and the collection of resources gathered by Alanna Lockward at: http://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decoloniality-and-reparation/

Clearly, Césaire's political strategy emanated from a lived experience that in order to be understood must be situated within an Atlantic biotope. Indeed, Césaire approached even "intra-"European politics as integral to the Atlantic biotope and its mobile structuring principle of colonial difference. For example, Césaire (2010: 152) noted that it was Stalin who had reintroduced the colonial notion of advanced and backward peoples into socialist thinking. He made this observation in the context of Soviet tanks flattening the 1956 Hungarian Revolution to be met with quiescence from the PCF. In this environment Césaire (2010: 149) demanded from the PCF a solidarity adequate to the task of confronting the articulated nature of anti-capitalist and anti-colonial struggle: "this is not a desire to fight alone and a disdain for all alliances. It is a desire to distinguish between alliance and subordination, solidarity and resignation".

Philosophical Freedom: Sartre and Fanon

It was in the political climates sketched out above that Sartre – the preeminent white European "African philosopher" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 83) – engaged with Négritude. One of the defining questions in approaching Sartre's oeuvre is, as both Paige Arthur (2010: 7) and Robert Young (2001: x) put it, how and why a political philosophy devoted to the necessity of individual freedom transformed into a concern for collective identities and social justice on a global scale. Without engaging with the influence of decolonization, this question concerning *the* pre-eminent public and politically-engaged intellectual of post-war France – if not Europe – is unanswerable (Arthur, 2010: xix). Indeed, Sartre was the first philosopher to reformulate his political philosophy based on his wartime experiences of the Nazi occupation and the coterminous and violent subjugation of independence movements in the French colonies, especially Algeria.

As I have already noted, back in the 1920s white Parisian intellectuals were navigating the currents of the Atlantic biotope with their exotic fixation on African primitivism, which led them to the shores of Black America. In fact, the long and transformative process of incorporating the colonial question into Sartre's existentialist philosophy began with the clue laid by his Parisian neighbour, the African-American Richard Wright. Wright had argued that there was no Negro problem in the United States, only a white problem (Young, 2001: xi). From this prompt, Sartre examined the "Jewish" – more accurately, anti-Semitic – problem in France, and from it clarified his ethical position vis-à-vis "bad faith": in response to a dominating power that turns a subject into an object each

individual had a responsibility to transform her/himself back into an agent (Gordon, 1995a; Sartre, 1965b).

It was, though, Sartre's engagement with Négritude, in Paris, that further spurred his auto-critique of the individualist ethics of freedom proposed in *Being and Nothingness*, and published during the war. As Gary Wilder (2005) has suggested, Négritude poetically articulated colonial difference and the schism between national-citizenship and colonial subjecthood. Yet this poetics resonated not just in the Antilles and African continent, but in the heart of the intellectual metropolis as well. There, it challenged Sartre to propose a racial modifier to the abstract being at the centre of his philosophy of freedom; it forced Sartre to recognize the integrity of *Black* consciousness (Arthur, 2010: 36).

Sartre took up this challenge in his essay, *Black Orpheus.* One of the first, startling, moves that he makes in the essay is to shift the lived experience of white intellectuals towards an intimate engagement with colonial difference: "here are the black men standing, looking at us, and I hope that you, like me, will feel the shock of being seen"(Sartre, 1965a: 13). Sartre (1965a: 16) goes on to argue that whilst Négritude might be racially specific, its humanistic implications make it "a hymn to everyone for everyone". What is more, it seems that for Sartre, Négritude exceeds the historical importance of even the PCF: "in our time [it] is the only great revolutionary poetry". Négritude is revolutionary, Sartre (1965a: 28) argues, because, in order to transform back into an agent, the Negro "must first destroy the Truth of others".

However, by excavating an Hegelian "point of arrival" out of this negation, Sartre (1965a: 48) assumed that Négritude would, as a kind of "anti-racist racism", destroy itself in the movement towards a non or post-racial universalism. Fanon (1986: 132-133) would later vociferously criticize such a colour-blind appraisal in so far as it situated Antilleans as the anti-thesis to the European thesis of freedom, which finds its synthesis in Europe. In other words, Sartre's situatedness had not quite left behind the comfortable cosmopolitan biotope of Europe and its presumed autochthonous cultivation of freedom. Nevertheless, as Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (1988: 86, emphasis added) notes, *Black Orpheus* was intensely controversial in so far as a white metropolitan philosopher was now daring to reject both the "colonial rationale *and* the set of culturally eternal values as bases for society".

It is also important to note that during this time in Paris, when almost all things African were being anthropologised, Sartre had become, alongside Richard Wright, Léopold Senghor and others, a patron of *Présence Africaine*, the publishing house set up by Alioune Diop, a major Senegalese intellectual resident in Paris. With the intellectual and

organisational support of his wife, Christiane, Diop intended *Présence Africaine* to be a forum for all who might help "to define African originality and to hasten its introduction into the modern world" (Howlett, 1958: 140). Albert Camus, Emmanuel Mounier, and Andre Gide shared its pages with Antillean and African intellectuals, and Diop saw no contradiction between this openness and his avowedly pan-African sensibilities (Howlett: 140). In fact, Diop was keen to preserve the forum as a non-aligned space of reflection in a context wherein intellectual and artistic positions across Europe were increasingly being forced into one or other pole of the Cold War conflict (Nicol, 1979: 5). Sartre himself believed that discussions in this journal might be seminal to the resurrection of democratic futures within fascist-ravaged European metropoles. In so doing, Sartre started to recognise the broader Atlantic biotope in which freedom struggles were cultivating; in fact, he desired that the journal "would be among us, not like that of a child in the family circle, but like the presence of a remorse and a hope" (cited in Howlett, 1958: 141).

Sartre's famed intellectual engagement with Fanon must be situated within these wider philosophical engagements with colonialism and its legacies. For this purpose I follow Lewis Gordon (1995b: 14) who conceives of the engagement between Sartre and Fanon not in terms of hierarchy or diffusion but of convergence, sometimes co-extensive concerns and, I would add, of give-and-take (similar to the relationship between Négritude and Surrealism). Fanon was no doubt attracted to Sartre not just because of the latter's political commitments but also due to his "existentialist articulation of materialist history with the subjective experience of its operations" (see also Arthur, 2010: 25; Young, 2001: xix). And as is well known, Fanon was influenced by Sartre's (African-American inspired) reflections of the Manichean structure of racism in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (Cheyette, 2005). Yet as I have also noted, if Fanon was critical of Négritude's cultural rather than political exposition of the Black experience, he was just as critical of Sartre's Hegelian resolution to racial and colonial oppression. Fanon (1968: chapter 4) argued that national culture is forged in the violent struggle against colonial rule; yet, precisely because this culture must destroy the colonial relationship it is imbued with a humanism far more authentic than the abstract proclamations of European Enlightenment lore. In short, contra Sartre, the synthesis could not be known in advance of the outcome of liberation struggles.

Although Sartre had initially dismissed violence as a method of freedom on ethical grounds, events in the Algerian War of Independence would bring him to a position that confirmed Fanon's earlier critique of his own dialectics. It was also a position that aligned him with Fanon's position that in the colonial context violence was necessary in order to

exorcise "bad faith" (see Young, 2001: xv). In a 1956 speech made at a rally for peace in Algeria, Sartre (2001a: 136) argued that colonialism as a system can only maintain itself by becoming "more inhuman every day." The *colon*, claimed Sartre (2001a: 138), detests the "token universality of French institutions" that in principle allows the colonized to claim the same rights as the colonizer; hence, "one of the functions of racism is to compensate the latent universalism of bourgeois liberalism: since all human beings have the same rights, the Algerian will be made a subhuman".

Sartre had therefore re-framed his philosophy of freedom away from a hermetically sealed European biotope through his realisation that freedom's prime struggle was taking place in a more expansivebiotope over the organizing principle of colonial difference. In this respect, he had joined the company of Antillean intellectuals. For example, in the 1960 Marxist-influenced reformulation of his philosophical position, (*Critique of Dialectical Reason)*, Sartre, as had Césaire before him, refuted the epistemic validity of key sociological concepts used by dialectical materialism such as the "destruction of backwards social structures by advanced". He proposed to replace these concepts with those of colonialism and racism and the focus on violence and dehumanisation that they provided (Sartre, 1976: 717–8). Additionally, against the economism of the PCF, Sartre again claimed that the point of analysis was not to view exploitation as a *consequence* of capital accumulation but to show how the *process* of capital accumulation was violent and oppressive, as, again, was shown most clearly in the colonial context (Sartre, 1976: 734).

In 1961 Sartre briefly met Fanon in Rome and the following year wrote the preface to the *Wretched of the Earth*.[4] In his earlier preface to Léopold Senghor's anthology of Négritude poems, Sartre provoked his fellow white metropolitan intellectuals with an image of black colonial subjects that stared back at them. Sartre then proceeded to explain the poetic voice of these subjects but in the language of a universal owned by the white metropole. In the image Sartre presented fifteen years later, black colonial subjects no longer looked at Sartre's brethren; having turned their backs they were using Fanon's language to talk amongst themselves about struggle, freedom and a new humanism. Sartre seems to have been saying that those white Europeans who embraced a colonial amnesia would never be able to glean freedom's movement in a post-war *and* postcolonial world order.

Conclusion

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[4] In 1967, Josie Fanon, Fanon's widow, demanded that Sartre's preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* be removed due to his support for Israel in the Six Day war.

In 1956 Senghor and Aimé Césaire were joined by the Malagasy poet and politician Jacques Rabemananjari in the organizing committee that would put into effect Diop's vision of a Black Writers and Artists Congress, to be convened in the heart of the intellectual metropole of the imperial-nation-state at the Sorbonne's Descartes Ampitheatre (Nicol, 1979: 3). The president of the conference, the "elder" Haitian writer Jean Price-Mars, alongside a front table of Wright, Diop, Senghor, Césaire, and Haitian novelist Jacques-Stephen Alexis, began proceedings in a packed room decorated with portraits of Descartes, Pascal and other luminaries. However, these figures now shared the space with Picasso's stylistic "negro" head that he had drawn for the Congress poster (Baldwin, 1961: 25; Nicol, 1979: 8). It should be noted, though, that no Black women shared the speaking tables, although they had made crucial practical and intellectual contributions to the organisation of the conference.

The purpose of the conference (an attenuated one due to the absence of female intellectuals) was to explore the richness of Black and African cultures, to attend to the crisis of these cultures in terms of their relation to political action, and to assess future prospects (Jules-Rosette, 1998: 53). Billed as the "cultural Bandung", and although focused on Black and African culture and arts, the congress was also framed as a contribution to the post-war intellectual project of retrieving humanism from the fascist barbarism of the war. Diop, for example, exhorted the congregation to remember that they were not the only victims of racism, and that tribute had to be paid to Hitlers Jewish victims. Lévi-Strauss, who, like Breton, had touched down in Martinique *en route* to the United States, sent a letter addressed to the congress declaring that "there can be no true humanism if it excludes any part of humanity" and that therefore "your humanism is democratic, not only in purpose, but also in its method" (Lévi-Strauss, 1956). Here was the expression of a distinctly different cosmopolitan project in which Europe would have to play a part.

The Treaty of Rome was signed, one year later. While binding European countries together in a tighter economic union, the Treaty also sought to re-bind African polities, peoples and resources back into a European union on distinctly colonial principles. Indeed, it could be argued that this imperial project to forge "Eurafrica" was pre-eminent in the minds of the organizers (Hansen and Jonsson, 2013). The Black Writers and Artists Congress had sought to redirect the European project towards a reckoning with its colonial constitution for the pursuit of meaningful democracy in the post-fascist, post-war era. It challenged the inequitable difference between colonial subjecthood and national citizenship. This "cultural Bandung", and other cognate projects authored by colonial subjects, have had to be actively

forgotten in order for the Treaty of Rome to appear as the origination of a cosmopolitan project rather than the reformation of an older *imperial* project.

Habermas (2011), like many other European cosmopolitanists, practices this colonial amnesia. He supposes that if Merkel has her way, the European project will be transformed into its "opposite" and "[t]he first transnational democracy would become an especially effective, because disguised, arrangement for exercising a kind of post-democratic rule." But when colonial amnesia is lifted, such current speculations concerning European democracy seem naïve and even bigoted. The struggles that I have documented in this chapter only become cognisable when the key dynamic of freedom struggles is recognized to be expressive of the tension, caused by colonial difference, between national-citizenship and colonial-subjecthood. I have addressed this concern by engaging not with a provincially European biotope but with a more expansive and relationalist Atlantic biotope, and I have followed these struggles through a set of different registers – aesthetic, political and philosophical. There are other registers too, as there are other biotopes – distinct, yet necessarily related, and for some people, on some occasions, traversable.

To my mind, the aims of a global historical sociology cannot be solely academic. The main rationale for prefacing historical sociology with the global is as part of a political commitment to clarifying the deeper contexts within which struggles over self-determination, freedom, and democracy take place. The stakes are always high. For instance, the current myopic confrontation by many European social democrats and cosmopolitans with the Eurozone crisis could never provide an adequate response to the racisms, molecular fascisms and exclusions that have been enabled and encouraged by current austerity policies (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 234–41).[5] After all, Europe was not born again by an assemblage of democratic nation-states; it was re-constructed by imperial-nation-states complicit in the defence of colonial difference. As European elites busily redraw and reconstitute their aesthetic, political and philosophical borders, we might ask: what has changed?

Postscript: As I write the final draft of this chapter, innocent Parisians have suffered a murderous terrorist attack, reportedly organized by Islamic State, which has resulted in approximately 129 deaths. Headlines read, variously: "France suffers deadliest violence since World War Two". But Algeria was a department – not colony - of France. And on the day of the Nazi surrender, May 8th 1945, French Gendamerie took exception to Algerian celebrators

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[5] My thanks to Robert Deuchars for instructive conversations on this work.

in Setif who marched carrying banners protesting colonial rule. Shots were fired in and into the crowd and, after days of fighting, the French army proceeded to carry out a set of reprisals on the population including summary executions and the bombing of villages from the air and from the sea. Thousands were estimated killed. Of the perpetrators of the despicable attacks on 14th November, 2015, President Hollande declared that they were "against France, against the values that we defend everywhere in the world, against what we are: a free country that means something to the whole planet."

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