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The Contrasting Philosophies of Martin Buber and Frantz Fanon: The *political* in Education as *dialogue* or as *defiance**

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Abstract
Education has two distinct but interconnected layers. There is an outer layer concerned with knowledge transfer and skills and an inner layer concerned with the development of character and relationships with others, both individually and socially. This inner layer provides the individual with the capacity to influence and to change society. In that sense, such an inner layer is 'political'. In this article we argue that the 'political' in education can take two distinct forms: either that of dialogue or of defiance. We claim that the former is epitomised by the philosophy of Martin Buber and the latter by the philosophy of Frantz Fanon. Our analysis contrasting these two philosophies clarifies the implications for education, and thereby for the individual and for society.

Education has two distinct but interconnected layers. There is an outer layer concerned with knowledge transfer, with the development of skills and the capacity for creativity and criticism; and most educators recognise this outer layer as a characterisation of 'education'. However, education has also an inner layer concerned with the formation of the human being, with the development of character, providing the individual with a perspective and understanding of reality. This is not always recognised by educators, who are sometimes too concerned with a syllabus and in achieving externally set targets. If national educational systems are examined for such layers, some will be revealed as concentrating on the outer layer, while others prioritise the inner layer; but this does not mean that a balance between the two layers should not be sought.

The inner layer is as important as the outer because it concerns the development of individual character, of the individual's relationships with others, both individually and socially. In consequence the inner layer provides the individual with the capacity to influence and to change society.

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In that sense, such an inner layer is 'political'. It is important to note that this feature of education, the 'political' feature, is present throughout education in its various forms; it is present in formal and non-formal education as well as in both child and adult education, and, therefore, when we discuss the 'political' in education in this article, we mean 'education' in general.

We argue that the 'political' in education can take two distinct forms: that of dialogue or of defiance. We argue also that the former is epitomised by the philosophy of Martin Buber and the latter by the philosophy of Frantz Fanon. In the article we examine these two contrasting philosophies and establish their implications for the 'political' in education. Corollary to this will be the implications for the individual and for society.

Martin Buber's philosophy of education

Martin Buber (1878–1965), the well-known Jewish social philosopher, is considered to be one of the greatest thinkers on education of the twentieth century. Between 1924 and 1933 he was professor of the History of Jewish Religion and Ethics at the University of Frankfurt in Germany. It was during these years that he consolidated his reputation as one of the most important German-speaking theologians and philosophers of religion of his generation. In 1933 however, after Hitler came to power in Germany, Buber was forced to leave his university post. He became the director of the Office for Jewish Adult Education in Germany with responsibility for the training of volunteer teachers as Jews were excluded from German educational institutions. Buber's status as an educator and as a moral leader was significant; Hannah Arendt, writing in *Le Journal Juif* on 16 April 1935, said of him: 'Martin Buber is German Judaism's incontestable guide. He is the official and actual head of all educational and cultural institutions. His personality is recognized by all parties and all groups. And furthermore he is the true leader of the youth' (Arendt, 2007: 31; Guilherme and Morgan, 2009: 566). In 1938, Buber left Germany to become professor of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In 1949, following the establishment of the State of Israel, about which Buber held serious reservations,[1] the new Israeli Ministry of Education requested his help in establishing an Institute for Adult Education in Jerusalem. The Institute's purpose was to train teachers to work with immigrants and aimed at encouraging a sense of community amongst people from the most varied social and cultural backgrounds and at forging a sense of Israeli identity. Knowledge of this context is necessary to understand how Martin Buber's philosophy of education and of dialogue was developed in practice as a response to crisis (Friedenthal-Haase, 1990; Friedenthaal-Haase and Korrenz, 2005; Zank, 2006).

Our focus on the 'political' in education leads us to begin with Buber's *I and Thou* (*Ich und Du*). In this seminal work, published in 1923, Martin Buber established taxonomy to describe the relationships into which a human being can enter. According to Buber, human beings possess a twofold attitude towards the world, indicated by the foundational concepts I–It (Ich–Es) and I–Thou (Ich–Du). These concepts are essential for a proper understanding of Buber's philosophy and not least for understanding his views on education. The relation of I–Thou stresses the mutual and holistic existence of two beings. It is an encounter of equals who recognise each other as such – it is a *dialogue*. Buber argues that the relation of I–Thou lacks proper structure and content because infinity and universality are at the basis of this relation. This is because when two free rational human beings encounter each other and recognise each other as equals, then an infinite number of meaningful and dynamic situations may be established within the I–Thou relation. Olsen (2004: 17) describes the I–Thou relation rather well: 'The "I–Thou" address points out an approach in mutuality, where the I partakes in the ontological *openness* in which the Thou shows itself independently of the I's pre-judgement.' Concrete instances of I–Thou relations in daily life are those of two friends and of teacher and student.

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The I–It relation is different. In the I–It relation beings *fail* to establish a dialogue. That is in the I–It relation one being confronts another and does not recognise it as an equal because it objectifies it. Therefore in the I–It relation an individual being treats things, including other people, as objects to be used and experienced, that is, they became means to ends and have no value in themselves. Buber did not think of I–It relations as being evil inherently and he recognised that the human condition requires such relations. We live in this worldly reality and need to manipulate nature and to seek resources to fulfil our needs and desires (e.g. food), and we are also obliged to use people as means to ends (e.g. to take a taxi from A to B). The I–It relation fulfils basic needs.

Buber understood that human existence consists of an oscillation between the I–Thou and I–It relations, and that the I–Thou experiences are rather few and far between. Buber also rejects any sort of sharp dualism between the I–Thou and I–It relation; that is, for Buber, there is always an *interplay* between the I–Thou and the I–It, rather than an *either/or* relation between these foundational concepts. For Buber, the I–Thou relation will inevitably slip into an I–It relation, but the I–It relation always has the potential of becoming an I–Thou relation. Consequently, it could be said that the I–It relation is an *objective* or *instrumental relation* that allows human beings to provide for and fulfil their basic needs and desires because we are material entities, but it could also be said that the I–Thou relation is a *subjective* or *spiritual relation* that allows human beings to fulfil themselves creatively, emotively and spiritually because we are also subjective entities. Given the nature of human existence, which is grounded on a material and objective world but which also encompasses one's subjectivity and interiority, human beings require both kinds of relations – this is one of Buber's greatest insights. This oscillation is very significant for it is the source of transformation; that is, through every I–Thou encounter, the I is transformed and this affects the I's outlook on the I–It relation and on future I–Thou encounters. Putnam (2008: 67) notes that 'the idea is that if one achieves that mode of being in the world, however briefly … then ideally, that mode of being … will *transform* one's life even when one is back in the "It world"'.

However, Buber also understood that there are situations in which I–It relations become so prevalent that they suppress the resurfacing of I–Thou relations and this has serious implications for inter-human relationships. We argue that socio-political crisis or instability can easily lead to I–It relations gaining a stranglehold on inter-human relations and preventing I–Thou relations from (re-)emerging. First, such situations devalue human beings and human existence because they do not account for the richness of the human condition; that is, they do not account for the fact that human beings are capable of *dialogical* I–Thou relations and of *objectifying* I–It relations. Second, these situations have a significant moral implication. That is, if one ceases to say *thou* to fellow human beings then one ceases to see them as *persons* and they become merely objects – they become *means to an end* – and in doing so one ceases to ascribe rights and duties to them. As the I–Thou relation requires a mutual attitude of recognition, if one is unable to establish a *dialogue* with one's fellow human beings, if one is unable to say *thou* to one's fellow human beings, then one also becomes an object for them because one will not hear the word *thou* from them, and as such they will not ascribe rights and duties to you (Babolin, 1965: 197; Tallon, 2004: 62; Okshevsky, 2001: 297–298).

As we said earlier, Buber himself experienced socio-political upheaval, first in the 1930s in Nazi Germany and again during the establishment of the State of Israel and its aftermath. These two events in the life of Martin Buber are examples of situations in which I–It relations become prevalent.

Soon after the end of the Second World War, when the horrors of the Jewish *Sho'ah* (*Holocaust*) were still emerging, Buber advocated dialogue between Jews and Germans as a way of reconciliation. Despite criticisms, the establishment of such dialogue between Germany and Israel, between Jews and Germans, led to a cordial working relationship between the German and Israeli

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governments, which led to strong economic, educational and cultural ties, and to the revival of the Jewish community in Germany. The establishment of dialogue, of I–Thou relations, between Germany and Israel after the Second World War diffused the potential for conflict between these communities despite the terrible atrocities committed by Nazi Germany against the Jewish people (and it is important to note that Buber advocated this even though, perhaps even because, he had himself been a victim of Nazi racist ideology and persecution).

The situation that has arisen between Jews and Arabs, which Buber experienced directly, is in contrast to this. Buber was part of the early Zionist movement and, following his emigration to Palestine, was active in trying to achieve Jewish–Arab dialogue through his participation in *Ichud* (*Unity* in Hebrew) a political and cultural movement that aimed at establishing a bi-national state in Palestine, where Jews and Arabs would share power and live in communion once the British Mandate had ended. For Buber, such a bi-national state could only be achieved through an educational model and system based on dialogue. Buber's views were rebuffed by both Jewish Zionists and by Arab Nationalists but he sought continuously to bring about understanding and reconciliation between Jews and Arabs (Morgan, 2007: 11). After the 1948 war between the Jews and Arabs, which accompanied the foundation of the State of Israel, Buber continued to argue in favour of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians as a way of resolving their differences. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a prime example of a lack of *genuine* dialogue between individuals and communities which overcomes their deep-seated existential fears; neither Israelis nor Palestinians seem able to say *Thou* to each other and this is at the heart of their conflict; and something Buber had warned against and tried to prevent. Certainly, there have always been and remain on both sides those who have advocated dialogue between Israelis and Arabs; however, these have been increasingly isolated efforts which have taken place at the margins of the conflict (Morgan, 2007; Chomsky, 1999; Ben-Ami, 2006; Carter, 2006; Golan, 2006). There remain educational, scientific and economic projects and ventures in place, such as the *Shared History Project* (Adwan and Bar-On, 2004), the *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* (www.pij.org), the *Israel-Palestine Science Organization* (www.ipso-jerusalem.org) and the *US, Egypt and Israel 3-way Trade Pact* (Yadav, 2007); however, these ventures have been limited in scope and in reaching mainstream discourse and have been countered by an externally led campaign to boycott Israel.

Two events in the life of Martin Buber are concrete instances of the implications of the views set out in *I and Thou*. The establishment of a dialogical relation, an I–Thou relation, between Germany and Israel encouraged a situation where the potential for conflict was defused and in which relations led to economic, educational and cultural ties; contrary to this is the situation between Israelis and Palestinians mentioned above which currently does not allow, but rather suppresses, I–Thou relations, and which has led to an increase in conflict and violence, where both sides seem to have lost sight that there is a *Thou* at the receiving end of their actions. The first epitomises a situation in which I–It relations were hegemonic and in which I–Thou relations were allowed to re-emerge; the second stands for those situations in which I–Thou relations decayed into I–It relations, which are so strong and entrenched that they suppress attempts at I–Thou relations re-emerging and coming to the fore.

What are the implications of Buber's philosophy for education? Buber's *Between Man and Man* (1947), *The Education of Character* (1939) and *The Address on Education* (1925) are some of his most important texts on education. As the title of the first suggests, education is a relation between human beings and, as such, Buber's theory of inter-human relationships serves as the obvious foundation for his philosophy of education. Buber understands that both the I–Thou and the I–It relations play a role in one's education and he was very critical of both teacher-centred (top-down, or as Buber would say, '*funnelled in*') and student-centred (bottom-up – or as Buber would say, '*pumped out*') approaches to education, which were discussed in the early years of the twentieth

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century in Germany in particular. For Buber, a teacher-centred approach to education places too much emphasis on the role of the teacher. This makes it difficult for an I–Thou relation to arise, and therefore teacher and pupil become trapped in an I–It relation where the teacher provides students with facts and information, where the teacher *funnels* information *into* students, but does not encourage their creative minds. The student-centred approach to education emphasises the role of the student, but also makes it difficult for an I–Thou relation to arise, for the student lacks the guidance from the teacher and, by and large, is left to his or her own devices, left to *pump* education *out* of subjective interests or needs within a given environment. Both these approaches to education remain within the realm of the I–It according to Buber and, as such, Buber rejects these in favour of an educational approach based on dialogue between teacher and student, which enables the I–Thou relation to arise (Guilherme and Morgan, 2009). Education, i.e. dialogical education, is, for Buber, always fundamentally the education of *character*. The core task of education is to enable people to live humanely and in social peace and harmony. In his *Education of Character*, an address to the National Conference of Jewish Teachers in Palestine, held at Tel Aviv in 1939, Buber (1961: 146) said that education is:

> ... a step beyond all the dividedness of individualism and collectivism ... genuine education of character is genuine education for community ... he who knows inner unity, the inner most life of which is mystery, learns to honour the mystery in all its forms.

It is obvious in this passage that Buber understood the social and political implications of his philosophy of education. As we said earlier, education has both an outer and an inner layer. From Buber's perspective the outer layer takes the following form: the educator establishes a value-platform and invites the student to join it actively; the student analyses, scrutinises and criticises what is offered and this prompts the educator to re-evaluate and/or re-assert his or her own position – in short, there is a constant *dialogue* between educator and student. But it is also important to note that there is also interaction among students as they learn from each other and as they learn to respect each other's views and to re-evaluate and/or reassert their own. This interaction of student–educator and of student–student, a constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the basis and strength of value-platforms, is the dynamic of Buber's understanding of the inner layer of education. It advocates and fosters a 'political' attitude of *dialogue* and of *mutual respect and recognition* between individuals and communities. Such a model of education, a *dialogical model*, encourages what Buber calls a *dialogical community*, and such a community is, for Buber, *a third way* between absolute individualism (I without Thous) and collectivism (Thous without an I). Buber believed that a dialogical community improves the quality of life for its members, as it increases social cohesion and sustains cultural creativity, as well as dissipates the potential for conflict; all of which are very positive and desirable aspects. Crucially and given the fact that in a globalised world no community is completely independent and that no community is ever totally self-sufficient, the establishment of a web of *dialogical communities* would multiply their positive aspects. Morgan (2007: 13–14) argues:

> Buber advocates an authentic civil society that acts as a shock absorber between individuals and the State, taking away as much from the latter as possible, while discouraging selfish individualism. This understands community as something organic, rather than mechanical, something to be nurtured rather than constructed. Mutually respectful and ultimately co-operative relations between communities in conflict depend on a very similar process. It is however, much more difficult because of cultural difference and often deep-seated hostility. Buber argues against programmatic nationalisms that are in competition. Instead his starting point is the identification of common problems and the need to address these jointly. This is the beginning of dialogue, with co-operation in education being a fruitful way of achieving this.

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Dialogical education allows for individuals and communities to 'put a face' to the other part and to recognise the validity of another person's views (Watras, 1986: 15); and in doing so the potential for objectifying the other part dissipates, and this has clear 'political' implications. By putting a stop to, or at least hindering, the objectification of the other part dialogical education makes it difficult for prejudices, preconceptions and racism to take a grip. And in doing so, the potential for conflict between individuals and groups is eliminated or, at least, given a chance to be resolved. This is an extremely important implication of Buber's philosophy given the potential positive effects on society.

The dynamics of dialogue, whether in education or in life, implies that '… in the life of groups, as in the life of the individual, one begins with the immediate situation at hand. Before confronting the situation and beginning the conversation, once cannot know the limits of what is attainable. Just as, on the individual level, one cannot strive for relation but only hold oneself open for it, on the social level, 'one cannot produce dialogue, but one can be at its disposal' (Buber, *Pointing the Way* 1957: 206)" (Silberstein, 1989: 202). This implies that, politically speaking, dialogue encourages respect and leaves one open to the other's influence; it allows one to learn from the other and to explore issues together, whether in initial agreement or disagreement. Of course, implementing dialogue is something that takes time, skill and commitment from all participants (Noddings, 1994: 116) and this is why such a 'political' attitude should be encouraged in educational systems; the implications of not doing so can be dangerous, as it can lead to the quick deterioration of relations between individuals and communities and to dire consequences.

If Buber represents the quintessence of the philosopher of dialogue then Fanon is a very different kind of philosopher representing the very embodiment of defiance, and it is to him that we now turn.

Frantz Fanon's philosophy of education

Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) was a psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary from the French colony of Martinique. He has been very influential in post-colonial studies, especially those concerning decolonisation and the psycho-pathologies of colonisation. He was a pivotal figure in twentieth-century revolutionary thought and a major influence on the Left, especially in Latin America (Guimarães, 2008) and in Africa, particularly Algeria, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa (Hacker, 1972; Gendzier, 1973: 186–192; Jinadu, 2003: 159–161; Hansen, 1977: 37–50), but also in the United States of America (Fontenot, 1979: 2).

Fanon displayed humanitarianism and utopian ideals at a very early age. For instance, at the age of seventeen he volunteered to fight to liberate France from the Nazis and, when his older brother tried to persuade him not to do so, Fanon wrote: '… each time liberty is at stake, we are all affected, be we white, black, yellow or khaki and I swear to you today that no matter where it may be, each time freedom is threatened, I will be there' (Youssef and Fadl, 1996: 526). This venture, his time with the Free French Forces and his sojourn in France after the war, allowed Fanon to experience both the horrors of armed conflict and of racism in Europe (Ehlen, 2000). The war over, Fanon studied medicine in France and in 1953 became a qualified psychiatrist and moved to Algeria, where he worked at the Blida Joinville Hospital, instead of remaining in what could have been the relatively comfortable circumstances of life in France. In Algeria, he witnessed the racism of the French colonists towards the local Arab population. Knowledge of this context is necessary to understand how Frantz Fanon's political thought (which has direct implications both for psychiatry and for education) and his views on *defiance* were developed in practice as a response to situations of crisis. It is worth noting Jacques Berque's observation, in relation to French North Africa, that: 'A regime can be defined by the relations it establishes between the habitual and the exceptional'

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and his footnote comment that Fanon's interpretations in *The Wretched of the Earth* '… seem more valid for other historic milieux' (Berque, 1967: 310, 310n). Unfortunately, he does not elaborate.

It is certain that Fanon's political thought is characterised by its central concern with the social psychology of colonisation and by its argument in favour of 'violence' and of *defiance* as a form of psychological catharsis. On reflecting upon colonisation, Fanon argues that it is a form of violence *per se*. Colonialism makes use of *physical*, *psychological* and *structural* forms of violence as a means to oppress colonised populations (Galtung, 1969: 167–191; Jinadu, 2003: 44–52).

Physical violence involves injuring human beings and the ultimate form of injury is death; for Fanon colonialism is preceded, established and maintained by the use of physical violence, which is used to subjugate local populations in accepting the coloniser's rule of order. On writing about *physical violence* in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1963: 40) says: '... the foreigner coming from another country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines'; Jinadu (2003: 45) comments that 'this conception of violence as involving the killing and wounding of human beings is reflected in many passages in *Wretched of the Earth*'.

Psychological violence is injury to a human being's *psyche* and includes brainwashing, indoctrination and threats, which are used to appease and to break the local population's will for self-determination; this kind of violence injures the very idea of selfhood and of identity of local populations and causes a pathological condition in which the local population only have a sense of self in the face of the coloniser, that is, the colonised only attain a sense of selfhood and of identity in the face of the master and coloniser. The implications for cultural confidence, self-value and pride are enormous – the colonised are deprived of these. On writing about *psychological violence* in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1967: 60) says:

> When the Negro makes contact with the White world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an *actional* person. The goal of his behaviour will be the Other (in the guise of the white man), for the Other alone can give him worth. That is on the ethical level: self-esteem.

Jinadu (2003: 49) comments that: '… the alienated colonized individual accepts the stereotypical view that equates Black with evil; he or she becomes the object of the Other's view that depries him or her of any authenticity', and this means that 'the only basis on which Africans and black men generally could compare their experience was as blacks in relation to white society' as Gendzier (1973: 227) notes. But it is not just the sense of selfhood and identity that is lost, Fanon also asserts that the native fosters an extreme anger towards the conqueror, an anger that very often has no conclusive outlet (e.g. work stoppages, mass demonstrations, and boycotts) and either accumulates and vents itself in bloodthirsty explosions or is internalised, resulting in self-destructive behaviour (Sonnleitner, 1987: 290). Thus, and according to Fanon, the psychological impact of colonisation on local populations is severe and long-lasting, as the damage done to the psyche of local populations cannot be easily healed and requires a continuous process in which selfhood is asserted and re-asserted.

Structural violence is a kind of social-economic violence. This kind of violence is implemented by the harvesting and plundering of local resources by colonisers, who use these resources in their own favour and in favour of the *metropole*, to the detriment of local populations and of the colony. This generates a situation in which the local population lives in dire poverty and the coloniser in affluent wealth. In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon (1963: 37) writes:

> The colonial world is a world divided into compartments. It is probably unnecessary to recall the existence of native quarters and European quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans: in the same way we need not recall apartheid in South Africa.

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The coloniser is not concerned with bridging the gap that separates them from the colonised; the coloniser is not concerned with improving the lives of the colonised, which is an assumption often made especially in connection with the unprofitability of the colonies and in the economic burden colonies posed to the *metropole*; the coloniser's only concern is the economic exploitation of the colonised (Jinadu, 2003: 46). It is arguable that another form of *structural* violence is the one that becomes part of the running of, or acceptable in, society. This is a euphemised form of violence, which is found in the use of linguistic terms loaded with racist and prejudicial content. This form of systemic and symbolic violence becomes so much part of the daily functioning of society that it passes as something 'natural' – but nevertheless it is still a form of 'violence' (Žižek, 2008; Leonardo and Porter, 2010: 140).

From Fanon's perspective, the entire situation in countries that have been colonised can, in one way or another, be described in terms of violence. Colonisation destroys the organic and natural cultural, social and economic order, and this forces colonised countries into a situation in which they must continuously struggle against external and alien forces in their attempts to re-establish their sense of selfhood and self-value; and the colonised also struggle against outer forces in their efforts to re-organise the organic and natural cultural, social and economic order for their own cultures. As Fanon (1963: 170) says in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> ... colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.

It is against this paradigm that Fanon advocates 'violence' as a way of overcoming the various forms of colonising violence. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963: 73–74) he writes:

> ... 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. ...When the people have taken violent part in the national liberation they will allow no one to set themselves up as 'liberators' ... Yesterday they were completely irresponsible; today they mean to understand everything and make all decisions. Illuminated by violence, the consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification ...

For Fanon, the only way to redress the problems caused by the process of colonisation, and its violent foundations, structures and implications, is to make use of what can only be described as (to borrow from homeopathy) the *Law of Similars* ('like cures like') or by the *Action-Reaction Law* (to borrow from Newtonian physics). Fanon argued that the various forms of violence practised by colonialism suppressed all avenues for debate and dialogue, and that even when the coloniser seems to offer, or is forced to, dialogue, this is only an attempt to consolidate a position and to continue to dominate. Only violence can put a stop to violence (Cherki, 2000: 261–262; Africanus, 1967; Worsley, 1969). But it is important to note that the reactive violence practised by the oppressed must not be solely fed by feelings of resentment and anger; rather it must be consciously undertaken and it must recognise itself as the source of a new order (Fraser and Hutchings, 2008) and 'education' provides the setting for this process of conscientisation, something with which we deal in more detail below. This conceptual paradigm can be explained further by referring to Sartre's preface to *The Wretched of the Earth.* Sartre's intellectual reputation propelled Fanon's thinking into the limelight and his preface endorsed Fanon's apology of violence when he said that: '… killing a European is killing two birds with one stone, eliminating in one go oppressor and oppressed: leaving one man dead and the other man free' (Fanon, 1963: 19).

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Such statements were criticised severely; for instance, Arendt (1969: 12) states that Sartre: '… goes much further in [its] glorification of violence than Sorel in his famous *Reflection on Violence*'. Not infrequently in the preface, Sartre states that Fanon's text is not for European ears, that Fanon speaks *about* the *Europeans* but never *to* them; however, Sartre also states that *Europeans* must read Fanon's work because only then can *Europeans* understand the wave of violence which is to fall upon them. For Sartre, Europeans have sown the seeds of violence through their conquests and dehumanisation of other peoples, and this violence has come back to haunt them. It is interesting to note that whilst Fanon speaks to the *colonised* and advocates *violence as liberation*, Sartre speaks to the *coloniser* and asserts that *this violence against the coloniser is also liberating* because it forces the *coloniser* to face and come to terms with its violent deeds and hypocrisy (i.e. humanistic and democratic values apply exclusively to white Europeans at home and abroad, and to the detriment of conquered peoples); as Sartre (1963: 21) says: '... we in Europe too are being decolonised: that is to say that the settler which is in every one of us is being savagely rooted out. Let us look at ourselves, if we can bear to, and see what is becoming of us ... we must face that unexpected revelation, the strip-tease of our humanism.' In a sense, and if we join with Fanon and Sartre's views, the process of liberation is 'educational' to both the oppressor and to the oppressed, and no matter whether this violence is physical or psychological (Leonardo and Porter, 2010). We will refer to Sartre's preface again.

As we have done with Buber, we wish to consider two events in Fanon's life through which to illustrate his philosophy. These are two psychiatric cases studied and followed by Fanon and related to his experiences in Algeria. The first is the case of a 'former resistance fighter' who experienced insomnia, anxiety and suicidal thoughts every year around the anniversary of the date when he had planted a bomb in a cafe in Algiers, notorious for being a haunt of racists; the bomb killed ten people. Fanon (1963: 184–185) refers to this case in a footnote in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> The circumstances surrounding the symptoms are interesting for several reasons. Several months after his country had gained independence he made the acquaintance of nationals from the former colonizing nation. They became friends. These men and women welcomed the newly acquired independence and unhesitatingly paid tribute to the courage of the patriots in the national liberation struggle. The militant was then overcome by a kind of vertigo. He anxiously asked himself whether among the victims of his bomb there might have been individuals similar to his new acquaintances. It was true the bombed café was known to be the haunt of notorious racists, but nothing could stop any passer-by from entering and having a drink. From that day on the man tried to avoid thinking of past events. But paradoxically a few days before the critical date the first symptoms would break out. They have been a regular occurrence ever since. In other words our actions never cease to haunt us. The way they are ordered, organized, and reasoned can be *a posteriori* radically transformed. It is by no means the least of the traps history and its many determinations set for us. But can we escape vertigo? Who dares claim that vertigo does not prey on every life?

Whilst Fanon advocates violence as a way to combat violence and as a way of relieving socio-psychological damage done by colonialism, he seems to either disregard or to brush aside the damage done to the individual's psyche through committing an individual act of violence, through killing other people (Ellington, 2007: 6).

In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon also refers to another revealing case. This is of two Algerian Arab boys, aged thirteen and fourteen, who had stabbed one of their European classmates to death. Fanon (1963: 201) writes:

> I wanted to take to the mountains, but I'm too young. So [the other boy] and I said ... we would kill a European.
>
> Why?
>
> In your opinion, what do you think we should have done?

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I don't know. But you are a child and the things that are going on are for grown-ups.

But they kill children, too.

But that's no reason for killing your friend.

Well, I killed him. Now you can do what you like.

Did this friend do anything to you?

No. He didn't do anything.

Well?

That's all there is to it.

The victim was described by one of the boys as 'our best friend', and he had been targeted because only a friend would have trusted them enough to be lured to the place where they could kill him. The two boys showed no remorse for their actions. It is said that this case troubled Fanon, compelling him to have long conversations with the boys in an attempt to understand them and the situation (Ellington, 2007: 6). Nevertheless, however, troublesome this case was to Fanon, he believed that the liberation movement 'had no choice but to adopt forms of terror which until then it had rejected' (Fanon, 1965: 55); and Sonnleitner (1987) advances the thesis that Fanon's justifications for terrorism are complex and must be understood in the light of the goals of his programme, which were (1) promoting individual self-respect; (2) realising political independence; and (3) the creation of a new humanity. All three goals are interlinked: self-respect is only achieved through independence, which in turn creates a new humanity (i.e. one that applies to all human beings and not only to the white European settler).

These two cases are intuitively troublesome because, whilst Fanon advocates violence as a way of counteracting violence, as a way of liberating the colonised (not just physically but also psychologically) from the colonised, he seems to either disregard the self-damage caused by an individual's using violent acts against other human beings (which is connected to the case of the bomber) or to accept this as necessary 'collateral damage' in the pursuit of one's liberation (which is corollary to the case of the murderous children). It is argued that, even if Fanon recognises these as implications of his thought, they seem not to affect his fundamental views and endorsement of the use of violence in cases of conflict. It is true that Fanon's main concern was colonialism and the society of his age, but it is also true that his thought remains relevant to our times as he extends his discussion to all oppressive societies, to all societies practising violence in any or all its forms, and such instances are, unfortunately, still numerous today.

What are the implications of Fanon's thought for education? We argue that they are considerable. This is because the violence of colonialism both destroys and undermines the cultural foundations of colonised peoples and makes use of education as a weapon of domination. Let us first deal with the issue of culture. Very often the local culture is undermined by either outlawing it (e.g. banning traditional dance and music) or by downgrading it to a lesser value (e.g. native language is undervalued and replaced by the coloniser's language, which is then imposed at all structural and bureaucratic levels) – and this causes irreparable damage to the local culture, which is suppressed and forgotten, and which causes the local population to lose its sense of selfhood. This experience was found historically in Europe as well as elsewhere in the world, indeed wherever and whenever colonialism was practised. Ireland is a notable example of both linguistic imperialism and of nationalist cultural resistance, as is illustrated dramatically in Brian Friel's well-known play *Translations* (Friel, 1981); but there are other interesting instances such as the *Welsh Not*, a piece of wood inscribed with the letters *WN* and placed around the necks of children who spoke Welsh (Davies, 1994: 455) and art. 111 of the *ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* (1539) which established French (the *françoys,* the language of the *Île de France*) as the only official language in France and

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prohibited the use of the languages of southern France (also called the *langues d'oc*, such as the *Provençal*) as well as *Breton* in education and administration.[2]

Rabaka (2003: 403) notes also that Fanon: '… understood that speaking a language meant much more than using a certain syntax, learning the lexicon, and mastering the morphology; it meant above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of civilization' and therefore losing one's command of one's own language (and arguably, also of one's accent) represents a loss of one's sense of self and belonging. Educationally and culturally, this encourages peoples who have been oppressed in this way to revive and encourage the use of their own language. Cultural nationalism has been an important aspect of struggles for nationhood in post-Enlightenment societies. A classic example is that of the Gaelic revival and the creation of the Irish nation state, despite the failure finally to establish the native language as the dominant means of discourse in the new republic (Hutchinson, 1987). Another, arguably more successful, example is that of the (Modern) Hebrew language, which was revived by the Zionist movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ancient Hebrew was transformed from being a *sacred language* spoken only at the synagogue and became the official language of the State of Israel in 1948 (Rabin, 1973).

Suppression is different from interaction. In the case of interaction, a culture exchanges and re-evaluates itself in the face of another culture, whilst in the case of suppression, the native culture is abruptly eradicated and replaced with something that is alien to the local population. The issue of education as a weapon of domination is also very problematic. Very often the local population is kept illiterate or given very limited access to education; and the local élite are educated only in the language and values of the coloniser, which is the only way for them to unlock the doors of the coloniser's establishment, and such élites then become a tool of domination at the hands of the coloniser. As Edward Said observes, these were colonially-formed national bourgeoisies: '… of which Fanon speaks so ominously' and which '… in effect tended to replace the colonial force with a new class-based and ultimately exploitative one, which replicated the old colonial structures in new terms' (Said, 1993: 269). Cultural suppression leads to a loss of selfhood, to the psychological damage and violence we mentioned earlier, and the use of education as a weapon of domination is an extension of this, preventing the majority of the local population from understanding their situation (because they are illiterate or have little access to education; Fairchild, 1994: 192) and placing the local élite (who have also lost their sense of selfhood and mirror themselves in the image of the coloniser) as structural controlling entities of domination of their own people. This analysis can be extended to peoples who have been displaced forcibly from their homelands and also to the descendents of these populations, who still suffer from this neurosis. It is often the case that they have been unable to improve their social and economic conditions as a consequence of their humble beginnings and psychological injuries; for instance, Moore (2005: 757–758) says:

> … historically, people of African descent living in America have been acculturated to believe in a Eurocentric version of the world events. The common thread of Eurocentrism leads one to believe that Africans were savages who had to be enslaved to be civilized. The horrors of chattel slavery are normally glossed over as if it was a time of history that did not mean too much … A common mistake that has been made by many Black families is the refusal to teach the vivid story of how we were enslaved. One can understand the desire to shelter a child from horror, but it is negligent to avoid teaching what it meant to struggle for freedom.

In the face of this Fanon advocates that colonised countries, and oppressed peoples, should adopt an anti-colonialist model of education that is not a representation of the coloniser's, and oppressor's, culture and an extension of domination.[3] This is so because Fanon understands that even after independence those peoples who have been colonised remain colonised internally and psychologically, and consequently it is through 'education' that one can both make a critique of 'colonial education'

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as complicit with Eurocentric discourses and practices, and reveal and resist colonialism's continuous hold on the imagination; education provides us with the tools to analyse and understand the effects of oppression as well as with the ways to remedy this (Rizvi et al, 2006: 251–257). For Fanon, cultural nationalism and cultural identification go hand in hand and occur through a process of transformation that provides those peoples suffering from lack of self-identity and selfhood with the 'cure' for their condition; Fairchild (1994: 198) notes that:

> …in the initial phase, the person has unqualified assimilation to the colonial system including its beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. In the second phase, the person becomes 'immersed' in the reclaiming of culture. And in the third phase, called the fighting phase, the intellectual embarks on a crusade to enlighten the masses … Thus, Fanon sees cultural nationalism as a prerequisite to national liberation and the liberation of the nation as necessary for the renewal of the culture.

In this light, it could be said that insofar as the 'political', that inner layer, in education is concerned, Fanon's thought advocates a defiance, which sanctions the use of violence against whoever is categorised as the enemy, as the Other, as the domineering outsider. It is obvious that such a 'political' conceptualisation within education leads to confrontational attitudes, to an increase in conflict, and to an escalation of violence that can spiral out of the control of all who are involved. We have referred to two cases studied by Fanon during his time in Algeria, and indicated the potential for self-damage caused by an individual's use of violence against other individuals; in the first case, the *guilt* felt by the bomber and the continuous insomnia, anxiety and suicidal thought experienced by him, and in the second case, the *lack of guilt* felt by the two children, and how troublesome this is intuitively. From the perspective of the 'political' in education it could be said that the level of psychological damage done to individuals who are part of an educational system where violence and defiance are the political norm is substantial; but the damage is not only done to individuals, it is also done to the communities which integrate such a 'political' conceptualisation in their educational systems, because such communities will experience an increase of violence and of confrontation with anyone considered an outsider – not only foreigners and outsiders, but also dissidents from the majority.

Conclusion: Fanon's *defiance* and Buber's *dialogue*

Fanon's thought, influential in national liberation movements of the second half of the twentieth century, represents a challenge to Buber's views on dialogue and education. From Buber's perspective, Fanon, in advocating violence as the means of both liberation and of catharsis, as well as advocating a new, non-traditional and militantly anti-colonial educational system, tips the scales in the direction of colonised populations. Fanon believes that colonisers regarded the colonised as inferior and thus at a different level to them; that is, colonisers *objectified* the colonised. However, when Fanon advocates violence and a new educational system as a way of liberation and of purging stigma he tips the scales in the direction of the colonised, which now see colonisers as unequal to themselves, and therefore, the colonised now *objectify* the colonisers. The enemy is seen, as it were, as in a mirror.

In the specific contexts of colonialism and post-colonialism, however, let us allow, as Edward Said argues, in a reference to Fanon, that: '… there was a kind of historical necessity by which colonial pressure created anti-colonial resistance'. Yet what concerned Said was the way in which, generations later: '… the conflict continues in an impoverished and, for that reason, all the more dangerous form', resulting in '… an intellectual politics of blame' (Said, 1993: 45). Again, in an appreciative reference to Wole Soyinka who, he says, had Fanon in mind, Said comments that: '… adoring the Negro is as

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'sick' as abominating him. And while it is impossible to avoid the combative, assertive early stages in the nativist identity … there is a good deal of promise in getting beyond them, not remaining trapped in the emotional self-indulgence of celebrating one's own identity' (Said, 1993: 277). Joseph Brodsky gives an example when he says of the English poems of Derek Walcott, the Nobel Prize winning poet from St Lucia, that they were part of world culture. This, says Brodsky (himself a Nobel Prize winner) and quoting Walcott, is: '… what "sound colonial education" amounts to; this is what having "English in me" is all about' (Brodsky, 1987: 169).

The problem with Fanon's paradigm becomes even more serious if we consider again the two cases to which we referred earlier. In the first, the bomber seems to have realised that he was dealing with *Thous* (to make use of Buber's expression), that he was dealing with individuals, with human beings; in the second the two boys who committed murder seem unable to realise they had been dealing with a *Thou* and that they had *objectified* the boy, their victim. In his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth,* Sartre seems to accept such actions as psychological liberation. But where does this process begin and end, who decides upon it and why and, ultimately, who is the victim? As Michael Walzer (1977: 204) observes scathingly of Sartre: 'It is hard to see how vicarious experience can play an important part in a process of personal liberation (as described by an existentialist philosopher).' The arguments of Sartre and of Fanon, as Walzer argued in his essay on 'Albert Camus's Algerian War', were essentially historicist and collectivist and as such: '… examples of abstract morality. They miss the personal and human texture of moral life' (Walzer, 2002: 143). Within Fanon's paradigm the problem of establishing a dialogue between colonisers and colonised remains, as neither community sees the other as equal and thus the potential for conflict is not removed; it is perhaps even aggravated. Buber would argue that it is only through dialogue that such antagonistic communities may establish a relation based on recognition, mutuality and ultimate communion, and this is one of the great humane insights of Buber. As Edward Said observed in the comment on Soyinka, and by implication on Fanon, with the capacity to reach beyond one's own identity: 'There is first of all the possibility of discovering a world *not* constructed out of warring essences. Second, there is the possibility of a universalism that is not limited or coercive, which believing that all people have only one single identity is … Third, and most important … it does mean thinking of local identity as not exhaustive, and therefore not being anxious to confine oneself to one's own sphere, with its ceremonies of belonging, its built-in chauvinism, and its limiting sense of security" (Said, 1993: 277).

It might seem that the implications of Buber and Fanon's philosophies are most apparent for the 'political' in Education, and for individual and social relations, before and after conflict, to reduce its likelihood or to achieve reconciliation. However, we argue that they are also relevant when conflict is unfolding. When a conflict emerges or is in being Fanon's approach perpetuates conflict because it advocates violent *defiance* as a remedy and this can only lead to an escalation and consolidation of divergence, discord, hatred and revenge. By contrast, Buber's approach provides those in conflict with a peaceful alternative to their disputes, a way of resolving disagreements through *dialogue* and through the effort of trying to understand *each other*. Certainly, when conflict is in progress, and especially when one party is dominant and the other offended, even suffering as a victim, it is a difficult and arduous task to persuade enemies to sit at the table and *dialogue*; but as Buber (1957: 206) says in *Pointing the Way*: 'One cannot produce dialogue, but one can be at its disposal.'

In conclusion, it is perhaps worth quoting the following passage of Morgan (2007: 12) who sums up the essential contribution of dialogue to conflict resolution:

> ... to achieve *authentic* dialogue and conflict resolution between communities, it is necessary to understand that, for Buber, this means more than according justice, crucial though that is, or building a

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framework for mutual economic advancement. These entail the elimination of the *objective* sources of conflict. However, according to Buber, such actions must be accompanied by a spiritual transformation that eliminates the *subjective* sources of conflict. It is also the case that often external partisans of the respective causes, even when well-meaning, aggravate the conflict and make dialogue more difficult to achieve. In short, mediators are preferable to advocates, while direct dialogic encounter between those in dispute is best of all.

The implications of this for educators and their students, who should themselves all be engaged in dialogue, are clear.

Notes

1. Buber was active in the early Zionist movement, but advocated a bi-national Palestine of Jews and of Arabs, a stance that he maintained following his arrival in Jerusalem.
2. It is interesting to note that France has signed, but still not ratified, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992).
3. This may be compared with Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* as elaborated originally in his *Prison Notebooks* and on which there is now an extensive literature.

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