

CONVERSATION 4

COLONIALISM AND REVOLUTION

MICHAEL BURAWOY

Fanon Meets Bourdieu

But above all I wanted to get away from speculation – at that time [1960s], the works of Frantz Fanon, especially The Wretched of the Earth, were the latest fashion, and they struck me as being false and dangerous.

Bourdieu (1990 [1986]: 7)

What Fanon says corresponds to nothing. It is even dangerous to make the Algerians believe the things he says. This would bring them to a utopia. And I think these men [Sartre and Fanon] contributed to what Algeria became because they told stories to Algerians who often did not know their own country any more than the French who spoke about it, and, therefore, the Algerians retained a completely unrealistic utopian illusion of Algeria ... the texts of Fanon and Sartre are frightening for their irresponsibility. You would have to be a megalomaniac to think you could say just any such nonsense.

Pierre Bourdieu, interview in *Le Sueur* (2001: 282)

Bourdieu's stance toward Marxism becomes more hostile as we move from Marx to Gramsci and now to Fanon. Bourdieu is prepared to acknowledge the insights of Karl Marx and, indeed, so many of his ideas find an echo in the writings of Marx. As I suggested in Conversation 2, his theory of cultural domination can be seen as an extension of Marx's political economy from material to symbolic goods. While Bourdieu wants to distance himself from his opposite number in the Marxist tradition, he nonetheless shows a grudging respect by turning Gramsci against Gramsci.

When it comes to Frantz Fanon, the gloves are off, as we see in the rare quotes above, taken from two interviews. I have found no other explicit commentary on Fanon in Bourdieu's works. As with other Marxists, once we allow Fanon to respond, we see both astonishing parallels and glaring divergences. Bourdieu's enmity towards Fanon – there is no evidence that Fanon even knew Bourdieu – is perhaps all the deeper because their lives in Algeria overlapped. But they were worlds apart: the one a scientific observer from the metropolis sympathetic to the plight of the colonised, attempting to give them dignity by recognising their distinctive traditions; the other a psychiatrist from Martinique trained in France and dealing directly with victims of violence on both sides of the colonial divide. The one was attached to the university and ventured into communities as research sites, while the other worked in a psychiatric hospital before committing himself to the liberation movement (the Front de Libération Nationale/National Liberation Front or FLN).

Still, the enmity is especially interesting, given how similar are their accounts of colonialism and its effects, namely those found in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963 [1961]) and Bourdieu's less-well-known works written while he was in Algeria or soon thereafter – *The Sociology of Algeria* (1958), *Work and Workers in Algeria* (written with Alain Darbel, Jean-Pierre Rivet and Claude Seibel) (1963), and *The Uprooting* (written with Abdelmalek Sayad) (1964).¹ Certainly, the two writers refract their writings through different theoretical lenses – modernisation theory and Third World Marxism – which reflect serious disagreements, but it cannot account for Bourdieu's venomous hostility, especially as within his modernisation theory there is more than a whiff of Marxism.

We need to look elsewhere for the source of Bourdieu's contempt for Fanon, namely their places in the French political and intellectual scene. The two men were not only located on different sides of the colour line within the political field of war-torn Algeria, but, just as significantly, they occupied opposed positions within the different, but connected French political field. When Bourdieu moved back to France, he entered

a very different intellectual world – that of the metropolis rather than the colony. There, despite his sympathies for the colonised, he positioned himself in opposition to the Third Worldism associated with Sartre and others, and expressed most vividly in the writings of Fanon. We must not forget that the Algerian question created a virtual civil war within France itself, with positions ranging all the way from fervent defence of the anti-colonial revolution to uncompromising support for the settler regime. Indeed, the extremes were organised militarily within France. Bourdieu vacillated in the middle, but he certainly did not take the side of Fanon and Sartre.

It is significant, then, that with immersion in the French political field, Bourdieu breaks with his own ‘revolutionary’ writings on Algeria to offer a completely different rendering of Algerian society. His best-known Algerian writings are not the early ones, but the heavily theorised treatises *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977 [1972]) and the subsequent version, *The Logic of Practice* (1990 [1980]). Based on a timeless, context-free construction of the rural Kabyle² – an anthropological mythology if ever there was one – it is here that Bourdieu develops the concepts of symbolic capital, habitus, doxa and misrecognition, which are then used to paint France in functionalist colours. Here lies Bourdieu’s brilliance (and, one might say, his limitations) – to take the elementary forms of a fabricated Kabyle social life as the building blocks for studying advanced capitalism. What differentiates the latter from the former is the coexistence of differentiated fields – a notion notably absent in his writings on the Kabyle.

Physical violence is, thereby, relegated to the colony, while *symbolic* violence is pinned to the metropolis – but, ironically, through the extrapolation of a self-reproducing, harmonious, autochthonous Kabyle society. But, curiously, Bourdieu’s analysis of France exhibits uncanny parallels with Fanon’s first great work, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967 [1952]), which describes the symbolic violence of the French racial order. But where Fanon stresses the *psychoanalysis* of internalised oppression in the context of the French racial order, Bourdieu undertakes the *socio-analysis* of outward distinction, supported by the undeveloped psychology of habitus. Equally important, however, is their inverse trajectory: Fanon moves from symbolic violence to social revolution, whereas Bourdieu moves in the opposite direction, from social revolution to symbolic violence.

This, then, is how I will construct Fanon’s response to Bourdieu’s violent denunciations. I begin with their convergent biographies – from margin to centre to margin – and from there explore their parallel

accounts of colonialism, showing how they inflect those accounts with different theories, before finally comparing their reverse trajectories leading to Bourdieu’s *critical pessimism* with regard to symbolic violence in France and Fanon’s revolutionary optimism with regard to colonial violence in Algeria.

CONVERGENT BIOGRAPHIES: FROM MARGIN TO CENTRE TO MARGIN

Bourdieu and Fanon overlapped in Algeria, during the period of intensive struggles for national liberation (1954–62). Bourdieu arrived in 1955 to do his military service, whereupon he became absorbed by the fate of the Algerian people. He stayed on, taking a position at the University of Algiers, turned from philosophy to ethnology and sociology, and dived into research on all facets of the life of the colonised. Wading into war zones with his research assistants, he became a chronicler and witness to colonial subjugation and the evolving struggles. By 1960 his presence had become politically untenable and he left Algeria for France, where he embarked on his illustrious career as a sociologist, but indelibly marked by his Algerian experiences.

Fanon arrived in Algeria in 1953, two years before Bourdieu, also from France, where he had recently completed a degree in medicine and psychiatry. In Algeria, he was appointed head of the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital and through his patients he vicariously experienced the traumas of colonial violence. He concluded that psychiatry was no solution to the suffering and so he became involved in the liberation struggle, leading to his expulsion from Algeria in 1956. He went to Tunis, where he continued his psychiatric work, and then to Accra, where he became a roving ambassador for the FLN in different parts of North and West Africa. He died of leukemia in 1961, just before Algeria achieved independence, but not before he had finished *The Wretched of the Earth*, the bible of liberation movements across the world.

In their different ways, both Bourdieu and Fanon were well prepared to develop original interpretations of their Algerian experiences. They both made the uncomfortable journey from periphery to centre. Bourdieu grew up in a small village in the Béarn, where his father graduated from sharecropper to postal employee. Only Bourdieu’s brilliance and the support of his teachers took him all the way to the École Normale Supérieure. Fanon grew up in Martinique in a Creole family with middle-class aspirations, before entering the Free French Army in 1943. He served in North

Africa, witnessing colonial oppression of a sort he had never seen before, and then in eastern France, where he discovered the meaning of metropolitan racism. He was back in France in 1946, studying to be a doctor in Lyon. Both Bourdieu and Fanon had bitter experiences of marginalisation in France: the one based on class, which Bourdieu describes in *Sketch for a Self-analysis* and the other based on race that Fanon exposed in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Both were well equipped to be horrified by the abominations of settler colonialism, although their race and political propensities would position them differently within the colonial order.

The transition from centre to periphery, from France to Algeria, demanded a wholesale reorientation of the schemes of understanding they had acquired in their formal training in France. They both converged on a sociology of colonialism – Bourdieu from philosophy that was far too removed from what he saw in Algeria and Fanon from psychiatry that couldn't grasp the structural features of colonial domination. Their accounts of colonialism are remarkably similar.

SEVEN THESES ON COLONIALISM: BOURDIEU EQUALS FANON

Notwithstanding their convergent trajectories from periphery to centre to periphery, given their divergent positions and dispositions, one would expect Bourdieu the French normalien and Fanon the Martiniquan psychiatrist to have clashing understandings of the colonial condition. Such an expectation of divergence is only intensified if one takes into account Bourdieu's later denunciation of Fanon's writings as 'speculative', 'irresponsible' and 'dangerous'. It is all the more surprising, therefore, to discover striking parallels in their analysis of colonial domination, anti-colonial struggles and the supersession of colonialism. As evidence, let me draw on two texts, both written in 1961, one year before Algeria's independence – Bourdieu's 'Revolution within the revolution'³ and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

1. *Colonialism is a system of domination held together by violence.* In his familiar evocative way, Fanon writes:

Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler – was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 36).

Bourdieu is equally clear:

Indeed, the war plainly revealed the true basis for the colonial order: the relation, backed by force, which allows the dominant caste to keep the dominated caste in a position of inferiority (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 146).

Bourdieu avoids the concept of race, reluctant to use it not only in his analysis of colonialism, but also of French society, where he is far more comfortable deploying class as his critical concept.

2. *The colonial situation is fundamentally one of segregation of colonisers from colonised.* In Fanon's terms, colonialism follows the principle of 'reciprocal exclusivity', admitting of no compromise:

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 38–39).

Bourdieu continues to use the term 'caste' to grasp the structural character of colonialism, but this misses out on the experiential moment of race that remains central in Fanon's writings:

In short, when carried along by its own internal logic, the colonial system tends to develop all the consequences implied at the time of its founding – the complete separation of the social castes (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 146).

3. *Colonialism dehumanises the colonised, demanding its reversal.* Parallels in their description of colonial domination appear in their accounts of the subjective experience of colonialism. Fanon writes:

[Colonialism] dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly turns him into an animal [The native] knows that he is not an animal, and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity, that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 42–43).

Similarly, Bourdieu (1962 [1961]: 151) writes that 'respect and dignity' are the first demand of the dominated, because they have experienced colonialism as 'humiliation or alienation'. Echoing Fanon he writes:

The colonial situation thus creates the 'contemptible' person at the same time that it creates the contemptuous attitude; but it creates in turn a spirit of revolt against this contempt; and so the tension that is tearing the whole society to pieces keeps on increasing (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 134).

4. *Colonialism uses its domination to dispossess the peasantry of their land.* Both Fanon and Bourdieu concentrate on the destruction of the peasantry through the expropriation of land, the very foundation of their existence. Fanon writes:

For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 44).

Here is Bourdieu's parallel assessment of the centrality of land:

The peasant can exist only when rooted to the land, the land where he was born, which he received from his parents and to which he is attached by his habits and his memories. Once he has been uprooted there is a good chance that he will cease to exist as a peasant, that the instinctive and irrational passion which binds him to his peasant existence will die within him (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 172).

While the land is key in both, Bourdieu and Sayad's (1964) analysis in *The Uprooting* is far richer. There they study the resettlement camps created during the Algerian war, the result of forced removals conducted in the name of protecting the colonised from the national liberation movement, but clearly aimed at flushing it out of the rural areas by denying it the support of the people.

5. *Only through revolution can the colonial order be overthrown.* Fanon here stresses the importance of violence, absolute violence. The order is held together by violence and, therefore, has to be overthrown through violence. This is how he puts it:

The native who decides to put the program into practice, and to become its moving force, is ready for violence at all times. From birth it is clear to him that this narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called into question by absolute violence (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 37).

While Bourdieu's idea of a caste system perhaps implies a more harmonious order than Fanon's racial order, he also has no doubt that the colonial system sows the seeds of its own destruction – a 'great upheaval', in which 'the great mass of peasants ... have been carried along in the whirlwind of violence which is sweeping away even the vestiges of the past' (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 188). Only revolution can achieve the end of colonialism:

That only a revolution can abolish the colonial system, that any changes to be made must be subject to the law of all or nothing, are facts now consciously realized, even if only confusedly, just as much by members of the dominant society as by the members of the dominated society Thus it must be granted that the primary and indeed the sole radical challenge to the system was the one that system itself engendered; the revolt against the principles on which it was founded (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 146).

6. *The anti-colonial revolution transforms consciousness, liquidating all forms of localism to build a national solidarity.* For Fanon, violence has a cathartic and unifying effect:

We have said that the native's violence unifies the people Violence is in action all-inclusive and national. It follows that it is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 94).

In Bourdieu's language, the war dissolves 'false solicitude'. Attempts at conciliation and all forms of concession are merely tactics of the dominant to hold on to their power: 'attempts at trickery or subterfuge are at once revealed in their true light. The war helped to bring about a heightened awareness' (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 153). Repression and war lead to the spiralling of hostilities and the deepening of the schism between the two sides. The war becomes a cultural agent, dissolving resignation and

replacing symbolic refusal of colonial domination, for example, in the insistent wearing of the veil – what Bourdieu calls traditionalism – with aggressive demands for rights to welfare and education. Pride, he says, replaces shame:

The feeling of being engaged in a common adventure, of being subject to a common destiny, of confronting the same adversary, of sharing the same preoccupations, the same sufferings and the same aspirations, widened and deepened the sentiment of solidarity, a sentiment which was undergoing at the same time a veritable transformation as the idea of fraternity tended to lose any ethnical or religious coloration and became synonymous with national solidarity (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 162).

This is the ‘revolution within the revolution’, the revolutionary transformation of consciousness, the substitution of an assertive solidarity for a resentful deference. How different is this revolution within the revolution from Fanon’s account of the national liberation struggle?⁴

7. *The anti-colonial revolution leads either to socialism or barbarism.* Fanon recognises two paths out of colonialism: either national liberation based on peasant revolution leading to a socialist participatory democracy, or the taking of a national bourgeois road that will bring progressive degradation to the political order, ending in dictatorship and repression:

The bourgeois leaders of underdeveloped countries imprison national consciousness in sterile formalism. It is only when men and women are included on a vast scale in enlightened and fruitful work that form and body are given to that consciousness. ... Otherwise there is anarchy, repression, and the resurgence of tribal parties and federalism (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 204–5).

Bourdieu, too, discovers a fork in the post-colonial road: not Fanon’s struggle for socialism or dictatorship, but an indeterminacy of immediate outcome – socialism or chaos:

A society which has been so greatly revolutionized demands that revolutionary solutions be devised to meet its problems. It will insist that a way be found to mobilize these masses who have been freed from the traditional disciplines and thrown into a chaotic, disillusioned world, by holding up before them a collective ideal, the building of a harmonious

social order and the development of a modern economy capable of assuring employment and a decent standard of living for all. Algeria contains such explosive forces that it could well be that there now remains only a choice between chaos and an original form of socialism that will have been carefully designed to meet the needs of the actual situation (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 192–93).⁵

Both allow for the possibility of socialism, but for Fanon it is a long historical project, whereas for Bourdieu it is a spontaneous occurrence.

The two critics of colonialism converge to a surprising degree in their assessment of colonialism and its denouement. If Fanon was ‘speculative’, ‘dangerous’ and ‘irresponsible’, then surely Bourdieu was no less so. The main difference, one might surmise, is that Fanon did not live to change his mind. Investigating further, however, we can see that their common understandings are located within very different theoretical-political frameworks – the one is a dissident within modernisation theory and the other a dissident within Marxism.

BOURDIEU: BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Perhaps it is surprising to place Bourdieu in the camp of modernisation theory, given his concern with colonial domination. Nonetheless, his work exhibits close parallels with Durkheim’s Manichean worlds of mechanical and organic solidarity. At one extreme, Bourdieu constructs a harmonious order of self-reproduction through rituals of gift exchange and lifecycle, and the unconscious reproduction of masculine domination as expressed in the division of the Kabyle house. This order, unsullied by colonialism, is dominated by a strong collective consciousness. This romantic redemption of ethnic culture has been defended by Bourdieu and his followers as reversing the contempt of colonialism for the culture of its subjects. Paul Silverstein (2004) refers to this as a structural nostalgia that can be a weapon in an anti-colonial struggle.⁶ More curious, it is from this vision of ‘traditional’ society that Bourdieu draws many of his concepts – habitus, symbolic domination, misrecognition – to analyse French society.

Very different from this harmonious order was modern Algeria, beset by colonialism that created a stable but potentially revolutionary working class, a disoriented subproletariat and a dispossessed peasantry. Here we find Durkheim’s abnormal forms of the division of labour that generate disorganisation and conflict. On the one hand, there is the forced division of labour and the imposition of unequal conditions on the colonised,

depriving them of opportunities for advancement and, indeed, leading to the anti-colonial struggle. On the other hand, there is the anomic division of labour expressed in the confusion of those caught between two opposed worlds – what Bourdieu later calls the ‘split habitus’ – generating outbursts of irrational, messianic behaviour:

All these contradictions affect the inner nature of ‘the man between two worlds’ – the intellectual, the man who formerly worked in France, the city dweller – is exposed to the conflicts created by the weakening of the traditional systems of sanctions and by the development of a double set of moral standards ... this man, cast between two worlds and rejected by both, lives a sort of double inner life, is a prey to frustration and inner conflict, with the result that he is constantly being tempted to adopt either an attitude of uneasy overidentification or one of rebellious negativism (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 142–44).

These ideas of cultural lag – incomplete adaptation to modernity being caught between the old and the new – lie at the core of 1960s modernisation theory of Clifford Geertz, Alex Inkeles and Edward Shils, not to mention Talcott Parsons’s pattern variables.⁷ To explain the plight of so-called ‘new nations’ and the impediments to ‘modernity’, these authors invoked the heavy weight of tradition and primordial attachments (kinship, tribe, religion). Bourdieu, no less than they, provides precious little evidence to back up his claims about this state of anomie.⁸

More original is Bourdieu’s adaptation of Weber’s, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Drawing on Husserl’s philosophy of time, Bourdieu (1979 [1963]) argues that modernity is an orientation to a rationally planned future, whereas tradition is encased by the repetition of the same patterns. He pins modernity onto the Algerian working class, which has the stability to think rationally and imaginatively about future alternatives, as opposed to the peasantry, who are stuck in the eternal present, what he calls a *traditional traditionalism*. The unstable, marginal, semi-employed or unemployed urban ‘subproletariat’ and the rural proletariat displaced from their lands into resettlement camps live from hand to mouth. They exhibit a *traditionalism of despair*, oriented to the here and now, but cognisant of alternative futures that they are denied.

Curiously, this leads Bourdieu, via Durkheimian notions of anomie, to the orthodox Marxist position that the Algerian working class, because it is rooted in stable employment, is revolutionary – in contrast to the

uprooted peasantry or urban subproletariat who can only break out into spontaneous, senseless revolt:

On the one hand, there is the revolt of emotion, the uncertain and incoherent expression of a condition characterized by uncertainty and incoherence; on the other hand, there is revolutionary radicalism, springing from the systematic consideration of reality. These two attitudes correspond to two types of material conditions of existence: on the one hand the sub-proletarians of the towns and the uprooted peasants whose whole existence is constraint and arbitrariness; on the other hand the regular workers of the modern sector, provided with the minimum of security and guarantees which allow aspirations and opinions to be put into perspective. Disorganization of daily conduct prohibits the formation of the system of rational projects and forecasts of which the revolutionary consciousness is one aspect (Bourdieu, 1979 [1963]: 62).

The uprooted may be a ‘force for revolution’, but not a ‘revolutionary force’ that self-consciously promotes and rationally organises the transformation of society. The latter possibility is reserved for the working class:

To those who have the ‘privilege’ of undergoing permanent and ‘rational’ exploitation and of enjoying the corresponding advantages also belongs the privilege of a truly revolutionary consciousness. This realistic aiming at the future (*l’avenir*) is only accessible to those who have the means to confront the present and to look for ways of beginning to implement their hopes, instead of giving way to resigned surrender or to the magical impatience of those who are too crushed by the present to be able to look to anything other than a utopian future (*un futur*), an immediate, magical negation of the present (Bourdieu, 1979 [1963]: 63).

What a contrast to the French working class depicted in *Distinction or Pascalian Meditations*, whose members are driven by necessity, symbolically dominated and misrecognising their conditions of existence. Not one to be disturbed by contradictions, Bourdieu never explains this most obvious inconsistency. What is the source of the difference? Does it lie in the political structures of the two countries – the effects of symbolic as opposed to colonial violence – or does it lie in Bourdieu’s positions in the political-intellectual fields of the two countries? A comparison with Fanon sheds light on both these possibilities.

FANON: BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

If Bourdieu analyses Algeria with the Manichean categories of modernity and tradition, Fanon sees Algeria through the bifocal lens of capitalism and socialism; if Bourdieu analyses Algeria from the standpoint of a romantic past, Fanon sees Algeria from the vantage of a romantic future. They meet on the terrain of the present.

For Fanon, colonialism was a space of struggles. National independence is a struggle against the colonial power, Gramsci's *war of movement* conducted with violence, but it is also a struggle over post-coloniality, a *war of position* within the colonised between, on the one hand, the followers of the national bourgeoisie who fight to *replace* the colonisers and, on the other hand, the militants of the national liberation movement who fight also to *transform* the class structure.⁹ The war of position for the future exists uneasily alongside the anti-colonial war of movement, but if the former is displaced by the latter and the denouement of colonialism is left to look after itself, democratic socialism will never be victorious. So argues Fanon.

Bourdieu not only failed to separate the two moments of the anti-colonial revolution, but he also did not pay sufficient attention to the idea of class as a potential political force. Fanon, again following Gramsci, examined the balance of class forces behind the reformist national bourgeoisie and the revolutionary national liberation movement. At the heart of the national bourgeoisie lay traders, merchants and small capitalists, together with their intellectuals recruited from teachers, civil servants, lawyers, nurses and other professionals. The national bourgeoisie also had the support of the albeit-small colonial working class, which in Fanon's view was pampered and parasitic. It is here that Bourdieu and Fanon diverge dramatically: relative stability of the working class for Bourdieu meant revolutionary potential, while for Fanon it meant reformism.¹⁰ As we know from South Africa, in reality, the situation is rather more complex – different fractions of the working class become revolutionary at different times.

For Fanon, the revolutionary struggle depended on the dispossessed peasantry, because the latter had nothing to lose. Bourdieu considered this to be 'pretentious foolishness' (cited in Le Sueur, 2001: 284). The peasantry was 'overwhelmed by the war, by the concentration camps, and by the mass deportations', and so to claim that it was revolutionary was 'completely idiotic' (Le Sueur, 2001: 284). Bourdieu attempted to put the picture right with his book, *The Uprooting*, written with Abdelmalek Sayad (1964), which dealt with the crisis of the displaced. Fanon was not as ignorant as Bourdieu made out, as he had done his own

field work among the Kabyle (Macey, 2000: 234–36). He considered instinctive rebelliousness to come precisely from the expropriation of their land, which Bourdieu had himself recognised as the source of 'revolutionary chiasm and magical utopias' (1979 [1963]: 70).

The more substantial difference between them comes with the next step in Fanon's argument. For the peasantry to be a revolutionary force, its volcanic energy had to be disciplined by intellectuals. They would be in plentiful supply – radicals expelled from the towns for exposing the venality of the native elites. Opposed to the bourgeois road, they join the peasantry to forge a revolutionary movement. To Bourdieu, the idea of symbiosis between intellectuals and peasantry is a fantasy of the intellectual that not only cannot work, but is also dangerous and irresponsible. It is very different from Bourdieu's own position as an engaged intellectual supporting the colonised from a healthy, objective distance.

Be that as it may, Fanon continues his analysis of the balance of class forces. There are two projects vying for the support of the colonised classes: the national bourgeoisie road centred on the native bourgeoisie and the working class, and the national liberation movement centred on the peasantry embracing and embraced by radical intellectuals. Fanon asks which of these two projects will succeed in winning the support of vacillating classes: traditional leaders in the countryside who are reformist by nature, a screen for the colonisers, but who are also accountable to their ever-more militant followers, and the urban lumpenproletariat, recently uprooted from their villages, a volatile group easily manipulated by leaders who grant them the smallest concessions. The colonisers play their own role in shaping the balance between these two tendencies, and when they see the writing on the wall, they throw their weight behind the less threatening national bourgeoisie.

This analysis of the future, so alien to Bourdieu's backward-looking sociology, continues with Fanon's pessimistic, but prophetic anticipations. Should the national bourgeoisie win the struggle for leadership of the anti-colonial struggle and come to power, they will not be able to build a true hegemony, which would require resources that they do not possess. They will become a dominated bourgeoisie – dominated by the metropolitan bourgeoisie – only capable of becoming an imitative and parasitical class, making up for its backwardness by conspicuous consumption and the reversion to tribalism and racism:

Because it is bereft of ideas, because it lives to itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all

the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that nation, the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of the manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 154).

The national bourgeoisie starts out by copying Western institutions – political constitutions and outward manifestations of its economy – but degenerates from a multiparty democracy to a one-party state, and then to a one-man dictatorship. Fanon expressed vividly what would indeed come to pass in post-colonial Africa. This was no empty speculation; it was how things turned out.

By painting the national bourgeois road in such dire colours, Fanon hopes to convince us that the only progressive road is that of national liberation – the revolutionary transformation of the class structure and the realisation of democratic socialism. But how feasible was this? Even if the revolutionary forces won hegemony, could they bring about democratic socialism? Leaving aside colonial legacies that cannot be simply swept aside – the argument of Bourdieu and others – what about international forces? Fanon rather optimistically argued that post-colonial Africa can insist on and enforce reparations from Western capitalism, because the latter needs what Africa has to offer – not just its natural resources, but also its consumer markets. Fanon was naive about the possibilities of democratic socialism, but the naïveté sprang from a desperation that saw the pitfalls of the national bourgeoisie.

Both Bourdieu and Fanon have a fascination for the peasantry and deploy that fascination for a critical analysis of contemporary societies. Bourdieu creates a romantic anthropology of the Algerian peasantry that becomes the basis for his functionalist analysis of symbolic domination in French society. Fanon projects the peasantry as a revolutionary class that will usher in democratic socialism, formulated to highlight the degeneration of post-colonial Africa if it follows the national bourgeois road.

BETWEEN REVOLUTIONARY OPTIMISM AND CRITICAL PESSIMISM

The conversation between Fanon and Bourdieu shows how theoretical influences circulate between colony and metropolis, but especially the influence of the colony on the metropolis. Nor are these isolated examples. Some of the great French intellectuals were shaped by experiences in colonial Africa – Foucault spent two formative years in Tunisia; Derrida

and Camus grew up in Algeria – and the Algerian question continues to exert a powerful influence on French intellectual life, even now, almost 50 years after independence.

Thus, the conversation between Fanon and Bourdieu becomes more interesting if we extend it backwards and forwards in time beyond the Algerian experience to examine the theoretical effects of their personal trajectories between colony and metropolis. Here, we see a striking and unexpected convergence in their understandings of French society, especially if placed in the frame of colonialism. The very notion of symbolic violence, at the centre of Bourdieu's corpus on France, implies a contrast with the physical violence of colonialism, especially Algerian settler colonialism. Symbolic violence works through the habitus – the cumulative introjection of social structure into the human psyche and the inscription of social structure onto the body.

The parallels with Fanon are uncanny. *Black Skin, White Masks*, written about Fanon's experience of metropolitan racism, is a psychoanalytical understanding of the internal dynamics of racial domination in which the colonised internalises the social structure and wrestles to find his or her place in that structure. It is a futile struggle of inter-racial sexual liaisons and exaggerated efforts to be the perfect Frenchman/-woman that only further endorses their inferiority. This is not the physical violence of colonialism, but the deeper symbolic violence of metropolitan racial domination. For Fanon, as indeed for Bourdieu, there is simply no effective response to symbolic violence, and so both end up with a critical pessimism with respect to France, which contrasts so vividly to the revolutionary optimism they both exhibit in Algeria.

The parallels become more even intriguing if one probes Bourdieu's great book of symbolic domination – *Distinction*. Here, the dominant classes are blessed with cultural capital, some more than others, and the dominated classes are bereft of such capital, but the middle classes – the petite bourgeoisie – are the great pretenders, aspiring to legitimate culture, over-conforming in their attempt to emulate the class to which they don't belong. The petit bourgeois is indeed the bourgeois 'writ small':

Even his bodily hexis, which expresses his whole objective relation to the social world, is that of a man who had to make himself small to pass through the strait gate, which leads to the bourgeoisie: strict and sober, discreet and severe, in his dress, his speech, his gestures and his whole bearing, he always lacks something in stature, breadth, substance, largesse (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]: 338).

Bourdieu's contempt for the petite bourgeoisie who seeks admission to an inaccessible world is strikingly parallel to Fanon's contempt for blacks who try to enter white society by trying to make themselves less black. Although he is never explicit, Fanon is not writing about the working class, but about members of the black middle classes, like himself, who emigrate to France to become professionals of one sort or another. It is as if their own histories of exclusion, seared into their psyches, lead the one (Bourdieu) to be a self-hating petit bourgeois and the other (Fanon) a self-hating black. This might also explain the venom behind Fanon's denunciation of the colonial national bourgeoisie as an imitative bourgeoisie, just as it might also explain Bourdieu's hostility to Fanon, whose revolutionary ardour is the intellectual's attempt to escape his habitus, to jump out of his skin.

There is, however, a profound asymmetry in the trajectories of these two intellectuals. Whereas Fanon starts out in France as a critical pessimist to become a revolutionary optimist in Algeria based on a romantic radical vision of the peasantry, Bourdieu starts out in Algeria as a revolutionary optimist to become a critical pessimist in France by drawing on a romantic conservative vision of the peasantry. Each reacts against his previous experience. Fanon leaves behind the symbolic violence of racism in France primed to participate in revolutionary catharsis against colonial violence. Equally, Bourdieu is all too ready to abandon his equivocal revolutionary optimism, so that when he enters France he rejects Third World Marxism and adopts a critical pessimism based on another form of violence – symbolic violence. Toward the end of his life he breaks out of his critical pessimism by joining the calumniated working class, attacking the symbolic order associated with neoliberalism and forging new bonds with African intellectuals – a return of the repressed, but without theoretical warrant.

Violence

The conversation between Fanon and Bourdieu raises questions of violence and colonialism, and the relation between them. Despite the insight and sympathy with which Bourdieu grasped the realities of colonial domination and resistance in Algeria, these were not the insights he was to take back to France and use in the elaboration of his theory of social order. Rather, what he took back to France to work into a suite of theoretical innovations for understanding society were the insights he drew from his study of rural indigenous society. In consequence, his work has very little to say about social change, transformation, resistance and revolution beyond those occasional and suggestive passages we noted in Conversation 2, frequently marked by references to Algeria or colonisation more broadly. On the face of it, therefore, Bourdieu should have little to say to South African social reality.

But the division between Fanon and Bourdieu – real violence in the colony, symbolic violence in the metropolis; revolution in the colony, invisible and unchallengeable domination in the metropolis – may be too stark. The relationship between symbolic violence and physical violence is much closer than such dichotomies make it appear. And as with symbolic violence, the relationship between the state, the law, and popular violence in communities is a complex and reciprocal one.

This reflection proceeds through a discussion of seven propositions regarding physical violence, drawn from ongoing research into the dynamics of social change in South Africa.

Collective violence on the part of subalterns is frequently a response to the symbolic violence that works to silence them.

Fanon certainly thought so: one reason why subaltern violence was necessary was that it was the only way to break the internal chains of oppression. South Africa's Steve Biko and other intellectuals of the Black Consciousness movement also argued that the first necessity in the struggle for freedom was that blacks should overcome the internal complex of inferiority fostered by white racism. The symbolic violence of

racism, in other words, has enormous force in the colonies. It has been argued by some that popular violence in South Africa, particularly ethnic and xenophobic violence, has roots in the self-denigration fostered by the symbolic violence of racism.

Our research into community protests suggests, too, that violence is a last resort when the authorities have repeatedly refused to consult with communities or failed to respond to their grievances. Violence then becomes a refusal to accept the symbolic violence of marginalisation and lack of voice, and an assertion of popular agency and the right to have grievances and to be heard.

Physical violence always has a symbolic dimension.

As Bourdieu (2000 [1997]: 172) remarks, even naked force 'has a symbolic dimension'. When police gather in force to stop a demonstration and shoot protesters with rubber bullets, they are not only attempting to control 'rioters'; they are asserting the symbolic authority of the state to deploy violence in maintaining 'order'. In South Africa, however, this kind of symbolic display is apt to ring with undertones that subvert its official meaning. For the crowds of community protesters, police action of this sort conjures up a different symbolic universe, undermining the authority of the state: the casspirs¹¹ 'remind us of apartheid, that we are not free in this democracy. We don't need casspirs. We need police that respect human rights' (Langa, 2011: 63).

For their part, when protesters burn down municipal buildings, they are challenging the symbolic authority of the state with a symbolic power of their own, as we saw in Conversation 3. During the struggle against apartheid, burning collaborators to death with the dreaded 'necklace' – a tyre drenched in petrol – was a way of 'purifying' the community. While in some cases xenophobic violence deliberately focuses on killing foreign nationals and even on occasion burning them to death, in many more cases it is limited to looting or the destruction of property, suggesting degrees of restraint on the part of xenophobic crowds.

Building on this, we see that subaltern violence is embedded in its own structures of symbolic meaning that shape its rules and repertoires. This is signalled by a woman worker, discussing strike violence:

There's no sweet strike, there is no Christian strike ... a strike is a strike. You want to get back what belongs to you. You want the response must be positive and quick. You won't win a strike with a Bible. You do not

wear high heels and carry an umbrella and say 1992 it was under apartheid, 2007 is under ANC. You won't win a strike like that (Von Holdt, 2010b: 141).

The contrast drawn by the striker between Christian behaviour and strike behaviour signals a shift in moral register: a strike has its own moral codes distinct from those of Christianity. And a community protester uses almost exactly the same words to describe protest action against dirty municipal water supplies, suggesting that they resonate with a common sense of popular justice shared among diverse subaltern groups: 'I am a Christian, but when the strikes¹² start you put the Bible down and then you fight. It is necessary to use force. The water is clean now because of the strike' (Langa, 2011: 62).

Subaltern violence is ambiguous, with both emancipatory and corrosive dimensions.

Deployed against unjust authority, subaltern violence disrupts the symbolic order that elevates such authority above the people, and not infrequently it delivers concrete results – clean water, higher wages. Violence, it is clear from our respondents, and as Fanon argues, constitutes an assertion of popular agency and a celebration of popular power. Yet it has its dark side, to which Fanon pays too little attention. Frequently, its victims are other subalterns and it effects a terrible trauma in their lives. Xenophobic attacks provide a dreadful illustration of this.

Moreover, repertoires of violence expand and become embedded in organisational practices. Violence corrodes democracy, both within organisations where disputes or factional struggles are settled through violence (see the discussion under '*Democracy and violence are both ways to structure power*', below, for an example of this), and in the broader body politic, where violence becomes an alternative to the democratic act of voting: 'Violence is the only language that our government understands ... we became violent and problems were immediately resolved. It is clear that violence is a solution to all problems' (Langa, Dlamini & Von Holdt, 2011: 49).

A brief vignette of the death of one of our respondents illustrates the complex way cycles of violence reproduce themselves over time. During the 1980s Mr T had participated in battles between local self-defence units and vigilante gangs sponsored by the apartheid security apparatus in which several people had been killed. At the time our research team met him, Mr T was a taxi owner and chairperson of the local taxi

association. The taxi association had been racked by internal conflict that had recently turned violent, again with deadly consequences.

The current community protests against the town council in his community were violent, and this man formed part of a delegation of elders who went to the ANC head office to request an urgent response to resolve the conflict. He was, he told our researchers, motivated by the desire for peace, fearing that the protests would reignite the taxi war. He spoke about the importance of exploring non-violent methods in dealing with community problems, so that the mistakes of the past in which people start killing each other were not repeated. He also mentioned that since being elected chairperson of the taxi association, there had been three attempts to kill him.

A few days later Mr T was gunned down and died on the scene. His life and death had paradoxical meanings in the community. At his funeral, gunshots were fired in the air, celebrating a fallen hero and soldier. Mourners sang revolutionary songs referring to the activities of the self-defence units. He was spoken of as a hero, and also as a man who had brought peace to the community: 'We have peace in our time because of Mr T', said one speaker (Langa, Dlamini and Von Holdt, 2010).

Violence, democracy, and peace are entwined in perplexing and complex ways in societies such as ours, characterised by a legacy of colonialism and the turbulence of transition. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence – and its relation to the broader symbolic order – provides rich insights; however, it needs to be expanded and brought into relationship with structural and physical violence if it is to help us make sense of this social reality.

Democracy and violence are both ways to structure power.

Democracy and violence have a complex and shifting relationship with each other.

The crucial element in the popular resistance to apartheid was the building of popular democratic organisations, such as trade unions and residents associations. This was an innovation, the possibility of which was considered by neither Fanon nor Bourdieu in their analysis of the Algerian revolution, and it constituted a very different form of empowerment on the part of the colonised than the strategies of violence advocated by Fanon. Indeed, it provided a durable structure of empowerment through which subalterns could challenge not only the apartheid regime, but also their own leaders over questions of strategy and tactics, and it would be sustained into the post-apartheid period.

While popular democratic organisation enabled workers and residents to negotiate with the authorities, it did not eliminate violence; indeed, the context for building this type of organisation was an intrinsically violent one, characterised by street battles, the destruction of property, massacres, assault and detentions, judicial repression, and guerrilla operations. Under such conditions, democratic organisation also entailed a coercive element. My research into the internal dynamics of trade union organisation during the 1980s at Highveld Steel provided insight into the relationship among democracy, coercive violence and power.

As union militancy at Highveld Steel increased, the shop steward committee, directly elected by union members in each department of the steelworks, designated a number of militant and active members who were not shop stewards to form a 'strike committee', with the informal understanding that this would mobilise workers, identify strikebreakers and apply 'punishment' to the latter, usually in the form of beatings with a sjambok.¹³ This was understood as a way of teaching and enforcing the 'union law' regarding solidarity. Although the shop stewards committee expected the strike committee to be subordinate to its overall direction, a struggle for power rapidly developed between the two committees, as the strike committee came to believe that the compromises entailed by negotiating with management were a sign that shop stewards were 'selling out'. Violence escalated, strikes were accompanied by more and more widespread and serious assaults, and eventually the union split into two.

Underlying this split was the way internal organisational democracy and the complex procedures governing relations between the union and management empowered workers differentially: the more articulate, educated and skilled residents of the township proved to be highly effective shop stewards, in contrast to the illiterate and less educated rural migrant workers in the hostels, and so it was the former who tended to be elected and re-elected. This led to bitterness among the hostel dwellers, particularly as they had initially established the union.

Democracy disempowered them. The violence of the strike committee was a way of taking the union back. For the strike committee and its constituents, it was the sjambok that had built the union. For the shop stewards and their constituencies, it was democracy that had built the union and the sjambok that was destroying it. Both sides mobilised symbolic power in the struggle over the meaning, practices and leadership of the organisation. When the union split, it was into 'the union of the hostels' and 'the union of the township'. Although the two were eventually

reunited into one union, deep fissures, buttressed by memories of violence, continued to surface at times of stress (Von Holdt, 2003: 147ff).

As this study showed, democracy does not do away with all violence: every democracy has its 'law' and every law has its coercive dimension. Furthermore, democracy, even within subaltern organisations, does not empower everyone equally, but itself constitutes a structure of differential power. For those who are marginalised and disempowered, violence provides an alternative strategy for reconfiguring the structures of power. However, violence also proves to be profoundly corrosive within subaltern organisation, undermining democracy, producing a climate of fear and the withdrawal of members, division and splits. Violent repertoires have a long life, reproducing themselves within organisational structures and cultures, where they are always available as a resource in future conflict. Democratic leadership stands revealed as an extremely complex and demanding practice.

These dynamics, explored in a small case study of democracy from below, are repeated within large-scale democratic political systems, such as South Africa's after apartheid. Strike violence, for example, persists. Partly this is an enduring repertoire from the anti-apartheid period: as one worker put it, 'Since I was born, I have seen all strikes are violent. There are no such strikes as peaceful strikes.'

Partly, though, there is a deep sense that South African democracy masks great inequalities and that workers have not experienced the promises of liberation (Von Holdt, 2010b). Workers, in other words, are acutely aware of the structural violence that continues to oppress them, which brings us to the next proposition.

Symbolic violence is also interconnected with structural violence.

A national constitution, according to Bourdieu, 'is merely a founding fiction designed to disguise the act of lawless violence which is the basis for the establishment of law'. Symbolic violence thus originates with a process of usurpation, 'the inaugural violence' in which the law is rooted (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 168). This inaugural violence would include what Marx called primitive accumulation in the advanced capitalist countries, as well as the wars and 'pacification' of the populace entailed in the formation of nation states. In the colonies, colonial conquest and land dispossession constitute crucial dimensions of the 'inaugural violence'; in South Africa, this violent process of land dispossession continues to underpin the new post-apartheid constitution, often lauded as one of the most progressive in the world.

But Bourdieu's almost exclusive focus on domination and symbolic violence within the elite, such as takes place within the scholarly, bureaucratic and cultural fields, provides him with a curiously bloodless sense of symbolic violence; it is only when he turns to discuss briefly the symbolic violence experienced by workers in the workplace that he finds it to be based on 'structural violence' derived from the fear of losing their jobs. The symbolic violence experienced by subalterns, then, is bound up with the structural violence – a concept pretty much unexplored by Bourdieu – of their location in society, unlike the symbolic violence experienced in elite fields. The domination experienced by a junior academic in the scholarly field is very different from the domination experienced by a mine-worker or by the residents of informal settlements such as Orange Farm.

'Popular justice' may displace the state's monopoly over violence.

In South Africa, the post-apartheid state does not have a monopoly over either symbolic or physical violence. Research into popular crime-fighting initiatives, xenophobic violence, and strike violence reveals the tension between subaltern organisation and the state over the deployment of coercion and the law, which is simultaneously a contestation over physical and symbolic violence.

In a place called Trouble, an area of Reconstruction and Development Programme houses and shacks in Gauteng, the local Community Policing Forum (CPF) attempts to support policing and reduce criminal activities (Von Holdt, 2011b). The grassroots volunteers in the CPF, though, find themselves squeezed between the violence of criminals, community vigilantism, and lacklustre and sometimes corrupt local police. A young woman street patroller in the shack section of Trouble told us that people are scared to talk about crime because of the danger of retaliation by the criminals. As an example, she told us about a rapist who had been apprehended by her street patrollers and who was now sending messages from his jail cell, where he was awaiting trial: "Tell that girl and her group that I will be out very soon and I will deal with her." So somewhere, somehow, you feel what is the use of patrolling? I do not have any protection.'

As a result, the membership of the CPF is dwindling. She commented bitterly about corruption in the criminal justice system:

I would like to put a big no, the law doesn't exist, the law doesn't work for us. As long as you have money, you can live the way you want in this

country of ours. You rape a kid, you have money, you don't even go to court, you are out. I am talking from what I have seen. As long as you have money, then you are free man.

Because of this fear and ineffectual police presence, there has been a rise in community vigilantism:

What they do is they catch a criminal, they won't come to me, they will whistle their whistle and the community gets up and the next thing you go there, the guy is already beaten up. The community does not care as long as he is dead, a criminal is a criminal. You steal other people's things, you deserve to die, they do not give a damn.

CPF members try to prevent mob justice, believing that it is the state's role to enforce the law, but they sometimes have to withdraw because of the danger to themselves.

Such interviews make it clear that there is an argument deep within communities over legality and the community enforcement of codes of behaviour – over the state and extra-state action. The same argument was apparent in Trouble during an outbreak of xenophobic conflict. Foreign nationals had used guns to repel an attack by South African residents and there was a strong argument from some quarters in the community that residents should arm themselves and retaliate. The CPF and the local ANC branch combined forces to persuade the community not to pursue such a course of action. An ANC office bearer explained that 'As the people, we cannot take our own decision, but the government will come ... We cannot just take the law into our own hands whilst the government is there.' The chairperson of the CPF explained: 'it is part of law enforcement to prevent crime and prevent violence It is in the nature of the CPF to be against violence and to stop wrong things.'

In this case, organisations such as the ANC branch and the CPF engage in formative efforts to defend the legitimacy of the state and its monopoly over coercion and law enforcement, against informal groups who advocate taking the law into their own hands.¹⁴ The success of these organisations in this particular case may be related to the fact that foreign nationals were well armed and clearly capable of deploying their own extra-state violence. It is not impossible, though, that the argument will swing the other way in the light of the failure of the police to protect the community from violent crime more generally, or to make any effort to seize the weapons of the foreigners as they had promised. Where the

state fails to demonstrate its monopoly over coercion, popular justice is likely to fill the vacuum.

Apartheid and the struggle against it undermined the legitimacy of the state and its laws. The new democratic state has not been able to securely re-establish the legitimacy of the law, with the result that the law tends to receive a qualified and provisional acceptance in many quarters; consider the comments of a striker explaining why the law of the majority ('the law of the union') requires breaking the law of the state:

I do not think the law is wrong as such. Law is supposed to defend the right to strike and the rights of those not on strike. But how can we follow that law? How are we going to be successful in winning our demands? *Umthetho oyaphulwa, oyenzelwe oko phulwa.*¹⁵ We must follow the majority. The majority vote for a strike (Von Holdt, 2010b: 142).

Seldom, if ever, are violent strikers brought before a court of law. In practice, then, the law of the state has less force than the law of the strike and the symbolic power of the state is further eroded.

Social order is jointly constructed by the state and citizens.

The discussion under the previous proposition illustrated a profound argument and contestation within communities that suggest that the authority of the law and the state are not simply imposed from above on the citizenry, but are actively constituted by citizens, indicating that there is a substantial constituency that supports such a project against both the criminal erosion of law and order, and the protagonists of vigilantism and 'popular justice'.

In exploring this proposition, we turn to a case study (Langa & Von Holdt, 2011) of the community of Bokfontein, near Brits, where an innovative state intervention to establish a community-shaped public work programme has been introduced, and of the way in which this has empowered the community both to bring an end to intra-community violence and to resist calls for xenophobic pogroms. Bokfontein is the product of the removals of two separate communities from land earmarked for development by private and public developers, and consists of some 5,000 residents living in shacks at a site far from towns and work opportunities, and with no public amenities. The people who live there were traumatised, angry, and bitter, and the result was violent and deadly conflict between the two communities.

The Community Work Programme (CWP) is a public employment programme that offers participants two days of work per week, at a minimum of R60 per day, for as long as they wish to remain on the programme. The community decides on the socially useful work to be performed, and the work is organised by work teams and a project leadership selected from the community. In Bokfontein, CWP projects include the building of an access road; planting trees throughout the community; drilling a borehole and installing water piping; establishing a community park and vegetable gardens, the produce of which is used to cook daily meals for the children of vulnerable families; and providing home-based care programmes for vulnerable households, including the chronically ill and AIDS sufferers. The CWP, which employs about 800 participants from the community, has not only improved household incomes, but also allows the community to reimagine itself as a place with public amenities, public goods, and public spaces, and as a caring community that assists the vulnerable and values socially useful labour.

Not only that, but the CWP, and the community building process that preceded it, enabled participants to confront their trauma and the intra-community violence, and establish a new sense of solidarity:

It helped us deal with the pain of our eviction and also the lines that were dividing us as communities.

It made it possible for us to know each other. And it brought us together to accept each other as human beings.

The community-building process also enabled foreign nationals, of whom many live in Bokfontein, and South African citizens to discuss discrimination and violence, and to explicitly understand more about each other's histories and cultures. When a nearby community attempted to mobilise Bokfontein residents to take part in xenophobic pogroms, the community as a whole resisted this. The community leadership also explicitly rejects strategies of protest and toyi-toying in favour of negotiating with authorities and business, and forging their own community development strategies: 'So when we toyi-toyi we become violent. What are we teaching our children? Are we not teaching them to also be violent?' (Langa & Von Holdt, 2011).

In Bokfontein, an innovative state intervention has empowered the community to reimagine itself and its future in a collaboration that has created the elements of a new symbolic order in the community, one that both

restores the authority of the state and the law, and sustains an active and confident citizenry in a partnership oriented towards development and the future. Here we can see the constituency identified in *Trouble*, which seeks a new kind of state authority and a peaceful and violence-free community, coming into a power that has both symbolic and material dimensions.¹⁶

NOTES

- 1 The English versions to which I will refer are *The Algerians* (1962 [1961]) and *Algeria, 1960* (1979 [1963]), which is an abridged version of the French *Work and Workers in Algeria* (1963).
- 2 For an important set of essays on the contradictions and paradoxes of Bourdieu's Algerian writings, see Jane Goodman and Paul Silverstein (2009), especially the chapter by Fanny Colonna, who criticises Bourdieu for his poor stylised fieldwork that misses the realities of daily life and for his unsubstantiated claim that the Kabyle misrecognise what they are up to.
- 3 First published in *Esprit*, 1, January 1961; English translation appeared in Bourdieu (1962 [1961]: chap. 7).
- 4 Bourdieu (2000 [1998]) writes of the difficulty of changing the habitus, calling for all sorts of bodily retraining. Fanon is saying the same, i.e. that the internalisation of oppression is so deep that the colonised can only transform themselves through violence.
- 5 Writing with Sayad in 1964, Bourdieu analyses the possibilities of socialism very much in terms familiar from Durkheim and Mauss. They cast doubt on the feasibility of self-organised, decentralised socialism based on autonomous peasant organisation of the farms vacated by colonialists, just as they fear the possibility of a centralised authoritarian socialism imposed from above. Like Fanon, they hope for an educative leadership responsive to needs from below. They easily fall back, however, on the cultural legacies of tradition to explain economic and political regression.
- 6 We find this vision laid out in the earliest writings of Bourdieu (1962 [1961]) a secondary account of the cultures of different ethnic groups, and then in the self-consciously theoretical works written in France, most notably *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977 [1972]).
- 7 Bourdieu does try to mark his distance from one of the modernisation theorists of the day – Daniel Lerner (1958) – by criticising his psychological characterisation of modernity as the recognition of other, the expression of empathy and as a rationality freely chosen. As orientations to the world, 'tradition' and 'modernity' are not freely chosen, says Bourdieu, but spring from specific material contexts, the clash of unequal civilisations under

- colonialism (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 117, 119–20). But the concepts of tradition and modernity are never called into question, simply redefined.
- 8 Bourdieu (2000) relies on the much misused case of the Kabyle cook – a man who moves from one job to another. There is little evidence that this is a sign of anomie or that he is beholden to some traditional habitus. Instead, the cook shows great entrepreneurial adroitness in adapting to the exigencies of urban life under colonialism.
 - 9 Gramsci seemed to think that the war of position either preceded the war of movement (in the West, where civil society was strong) or followed the war of movement (in the East, with its undeveloped civil society, where socialism would be built after the revolution). Fanon understood the dangers of postponing the struggle for socialism until after independence.
 - 10 Interestingly, Fanon and Bourdieu held opposite views about the working class in advanced capitalism: for Fanon, it was potentially revolutionary; for Bourdieu, it was not. Although there is no sign that Fanon had read Gramsci, he had a very Gramscian view of the West with a developed civil society and a bourgeoisie able to make concessions, all of which was absent in the periphery (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 38, 108–9, 165, 175).
 - 11 Armoured police vehicles.
 - 12 The word ‘strike’ is used to describe not only industrial action, but forceful community protest.
 - 13 A sjambok is a rawhide whip.
 - 14 In other sites of our research, both the local ANC branch and organisations such as civic associations and CPFs adopted a very different stance, either supporting or turning a blind eye to xenophobic attacks.
 - 15 ‘The law is made to be broken.’
 - 16 The CWP has already been rolled out into some 70 communities nationally with a total of 90,000 people employed, and is sparking a discussion about a national employment guarantee.

CONVERSATION 5

PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED

MICHAEL BURAWOY

Freire Meets Bourdieu

Thus, in a society in which the obtaining of social privileges depends more and more closely on possession of academic credentials, the School does not only have the function of ensuring discreet succession to a bourgeois estate which can no longer be transmitted directly and openly. This privileged instrument of the bourgeois sociodicy which confers on the privileged the supreme privilege of not seeing themselves as privileged manages the more easily to convince the disinherited that they owe their scholastic and social destiny to their lack of gifts or merits, because in matters of culture absolute dispossession excludes awareness of being dispossessed.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977 [1970]: 210)

For Bourdieu, education is symbolic domination par excellence. In a society where the dominant class can no longer invoke rights of blood to pass on their inheritance nor appeal to ascetic virtue as a justification of success, academic certification becomes the vehicle to justify and transmit its domination. Education attests and consecrates the merits and gift of the bourgeoisie, while concealing their distinction as an outgrowth of their privilege – concealing it, that is, not only from themselves, but also from the dominated, who see themselves as undeserving because unmeritorious. *Reproduction*, which brought Bourdieu and Passeron