

the consentor, it liberates vital forces subdued and restrained, it breaks deadly silence... its screams—the dawn, the wake, and the breeze.

Questions, like grass cracking the pavement. That vegetation within the city walls growing unplanned, those weeds dotting a brick wall, the climbing green engulfing an old house — a challenge to consented planning, the development of a force both external and in opposition to the established order, a living and vital energy that is in continuous expansion, a power that is not stuck, a force that is not a thing but a movement of growth, plastic and malleable, in self-doubt, in process of becoming, always to-be.

Grass cracking the pavement. That natural uncanny. Alien life, life outside of control, life that does not obey and surrender to dominion; and life that physically breaks and disrupts the familiar order, that technological and societal laying of the table; life, that, through the anarchic liberation of a patch of earth, raises problems.

The seed of dissent—grass cracking the pavement.

Fukuyama’s claim to fame is the ridiculous contention that the end of history has finally been reached with developed Western liberal capitalism. There may nonetheless be a partial, albeit unintended, terrifying truth in this statement.

The West is morally stuck.

Political variation, belief in what went for the name of "progress", has in its fall from grace placated sentiments of reject, sentiments of not-being-enough, the will to shape and to transform — sentiments bringing in their wake a most fundamental perception of the wrong to be amended. The capacity to see wrong, the perception of the wrong forcing our bodies to stand up and walk, decisively, towards eternal Spanish windmills; but to have moved, to have caused a smile, to have assumed an armour because of that, that No followed by that energetic stance...

And who gains? For a pacified mass of entertained, falls at the first winter breeze like the dry leaves of an autumn tree...

QALANDAR BUX MEMON
White Skin, White Mask



Yes, yes the 'why's' but more so the 'how'. My friend, the why is apt to circle itself (that dog chasing its own tail), the figure of the 'why' is indeed Rodin's thinkers — poised in slumber. Praiseworthy but static. Aimé Césaire gives us another figure: "And more than anything, my body, as well as my soul, do not allow yourself to cross your arms like a sterile spectacle, for life is not a spectacle, for a sea of sorrows is not a stage, for a man who cries out is not a dancing bear..."

It is the 'why' that very soon craves an imaginary position outside of time, society, and into the decks of the library and those boorish questions — and only these questions — of TIME IN ARISTOTLE... - that why of disinterestedness.

The 'why' is the chief weapon of the child against the adult, it can undermine any given assumption, and for this we admire it. However, what does it build? The 'how' forces open another page. Turn your why — when you are ready — into a how and see:

Why should I live?
How should I live?
Assert.

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"To educate man to be actional, preserving in all his relations his respect for the basic values that constitute a human world is the prime task of him who having taken thought, prepares to act".

Frantz Fanon

On the third of January I visit an Antillean poet friend and we go to a pub in Edgware Road. Irish songs are sung and

rooted in this atmosphere of immigrants, he tells me of his recent visit to South Africa. He begins his story of one night beginning with the words, 'you think Apartheid is over?', let me tell:

we went, over the hills,
a big house, nothing much else around,
our flash-light landed on a guard,
he said, 'what are you doing here - you got no business here
you know what this place holds, they are 'whores',
interesting words but undeterred
we went in,
upon reaching the entrance, sizzling in a green gown,
a Garbo frame, she came, a real Madame,
"Gentlemen, how can I help you',
-'what are the rates, we inquired?'
-'500 for half hour',
-'where are the ladies'
-'this way please',
we followed - perturbed we asked,
and so are they 'all white'
she said, 'well, of course, no black girls here'.

A month previously, irritated and frail, with hung shoulders (true) I board a train. In front of me is a young black person – youthful, imperious and magnificently athletic – he gives no quarter or sign of deference and I utter under the slavish breath – 'Savage'.

Two weeks ago in reaction to the festive indulgence I venture for a jog, I don't go far before I hear a child's voice: "Paki".

What I am pointing to are instances that constitute the continued manifestation of Racial prejudice. It lies at the heart of our 'collective un/consciousness' and is continually being reinforced by academic practices (we are given Mill, Hegel, and the whole of the Eurocentric world view without so much as that warning as legislated by Wole Soyinka: 'WARNING! THIS WORK IS DANGEROUS FOR YOUR RACIAL SELF-ESTEEM), by shrivel but effective news coverage, by our gaze at the Other, in our words...in our poetry...in art.

Racist pruderies do not end with de-colonization and they don't just come from one-side. They form part of who I am. And be warned: They surface – the 'hidden' becomes 'actional'. They surfaced when a young Brazilian got off a London bus and calmly walked to get the tube – for this leisure he got 16 bullets. They surface when a dark skinned French person who rolls his "RRRs" goes for a job interview. They surface with similar wanton consequences when indiscriminating bombs are sent to 'shock and awe' or when peace-campaigners are kidnapped and be-headed.

And this is the danger, to be actional – to utter, to draw, to sing, to create – is at the same time to leave a mark, to change, to move – we possess, if only we would see it, irreducible agency. And who can be sure of one's song? 'Why' then risk action? But let us rather ask, 'how' then to be actional? Listen again to Fanon: "while 'preserving in all his (our) relations his (our) respect for the basic values that constitute a human world". The way is dangerous, true - and we must move carefully with ever an alert gaze, but it must be travelled.

'Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the you?

My final prayer:

O my body, make of me always a man who questions!

Frantz Fanon.

Qalandar Memon

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