

Counter-violence, a ‘Hegelian’ myth

Minor variations on the master-slave dialectic

Matthieu Renault

Beyond a doubt Hegel knew about real slaves and their revolutionary struggles. In perhaps the most political expression of his career, he used the sensational events of Haiti as the linchpin in his argument in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The actual and successful revolution of Caribbean slaves against their masters is the moment when the dialectical logic of recognition becomes visible as the thematics of world history, the story of the universal realisation of freedom.¹

These sentences are taken from Susan Buck-Morss’ essay ‘Hegel and Haiti’, first published in 2000. The main thesis of Buck-Morss’ essay can be succinctly summarised: Hegel, one of the major figures of German Idealism, had drawn inspiration from the Haitian Revolution – the struggle to the death of the slaves of Saint-Domingue against their white masters – when composing the famous dialectic of mastery and servitude [*Herrschaft und Knechtschaft*] in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was published in 1807, just three years after Haiti’s independence. As is well known, this phenomenological sequence seeks to give an account of the passage from consciousness (of something) to self-consciousness as one that entails the encounter, confrontation and conflict with another consciousness. A struggle for recognition ensues between these two consciousnesses, one that from the outset takes the form of a battle to the death. And yet, Buck-Morss argues, while ‘bringing into his text the present, historical realities that surrounded it like invisible ink’, Hegel concealed his abolitionist Caribbean source.² The reality of the self-emancipation of the plantation slaves, accomplished in the wake and in the shadow of the French Revolution, was implanted in the text, if only to better philosophically nullify the potentially subversive effects of this reality, to better suppress it.

By way of proof, Buck-Morss emphasises that Hegel had attentively followed the events of Saint-Domingo from the autumn of 1804 to the end of 1805 as they were recounted in the journal *Minerva*, which had ‘informed its readers not only of the final struggle for independence of this French colony – under the banner of Liberty or Death! – but of events over the previous 10 years as well.’³ That ‘freedom cannot be granted to the slaves from above’, that the ‘self-liberation of the slave is required through a “trial by death”’, this had been demonstrated in the act of the Haitian Revolution. It is this ‘trial by death’ endured to the end by the Haitian slaves that Hegel would have had in mind when writing: ‘The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person’ – in the legal sense, ‘the agenda of the abolitionists!’, remarks Buck-Morss – ‘but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness’.⁴ And so Buck-Morss concludes:

Given the facility with which this dialectic of lordship and bondage lends itself to such a reading one wonders why the topic Hegel and Haiti has for so long been ignored. Not only have Hegel scholars failed to answer this question; they have failed, for the past two hundred years, even to ask it.⁵

Even if we put to one side the dispute over this failure by Hegel scholars – which pitted Buck-Morss against the Cape Verdean philosopher Pierre-Franklin Tavares, who had published an article in 1992 entitled ‘Hegel et Haïti, ou le silence de Hegel sur Saint-Domingue’ [Hegel and Haiti, or Hegel’s silence on Saint-Domingue]⁶ – it should still be noted that as early as 1975, in the appendix to the second volume of his monumental history of slavery, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolu-*

tion, David Brion Davis initiated a dialogue between the master-slave dialectic and the Haitian Revolution by depicting a 'partly imaginary' struggle to the death between Napoleon and Toussaint Louverture. Although this 'elemental struggle' culminated in Toussaint's capitulation and surrender, the Haitian Revolution was nonetheless the proof of the truth of the 'message' bequeathed by Hegel, namely, that 'man's true emancipation, whether physical or spiritual, must always depend on those who have endured and overcome some form of slavery.'⁷ This comparison re-emerged a decade later when the Haitian sociologist Laënnec Hurbon maintained that, although '*The Phenomenology of Spirit* ignores Toussaint Louverture ... [h]istory seems to prove Hegel right.'⁸ The Hegelian completion of the experience of Western consciousness in the Napoleonic State-Empire was being replayed, in parallel, mirrored, and accelerated so to speak, on another stage, with the creation of the state of Haiti, soon followed by the coronation of Jean-Jacques Dessalines as Emperor.

Deborah Jenson has recently evoked the figure of Dessalines in order to push Buck-Morss' thesis further still. Jenson stresses that the journal *Minerva* did more than narrate the events at Saint-Domingue in the third person. It also published Dessalines' texts and speeches, including extracts from his military field journal and the declaration of independence signed by himself. In Dessalines' acceptance of his imperial nomination, he used the following words:

Citizens, if anything to my eyes justifies this august title your trust has bestowed upon me, it is without a doubt my zeal to ensure the salvation of the empire and my will to consolidate our enterprise, an enterprise that will give the nations who are least friendly to freedom the image of us not as a passel of slaves, but as men who cherish their independence even in the knowledge that the major powers never grant it to people who, like us, are the artisans of their own liberty, men who have no occasion to beg for foreign assistance to break the idol to which we were sacrificed.⁹

According to Jenson, this and other declarations by Dessalines prefigured the Hegelian *leitmotif* of a freedom that can never be given but must be conquered in the heat of struggle. Insofar as there would be, not only 'something of Haiti', but also 'a lot of Dessalines' in Hegel, it becomes necessary to listen for the 'proto-

Hegelian resonance of [Dessalines'] proclamations.'¹⁰ Jenson thereby portrays a Hegel who had ventriloquised Dessalines: what is silently expressed in the very texture of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* – this story of European modernity's painful birth, described by Hegel as a 'voyage of discovery' – would be nothing other than its darker side, and the *voice* of the black slave who risked his life and won his emancipation.

Since its publication, Buck-Morss' essay has received both praise and criticism. The latter essentially falls into two categories. For some, as Buck-Morss herself remarks, 'the very suggestion of resurrecting the project of universal history from the ashes of modern metaphysics appeared to collude with Western imperialism'.¹¹ In a well-known move, the history of non-European peoples found itself placed under the yoke of European thought. For others, it is the empirical-historical corollary of Hegel's 'Mastery and Servitude' that is the problem – that is, whether such a corollary, in the singular, can be identified at all. Andrew Cole, for example, holds that the German term *Knecht*, as used by Hegel, refers much more immediately to the serf of still feudal Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century than to the plantation slaves, for whom Hegel elsewhere uses the term *Sklave*.¹²

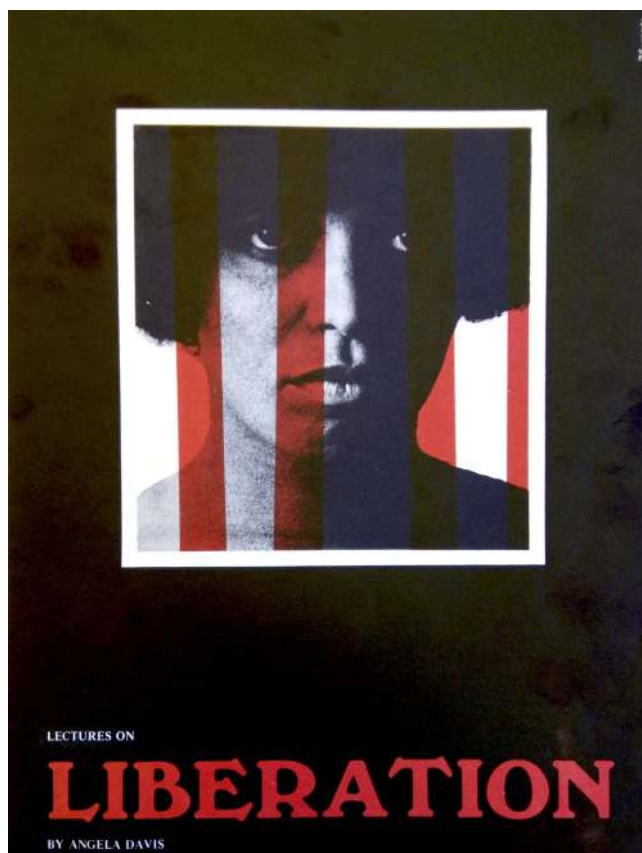
It is nevertheless surprising that amongst the readers of Buck-Morss, her critics included, few have remarked upon the fact that Hegel's 'Mastery and Servitude' does not actually concern a struggle to the death of slave against master. As Hegel narrates it, the struggle to the death is that founding struggle which gives shape to the figures of master and of slave-servant. Equality, or at least equivalence, is the starting point, inequality or domination is the result. The reversibility of this process is untraceable in Hegel's account. If, in this chapter, the Hegelian slave is already proceeding along the path of his emancipation, it is only through his servile work, carried out under the influence of the fear of death instilled in him by the master, through which he starts to gain his autonomy, laboriously achieving his own self-consciousness. Moreover, this emancipation is fundamentally incomplete and the master-slave dialectic quickly gives way to stoicism (chapter 4b), to scepticism and finally to the 'unhappy consciousness' divided within and against itself. Nowhere in these passages does a struggle to the death destroy slavery. Since the master-slave relation is nevertheless considered as a transhistor-

ical concrete universal, it is only thanks to an interpretative forcing that the passages which Hegel devoted to the French Revolution and its aftermath, the Terror, could be re-interpreted as the definitive abolition of the relation of mastery and servitude depicted several hundred pages before. We will flush out the party 'guilty' for this in what follows.

Buck-Morss certainly hints at having recognised as much, when in echo of the last lines of 'Mastery and Servitude', she declares: 'Hegel's text becomes obscure and falls silent at this point of realization. But given the historical events that provided the context for *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the inference is clear.' And this inference is the following: 'Those who once acquiesced to slavery' after a first struggle till death, 'demonstrate their humanity when they are willing to risk death rather than remain subjugated.' Fearing the philosophical-political consequences of this inevitable conclusion, Hegel would have balked at 'taking the next step to revolutionary practice', the second struggle to the death, for emancipation. Well before the European proletarians, 'Hegel knew' that the slaves of Saint-Domingue were 'taking this step for him.'¹³ Regardless of whether this inference is judged to be legitimate or not, it ultimately places the burden of proof on the meaning given to an absence, a silence. It is up to us to fill in this gap, which remains by its very definition, open to multiple and competing interpretations.

However novel Buck-Morss' thesis may be, it has none of the 'facility' its author attributes to it. Rather, it presupposes a set of mediations that provide its conditions of possibility. The thesis, as will become clear, is the fruit of Hegelianism's long intellectual and political history in the twentieth century, a history marked by an inversion, or at the very least by a split, of the phenomenological stage of the trial by death, such that the latter came to be conceived not only as what *produces* relations of mastery and servitude, but also and indissolubly as what one must pass through in order to undo them. Not only did the idea of emancipatory violence thereby come to the fore, but so did the idea that this final violence, ultimate in every sense of the word, sounds the death knell for a first and founding violence, albeit through endlessly repeating and re-enacting this violence within oppressive structures. In other words, the violence of the oppressed, of the slave, was destined to be defined

as counter-violence. The formation of this 'Hegelian' paradigm of counter-violence is what we propose to re-trace step by step, by restoring, if not its entire history, then at least the main scissions within it.



Future perfect: Frederick Douglass in Hegelian (Davis, Gilroy)

The year is 1969. Angela Davis is hired to teach philosophy at the University of California. She will soon be fired for her communist affinities, then charged in the Soledad Brothers affair. After several weeks on the run, she will be arrested and ultimately acquitted of all charges. In the autumn of 1969, for her first-term course, she proposes to study the 'recurrent philosophical themes in black literature', the first of which is a re-examination – in light of this literature – of a classical concept of European philosophy: freedom. From the outset, Davis notes that such a re-examination necessarily implies rethinking the relation between the theory and the practice of freedom, defying their systematic disassociation in Western history – the presence of slavery in the age of Enlightenment being the most striking proof of this.¹⁴ In her first lectures, Davis takes as her object the

autobiography of Frederick Douglass, the former slave and a prominent figure of the abolitionist struggle in the U.S. The first edition of this work was published in 1845 and, in conjunction with the rediscovery of slave narratives from the nineteenth century, it has fuelled an abundant critical literature both within and beyond the field of black studies since the 1960s.¹⁵

Although we must wait until the end of the second lesson to see Davis make explicit reference to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, one need not be a Hegel scholar to discern that her reading – centred on the mutations of the slave’s (self-)consciousness and revealing the progressive inversion of the relation of dependence between the slave and his master – is deeply marked by the Hegelian thematisation of the mastery and servitude relation. For Davis, it is not so much a question of applying the Hegelian thematisation to a supposedly particular instance – ‘black’ in this case – as it is of testing it against Douglass’ lived experience. Within Douglass’ narrative, Davis first of all discovers, or rediscovers, the idea that ‘the first condition of freedom is the open act of resistance – physical resistance, violent resistance.’ [V]iolent retaliation’ here not only indicates that the slave refuses to be physically enslaved, but first and foremost that he refuses the ‘definitions of the slave-master’, that is, the image of himself that the slave-owner once furnished, such that the ‘journey from slavery to freedom’ undertaken by Douglass was indissolubly ‘physical’ and ‘spiritual’.¹⁶

This is demonstrated in what Davis judges to be ‘the most crucial passage’ of Douglass’ autobiography.¹⁷ The scene unfolds when an already recalcitrant Douglass is consigned to the ‘slave-breaker’ Covey, who is charged with the task of returning Douglass to the straight and narrow by crushing any trace of resistance in him, by destroying any form of conscience or desire. Douglass suffers Covey’s violence until one day, on the brink of annihilation and about to be whipped once more, he decides to defend himself:

[B]ut at this moment – from whence came the spirit I don’t know – I resolved to fight; and, suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose ... My resistance was so entirely unexpected, that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers ... We were at it for nearly two hours. Covey at length let me go, puffing and blowing at

a great rate, saying that if I had not resisted, he would not have whipped me half so much. The truth was, that he had not whipped me at all ... The whole six months afterwards, that I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger. This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free.¹⁸

Initially, Davis is concerned with the consequence of this struggle for the master himself. Covey, she emphasises, is certainly physically strong enough to overpower Douglass, who is only 16 at the time, in hand-to-hand combat. Rather, he proves himself incapable of responding to the slave’s unexpected resistance. At that exact moment, Covey comes to realise that he is dependent on the slave, not only for his subsistence, but also for the definition of his own identity as master. What he discovers in the struggle is that ‘he is no longer the recognised master, the slave no longer recognises himself as slave.’¹⁹ And it is precisely this rupture in the unilateral, vertical relation of recognition of the slave towards the master which, so to speak, meant that, for Covey, the battle had been lost before it had even begun.

At the end of her second lesson, Davis announced that during her next session, she would discuss the effects of the struggle from the slave’s point of view.²⁰ Unfortunately, Davis’ ‘Lectures on Liberation’, such as they were published, end there. There is little doubt, however, that Davis considered this scene of the struggle to the death with the master as the pivotal moment, if not the final stage, of Douglass’ liberation. Little doubt, in other words, that she conceived of the slave’s counter-violence, his ‘eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth’ response to the master’s violence, as representing for Douglass the supreme form of resistance to slavery. For reasons that are easily understood, in light of the extreme exploitation founding plantation slavery, the master-slave dialectic here finds itself amputated from Hegel’s central thesis concerning the nature, at once alienating, formative and partly liberating, of servile work. Davis puts in its place the motif of the slave’s struggle to the death for his emancipation, which, it bears noting once more, is absent in Hegel.²¹

Whether consciously or not, it fell to Paul Gilroy to resume where Davis left off. Like Davis, Gilroy accords supreme importance to the battle between Douglass and

Covey, paying specific attention in his *The Black Atlantic* (1993) to the passage that follows immediately on from our previous citation.

The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. ... It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. ... I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.²²

In the Hegelian narrative of mastery and servitude, the slave is he who, in the course of an ordinary struggle, has refused to risk his life and has given in to the fear of death, choosing life over the freedom of consciousness. In doing so, the slave 'voluntarily' submits to his adversary, the latter thereby becoming his master. Gilroy observes that: 'Douglass's version is quite different. For him, the slave actively prefers the possibility of death to the continuing condition of inhumanity on which plantation slavery depends.'²³ He prefers dying to a continued life lived in slavery, that is, to survival. In this manner, Douglass' narrative can be read, in Gilroy's words, as an 'alternative', a 'supplement if not exactly a trans-coding' of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic. The radical inversion of the relation to death in the slave, but also in the master – since, if Covey was defeated, it was first of all because he feared for his life – signals the translation of 'Hegel's meta-narrative of power' (from the standpoint of the oppressor) into 'a meta-narrative of emancipation' (the standpoint of the oppressed).²⁴ Inextricably, it signals the transformation of enslaving violence into liberating counter-violence.

Since Davis' and Gilroy's seminal readings, there has been a proliferation of more or less successfully interlaced analyses of Hegel's chapter on 'Mastery and Servitude' and Douglass' narrative, some of which have been carried out in order to question the legitimacy of such a connection.²⁵ What is surprising in these interpretations, Gilroy's included, is that they suggest that Douglass would have situated himself in relation to Hegel, either with and/or against him. Even if we were to put to one side the fact that in the middle of the nineteenth cen-

ture *The Phenomenology of Spirit* was, in comparison with *The Science of Logic*, only a marginal work in the Hegelian corpus, and that no one had accorded a pre-eminent position or even specific status to the section on 'Mastery and Servitude', not even Marx as we will see, there can be no doubt that at the moment when he was drafting the first version of his autobiography, Douglass had no knowledge of Hegel's writings. Certainly, he was later granted privileged access to Germanic culture through his relationship with the militant feminist and abolitionist Otilie Assing, a German immigrant in America. In 1871, the same Assing wrote a letter to the then almost 80-year old 'young Hegelian' Ludwig Feuerbach, singing the praises of his *opus magnum*, *The Essence of Christianity*, by stating that it had provoked in Douglass, 'one of the most famous men in America', a 'total reversal of his attitudes' on religion and the church, making possible his conversion to atheism.²⁶ Eight years later, she further encouraged Douglass to recount in a new version of his autobiography how the 'helping hand' of Feuerbach had allowed him to '[break] the chains of a second bondage': slavery to God.²⁷ But this relation to a 'Left Hegelian' like Feuerbach only makes it more obvious that, for Assing and even more so for Douglass himself, there was never a question of referring his 'first' or actual enslavement to Hegel's philosophy. If we wish to grasp what has authorised the invention of a posthumous dialogue between Douglass and Hegel, we must go back in time, before the versions of Gilroy and Davis.

The (second) struggle till death: the work of counter-violence (Fanon)

Return to 1952, the year Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* was published. If, throughout his book, Fanon confronts Hegel's master-slave dialectic head-on, and compares it to the reality of colonial racism, this confrontation culminates in the seventh and final chapter, 'The Black Man and Recognition', specifically in its second section, 'The Black Man and Hegel.' Fanon's thesis is well known by now. He argues that the black man, or at least the black man of the French colonies, the Caribbean ones in particular – in his terms the 'Black Frenchman' (*le Noir français*) – remains a slave, be that a slave with no master, but rather an 'imaginary' master, since the black man has never risked his life in a struggle to the

death for recognition: 'There is no open conflict between White and Black'; '[o]ne day the white master recognized without a struggle the black slave.'²⁸ Fanon may not say so explicitly but no doubt he is thinking here of the abolition of slavery, which would have conferred upon the black man only a false sense of recognition and a troubled self-consciousness, since, quite simply, this recognition was bestowed upon him by the other and not won for himself.

Out of slavery the black man burst into the lists where his masters stood. ... The black man did not become a master. When there are no more slaves, there are no masters. The black man is a slave who was allowed to assume a master's attitude. The white man is a master who allowed his slaves to eat at his table.²⁹

It was the white man who decided to 'promote some men-machine-beasts to the supreme rank of *men*', it was not the black man himself who raised himself to humanity. 'The upheaval reached the black man from the outside. The black man was acted upon ... [He] does not know the price of freedom because he has never fought for it.'³⁰

Historically, abolition resulted in the petrification of the dialectical process of the slave's (self-)emancipation. Fanon thematises this anti-dialectic, which after the abolition of slavery, at least in the context of the French colonial empire, governs relations between whites and blacks. In the United States of America, where racism is at its height and where whites do not even bother to pretend to recognise blacks as equals, the latter are engaged in the true process of liberation: 'There are battles, there are defeats, truces, victories.'³¹ In contrast, where open conflict is, or at least seems to be, impossible, the black man comes to interiorise the image of the master, to identify with him: he hides his black skin behind a white mask; a split which could be reinterpreted in terms of the Hegelian figure of unhappy consciousness, as has been the case with W.E.B. Du Bois' motif of double consciousness.³² That, however, would be another chapter in the story of Hegelian or counter-Hegelian re-readings of black radical thought, underway now for half a century.

In order to support the idea that a struggle to the death against the master is absolutely necessary, Fanon cites those same passages of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* to which Buck-Morss will refer: 'The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognised as a

Person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness.'³³ And as Buck-Morss will, Fanon extracts this from the phenomenological context of Hegel's text, where the struggle constitutes, rather than destitutes, the figures of master and of slave. Indeed, Buck-Morss' hypothesis implicitly rests on a Fanonian reading of Hegel. However, she also turns this reading against itself. Whereas Fanon maintains that the struggle to the death between the slaves and their masters never took place, Buck-Morss declares that, at least in one instance, it gloriously did, and furthermore that this struggle provided Hegel with an archetype of all other such struggles.³⁴

One such Hegelian substratum still feeds the famous theory of violence set out in *The Wretched of the Earth*. For Fanon, the Algerian War of Independence was in many regards the realisation of this struggle to the death against the master that the black Caribbean was incapable, still, of engaging in. And there is a reason why anti-colonial violence is defined, at least in the initial phase of the struggle, as counter-violence: 'The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the colonized balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity ... Violence among the colonized will spread in proportion to the violence exerted by the colonial regime.'³⁵ Initially at least, the violence of the colonised is nothing more than colonialism's extreme, everyday violence turned against itself. It is an 'ironic return of things': a backlash.³⁶ This struggle to the death is, in fact, the necessary, if not sufficient, condition for the abolition of colonialism's founding violence: it is the reverse of colonial conquest, committed as this was to the erasure of history.³⁷

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon asserted that unlike the Hegelian slave, who 'loses himself in the object and finds the source of his liberation in his work', the black man 'abandons the object' in the desire to be 'like his master.'³⁸ In the context of slavery and colonialism, it is problematic, to say the least, to invest work with emancipatory virtue. However, in *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon does appeal to a form of work: 'for the colonized this violence is invested with positive, formative features because it constitutes their only work.'³⁹ Undoubtedly, this is a reference to the formative – in the sense of the term *Bildung* – function that work, for Hegel, takes on for the self-consciousness of the slave. Except that for

Fanon, there is no other work than the work of a struggle to the death; no work that is not the work of violence.

From this perspective there is one major difference between the Fanon of *Black Skin, White Masks* and the Fanon of *The Wretched of the Earth*. The former perceives the dilemmas of a recognition *as man* that means recognition *as white*, and yet he continues to conceive of the struggle to the death as a struggle for recognition, and as a point of departure for a process of reconciliation: 'I can already see a white man and a black man *hand in hand*.'⁴⁰ The latter declares instead a prohibition on seeking the recognition of the coloniser as a preliminary condition for the emancipation of the colonised; in place of colonialism's relentless enforcing of 'divide and rule', there must be, before all else, a mutual recognition between the colonised/slaves, a learning to recognise one another.⁴¹ This 'horizontal' self-recognition unfolds in battle, a battle that seeks the abolition, not only of the figure of the master/coloniser, but also of the conditions of (neocolonial/endogenous) reproduction of (colonial/exogenous) forms of 'vertical' recognition. 'Horizontal' recognition implies that the turn to violence that defines the beginning of the anti-colonial struggle is succeeded by a transformation of violence, inextricable from the reinvention of work itself, in its anthropological, economic and political sense: the task of decolonising bodies and minds, extending well beyond the struggle for political-national independence.

It is clear that the Fanonian appropriation of Hegel has played, and continues to play, a determinate role in subsequent anti-racist reconfigurations of the master-slave dialectic. However, Fanon neither introduced nor invented the dominant motif of the second struggle to the death, the struggle of the slave for his emancipation, which, as has been emphasised here, from an exegetical perspective, is nowhere to be found within Hegel. Fanon took this moment for granted. That is, he inherited it. But from whom? A final step backwards is required in order to answer this question.

At the origins of the myth: Hegelian variations (Marcuse, Kojève)

The pivotal year is 1932, the year Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* are finally published. The young Herbert Marcuse immediately produces an extended analysis of them,

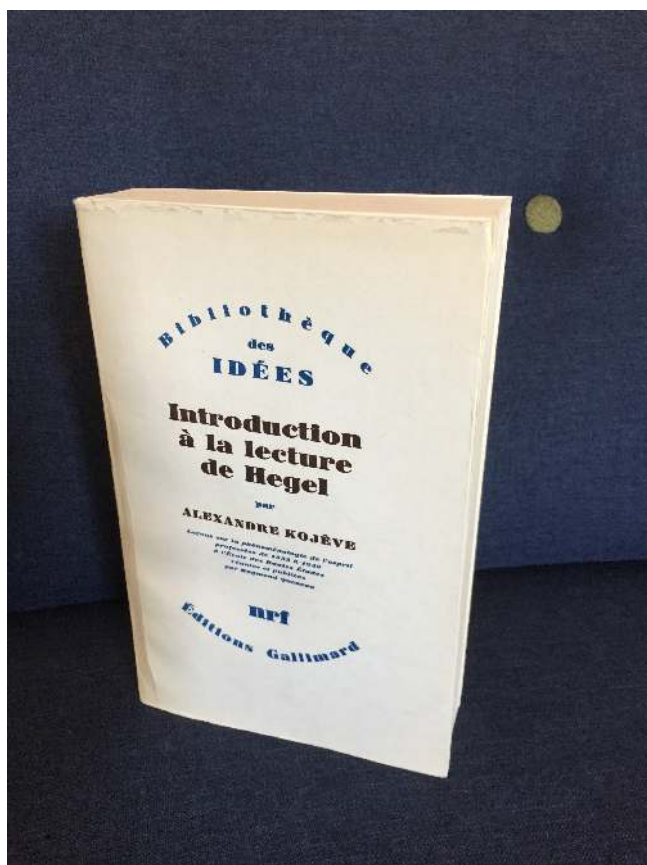
discovering a clear filiation between Hegel's chapter on 'Mastery and Servitude' and the Marxist conception of alienated labour under capitalism – in other words, a filiation between Hegel's slave-servant and Marx's labourer-worker, and, furthermore, between the master-slave dialectic and the schema of class struggle, such that the latter would be the translation of the former from a Marxist perspective.⁴² As a *topos* of critical philosophy, this idea still persists today, although Chris Arthur has long since shown it to be nothing more than a 'myth of Marxism'.⁴³ However, as is often the case with the history of ideas, the 'truth' here has little weight when faced with the formidable productivity of this Hegelian-Marxist matrix, which for decades has been a veritable machine for the production of an apparently inexhaustible variety of discourses on oppression and emancipation, extending well beyond the remit of the Marxist sphere *stricto sensu*. If this is a 'myth', it should not be understood (only) in a negative sense, as we will soon see.

This Marx-Hegel connection is fundamental to the invention of that 'supplement' to the master-slave dialectic that is the struggle to the death for liberation. Think only of Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, a Marxist catechism for a whole generation of communists and still a point of reference, albeit critically, for Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. If violence is first of all that of a founding and then conserving (bourgeois) state power, Engels equally conceives of the inversion of the 'internal state power' into an emancipatory and revolutionary counter-violence, carried out by the very forces engendered by capitalism itself: 'violence [*Gewalt*], however, plays yet another role in history, a revolutionary role; ... in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.'⁴⁴ Violence is, to cite the concluding paragraphs of the *Communist Manifesto*, the conduit for the 'overthrow of all existing social conditions.'⁴⁵

It is significant in this regard that in 1970, Davis – a student and friend of Marcuse, then a Jewish immigrant in the States – sent him a letter from prison, asking if he would agree to write a preface for the publication of her *Lectures on Liberation*. Confessing that he was ill at ease with discussing a work on 'a world to which I am still an outsider', Marcuse nevertheless praised Davis' effort to 'translate' the philosophical concept of 'human freedom' into the language of the struggle of black people and of 'the oppressed everywhere'; and for having deftly

demonstrated, in the act, the Hegelian thesis of the reversal of the relationship of dependence between master and slave which they had studied together in his seminar: ‘In your lecture ... Hegel’s philosophical analysis comes to life in the struggle in which the black slave establishes his own identity and thereby destroys the violent power of the master.’⁴⁶

The principal character responsible for the invention of the Hegelian Marxist master-slave dialectic was however not Marcuse, but another philosopher, the Franco-Russian Alexandre Kojève, who from 1933 to 1939 gave what would become a legendary seminar at the EPHE (*École pratique des hautes études*). It was above all Kojève who, in a Heideggerian-inspired crypto-Marxist vein, isolated the Hegelian narrative of mastery and servitude in order to reconstitute it as an autonomous dialectic. Whereas to Hegel it was but a ‘moment’ in a process from which it could not be extricated, Kojève instead made it the dynamic principle within spirit’s whole procession traced in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, both its origin and end. Kojève identified this procession with the ‘anthropogenetic’ history of humanity; a history that began with the formation of a master-slave relation and which ended, or which would end, with its definitive abolition.



For Kojève, the liberation of the slave-worker entails that he makes the master’s warrior principle – the principle of risk to life – his own, and consequently the ‘murder’ of the other, or at least its possibility, generates a synthesis of the ‘servile element of work’ and the ‘element of the Struggle over life and death’, a synthesis of the master and the slave which Hegel names the ‘citizen’, warrior and worker, labourer in arms, of the Napoleonic State.⁴⁷ After having ‘gratuitously’ projected the grammar of mastery and servitude onto Hegel’s reflections on the French Revolution, Kojève could easily ‘demonstrate’ that the master-slave dialectic culminated in a second great struggle to the death, which devastated the figures of master and slave, and which was nothing other than the repetition by inversion of the original struggle to the death for ‘pure prestige’ that had first led to their creation. It was then Kojève who, in a true *tour de force*, introduced the ‘Hegelian’ motif of revolutionary counter-violence.

It should be noted, moreover, that for Kojève the revolutionary moment proper had not been 1789, since the already crumbling monarchy had died a natural death, albeit a death lightly precipitated by Enlightenment propaganda. Rather, it was 1793, the Terror. He assures us that for a long while there had been only ‘slaves without masters’ of flesh and blood, slaves of God or of capital, nothing but the rich or poor bourgeois – hardly an orthodox Marxist assertion. Under these conditions, the risk to life could no longer take the form of a ‘class [struggle] properly [speaking], a war between the Masters and the Slaves.’⁴⁸ The ‘slave’ could only free himself definitively through a ‘bloody struggle for recognition.’⁴⁹ ‘[T]he working Bourgeois, turned Revolutionary’ for this reason had to create ‘the situation that introduce[d] into him the element of death.’⁵⁰ He had to stake his life, and that of others, for nothing; let blood flow without reason or, at least, without an apparent reason. The French Revolution thus simply expressed the law of all revolutions – which Kojève seems to have problematically extracted from the Russian Soviet experience, including that of Stalinism – namely, their division into two moments: ‘A great revolution is always bloodless at its outset; no trace of struggle. The old regime succumbs to an illness.’⁵¹ But this initial phase must be followed by a ‘second stage’, the stage of a ‘violent collective death’ marked by a ‘fury of annihilation.’⁵² ‘Liberation without a bloody Struggle, therefore, is metaphysically impossible’⁵³ because it is

‘the murderous war [that] guarantees historical freedom and the free historicity of man.’⁵⁴

If those who come to inherit this rewriting of the Hegelian narrative of mastery and servitude remain largely unconcerned by such an apology for the Terror, the fact still remains that subsequent appropriations of the master-slave dialectic will be nourished by Kojève’s attribution of an intrinsic value to revolutionary violence as a deliberately assumed ‘trial by death’, not only as a means or instrument of social transformation, but also as what drives real psychological revolution, a mutation in the consciousness of the slave. Foremost among these, without doubt, is Fanon. As Sartre observed, Fanon identified the logic of terror functioning at the very heart of the (anti) colonial war: ‘Terror, counter-terror, violence, counterviolence. This is what observers bitterly report when describing the circle of hatred which is so manifest and so tenacious in Algeria.’⁵⁵

Although this is not the place for a genuine demonstration, I am nevertheless convinced that Kojève should be (re)read less as a historian of philosophy and more as the creator of a myth (or a variant of the multifaceted Western myth of modernity) conceived of not merely as a conventional fiction, but in a properly anthropological sense. This is a myth that has permeated and informed critical thought all the more profoundly in that it did so anonymously. Kojève was meticulous in obscuring the true nature of his intervention and the distortion of Hegel’s text it involved. Like the Lévi-Straussian myth, the Kojévian narrative operates through a proliferation of fixed and opposed terminological pairs, and tends to reintroduce a binary logic into the heart of the Hegelian (ternary) dialectical logic, in a sense de-dialecticising the dialectic, divesting it of its essential fluidity. Such a (re)binarisation of the Hegelian dialectic has its roots in Kojève’s ‘ontological dualism’ (mind *versus* nature, man *versus* animal), which, as Judith Butler notes, is fundamentally alien to Hegelian thought.⁵⁶ Anthropogenesis, the becoming human of man, is in effect defined by Kojève as the process through which man, throughout the whole of history, extricates himself from his animal condition, sublating (at once suppressing and conserving) nature within him and around him. Thus, it seems that the old theme of the opposition between nature and culture, and in particular the passage from the first to the second, is (re)played here – this passage being, for Lévi-

Strauss, at the foundation of all myth. Moreover, the teleological schema so commonly attributed to Hegel is here rendered more complex by a ‘mythical’, circular conception of history, which ends with a brutal return to the animal condition, albeit in a fully humanised, that is, technological world. More importantly, Kojève puts forward a cyclical conception of absolute knowledge that, despite his own endeavour to dichotomise science and myth (especially the myth of faith), performs a loop back to primitive ‘mythological’ and ‘magical’ reason.⁵⁷

In a letter written in late 1948 to Tran Duc Thao, Kojève blithely confided in the latter, writing that his reading of Hegel ‘was intended as a striking piece of propaganda’, continuing: ‘For this reason I deliberately bolstered the role of the master-slave dialectic and, in a general manner, schematised the content of the phenomenology.’⁵⁸ However, this form of schematisation must be understood not only in the standard sense of simplification or vulgarisation – although it was certainly that and deliberately so – but also as an attempt to formalise the dynamic relations of mastery and servitude. What Kojève develops could be characterised as a combinatorics of so-called constitutive elements of human existence – first and foremost, ‘struggle’ and ‘work’, as activated and modulated by the relation to ‘death’ – thereby authorising a game of substitution, permutation, inversion and reconfiguration of terms, characters, functions and relations, which enabled everyone to rewrite their own variation of the myth, according to their lived experience and standpoint. More precisely put, it enabled the oppressed to don the garb of the Hegelian slave in order to rethink the very forms and conditions of their self-emancipation. Kojève was certainly the first to emphasise that *as a dynamic* the Hegelian relation of mastery and servitude could only be articulated from within the slave’s situated perspective, and that, whereas mastery had revealed itself to be an ‘existential impasse’,⁵⁹ being therefore without history, servitude presented itself as the source of all becoming, human history being nothing but the long and painful process of the slave’s liberation: ‘If idle Mastery is an impasse, laborious Servitude, in contrast, is the source of all human, social, historical progress. History is the history of the working slave.’⁶⁰

It is from this perspective that we should reconsider the multiple minoritarian appropriations that were forged from the master-slave dialectic (feminist, anti-

racist and, in part, Marxist), minor appropriations in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense that extend far beyond the names cited here, and that persist well after the ‘death sentence’ pronounced by professional French philosophers on a Hegelian myth, Deleuze himself leading the charge. These re-engagements, moments of dis-engagement here included, should be analysed as theoretical-political translations, or, to pastiche Lévi-Strauss’ *Mythologies*, as musical variations on a theme.⁶¹ There is no doubt that the motif of the emancipatory struggle to the death or revolutionary counter-violence has played a decisive role in these minor transformations of the master-slave dialectic. From this viewpoint, even Buck-Morss’ and other contemporary attempts to excavate the true historical sources of the Hegelian scheme of mastery and servitude appear as nothing but new mythical variations. Beginning (presumed) and end (provisional) coincide: exegesis proves to be part of myth-making.

Let us conclude by anticipating a potential objection. Lévi-Strauss makes clear that the choice of a myth or one of its variations is always arbitrary, at least ‘ontologically’, if not methodologically or ‘strategically’.⁶² That is to say, any other variant could justifiably fulfil this function. There is no such thing as an ‘authentic or primitive’ or ‘true version’.⁶³ Expanding on this, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro remarks in *Cannibal Metaphysics* that, to the extent that any original theme disappears, there are strictly speaking only variations, processes of reciprocal translation and permanent displacements.⁶⁴ Surely, as we have shown, Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* should not be considered as an origin in this sense, but at most, and *ex post*, as itself a variant, whose undeniable privilege relies not on the fact that it was the so-called ‘first version’, but rather that the philosopher and the text are an integral part of the very myth as it also describes the genesis of absolute knowledge, which means its own creation. Still, by retracing a genealogy of the ‘Hegelian’ motif of counter-violence, we did indeed set out to find the origins of the myth, which we in the end localised on the old continent, with Kojève. There is no denying that a tension or perhaps a contradiction between the historical (genealogical) and the mythological perspectives persists within this interpretation, but here I would like to adopt Lévi-Strauss’s remarks in relation to his own analyses of myths, namely that, in the final instance,

they were new variations on these very myths.⁶⁵ This is a statement already made in ‘The Structural Study of Myth’ with regard to the Freudian interpretation of the Oedipal myth.⁶⁶ As such, what we have produced is a myth of the origins of the ‘Hegelian’ myth of mastery and servitude: a meta-myth, as it were, that unlike the Lévi-Straussian analysis does not even claim to make ‘explicit’ what the other variants only ‘embodied’. In other words, the structure of the myth has not been ‘revealed to itself’ here, nor its transformations suspended.⁶⁷ This meta-myth is then conceived of as nothing more than a new chapter in the history it tells, certainly not its conclusion.⁶⁸

Translated by Olivia Fairweather and
Marie Louise Krogh

Matthieu Renault is Reader in Philosophy at the University of Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis, and a member of the Laboratory of Studies and Research on Contemporary Logics of Philosophy (LLCP). Recent publications include *L’empire de la révolution. Lénine et les musulmans de Russie* (2017).

Notes

1. Susan Buck-Morss, ‘Hegel and Haiti’, *Critical Inquiry* 26:4 (Summer 2000), 852. The following article is a revised version of a paper presented under the title ‘La contre-violence, un mythe “hégélien” (Fanon, Douglass, Toussaint Louverture)’ at the symposium ‘Focus sur les révoltes anticoloniales (Martinique – Guadeloupe – Réunion)’. The latter took place on 3 October 2018 at the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme and was organised by the members of the Caribbean worlds and transatlantic movements research group (Linda Boukhris, Christine Chivallon, Didier Nativel) and by Elsa Dorlin.
2. Buck-Morss, ‘Hegel and Haiti’, 846.
3. Buck-Morss, ‘Hegel and Haiti’, 835.
4. Hegel quoted in Buck-Morss, ‘Hegel and Haiti’, 849.
5. Buck-Morss, ‘Hegel and Haiti’, 849.
6. Pierre-Franklin Tavares, ‘Hegel et Haïti ou le silence de Hegel sur Saint-Domingue’ [Hegel and Haiti, or the Silence on Saint Domingue], *Chemins critiques* 2 (May 1992), 113–31. In this regard, see the letter from Tavares to Jean Ristat published in *L’Humanité* 2 Décembre 2006, accessed 3 February 2020, <https://www.humanite.fr/node/361462>. Note that in her essay, Buck-Morss mentions Tavares’ work but confides that she has not had the opportunity to read the article in detail and the thesis in question. See Buck-Morss, ‘Hegel and Haiti’, 843–4n72.
7. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation, 1770-1823* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 12, 558–60, 564.
8. Laënnec Hurbon, *Comprendre Haïti. Essai sur l’État, la nation et la culture* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), 63. Les Classiques des Sciences Sociales, accessed 26 May 2021, <http://classiques.uqac.ca/>

contemporains/hurbon_laennec/comprendre_haiti/comprendre_haiti.pdf

9. Jean-Jacques Dessalines, 'Acte d'acceptation par le gouverneur-général de sa nomination à la dignité impériale', 15 février 1804 ['Acceptance of his Imperial nomination by the Governor-General', 15 February 1804], reprinted in Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Haiti* (Paris: France Libraire, 1851), 9. [Translator's note: Partial translations of this paragraph can be found in Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave Narrative. Politics, Sex and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 97 and 142.]

10. Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave Narrative*, 97–98; Deborah Jenson, 'Hegel and Dessalines. Philosophy and the African diaspora', *New West Indian Guide*, 84:3-4 (2010), 269–75.

11. Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), ix.

12. Andrew Cole, *The Birth of Theory* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2014), 65. See also Alain Badiou, 'Hegel's Master and Slave', trans. Frank Ruda, *Crisis and Critique* 4:1 (March 2017), 34–47. Much ink has been spilled, and not only in French, over the translations of Hegel's *Knecht* ('valet', 'servant', 'serf' or even 'slave'), and, to a lesser extent, of *Herr* ('lord' or 'master'), a translation conundrum that we have only barely touched upon here. The fact however remains that these translation issues are intimately linked with the problematic of the variations of the 'master-slave' dialectic which will emerge at the conclusion of the present analysis.

13. Buck-Morss, 'Hegel and Haiti', 848–9. On this point, see also Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Culture of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 27–8.

14. Angela Davis, 'Lectures on Liberation', in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (San Francisco: Open Media Series/City Light Books, 2010) 45–7.

15. Davis makes use of the third edition of Douglass' autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881, revised in 1892). As regards this article, references are to the first version as it has been translated into French. This poses no great consequence in terms of the content, since the later editions are essentially augmented and extended versions of the first, including the later parts of Douglass' life.

16. Davis, 'Lectures on Liberation', 49, 52.

17. Davis, 'Lectures on Liberation', 81.

18. *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave, written by himself* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 77–8.

19. Davis, 'Lectures on Liberation', 79, 82–3.

20. Angela Davis, *Lectures on Liberation* (Los Angeles: National United Committee to Free Angela Davis, 1971), 24. This last paragraph does not appear in the recent reprint of Davis' lectures.

21. In her introduction to the new edition of Douglass' narrative, Davis, emphasising the use she could have made in her lectures on the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, admits that she regrets having ignored the meaning of manhood in Douglass' account, nowhere more explicit than in the physical confrontation with

Covey: 'In fact, today I find it simultaneously somewhat embarrassing to realise that my UCLA lectures on Douglass rely on an implicitly masculinist notion of freedom, and exciting to realise how much we have matured with respect to feminist analysis since that period.' (Davis, 'Introduction', in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 28). Nevertheless, let us note that as early as 1971, Davis published an essay in *The Black Scholar* on 'The Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves', still imbued with Hegelian or Hegelian-Marxist influences, in which work, 'productive activity', has a positive function for the formation of the 'black woman's consciousness', to the extent that, although it was still enslavement, it was nevertheless 'proof of her ability to transform things' and to reveal to her 'the oppressor's utter dependence on her.' Angela Davis, 'The Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves', *The Black Scholar* (December 1971), 6.

22. *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass*, 78.

23. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 63.

24. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 60.

25. Particularly notable in this respect is the thesis of Cynthia Willett, who claims that the phenomenology of the Black American consciousness has, historically, developed according to a dialectic that differed significantly to Hegel's, particularly with regard to the 'transformation of the self' and 'social change'. This 'second dialectic' would already be at work in Douglass, whose autobiographical narrative shows that the Western conception of freedom – an ascetic conception based in the supposed contradiction between, on the one hand, natural life and bodily desire, and on the other, freedom and reason – is foreign to the mainstreams of African-American culture. According to Willett, Douglass' violent struggle against Covey is not a risking of death but an affirmation of life. See Cynthia Willett, *Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), in particular, chapter 5, 'Hegel's Master Narrative of Freedom and the African American Experience', 103–27, and chapter 6, 'A Slave Narrative of Freedom. Frederick Douglass and the Force of Manhood', 129–56. However, one does wonder whether such claims of an 'outside' to Western thought really does something other than restage the binary oppositions that structure it internally.

26. Otilie Assing, Letter to Ludwig Feuerbach, 15 May 1871, cited in Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines: Otilie Assing and Frederick Douglass* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), 259–60.

27. Otilie Assing, Letter to Frederick Douglass, 6 January 1879, in *Radical Passion: Otilie Assing's Report from America and Letters to Frederick Douglass*, ed. Christoph Lohmann (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 351.

28. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2007), 191.

29. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 194.

30. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 194–5. Translation amended.

31. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 196. Translation amended.

32. See in particular Shamooin Zamir, *Dark Voices: W. E. B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888-1903* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 143.

33. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 194.

34. Why does the Haitian revolution remain in the shadows within Fanon's work? At least two interlacing reasons for such an occlusion can be teased out, one 'positive' and the other 'negative'. First, and this is a *leitmotif* in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon is clearly mindful not to make the *present* emancipation of black people dependent upon the past, however glorious it may have been: 'Whether we like it or not, the past can in no way be my guide in the actual state of things.' (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 200. Translation amended.). While one must know how to take on the past, in order to overcome it, this past cannot be exclusively black, rather it is the past of all of humanity: 'I am a man, and I have to rework the world's past from the very beginning. I am not just responsible for the slave revolt in Saint Domingue' (201) – this reference to the Haitian revolution being a hapax in Fanon's oeuvre. Second, while it is known that his library contained an edition of C.L. R. James' *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* – see: 'Frantz Fanon's library' in Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, eds. Jean Khalfa and Robert J.C. Young (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 738 – Fanon remained reliant upon a white-colonialist-capitalist historiography (one prefix is in this regard as good as another), which had systematically either ignored or denounced as savage those revolts that punctuate the history of slavery and colonisation. In other words, Fanon to a large degree remained dependent upon a representation of non-Europeans that cast them as the passive matter of a world history that so far had been made entirely by the peoples of Western Europe.
35. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 46.
36. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 42. Translation amended.
37. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 42.
38. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 195n10.
39. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 50.
40. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 194.
41. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 50.
42. Herbert Marcuse, 'The Foundation of Historical Materialism' in *Studies in Critical Philosophy*, trans. Joris de Bres (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 1–48.
43. Chris Arthur, 'Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic and a Myth of Marxology', *New Left Review* 142 (November-December 1983), 67–75.
44. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Düring*, in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 26 (London/Moscow: Lawrence & Wishart/Progress Publishers, 1987), 170–1.
45. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore (London: Penguin Classics, 2002), 258. [Translator's note: The English translations in both cases renders *Gewalt* as 'force'. To accord with the arguments presented here, which in part rests on the French translation of *Gewalt* as 'violence', we have carried that meaning over and modified the English translations to 'violence'.]
46. Herbert Marcuse, Letter to Angela Y. Davis, 18 November 1970, in *The New Left and the 1960s, Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, vol. 3, ed. Douglass Kellner (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 49–50.
47. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 69. [Translator's note: The English translation of Raymond Queneau's collection of Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel does not cover all of the lectures cited here. Where lectures not included in the English translation are cited, reference is given to the French].
48. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 69.
49. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), 143.
50. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 69.
51. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 141.
52. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 143, 557.
53. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 56.
54. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 560.
55. Fanon, *The Wretched*, 47; Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Preface', in Fanon, *The Wretched*, lii.
56. Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 81. See also Tran Duc Thao, 'Letter to Alexandre Kojève', 30/X 1948, *Genèses* 2 (December 1990), 136–7.
57. Alexandre Kojève, *Identité et réalité dans le 'Dictionnaire' de Pierre Bayle* [Identity and Reality in the 'Dictionary' of Pierre Bayle] (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 20.
58. Alexandre Kojève, 'Letter to Tran Duc Thao', 7 October 1948, in Gwendoline Jarczyk and Pierre-Jean Labarrière, 'Alexandre Kojève et Tran Duc Thao. Correspondance inédite' ['Alexandre Kojève and Tran Duc Thao. The Unpublished Correspondence'], *Genèses* 2 (December 1990), 134.
59. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, 25, 55, 114, 174.
60. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 20.
61. In particular, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to a Science of Mythology, volume 1: The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969).
62. See, for example, Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to a Science of Mythology: 1. The Raw and the Cooked*, 1; and Claude Lévi-Strauss and Didier Éribon, *De près et de loin* [From Far and Wide], (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1988).
63. Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth' (1958), in *Structural Anthology*, trans. Claire Jakobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 478. Translation modified.
64. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014), chapter 13, 'Becomings of Structuralism', 197–219.
65. 'But this philosophic caution, which makes it possible to avoid the pitfalls of reductionist interpretations, is also a strength. It supposes that each suggested new interpretation of a myth – and this means, for a start, my own interpretations – takes its place in sequence after the already known variants of that myth.' (Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'Finale' in *Introduction to a Science of Mythology, volume 4. The Naked Man*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 628.
66. Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth', 478.
67. Lévi-Strauss, 'Finale', 628.
68. I would like to thank Christine Chivallon for having drawn my attention to the mythological dimension of my reading and for having thus set the course for this reflexive hypothesis.