FANON'S PERSPECTIVE ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN POSTCOLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA

Stefan Sonderling[*]

ABSTRACT

This article develops a Fanonian perspective to understand intercultural communication in postcolonial South Africa. Apartheid's demise is communicated as a moral victory over evil and South African whites are persuaded to confess their past immorality. This article argues that moral interpretation is inappropriate and the demise of apartheid must be evaluated as a political power game. Furthermore, it explicates Fanon's rejection of moral evaluations and his conception of the violent dialectic of colonisation and decolonisation and applies this framework to analyse intercultural communication in the postcolony. Fanon's Hegelian violent dialectic of master and slave constructs human identities and provides the prototype for intercultural communication. Fanon's political realism also explains the mass African migration from the postcolonial necropolis to the promised good life in the land of their former European masters. African leaders promote the migration as a rightful revenge for colonisation and the migrants are represented as warriors on a crusade to conquer the lands of former colonisers inspired by communication of memories of their glorious past colonial wars: from Hannibal's invasion of Rome to the Muslim's conquest of Spain.

Keywords: Colonialism, postcolonial, apartheid, violence of identity, white guilt, decolonisation, Fanon, Hegel, master-slave dialectics, communication as war by other means

* Dr Stefan Sonderling (sondes@unisa.ac.za) lectures in the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa in Pretoria.

INTRODUCTION

"There is no Negro mission; there is no White Man's Burden" (Fanon 2008: 178). The demise of apartheid is celebrated as the fall of the last bastion of colonialism and communicated as a moral and political victory over evil (Moran 2002: 171). South African whites are urged to confess their guilt for complicity in past immoralities. Communication of self-loathing and confessions of shame have become the politically correct rituals for whites. In turn, the spectacle of white symbolic self-flagellation triggers rituals of orgiastic pleasures in the new black ruling elites. Many postcolonial media and communication scholars unquestionably accept this morality play as the common sense normative model for intercultural communication in post-apartheid South Africa and for all global communication between the West and the postcolonial Third World.

This article questions the moral interpretations and argues that the demise of apartheid is beyond the simplistic evaluation of good and evil and needs to be understood in realistic terms of a political power game. In order to demystify the play of power behind the moral evaluations, this article draws on Fanon's critique of Western morality and his theory of colonisation and liberation. Fanon is used because he is considered as the canonical source for understanding the postcolonial world of the 21st century (Mbembe 2012; Wallerstein 2009). After having demystified the moralising discourse of decolonisation the article analyses the dynamics of power behind intercultural communication in South Africa and between postcolonial Africa and its former European colonial masters.

A close reading of this Afrocentric communication on colonisation and decolonisation reveals an African dream to colonise Europe that manifests the continuation of the eternal war-like dialectic of master and slave. Seen from Fanon's decolonisation perspective African emigration to Europe can be understood as escape from the oppression and poverty perpetuated by the new indigenous postcolonial rulers. Thus Africans escape from their postcolonial *necropolis* (Mbembe 2003) to the promise of a good life in the land of long-departed former European colonisers. But in the communication of African leaders the migrants are imaginatively transformed into crusaders resurrecting ancient warrior traditions (Mazrui 1975), and memories of their glorious past colonial conquests and lost empires: from Hannibal's invasion of Rome to the Islamic conquest of Spain (Mbeki 2005).

COMMUNICATING POST-APARTHEID MORALITY

Communicating white guilt emerged long before the discourse of postcolonialism prescribed self-loathing as the politically correct posture. An early manifestation is recorded by Kapuscinski's (1988) description of the fear among the white Portuguese settlers in Luanda as black liberation armies are closing in on the city.

In the state of siege some whites spontaneously began to treat blacks with respect and "one of our neighbours had even got into the habit of stopping Africans he didn't know from Adam, shaking hands, and bowing low" (Kapuscinski 1988: 4). From such beginnings communicating colonial victimhood became a lucrative industry vociferously denouncing Whiteness and European Enlightenment rationality. This is typically promoted by a white South African academic:

> Whites ... would try, in a significantly different way to the normal workings of whiteliness, to make themselves invisible and unheard ... One would live as quietly and decently as possible, refraining from airing one's view on the political situation in the public realm, realising that it is not one's place to offer diagnoses and analyses, that blacks must be left to remake the country in their own way. Whites have too long had influence and a public voice; now they should in humility step back from expressing their thoughts or managing others (Vice 2010: 335).

Samantha Vice (2010) exhibits the mentality of the *culture of defeat* that transforms the shame of the defeated and humiliated South African white *tribe* into an act of purification: by communicating self-loathing whites can find redemption, and by eliciting pity they can claim to hold the moral high ground (Schivelbusch 2004: 27-31). As if by moral imperative whites must atone for their past sins by self-flagellation and retreat into silence to repair their presumed damaged moral self. In Vice's (2010: 337) moral imagination whites must become politically mute and renounce their right to participate in the democratic political process because their involvement could corrupt politics. This is another way of saying that whites must not engage in any political communication because, as was the case in Zimbabwe, political activity is deemed an illegal challenge to the ruling party, as a Zimbabwean government spokesman warned:

> Let me assure you whites here, that once you support MDC, ZANU is not going to treat you as business people, but as politicians. Then if you are treated as politicians, it is like signing your own death warrants. The political storm will not spare you. Let you be informed that our reserve force, the war veterans, will be set on you (Pilossof 2012: 48).

Political excommunication is justified because South African whites are foreigners and should not form an attachment to their country of birth (Vice 2010: 331-332, 337). Vice (2010) echoes Steve Biko's (2005) claim that Africa belongs to Africans and whites who do not accept the cultural dictates of Black Power cannot live in Africa. By making such a claim Vice (2010) is recycling the old blood-libel that all whites are guilty by definition because guilt is genetically inherited. The evil character of whiteness cancels any individual differences between members of the group, and like Ubuntu, the group's

collective stereotype excludes a place for individuals (Marx 2002). Stripping away individuality can lead to dehumanisation and the entire group is seen as constructed of homogenous individuals. Vice's essay elicited hostile reaction in the mass media and sympathetic reception from academics whose essays filled one entire issue and part of a subsequent issue of the *South African Journal of Philosophy* (cf. Baily 2011; Benatar 2012; Blum 2011; Futter 2011; Hook 2011; Hurst 2011; Janz 2011; Jones 2011; McKaiser 2011; Mills 2011; Vice 2011; Villet 2012; Wanderer 2011). Against the supportive essays, Benatar (2012: 629) is critical of Vice's faulty logic and cautions against the dangers of rendering whites politically silent. Vice's (2010) essay is indicative of the wider phenomena of Third World hubris and anti-Western hatred (Bruckner 2010; Buruma & Margalit 2005; Marx 2002; Mendoza, Montaner & Vargas Llosa 2000).

Against the above one can ask whether moral evaluations are appropriate to judge the post-apartheid world. The paradoxical mix of anti-White ideology and moral pretensions raise doubt about the appropriateness of using moral criteria to evaluate postcolonial intercultural communication relations. Indeed, the claims that whiteness is "inherently tied to domination and oppression" and that the accidental possession of a white skin forever condemns a person to be "irrevocably on the wrong side" (Vice 2010: 326) imply a contingent position, rather than a moral imperative. Indeed, as South African artist Mbongeni Ngema puts it: in the past the relationship between blacks and whites was clear cut because "we knew it was a racial conflict" (Nyamnjoh 2006: 56-57). Following Nietzsche's suspicion that morality may be the greatest danger to human existence because it is an imaginary evaluation devoid of reality (Nietzsche 1956; Sonderling 2008) this article turns to Fanon's writing (Fanon 1973; 2008) to construct a framework to analyse intercultural communication relations in postcolonial South Africa.

BEYOND MORAL EVALUATION: UNDERSTANDING COLONISATION AND DECOLONISATION AS WAR

Fanon (1973) considers history as a cyclical process of colonisation and decolonisation, domination and submission: colonisation is a violent conquest and decolonisation is a violent revenge. Fanon rejects the claim that colonial exploitation is morally the worse form of domination, because colonial exploitation is no different from other forms of exploitation: "All forms of exploitation resemble one another ... All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same 'object': man" (Fanon 2008: 65).

From Fanon's Marxist perspective, colonisation and decolonisation have no absolute moral value but are stages in the perpetual class war: "Colonisation and decolonisation are simply a question of relative strength" (Fanon 1973: 47). For Fanon the reordering of the world can only be achieved through violence

because decolonisation is the destruction of the colonisers' world "no more and no less" (Fanon 1973: 31). Colonisation and decolonisation are based on reciprocity: colonisation was made possible by violence, and decolonisation must be violent. History begins with the violent colonial conquest and induces violent resistance. Decolonisation is violent because it is a social revolution, "decolonisation is quite simply the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species of men'" (Fanon 1973: 27). Thus, both colonisation and decolonisation are defined by an essential racial difference, "decolonisation is meeting of two forces opposed to each other by their very nature" (Fanon 1973: 27-28). The colonisers are "first and foremost those who came from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, the 'others'" and must be expelled (Fanon 1973: 31). Decolonisation is the erasure of the traces of conquest and creates a "tabula rasa" on which a new human being and social order can be built. This is a revolutionary "change in the order of the world" whereby "the last shall be first and the first last" (Fanon 1973: 28). Fanon suggests that the war of liberation precludes the native "coexisting" with the coloniser because this hinders the task of unifying the natives. Decolonisation can unite the indigenous people by removing "heterogeneity": by removing the foreigners a nation can be unified on "racial basis" (Fanon 1973: 35).

When confronted with violence some European moralists implore the native to consider the Western cultural values for peaceful resolution of conflicts. But the native is not deceived by such moral talk: "As far as the native is concerned, morality is very concrete; it is to silence the settler's defiance, to break his flaunting violence – in a word, to put him out of the picture" (Fanon 1973: 34). For the colonised native European moral values are nothing more than "a collection of dead words" and moral values are deemed irrelevant because they have "nothing to do with the concrete conflict in which the people is engaged" (Fanon 1973: 36). The coloniser must be buried or expelled, and there must be a complete break in the line of communication between coloniser and colonised. Decolonisation is not achieved by "friendly discussion" but by "murderous and decisive" struggle between the two antagonists facing one another (Fanon 1973: 28). In this meeting of the antagonists, speech is replaced by action, "when the native hears a speech about the nobility of Western culture he pulls out his knife" (Fanon 1973: 33). The native considers discussions of moral values as attempts by the coloniser to retain domination. Moreover, the native considers moral values as irrelevant because he experiences first-hand the brutality of the coloniser "and no professor of ethics, no priest has ever come to be beaten in his place" (Fanon 1973: 34).

The native does not want to be equal to the coloniser but to be "more" than the settler, he wants to eject him and take his place (*ibid*.). The native dreams about eliminating the coloniser, possessing what he has and sleeping in his bed, preferably with the settler's wife (Fanon 1973: 30). The native "is an oppressed

person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" (Fanon 1973: 41). For the native violence has the ultimate utility in the fight for freedom and is central in constructing a new postcolonial identity.

THE VIOLENT CONSTRUCTION OF COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES

Fanon suggests that violence is central in the colonial and postcolonial relationships: through violence the land was colonised and violence is central in the decolonisation. Violence is instrumental and symbolic in the process of identity formation and it is therapeutic and formative: initially the violence of colonisation has undermined the natives' sense of self, and the native learns his violence from the coloniser because white civilisation is intrinsically violent and corrupts the peaceful "Noble Slave". This Rousseauian theme of pristine innocence is later modified when Fanon discovers that violence is also intrinsic to the colonised society. Like Heraclitus, Fanon accepts that violent conflict is the father of all things: "For the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler" (Fanon 1973: 73). For the colonised slave the act of killing constructs two entities: the identity of the social group, and the identity of the individual human being.

Sartre explains that Fanon shows how violence creates the communal sense of being whereby the "mad impulse to murder is the natives' collective unconscious" and thereafter violence constructs the individual as it "is man re-creating himself" (Sartre 1973: 16-18). To be human is to use violence: "The rebel's weapon is the proof of his humanity" (Sartre 1973: 19). Fanon follows on Hegel's description of the primordial battle that establishes the social hierarchy of master and slave and their dialectical interaction. This primordial violence of a fight to the death for recognition is the origin of human consciousness, self-consciousness and identity. At first, consciousness arises from the fight itself and from the act of killing the opponent, as Hegel puts it:

> [t]o speak of the 'origin' of Self-Consciousness is necessarily to speak of a fight to the death for 'recognition'. Without this fight to the death for pure prestige, there would never have been human beings on earth ... [T]he 'first' anthropogenetic action necessarily takes the form of a fight: a fight to the death between two beings that claim to be men, a fight for pure prestige carried on for the sake of 'recognition' by the adversary (Kojève 1980: 11-12).

Sartre (1973: 19) writes that the colonised natives make themselves human beings by a double act of killing: first they become "brothers in as much as each of them killed". In other words, participation in violence unites the natives and the act of

killing constructs a fraternity. Thereafter the act of killing produces individuals: through a more selective act of killing the colonised "make men of themselves by murdering Europeans" (Sartre 1973: 15). Sartre (1973: 19) notes that for Fanon killing is a productive and central aspect of colonial liberation because

> to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppressed at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man (*ibid*.).

The act of killing eliminates the master-oppressor and at the same time eliminates the oppressed-slave; from this massacre a new free man emerges. But killing the master does not yet produce a complete new identity: in line with Hegel's thinking, the killing only gives the former slave consciousness, but does not as yet produce self-consciousness. Complete human identity consists of consciousness as well as self-consciousness and is conferred by an act of mutual recognition from another living human being against whom one fights. The Hegelian dialectic of master and slave means that the new master (the former slave) needs to be recognised and acknowledged as the new master by the new slave (the former master). But such recognition cannot be given if the old master is dead, therefore it is important to keep the former master alive and in a state of perpetual submission. The dialectic of domination and submission continues: the former slave is a new master and gains self-consciousness by oppressing the former master. Fanon, following Hegel, puts it thus:

> Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him. As long as he has not been effectively recognized by the other, that other will remain the theme of his action. It is on that other being, on recognition by that other being, that his own human worth and reality depends. It is that other being in whom the meaning of his life is condensed (Fanon 2008: 168-169).

This implies that in order to be confirmed as a human being the liberated former slave must continually impose himself upon the "other" and engage in perpetual violence to affirm his own humanity. In order to fully confirm his humanity he needs a constant challenge and human identity is "achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies" (Fanon 2008: 170). This is reciprocal violence and, as Sartre (1973: 20) notes, "[w]e were men at his expense, he makes himself man at ours". This reciprocity opens new communication relationships: the former slave is compelled to colonise the white mother country to demonstrate that he is not inferior.

DIALECTIC OF PERPETUAL WAR: AFRICAN DREAM OF COLONISING EUROPE MANIFEST IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The violence of decolonisation does not disappear when independence is achieved but is used for post-independence struggles (Fanon 1973: 59). According to Fanon (*ibid*.), postcolonial violence is used for two purposes: internally for national reconstruction of the new postcolonial society, and externally when the free nation joins the global struggle between capitalism and socialism. But beyond the abstract ideological global war there is another meaningful conflict: a permanent war of attrition against the defeated colonisers. The defeat of the European colonisers and their expulsion was only the beginning of a dialectical process of identity construction. To become free the former slave must constantly impose himself on the former master. Thus after gaining freedom and having expelled the European settlers, the colonisers' mother country is doubly threatened with violence from the resentful returning settlers feeling betrayed by their government, as well as invasion by migrating former colonial subjects. As Sartre (1973: 24) puts it:

> The union of the Algerian people causes the disunion of the French people; throughout the whole territory of the ex-mother-country, the tribes are dancing their war-dances. The terror has left Africa, and is settling here; for quite obviously there are certain furious beings who want to make us pay with our blood for the shame of having been beaten by the native.

For the former master coloniser the double violence is purifying because it can free him from the guilt of colonisation: "our soil must be occupied by a formerly colonized people and we must starve of hunger" (Sartre 1973: 25). The liberated new nations of the Third World seem like the "rising tide" and threaten "to swallow up all of Europe" (Fanon 1973: 84). The former slaves demand and claim that

> the wealth of the imperial countries is our wealth too ... For in a very concrete way Europe has stuffed herself inordinately with the gold and raw materials of the colonial countries ... Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped people (Fanon 1973: 102).

So hordes of migrants are escaping from the repression of their postcolonial freedom. But migration is not benign: Fanon (1973) notes that Algerian migrants to France commit their acts of violence selectively: when they are in Algiers their acts of killing are "narcissistic" as they "rob each other, cut each other up and kill each other", thus they kill within their tribal "closed circle" (Fanon 1973: 246-247). However, in France their acts of killing are selective and

they create "an intersocial and intergroup criminality" that is specifically directed at the French (Fanon 1973: 247). In an act of role reversal the immigrants residing in Europe begin to describe their suburbs as if they were the colonial territories and the immigrant-invaders now see themselves as "decolonising the Republic" (Kipfer 2011: 1157-1158).

In an attempt to prevent the Third World from organising "a great crusade of hunger against the whole of Europe" the Europeans are urged to help develop the newly liberated countries (Fanon 1973: 84). But development aid and money is considered as rightful reparation for sins of colonialism (Fanon 1973: 81-83).

However, demands for reparation conceal the reality of the postcolonial world: the postcolonial nation states are poor, not because the colonisers confiscated their wealth, but because the state is being dismantled by the new indigenous elites (Bayart 1999). The people are brutalised by their own rulers who are the architects of their own poverty and force the people to migrate to the lands of their former colonisers (Mbeki 2009). As against the postcolonial poverty, the land of the former coloniser seems to offer hope because Africa looks like a desert and "there's nothing here to take!" (Virilio 2007: 62). Such realities are concealed by the propaganda produced by the new postcolonial elites. The migrations inspire African leaders to dream about colonising Europe and resurrect their ancient warrior traditions (Mazrui 1975). In particular it is the memory of Hannibal's adventurous invasion of Rome and the Muslims' conquest of Spain that provide the paradigmatic examples of past African colonial adventures that inspire new colonial aspirations, as is evident in the communications of former South African President Thabo Mbeki (2005).

Mbeki sees an analogy between past African colonial conquests and the contemporary African migration to Europe. Attempts by Europe to resist the African invasion are condemned by Mbeki as "immoral" manifestation of "European racism" and "Fortress Europe" is urged to open its gates, destroy its walls, and allow the poor wretched of the earth easy access to "take" what they claim is their inheritance. Mbeki (2005) warns that, as in the past, if Europe resists, it will be colonised by force: "The African armies of Hannibal and Djabal Tarik invaded Spain and Europe with the deliberate intention to vanquish their European opponents. They sought and required nobody's permission to undertake their bellicose ventures". Mbeki acknowledges Hannibal's colonial ambition and glorifies the Muslim colonial conquest of Spain and presents the hordes of postcolonial Africans escaping from the poverty and oppression as if they were the new African armies embarking on a jihad to colonise Europe. According to Mbeki (2005)

> [t]he African poor who have tried to enter Spain and Europe through Cetua and Melilla would prefer that they are given permission legally to enter Spain and Europe, to serve as lowly workers rather than conquistadors/conquerors.

But if "Fortress Europe" does not open its gates to the invaders, the African migrants will exercise their historical right to freely roam the world and they will follow in the footsteps of Hannibal and the "Arab-led African armies" that colonised Spain in the eighth century. For Mbeki (2005) these "Africans who might be described as the modern descendants of those who served in the armies led by Hannibal and Djabal Tarik" are inspired by historical precedents. Mbeki (2005) claims that it is immoral for Europe to defend itself by building up "fortress walls" because self-defence will lead to injury and death of the invaders. Mbeki predicts that the migrants vie for blood, and

> despite the casualties ... millions of the poor of the south are massing in the forests, on the hills and the sea shore that surround Fortress Europe ... Their number will continue to grow. They will persist in the effort to use their bodies as the assault force that will break down the wall of the Fortress ... The deprived of Africa and the world will not cower like dogs or flitter like bats, when confronted by the prospect of the witches' Sabbath of the maiden aunts. They will hammer upon the doors of the rich (Mbeki 2005).

Mbeki is not the first postcolonial African to revive the discourse of conquest: the Algerian President Houari Boumédienne is reported to have boasted in a 1974 speech at the United Nation that "[o]ne day millions of men will leave the southern hemisphere to go to the northern hemisphere. And they will not go there as friends. Because they will go there to conquer it" (Grayling 2011: 208).

Mbeki's use of military analogy is also inspired by the history of the African National Congress' (ANC) war against apartheid repression. Indeed, Mbeki acknowledges war and the military as grounding for African thought in his famous 1996 speech "I am an African", delivered on the occasion of the adoption of the South African Constitution. For Mbeki, declaring that "I am an African" is an acknowledgement of being the product of the long African warrior tradition:

> I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom. My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandhlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the

desert … It feels good that I can stand here as a South African and as a foot soldier of a titanic African army, the African National Congress (Mbeki 1996).

While Mbeki's use of rhetorical devises makes the speech memorable (Sheckels 2009: 331-332), success is enhanced by the references to the glory of the warrior tradition and the memory of past military epic battles.

The attempts to colonise Europe will not end and the master-slave dialectic is reappearing in Afrocentric theories, decoloniality claiming that despite liberation Western colonialism was not eliminated because it has a zombie-like persistence. Therefore, it is not enough for postcolonial Africans to have captured power at local levels but they need to capture the global world system and its power centres (Grosfoguel 2012: 23). To gain complete liberation, eliminate coloniality, and acquire distinctive identities postcolonial Africans must colonise the territory of their former European masters, and dominate the entire world.

History is a cycle of victories and defeats, as Schivelbusch (2004: 292) explains: "On the rotating wheel of fortune of victory and defeat, the positions of above and below are always being exchanged". The struggle for liberation is a struggle for power and the only valid criteria to evaluate it are reciprocal exchanges of blows, and victories and defeats. As Fanon (2008: 172) puts it: "There is war, there are defeats, truces, victories". Moreover, for Fanon life has no moral telos, there "is no Negro mission; there is no white burden". Life in the world is a perpetual struggle: "I am summoned into battle; a world in which it is always a question of annihilation or triumph" (Fanon 2008: 178). In other words, this is a call for perpetual colonial wars of conquest and liberation.

COMMUNICATION AS CONTINUATION OF COLONIAL WAR BY OTHER MEANS

Seen without moral preconceptions the relationship between Africa and the former white colonisers is ambiguous. Despite its freedom, Africa vacillates between independence from, and dependence on its former colonisers: if the Europeans do not interfere in Africans' affairs, the Africans complain that they are being ignored; if Europe pays attention to Africa and extends its helping hand in development aid, the cry goes up that this is a new form of colonialism (Ferguson 2002). In the African discourse whites are represented as eternally guilty and owing Africa an immense debt. But behind such claims there is a trace of *colonial nostalgia.* While Europe overcame its nostalgia for lost empires, a new colonial nostalgia is taking root in postcolonial Africa, described as a "harkening back to colonialism as a better age" (Bissell 2005: 217). For every assertion that Africa has constructed a new human being there comes the rejoinder that the Europeans should still assist the Africans to become like them (Ferguson 2002), and for every assertion

that the Europeans must go home, there is the demand that Europeans must send money to aid African development. In postcolonial Africa upon meeting a visiting "whiteman" or "whiteman woman", the despairing Africans communicate a wish to be taken to "Whiteman kontri" which they imagine as the promised land of plenty somewhere in the West (Nyamnjoh & Page 2002: 607). Nyamnjoh and Page's (2002: 611) research into the encounters between white visitors and black Cameroonian youth found that initial contacts "are followed by questions leading to demands for access or money". For example, they record the following typical intercultural communication exchanges:

> *'What e be visa condition for that una kontri? You fit send me letter of invitation? You fit carry me that side?'* ['What are the visa conditions for that country of yours? Could you send me a letter of invitation? Could you take me along to that part of the world?'] This is immediately followed by precipitate reassurance that the would-be voyager will be no burden: *'you no go spend any franc for me; I go take care of all expenses, I just want invitation for get visa.'* ['You won't spend a penny of your money on me; I will take care of all expenses. All I want is a letter of invitation to help me obtain a visa.'] (*ibid*.).

In their determination to reach the West nothing is considered as an obstacle, even imprisonment for illegally entering the country is acceptable because "prison in the white man's country is very good" and hardships are no deterrence to entry into the imagined paradise of Europe or North America (Nyamnjoh & Page 2002: 612).

CONCLUSION: PARADOX OF FREEDOM AND WAR ENVY

Fanon does not consider skin colour as indicative of original sin and rejects the tyranny of postcolonial moral crusade. According to Fanon, "[m]y black skin is not the wrapping of specific values" and morality is not an absolute value because "the moral law is not certain of itself" (Fanon 2008: 177). There is no moral duty for the postcolonial man of colour to impose a regime of moral guilt on whites (Fanon 2008: 178). From this realist perspective devoid of moral mystification all past white privileges can be considered as the rightful benefits gained by war and conquest; equally, the new privileges of the liberated postcolonial people are also the fruit of war and conquests. Ultimately these are stages in the eternal game of power; as Foucault (2000: xiii) notes, there is fascism in every human being's head, we cannot escape power and we love power to dominate others.

While violence is integral to the formation of human identity it would be a mistake to assume that all interracial and intercultural communication encounters in post-apartheid South Africa are driven by hatred of the whites. Indeed, there is an ambiguous relationship between the former colonial adversaries that has been

reshaped since the end of apartheid. After the liberation from apartheid a new *hierarchy of oppression* has been constructed whereby formerly oppressed black South Africans exhibit their imagined superiority vis-à-vis non-Africans citizens, as well as African migrants and refugees while the "whites are treated as the group to aspire to be like" (Nyamnjoh 2006: 62).

Liberation from colonial oppression and apartheid brought new meaning and dignity to the former colonised, while simultaneously it opened a void or an empty space formerly occupied by the colonial master. To escape from the postcolonial indigenous oppression Africans become refugees with a vague memory of colonial oppression as well as memory of the unfulfilled promise to construct a new human identity. Having been liberated and given human rights as citizens of the new postcolonial nations, these rights are useless when Africans become refugees and merely *men* knocking on Fortress Europe's gates. Their human rights have no significance because to have rights one has to be a citizen of a nation. The African migrants, as well as the Lumpen Proletariat inhabitants of the African postcolonies, are in limbo: they are unwanted by their own leaders and they are unwanted by Europe that does not desire to colonise them again. Hanna Arendt aptly describes this paradoxical situation: the army of refugee invaders, and the unemployed left behind in the postcolonies sense that they are held in contempt: "not that they are oppressed but that nobody wants to oppress them" (Arendt, in Rancière 2005: 299). As Rancière (2005: 299) puts it, these people are "beyond oppression" and deemed as not worthy of oppression. In order to redeem their human value they demand to be oppressed, while simultaneously they desire to oppress the European *other*.

In the postcolonial African states and on the European migration frontier the young men have no personal experience of the wars of liberation, but their bellicose spirit conjures a fantasy of male power and their "war envy" is expressed in staging surrogate wars to supplement their lack of first-hand war experience (Mbembe 2011: vi). In other words, because the youth did not participate in the excitement of liberation wars they search for an opportunity to engage in their own wars that will allow them to exhibit their humanity and male prowess and gain rightful rewards of war: sense of human worth, employment, wealth, women and cultural acknowledgement as if they were warriors. The youth were freed from colonialism but they "know nothing of the cost of freedom" for they have "not fought for it" and their memory has "no trace of the struggle for liberty" therefore they need the challenge of conflict (Fanon 2008: 172). Indeed, all bellicose entanglements are proper expressions of being human, and war lays the foundations for all social relations. Ever since Europe and Africa have become entangled, the dialectic of contestations, conflicts, wars, and love and hate relationships will not end. But without such antagonism and the dialectic of master and slave, and *friend* and

enemy (Schmitt 1976) there would be no human communication relationships at all.

Fanon confirms Heraclitus's observation that war is the father of all things, including language and communication. Indeed, as Clausewitz (1985: 402-406) notes, war is the continuation of communication by other means. Such an understanding is important for comprehending life in the contemporary postmodern and postcolonial world because since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the West, war is "becoming a *permanent social relation*" and a kind of "general matrix" to describe social organisations and relations of power in the contemporary world (Hardt & Negri 2006: 12-13). Today, as it was in antiquity, war is good to think with:

> Greeks and Romans frequently used ideas connected to war to understand the world and their place in it. War was used to structure their thought on other topics, such as culture, gender and the individual (Sidebottom 2004: 16).

The implication of such reality for communication theory is that a *model of war* is an appropriate tool to describe social communication. As Foucault (2003: 18) argues, "the binary schema of war and struggle, of the clash between forces" can be "identified as the basis of civil society, as both the principle and motor of the existence of political power". Fanon contributes to these insights that provide a foundation for communication theory where war is the unconscious and conscious structuring structure (Sonderling 2012a, 2012b, 2013). To minimise instrumental violence in intercultural communication, the playful symbolic violence of exchanging insults and war-like banter contests must be restored to intercultural communication encounters rather than eliminating them as if they were criminal acts of hate speech.

REFERENCES

Baily, A. 2011. On white shame and vulnerability. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 472–483.

Bayart, J-F. 1999. The 'social capital' of the felonious state: or the ruses of political intelligence. In: Bayart, J-F, Ellis, S. & Hibou, B. (eds). *The criminalization of the state in Africa.* Oxford/Bloomington, Ind.: James Curry/ Indiana University Press.

Benatar, D. 2012. How does anybody live in this strange place? A reply to Samantha Vice. *South African Journal of Philosophy* 31(4): 619–631.

Biko, S. 2005. *I write what I like*. Johannesburg: Picador.

Bissell, W.C. 2005. Engaging colonial nostalgia. *Cultural Anthropology* 20(2): 215–248.

Blum, L. 2011. Antiracist moral identities, or Iris Murdoch in South. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 440–451.

Bruckner, P. 2010. *The tyranny of guilt: An essay on Western masochism.* (Kindle edition). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Buruma, I. & Margalit, A. 2005. *Occidentalism: A short history of anti-Westernism*. London: Atlantic Books.

Clausewitz, C von. 1985. *On war*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Fanon, F. 1973. *The wretched of the earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Fanon, F. 2008. *Black skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Ferguson, J.G. 2002. Of mimicry and membership: Africans and the 'new world society'. *Cultural Anthropology* 17(4): 551–569.

Foucault, M. 2000. Preface. In: Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *Anti-oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Athlone Press.

Foucault, M. 2003. *Society must be defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975–76*. London: Allen Lane.

Futter, D. 2011. Exploring and communicating whiteliness. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 417–427.

Grayling, A.C. 2011. *The form of things: Essays on life, ideas and liberty in the 21st century*. London: Phoenix.

Grosfoguel, R. 2012. Decolonising Western universalism: Decolonial pluriversalism from Aime Cesaire to the Zapatistas. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(3): 87–104.

Hardt, M. & Negri, A. 2006. *Multitude: War and democracy in the age of empire*. London: Penguin.

Hook, D. 2011. White privilege, psychoanalytic ethics, and the limitations of political silence. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 494–501.

Hurst, A. 2001. This White 'I': The reciprocal shame of oppressor and oppressed. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 484-493.

Janz, B.B. 2011. Shame and silence. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 462-471.

Jones, W.E. 2011. Introduction. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 406–407.

Kapuscinski, R. 1988. *Another day of life*. London: Picador.

Kipfer, S. 2011. Decolonizing in the heart of Empire: Some Fanonian echoes in France today. *Antipode* 43(4): 1155–1180.

Kojève, A. 1980. *Introduction to the reading of Hegel: Lectures on the phenomenology of the spirit*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Marx, C. 2002. Ubu and Ubuntu: On the dialectics of apartheid and nation building. *Politikon* 29(1): 49–69.

Mazrui, A.A. 1975. The resurrection of the warrior tradition in African political culture. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 13(1): 67–84.

Mbeki, T. 1996. I am an African. Thabo Mbeki's speech at the adoption of The Republic of South Africa's Constitution. [Online]. Available at: www.anc.org.za [Accessed on 10 July 2013].

Mbeki, T. 2005. Is there anybody there! Letter from the president. *ANC Today* 5(40) 7–13 October. [Online]. Available at: www.anc.org.za/anctoday [Accessed on 15 September 2012].

Mbeki, M. 2009. *Architects of poverty: Why African capitalism needs changing*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

Mbembe, A. 2003. Necropolitics. *Public Culture* 15(1): 11–40.

Mbembe, A. 2011. Forward. In: Forde, F. *An inconvenient youth: Julius Malema and the 'new' ANC*. (Kindle edition). Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

Mbembe, A. 2012. Metamorphic thought: The works of Frantz Fanon. *African Studies* 71(1): 19–28.

McKaizer, E. 2011. How whites should live in this strange place. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 452-461.

Mendoza, P.A., Montaner, C.A. & Vargas Llosa, A. 2000. *Guide to the perfect Latin American idiot*. (Kindle edition). Lanham: Madison Books.

Mills, C.W. 2011. Vice's Vicious Virtues: The supererogatory as obligatory. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 428–439.

Moran, S. 2002. Kant and South African academic freedom. *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* 11(2): 171–188.

Nietzsche, F. 1956. *The birth of tragedy and the genealogy of morals*. Translated by F. Golffing. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.

Nyamnjoh, F.B. 2006. *Insiders and outsiders: Citizenship and xenophobia in contemporary Southern Africa*. London/Dakar: Zed Books/Codesria.

Nyamnjoh, F.B. & Page, B. 2002. Whiteman kontri and the enduring allure of modernity among Cameroonian youth. *African Affairs* 101: 607–634.

Pilossof, R. 2012. *The unbearable whiteness of being: Farmers' voices from Zimbabwe*. Harare/Claremont: Weaver Press/UCT Press.

Rancière, J. 2005. Who is the subject of the Rights of Man? *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103(2/3): 297–310.

Sartre, J-P. 1973. Preface. In: Fanon, F. *The wretched of the earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Schivelbusch, W. 2004. *The culture of defeat: On national trauma, mourning and recovery*. London: Granta Books.

Schmitt, C. 1976. *The concept of the political*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Sheckels, T.F. 2009. The rhetorical success of Thabo Mbeki's 1996 'I am an African' address. *Communication Quarterly* 57(3): 319–333.

Sidebottom, H. 2004. *Ancient warfare: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sonderling, S. 2008. What if morality should turn out to be the danger of dangers? Global ethics terrorism and the growth of ignorance. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research* 34(2): 290–327.

Sonderling, S. 2012a. Eternal peace of the graveyard: The language of peace discourse and the construction of the humanitarian concentration camp. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research* 38(1): 64–83.

Sonderling, S. 2012b. *Communication is war by other means: A new perspective on war and communication in the thought of twentieth century selected communication scholars*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Department of Communication Science. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Sonderling, S. 2013. To speak is to fight: War as structure of thought in Lyotard's postmodern condition. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa* 32(2): 1–19.

Vice, S. 2010. How do I live in this strange place? *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41(3): 323–342.

Vice, S. 2011. Reflections on 'How do I live in this strange place?' *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 503-518.

Villet, C. 2012. The invisibility of richness: A critique of Vice's 'strange place'. *South African Journal of Philosophy* 31(4): 702–716.

Virilio, P. 2007. *Strategy of deception*. London: Verso.

Wallerstein, I. 2009. Reading Fanon in the 21st century. *New Left Review* 57 (May/June): 117–125.

Wanderer, J. 2011. On Vice and confession. *South African Journal of Philosophy* (special issue on Vice's paper) 30(4): 408–416.