



Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics: Finding Something Different

By Anthony C. Alessandrini

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This book focuses on a reading of Frantz Fanon's work and life, asking how the work of a revolutionary writer such as Fanon might be best appropriated for contemporary political and cultural issues.

Separate chapters introduce Fanon's life and examine the question of Fanon as our contemporary; review the field of "Fanon studies" that has grown up around his work; bring Fanon into conversation with the critical contemporary figures Edward Said, Michel Foucault, Jamaica Kincaid, and Paul Gilroy; and turn to Fanon's work to think through the contemporary popular uprisings that have come to be known as the "Arab Spring."

The book concludes by arguing that a reevaluation of Fanon's life and work can provide us with a particular set of lessons about solidarity—lessons that are crucial for the contemporary political struggles that face us today and that will continue to confront us in the future. *Finding Something Different: Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics* is inspired by Fanon's unsparing struggle against the depredations of racism and colonialism, and his lifelong commitment to finding something different.

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Editorial Review

Review

[This book] is a masterful intervention into the theorizing and contextualizing of the way in which Fanon's work has been disseminated, appropriated and misappropriated by the Anglophone academy since English translations of his work started appearing posthumously in the late sixties. . . .Alessandrini's comprehensive book . . . proves how the thinker [Fanon] and the field are inextricably bound together. (*Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*)

Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics: Finding Something Different is an important new book. . . .[A] remarkable work of scholarship . . . [I]t is a deep consideration of the very project of postcolonial criticism and theory. (*The Committee on Globalization and Social Change*)

What are we to make of Frantz Fanon today? Unlike those who would consign Fanon's work to the dustbin of history, Anthony Alessandrini takes up this question in a series of provocative readings that show not only that Fanon's work remains profoundly relevant from a theoretical standpoint, but also that in many ways we continue to live in the world that Fanon sought to both comprehend and transform. Fanon's contemporary readers face both the theoretical task of reading Fanon for today and the practical task of putting his writings to work. Alessandrini's book accomplishes its theoretical task through a series of comparative readings that stage textual encounters between Fanon's work and that of Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Jamaica Kincaid, and Paul Gilroy. . . .Anthony Alessandrini's book proves to be a good guide to Fanon's writings and their contemporary relevance for scholars in a variety of fields, from Middle Eastern studies to Continental philosophy and contemporary theory. I have barely scratched the surface of Alessandrini's book here. His theoretical engagements with contemporary theorists alone make the book a worthy read, but what really makes this book distinctive is the emphasis on the continued practical import of Fanon's writings as provocations for us today in our task of 'finding something different.' (*SCTIW Review: Journal of the Society for Contemporary Thought and the Islamicate World*)

For those of us following Alessandrini's work over the years, this book is an important event. For those new to his work, it will be a lovely surprise. Alessandrini writes with confidence, clarity, and remarkable creativity, refusing in every way to be content with conventional formulations of Fanon's work. His book takes stock of the current state of Fanon studies and then quickly moves to the real innovations of the book: complex conversations with subaltern studies, Edward Said's and Michel Foucault's work on humanism, Jamaica Kincaid's literature and cultural politics, Paul Gilroy's critiques of raciology, and the meaning of "the African Spring." This is exactly the kind of refreshing, revitalizing engagement Fanon studies needs, engagement that both testifies to the enduring importance of his work and takes seriously developments after Fanon. It is no overstatement to say that *Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics* represents a shift in Fanon studies and will seriously impact inquiry into the ongoing revolutionary, postcolonial moment. (John E. Drabinski, Professor of Black Studies, Amherst College)

This timely and beautifully written book is marked by thinking that is at once careful and ambitious, deep and wide-ranging, sophisticated and crystal clear. Inviting us to read Frantz Fanon 'non-piously' as a situated thinker of his conjuncture and as our contemporary who may speak to current political predicaments, Alessandrini develops the most insightful re-consideration of Fanon that I've read. By placing Fanon in dialogue with other key theorists and novelists, he also reflects deeply on the project and place of postcolonial criticism now. And by reading Fanon in relation to contemporary situations (notably Palestine,

South Africa, and the Arab Spring), he addresses some of the most pressing and vexing political challenges today regarding the relation between situated singularities and translocal solidarities. His close readings, keen analyses, and searching questions are guided throughout by Fanon's lifelong demand for 'something different,' an 'emergent humanism' that would not only overcome colonial racism and imperialism but could ground 'true liberation' in and for a future that could not yet be known. (Gary Wilder, City University of New York Graduate Center)

Fearless yet fair-minded, Alessandrini sweeps away decades of piety and restores to us a Fanon who has no need of his legends. (Bruce Robbins, Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities, Columbia University)

This book examines how the work of a revolutionary writer such as Frantz Fanon might be best appropriated for contemporary political and cultural issues. Reviewing the field of "Fanon studies" and bringing Fanon into conversation with such figures as Edward Said, Michel Foucault, Jamaica Kincaid, and Paul Gilroy, as well as with the contemporary struggles of the Arab Spring, this book will be of interest to scholars and students across a wide range of disciplines.

About the Author

Anthony C. Alessandrini is associate professor of English at Kingsborough Community College and the Master of Arts program in Middle Eastern Studies at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York.

Users Review

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