Key Words:

- Muslim International
- Black Radicalism
- The coffin or the suitcase
- Racial Capital
- Perpetual War
- Permanent Unrest
- The Colonial Present
- Known Knowns
- Known Unknowns
- Unknown Unknowns
- Insurgent Aesthetics
The Battle of Algiers is still being waged, only now on a planetary scale. Everywhere the unrest is permanent, and everywhere the war declared on it is perpetual. Gaza. Ayotzinapa. Compton. Lagos. The world is a crime scene, with borders drawn in chalk outline. Security and order define and refine statecraft, resurrecting the unruly as the specter and threat to peace and stability. Police forces have proliferated. Brussels and Paris have been locked down. So too was Boston. Baghdad and Kabul are the laboratories; so too was Detroit. The threat perception is amorphous, boundless, everywhere, mirroring and mandated by the necropolitics of racial capital. The checkpoint is mobile and the barbed wire is ambient, while the guillotine looms. Counterinsurgency is the strategy and the tactic. The Law is an inconvenience and ethics a mere contrivance. House-to-house sweeps, gang injunctions, militarized borders, stop and frisks, surveillance aircraft, drone-fare, torture, indefinite detention, targeted assassinations: these are the predicates for liberal democracy and the protection of white life. The state of exception is the rule.

Though The Battle of Algiers (dir. Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966) was made fifty years ago, it's as if it never ended. From the corridors of power to the tunnels of Gaza, we are seemingly still living the film. Only now it's being billed as the “War on Terror,” a sequel to another prequel that is part horror, part absurdist drama, and part dystopic sci-fi, where mosques have become morgues and killing fields turned to theme parks. The names of the droned, tortured, and maimed can't even be mentioned. And if they are, they’re mispronounced. Amid the carnage, some wield the dialectic and others the gun, while the hunt for Ali La Pointe continues...

If the Americans of today see themselves as the French of yesterday, the Algerians, then, are Palestinians, Afghans, Zapatistas, Black Lives Matter activists, and all those who live in favelas, banlieues, townships, ghettos, barrios, and refugee camps. To watch The Battle of Algiers and see yourself in Hassiba, Ali, or Omar is to reclaim a radical legacy—and is an insurrectionary act.
the disaster— is a pathology that is difficult to undo. It's above all a fiction that no longer knows how to carry on. Our governors themselves increasingly consider it as a useless encumbrance because they, at least, take the conflict for what it is— militarily. They have no complex about sending in elite antiterrorist units to subdue riots, or to liberate a recycling center occupied by its workers. As the welfare state collapses, we see the emergence of a brute conflict between those who desire order and those who don't. Everything that French politics has been able to deactivate is in the process of unleashing itself. It will never be able to process all that it has repressed. In the advanced degree of social decomposition, we can count on the coming movement to find the necessary breath of nihilism. Which will not mean that it won't be exposed to other limits.

Revolutionary movements do not spread by contamination but by resonance. Something that is constituted here resonates with the shock wave emitted by something constituted over there. A body that resonates does so according to its own mode. An insurrection is not like a plague or a forest fire—a linear process which spreads from place to place after an initial spark. It rather takes the shape of a music, whose focal points, though dispersed in time and space, succeed in imposing the rhythm of their own vibrations, always taking on more density. To the point that any return to normal is no longer desirable or even imaginable.

When we speak of Empire we name the mechanisms of power that preventively and surgically stifle any revolutionary becoming in a situation. In this sense, Empire is not an enemy that confronts us head-on. It is a rhythm that imposes itself, a way of dispensing and dispersing reality. Less an order of the world than its sad, heavy and militaristic liquidation.

What we mean by the party of insurgents is the sketching out of a completely other composition, an other side of reality, which from Greece to the French banlieues* is seeking its consistency.

It is now publicly understood that crisis situations are so many opportunities for the restructuring of domination. This is why Sarkozy can announce, without seeming to lie too much, that the financial crisis is “the end of a world,” and that 2009 will see France enter a new era. This charade of an economic crisis is

The Battle of Algiers offers up that potential of insurgent possibility, a utopian demand in today's climate where authoritarianism is the rule, history has seemingly ended, and politics have been emptied. The film's poetry imagines that authority can be challenged, that dignity is possible, that freedom and the quest for it are not anachronistic—and that in the “War on Terror,” with perpetual war, massive surveillance, economic dispossession, and racist rule, the memory of a global struggle against larger, seemingly more powerful forces is not only vital but devastatingly urgent.

The film still brims with the radical possibility that it might turn citizens into skeptics, or, better yet, take Fanon's dictum that “every spectator is a coward or a traitor” and force one to choose.

As much as the film was about the Algerian War for Independence, it was also prophetically a warning and a call to arms. Its stark depiction of people struggling to overcome was poignant and an exemplar. Though The Battle of Algiers saw a resurgence in the post-9/11 moment, the film carries with it a kind of poetic inscrutability, an illicit and clandestine impulse that resists being neutralized within the amalgam of imperial static. Yes, the Pentagon has sought to rewrite its meaning and significance. But that they viewed it, probed it, and examined it also suggests that they fear it. Ali La Pointe is still alive. So is Hassiba and the young boy Omar. That is why they torture. Invade. Drone. Imprison. And kill. They are on the hunt. But it's we—the hungry—who will win.

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*banlieue — French ghettos, usually located in the suburban periphery.
نورا حتي الذهاب

HANDS UP, DON'T SHOOT

HANDS UP, DON'T SHOOT

HANDS UP, DON'T SHOOT
Enemy of the Sun
by Sameeh Al-Qassem

You may take the last strip of our land
Feed my youth to prison cells
You may plunder my heritage,
You may burn my books, my poems
Or feed my flesh to the dogs.
You may spread a web of terror
On the roofs of my village,
O enemy of the sun,
But,
I shall not compromise
And, to the last pulse in my veins
I shall resist.

Out of a desire for social justice and solidarity, we boycott, divest from, and sanction those who profit from keeping Palestinians in the limbo of debt. We express our bond with those in bondage by these acts of refusal. These acts of refusal are also acts of love. Militant love. There will be no peace or justice in Palestine until the outstanding debt to its people is recognized and paid through a mutual and collective struggle for justice, liberation, and autonomy.
For the colonized, this violence represents the absolute praxis. The militant therefore is one who works. The questions which the organization asks the militant bear the mark of this vision of things: "Where have you worked? With whom? What have you accomplished?" The group requires each individual to have performed an irreversible act. In Algeria, for example, where almost all the men who called on the people to join the national struggle were sentenced to death or wanted by the French police, trust was proportional to the desperate nature of each case. A new militant could be trusted only when he could no longer return to the colonial system. Such a mechanism apparently existed in Kenya with the Mau-Mau, who required every member of the group to strike the victim. Everyone was therefore personally responsible for the death of the victim. To work means to work towards the death of the colonist. Claiming responsibility for the violence also allows those members of the group who have strayed or have been outlawed to come back, to retake their place and be reintegrated. Violence can thus be understood to be the perfect mediation. The colonized man liberates himself in and through violence. This praxis enlightens the militant because it shows him the means and the end. Césaire's poetry takes on a prophetic significance in this very prospect of violence. Let us recall one of the most decisive pages of his tragedy where the Rebel (what a coincidence!) proclaims:

**REBEL** (toughly)
My family name: offended; my given name: humiliated; my profession: rebel; my age: the stone age.

**MOTHER**

**REBEL**
My race: the fallen race. My religion... but it is not you who will prepare it with your disarmament; it is I with my revolt and my poor clenched fists and my bushy head.

(*Very calmly*)

...der, defilement of women or ghastly blasphemy of childhood—which Christian civilization or Europe had not long been practicing against colored folk in all parts of the world in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world."18

The very idea that there was a superior race lay at the heart of the matter, and this is why elements of Discourse also drew on Négritude's impulse to recover the history of Africa's accomplishments. Taking his cue from Leo Frobenius's injunction that the "idea of the barbaric Negro is a European invention," Césaire sets out to prove that the colonial mission to "civilize" the primitive is just a smoke screen. If anything, colonialism results in the massive destruction of whole societies—societies that not only function at a high level of sophistication and complexity, but that might offer the West valuable lessons about how we might live together and remake the modern world. Indeed, Césaire's insistence that pre-colonial African and Asian cultures "were not only ante-capitalist... but also anti-capitalist," anticipated romantic claims advanced by African nationalist leaders such as Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, and Senghor himself, that modern Africa can establish socialism on the basis of pre-colonial village life.

Discourse was not the first place Césaire made the case for the barbaric West following the path of the civilized African. In his Introduction to Victor Schoelcher's *Esclavage et colonisation*, he wrote:

The men they took away knew how to build houses, govern empires, erect cities, cultivate fields, mine for metals, fashion, forge steel. Their civilization and its community, based on mystical connections within, found its unrivaled master, were pleasing, built on unity's kindness, hope for a...
Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack.” So the real crime of fascism was the application to white people of colonial procedures “which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the ‘coolies’ of India, and the ‘niggers’ of Africa.” (p. 36) Here we must situate Césaire within a larger context of radical black intellectuals who had come to the same conclusions before the publication of Discourse. As Cedric Robinson argues, a group of radical black intellectuals, including W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, George Padmore, and Oliver Cox, understood fascism not as some aberration from the march of progress, an unexpected right-wing turn, but a logical development of Western Civilization itself. They viewed fascism as a blood relative of slavery and imperialism, global systems rooted not only in capitalist political economy but racist ideologies that were already in place at the dawn of modernity. As early as 1936, Ralph Bunche, then a radical political science professor at Howard University, suggested that imperialism gave birth to fascism. “The doctrine of Fascism,” wrote Bunche, “with its extreme jingoism, its exaggerated exaltation of the state and its comic-opera glorification of race, has given a new and greater impetus to the policy of world imperialism which had conquered and subjected to systematic and ruthless exploitation virtually all of the darker populations of the earth.” Du Bois made some of the clearest statements to this effect: “I knew that Hitler and Mussolini were fighting communism, and using race prejudice to make some white people rich and all colored people poor. But it was not until later that I realized that the colonialism of Great Britain and France had exactly the same political and methods as the fascists and the Nazis, merely they are more subtle. Later, in The World and Africa (1947) he wrote: “There is no Nazi atrocity—concentration camps, wholesale maiming and mur-

I recall a November day; he was not six months old and the master came into the shack murky as an April moon, and he was probing the child’s small muscled limbs, he was a very good master, he ran his fat fingers caressingly across his little dimpled face. His blue eyes were laughing and his mouth was teasing him with sugary things: this one will make a good one, the master said looking at me, and he was saying other friendly things, the master was, that you had to start very early, that twenty years were not too much to make a good Christian and a good slave, a good subject, utterly devoted, a good slave-driver for an overseer, with a sharp eye and a strong arm. And this man was speculating over my son’s cradle, a slave-driver’s cradle.

MOTHER

Alas you will die.

REBEL

Killed . . . I killed him with my own hands . . .

Yes: a fecund and copious death . . .

It was night. We crawled through the sugarcane.
The cutlasses were whirling at the stars, but we didn’t care about the stars.
The cane slashed our faces with streams of green blades.

MOTHER

I had dreamed of a son who would close his mother’s eyes.

REBEL

I chose to open my child’s eyes to another sun.

MOTHER

. . . O my son . . . an evil and pernicious death.

REBEL

Mother, a verdant and sumptuous death.

MOTHER

From too much hate.

REBEL

From too much love.

MOTHER

Spare me, I’m choking from your shackles, bleeding from your wounds.

REBEL

And the world does not spare me. . . . There is not in the world one single poor lynched bastard, one poor tortured man, in whom I am not also murdered and humiliated.
The Aesthetics of Hunger

Glauber Rocha

Dispensing with the informative introduction that has become so characteristic of discussions about Latin America, I prefer to discuss the relationship between our culture and the 'civilised' man or 'civilised' man truly comprehend the misery of the Latin American.

What distinguishes yesterday's colonialism from today's is merely the more refined forms employed by the contemporary coloniser. Meanwhile, those who are preparing future domination try to replace these with even more subtle forms. The trying thing about Latin America in international terms is that there is more than simply an alarming symptom; it is the essence of our society. Herein lies the tragic originality of Cinema Novo in relation to world cinema. Our originality is our hunger and our greatest misery is that this hunger is felt but not intellectually understood.

We understand the hunger that Europeans and the majority of Brazilians have failed to understand. For the European, it is a strange tropical surrrealism. For the Brazilian, it is a national shame. He does not eat, but is ashamed to say so. He says that he does not know where the hunger comes from. We know - since we are not that ugly, and there, there is no madness - because we are aware of the fact that hunger is an image of the mode of existence and the product of history, culture, and the dramatic, not the individual.

The films in which reason has not always prevailed - that this hunger will not be assuaged by moderate government reforms and that the cloak of technicolor cannot hide, but rather only aggravates, its tumours. Therefore, only a culture of hunger can qualitatively surpass its own structures by undermining and destroying them. The most noble cultural manifestation of hunger is violence.


Cinema Novo teaches that the aesthetics of violence are revolutionary rather than primitive. The moment of violence is the moment when the coloniser becomes aware of the existence of the colonised. Only when he is confronted with violence can the coloniser understand, through horror, the strength of the culture he exploits.

As long as he does not take up arms, the colonised remains silent. The first policeman had to die before the French became aware of the Algerians.

In moral terms, this violence is not filled with hatred; nor is it linked to the old, colonising humanism. The love that this violence encompasses is as brutal as violence itself, because it is not the kind of love which derives from complacency or complacency, but rather a love of action and transformation.

The time when Cinema Novo had to explain itself in order to exist has passed. Cinema Novo is an ongoing process of exploration that is making us thinking clearer, freeing us from the debilitating delirium of hunger. Cinema Novo cannot develop effectively while it remains marginal to the economic and cultural processes of the Latin American continent. Because the New Cinema is a phenomenon belonging to new peoples everywhere and not a privileged entity of Brazil. Wherever there is a film-maker prepared to film the truth and to oppose the hypocrisy and repression of intellectual censorship, there will be the living spirit of Cinema Novo. Wherever there is a film-maker prepared to stand up against commercialism, exploitation, pornography and the tyranny of technique, there is to be found the living spirit of Cinema Novo. Wherever there is a film-maker, of any age or background, ready to place his cinema and his profession at the service of the great causes of his time, there will be the living spirit of Cinema Novo.

The Césaire of Cézair's credibility is a colonial critic. The Césaire of Cézair's credibility is a colonial critic. The Césaire of Cézair's credibility is a colonial critic. The Césaire of Cézair's credibility is a colonial critic.

ROBIN D.G. KELLEY
already present in Discourse. On the other hand, literary critics tend to skip over Discourse or dismiss it as an anomaly born of Césaire's eleven-year stint as a member of the Communist Party of Martinique. It has been read in terms of whether it conforms to or breaks from "Marxist orthodoxy." I want to suggest that Discourse made some critical contributions to our thinking about colonialism, fascism, and revolution. First, its recasting of the history of Western Civilization helps us locate the origins of fascism within colonialism itself; hence, within the very traditions of humanism, critics believed fascism threatened. Second, Césaire was neither confused about Marxism nor masquerading as a Marxist when he wrote Discourse. On the contrary, he was working to revise Marx, breaking the lines of his predecessors such as Weber, Du Bois and others, by suggesting that the anticolonial struggle is part of the project of revolution as the developmental historical movement of the period. The implication is enormous: the coming revolution will be posed in terms of capitalism versus socialism (notwithstanding, but we shall return to this later), but in terms of the complete and total overthrow of racist, colonialist system that would open the way to imagine a whole new world.

What such a world might look like is never spelled out, but that brings me to the final point about Discourse: it should be read as a surrealist text, perhaps even an unintended synthesis of Césaire's understanding of poetry (via Rimbaud) as revolt and his re-vision of historical materialism. For all of his Marxist criticism and Negritudian assertion, Césaire's text plumbs the depths of one's unconscious so that colonialism might be comprehended throughout the entire being. It is full of flares, full of anger, full of humor. It is not a solution or a strategy or a manual or a little red book with pithy quotes. It is a dancing flame in a bonfire.