Comparing Arendt and Fanon on Power and Violence

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Abstract
Frazer and Hutchings would have us believe that Hannah Arendt considers herself and Frantz Fanon to be at odds about the meanings and uses of power and violence. In this paper I examine Arendt's and Fanon's conceptions of power and violence on a molecular level to show that they do indeed agree on all levels. To do this, I separate the paper into two parts. In the first part, I ground the definition of power by linking it to the natural definition of power used in physics. To show that this is a viable task, I then test it against widely respected conceptions of power as outlined by Steven Lukes and Michel Foucault. Using Foucault, I examine power on a molecular level to ascertain the relationship between violence and power. In the second part, with a clearer understanding of power and violence, I examine both Arendt's and Fanon's conceptions of them showing that, on a molecular level, their meanings and uses are the same, and that their differences are purely cosmetic.

Keywords
Power, Violence, Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon, Steven Lukes, Michel Foucault

Understanding Power and Violence

Linguists might argue that it is acceptable and desirable for language and the words we use to change over time since most words only represent human constructs which can also change. However, I argue that there are some essential concepts which must not be allowed to change because they describe concepts which are pre-language and are fundamental to humanity and even among the more intelligent animals. Of course, our language should be able to evolve, and by that, I mean that it should seek to improve our ability to describe these natural phenomenon, however we should guard against the misappropriation of these essential concepts. These essential concepts are primarily emotions and sensory perception – both the basic, such as hunger, pain, joy, and fear; and the complex, which are found "in interactions between organisms rather than ... in the organism's internal cognitive economy."[1] These complex emotions include power, domination, oppression, and love, among others. Hence, because power existed between humans, and even between animals, before we had the language to describe it, it is essential that the concept of power be refined, yes, but not misappropriated. I would argue that 'love' has been misappropriated to an extent that most people would be unable to accurately describe it, and we must not allow the same to happen to 'power'. To prevent this from happening, I will define and refine power, anchoring it in the definition of power used in physics.

Physics defines power as equal to the work done by A to B over the time the work is done. Time is important to the definition because power cannot exist in a temporal vacuum, and it allows for the comparison of power, in that the more powerful does the same amount of work in a shorter time, or more work in the same time. However, this is intuitive, thus, to understand what is meant by power we must understand the nature of 'work'. Physics defines work as the force applied by A to B multiplied by the resultant displacement of B. Thus, our definition states that power is equal to the force applied by A to B, multiplied by the resultant displacement of B, over the time that this force is applied.

$$Power = \frac{Work}{time} \qquad \text{Eq.1}$$

$$Work = Force * displacement \qquad \text{Eq.2}$$

$$Power = \frac{Force * displacement}{time} \qquad \text{Eq.3}$$

To adapt this definition to politics, we must define force and displacement within the human context. Displacement is essentially 'change'. To move, stop, or deflect an object is to change its location, speed, or trajectory. In the human context, this can be a facilitated, constrained, or modified action or thought. If the applied force is to bring about this change, then force can be defined as the agent, means, or instrument of

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[1] Paul Griffiths, *Basic Emotions, Complex Emotions, Machiavellian Emotions.* (Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements, 2003), 49.

change. In the human context, this can include motivation, oppression, persuasion, and the threat of violence, among others. Also, this force can be implicit, explicit, direct, or indirect. As in physics, where gravitational forces can displace objects without direct contact, so too in politics people with power can displace others without being overt or specific in their application of force. Additionally, any analysis of forces in physics must consider all forces, as many forces are acting on an object, or a person, at any given time, and is reflected in the resultant displacement. A human example could include the power that religion, culture, society, family, and love interests have over a person's choice of partner. Furthermore, anybody can attempt to apply a force against another person, but not all people are able to generate a displacement in the other person. Within physics, if there is zero displacement, power will be equal to zero, and it can also be said within politics that the inability to create change implies a lack of power. Thus, we can say that power represents the capability of A to apply a force to B, resulting in the displacement of B, within some amount of time. Human examples of power as forces generating displacement would be: persuading somebody to change their vote; motivating somebody to go to the gym when they did not plan to; restricting a teenage child from dating a specific person; or threatening somebody to get them to hand over their wallet.

It is important to note that, by anchoring the definition of power within the one used in physics, I do not presuppose that physics has the authority over defining power, and in fact, the word 'power' has existed within politics far longer than it has in physics. However, when power was added to the nomenclature of physics, it would have done so by finding the word performing a similar function in interpersonal affairs and applying it to interactions between objects. Once the concept of power is adopted, then, the rigour and logic of physics allows for a dissection of power into its components, thus, giving us a dissection of political power. This dissection, allowing for a concrete formula for power, helps to guard against the misappropriation of the term in the future. However, while I believe most people would intuitively agree with the definition of power I have laid out, it is also possible that the physicists who appropriated the word 'power' did so incorrectly. Therefore, to further validate my claim, I will test this definition against two highly regarded conceptions of power, framed by people who famously dissected the phenomenon.

In his dissection of power, Steven Lukes found that it has three faces. The first dimension of power "involves a focus on behaviour in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation."[2] An example would be *A* forcing *B* to agree to a policy which conflicts with *B's* interests. The second dimension of power exists when institutions are created to channel and constrain the choices of the targets by setting what are acceptable choices, and what are unacceptable, even to legitimately

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[2] Steven Lukes, *Power. A Radical View,* 2nd ed., (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 19.

discuss. Democracy, posited by the leadership and societies of the West as the only legitimate form of government, and preventing other forms of governance from entering the discourse, is an example of this kind of power. The third dimension of power, and Lukes' main contribution to power discourse, is ideological power, in which the desires of people are changed, even possibly against their own interest, and often without their knowledge. The entire marketing industry is devoted towards getting people to buy and spend money on things they may not need and, thus, is an example of this kind of power.

In testing Lukes' definition of power against my own, power "as the capability of A to apply a force to B, resulting in the displacement of B" must hold true for all three dimensions of power. In the first dimension, the affecting of somebody else's decisions is clearly a force generating displacement. The second dimension, by creating institutions which may be enforced by the government, society, religion, culture, and the family, results in forces being applied by many people to each person, resulting in a displacement, thus satisfying the requirements. And, finally, ideological power, in purposely modifying people's desires, is also a force causing a displacement. Lukes' underlying definition of power is "*A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.*"[3] If strict to these words, motivation and influence, even though they can encourage acting in one's own interests, are contrary to a person's interests because they were not initially doing, or on a path to doing, whatever they required the motivation or influence for. However, Lukes explicitly states that inducement, encouragement, and persuasion, when it is in a person's interests, is not power, even though he also expresses doubts about this conclusion.[4] I would argue that this is a pessimistic view of power, as this suggests that the great motivators of the world are not powerful, when many would argue that they are. Furthermore, Lukes says himself that "[t]he three views we have been considering can be seen as alternative interpretations and applications of one and the same underlying concept of power",[5] leaving me to consider his conception of power, as always being against a person's interest, to be an 'alternative interpretation and application' of the root of power. Wittgenstein would approve of their being alternative uses of a word, stating, "the meaning of a word is its use in the language",[6] but I think we still must not allow the meaning or the use to stray too far from the original.

Foucault has written much on power - dissecting it and tracing genealogies. However, he is rarely as straightforward as Lukes has been, and states, "the goal of my work during the last twenty years ... has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis," instead, it has been to analyze the

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[3] Ibid, 30.
[4] Ibid, 36.
[5] Ibid, 30.
[6] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th ed, P. Hacker, & J. Schulte, eds., (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 20.

"three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects."[7] This is evident in his work on disciplinary power,[8] in which he shows how human-made structures subjugate the person, seemingly to nobody in particular. However, while his main analysis has been of the subject, and not of power, he soon came to see that human subjects are "placed in power relations which are very complex" making it "necessary to expand the dimensions of a definition of power".[9] Foucault defines power here:

> In itself the exercise of power is not violence; nor is it a consent which, implicitly, is renewable. It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions.[10]

Thus, we see here that Foucault also disagrees with Lukes' pessimistic view of power. Furthermore, by positing power as 'a set of actions upon other actions', it corresponds nicely to my definition of power as the application of force resulting in a displacement. We also see how this works in Foucault's explication of disciplinary power. While the establishment of a structure or institution requires the power of its creators, once it has been set, it no longer requires their power as it uses the power of everybody affected by the institution to enforce and maintain it, to the ends intended by the original creators. Hence, disciplinary power works through everybody in that institutional environment exerting forces to displace everybody else in that environment.

By bringing violence, consent, and 'sets of actions' into power discourse, Foucault also invites us to examine power on a more molecular level. To do this, I will use an example. Let's say that *A* and *B* are strangers. *A* threatens *B* with a knife and demands her wallet. *B* assesses the situation and consents, giving the wallet to *A*. In this situation, *A* applied a force and displaced *B*, since it was not *B*'s original intention to give her wallet to a stranger, meaning that *A* exerted power over *B*. Breaking this power situation down into its components, we see that *A* gave an imperative (the demand for the wallet), and an incentive (to avoid the threat posed by the knife), and *B* made an assessment, consented, even if it was reluctant, and acted. If we examine each of these components, we see that none of them can be called power in and of themselves, thus it is the set of these components which constitutes a power relationship. An imperative without consent and action would mean there was no displacement, and, thus, no power. The assessment of a displacing imperative that did not offer an incentive, whether explicit

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or implicit, would give *B* no reason to consent. Returning to our formula for power, it can now be further refined:

$$Power = \frac{Force * displacement}{time} \qquad \text{Eq.3}$$

$$Force = \frac{Incentive * x}{Imperative * y} \qquad \text{Eq.4}$$

$$displacement = f(consent) * Imperative + action \qquad \text{Eq.5}$$

$$consent = f(assessment) \qquad \text{Eq.5.1}$$

$$assessment = f(Force + z) \qquad \text{Eq.5.2}$$

In Eq.4, incentive and imperative are reciprocals because a large imperative with a small incentive would result in a small force, thus the larger the imperative, the larger the incentive necessary to generate a strong force. I have included *x* as a modifier of the incentive in Eq.4 because there may be additional circumstances which increase the strength of the incentive. Returning to our example above, if *B* knew that *A* had stabbed other people who refused to give their wallets, while the incentive would remain the same, that of avoiding being stabbed, the overall force would be modified and made stronger by this knowledge. Modifiers include perceptions of the incentive, influenced by knowledge of the past, predictions of the future, fears, goals, personality, and much more. I have also included *y* as a modifier, representing the feasibility of the imperative. Demanding a million dollars from a person on the street is not only a large imperative, but likely unfeasible or impossible, reducing the overall force and likelihood of consent.

In Eq.5, displacement is a function of consent, or more plainly, depends on the consent, is directed by the imperative, and includes a resultant action. Consent is a function of, or depends on the assessment (Eq.5.1), and the assessment is a function of, or depends on the force applied and any other factors which may affect the assessment (Eq.5.2). Thus, if there is a large enough force, meaning the imperative is feasible and the incentive is high, the assessment, considering the force, will recommend a level of consent, generating a displacement. In the case above, depending on her assessment, *B* may consent to giving the wallet but ask to keep her ID and health card, or, if she feels *A* is unreasonable, she may hand over her complete wallet to exit the situation as soon as possible. Any form of negotiation clearly represents imperatives, incentives, assessments, limited consents, and resultant actions.

So, then, what is the role of violence in power. Violence by itself does not speak, so it cannot issue an imperative nor an incentive. As an example, if a random gunman, with no particular affiliations or political message, fires a weapon into a crowd killing innocent people, there is violence but there is no imperative or incentive. Even if somebody, for fear of more violence, wanted to act in the interest of the gunman, they would not know how or why, because no direction or motive was given. To continue, assessment is also not a form of violence, nor is consent, but in some cases they may

lead to violent action. Soldiers being ordered to attack enemies is an example of an imperative (order to attack), an incentive (follow orders/keep job/avoid punishment), an assessment (what can I expect if I resist/consent? Is it a lawful order?), consent (agree to carry out the attack), and action (attack). Thus, in this example, only the resultant action includes violence. If we modify this example by having the soldiers' unit come under attack first, the received violence modifies the incentive to attack by adding the benefit of protecting themselves. Thus, violence can be an instrument or modifier of power, or the result of power, but is not power in itself. Additionally, if we return to the previous example, where *A* threatens *B* with a knife, if *B* resists and *A* attacks, it is only because *A* did not have the power to generate a displacement in *B,* hence, violence emerges because of the impotence of *A*. Therefore, where violence is necessary to modify power, or is the result of not gaining consent, it arises from, or is a result of, impotence.

What does it mean when it is said that government has a monopoly on the use of violence? Anybody with the ability to move or to speak can commit some form of violence, and there are many wealthy people and organizations that can afford to hire and outfit small armies which can carry out violence on a large scale. The difference between the government and others, is that the government has the power to get away with carrying out violence. By controlling the police, the military, the judiciary and legislation, the state has the mechanisms and the power to quash resistance to its actions. However, in some developing countries, or during a civil war, it is possible that large groups can mobilize which the government does not have the power to stop. If the state uses violence, first, it is to enhance its power because of its impotence, second, might be used to punish an unruly populace which it has lost power over, and third, is not carried out by the people in the state with power, but by those ordered by the state to conduct the violence. Thus, as in the previous example, violence can be an instrument or result of power, and the state's power lies in its ability to get away with committing violence, not in its ability to commit it. However, it is also true that having more power, by being able to command more people and resources, allows the state or somebody to facilitate greater levels of violence.

Thus, we have here a molecular breakdown of power, showing its constituent parts of imperative, incentive, assessment, consent, and action, and the relationship between them and their modifiers. I have also shown the relationship between power and violence, showing that violence can be an instrument or result of power, but has no voice of its own and therefore no power. With this theory in hand, I can now analyze Arendt and Fanon's use and meanings of power and violence.

Arendt and Fanon on Power and Violence

The aim of Frazer and Hutchings (2008) paper is to "[consider] Hannah Arendt's criticism of Frantz Fanon and the tradition of thinking about revolutionary violence

with which she associates him" (p. 90).[11] The authors state that "Arendt and Fanon offer opposed arguments about the relation between politics and violence", with Fanon "seeing violence as a 'necessary' aspect of politics" and Arendt "seeing violence as destructive of politics".[12] However, they go on to argue that "this either/or construction of the two thinkers' positions is misleading [and] the implications of both Fanon's and Arendt's analyses unsettle any clear-cut distinction between them".[13] They state that "Fanon gives us grounds for distrusting violence as a route to freedom, and Arendtian politics remains haunted by the violence it supposedly excludes."[14]

While I agree, and will show why I agree, that there is no clear-cut distinction between Arendt and Fanon's positions on power and violence, I find that Arendt has little real criticism for Fanon at all. While Arendt clearly disagrees with Fanon's followers, and even Fanon's influences, much of what she says of Fanon in *On Violence* is to validate or distinguish him from others within his tradition. While she clearly disagrees with Sartre, Arendt says that he goes "farther [in his glorification of violence] than Fanon."[15] When discussing the "irresponsible grandiose statements of the intellectuals", she marks Fanon as the exception, saying that he "manages to stay closer to reality than most."[16] In her footnotes she claims only to use Fanon's book "because of the great influence on the present student generation."[17] She goes on to say that "Fanon himself, however, is much more doubtful about the violence than his admirers. It seems that only the first chapter of the book, "Concerning Violence," has been widely read. Fanon knows of the "unmixed and total brutality [which], if not immediately combated, invariably leads to the defeat of the movement within a few weeks."[18] In another posthumous footnote, she remarks how Barbara Deming found that Fanon "can be quoted as well to plead for nonviolence."[19] These examples contradict her other statements which imply that Fanon glorifies violence for violence's sake, considers violence to be an important factor of unity, or that he truly believes that "only violence pays."[20]

The only real attempt I see by Arendt to criticize Fanon is when she says that "[n]othing...is more dangerous theoretically than this tradition of organic thought in political matters, in which power and violence are interpreted in biological terms" and that "Fanon...is still thinking along the lines of this tradition."[21] However, in the passage she is citing, Fanon is describing how political leaders in underdeveloped regions seek

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[11] Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, "On politics and violence: Arendt contra Fanon," Contemporary Political Theory, 7(1), (2008): 90-108.
[12] Ibid, 93.
[13] Ibid, 94.
[14] Ibid, 94.
[15] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 12.
[16] Ibid, 8.
[17] Ibid, 8.
[18] Ibid, 6.
[19] Ibid, 29.
[20] Ibid, 4-6, 25.
[21] Ibid, 31.

to motivate their citizens to cover the 'huge distances' between themselves and developed countries "using the only means at hand". In the same paragraph, however, he states that "[t]his manner of setting out the problem of the evolution of underdeveloped countries seems to us to be neither correct nor reasonable",[22] showing that she has taken him out of context. When he says they use "the only means at hand", he clearly intends this to mean 'the only means they believe to be at hand'. Since we cannot trust Arendt's conclusions about the differences between herself and Fanon, we must analyze them both for ourselves and come to our own conclusions.

It is not so easy to decipher Fanon's conception of power because he uses the word broadly and seemingly haphazardly, speaking of colonial powers, ruling powers, dominating powers, magical powers, economic powers, dynamic power, motive power, and being in power. However, a common thread running through these is the capability to create change, or to displace. Furthermore, his wide usage of the term suggests that he envisions power in the most common usage, which is 'power over', though his use of dynamic and motive power suggest he envisions power as a capability to do work as well. Given these examples, and that I did not find anything to suggest that he has a radical view of power, I conclude that his vision of power follows the formula I have laid out. Interestingly, Fanon also states:

> Well before the political or fighting phase of the national movement, an attentive spectator can thus feel and see the manifestation of new vigor and feel the approaching conflict. He will note unusual forms of expression and themes which are fresh and imbued with a power which is no longer that of invocation but rather of the assembling of the people, a summoning together for a precise purpose.[23]

Here, Fanon recognizes the power of assembling for a specific purpose, which is closely related to the thought of Arendt. Arendt defines power in her book *On Violence*:

> *Power* corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is "in power" we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with (*potestas in populo*, without a people or group there is no power), disappears, "his power" also vanishes.[24]

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[22] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 95.
[23] Ibid, 243.
[24] Arendt, 44.

At first glance, this may appear to differ from my definition of power, so we need to examine it more closely. My definition of power requires at least two people for power to exist, with the 'receiver' of power consenting, and thus empowering the person offering the imperative. Furthermore, I have shown how my definition operates within disciplinary power, certainly rendering it group-friendly. However, in the examples I gave, I have only represented power being exerted by one person on another, while Arendt speaks of power as the ability to act in concert, so we must break this down to its comparable components.

In any power situation, we can assume that each actor would prefer a result which suits their own interests, and even if somebody acts to better society, it would be in a way that is also better for themselves. Each person in the group attempts to exert power over every other person in the group, using imperatives and incentives, and hoping for an assessment which generates some level of consent. And, while each person went into the meeting with a vision of the desired outcome, these power-plays of repeated imperative-incentive-assessment-consent loops, carried out by all actors on all other actors, with each actor's loops modified by the loops of all the others, generates a result that neither could have predicted. This is what Arendt meant when she said:

> What makes man a political being is his faculty of action; it enables him to get together with his peers, to act in concert, and to reach out for goals and enterprises that would never enter his mind, let alone the desires of his heart, had he not been given this gift-to embark on something new.[25]

I fear this may not be as clear as I believe it to be, so I will present an example. There is a group with members A, B, and C, and their individual expected outcomes are x, y, and z, respectively. A begins by proposing x and explains the benefits of this to B and C. B and C assess the proposal, and B speaks, expressing a limited consent, suggesting that x be modified by y, proposing xy to A and C, and outlining its benefits. A and C assess, and C speaks next, suggesting xy be modified by z, proposing xyz and outlining its benefits. However, both A and B disagree with xyz, but based on C's proposal, A suggests a modification to xy, proposing x*y, and then B and C consent. In this limited example, A, B, and C have power. A garnered the final consent, and B was able to modify A's proposal and generate partial consent. The case of C is an interesting one, because while his explicit imperative and incentive did not get consent, his implicit imperative (let's make this proposal advantageous for me) and incentive (you need my support to reach a consensus; gain an ally and not an enemy) influenced A to act and modify the previous proposal. Thus, this example shows a group acting in concert and still following my formula for power. And, finally, the result of x*y was something that none of the actors expected or could have expected, validating Arendt's claim that new beginnings can

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[25] Ibid, 82.

arise out of concerted political power. Another interesting point that Arendt makes is that the power of acting in concert arises not solely from the action of concerted deliberation but the agreement to come together and 'act' in concert without resorting to violence, which is visible in A's actions when she rejects C's proposal but seeks to satisfy his wishes as well. However, it is also important to point out that this initial agreement to come together would have required the same process as in the example I gave, but with a modification of incentives to generate one specific result – that of coming together to act in concert. Without any such agreement, there is no guarantee that the group dynamic would not include domination or violence.

Therefore, while from initial appearances Arendt and Fanon have different conceptions of power, by breaking Arendt's 'concerted action' down into its components, we find that her definition of power is no different than any other. Thus, both Arendt and Fanon are simply offering us an 'alternative interpretation and application' of the same root of power. However, to further understand their conceptions of power we must look at how they perceive the relationship between violence and power.

Arendt states that there is nothing "more common than the combination of violence and power, nothing less frequent than to find them in their pure and extreme form... [though] it does not follow that authority, power, and violence are all the same."[26] She says:

> politically speaking, it is insufficient to say that power and violence are not the same. Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance. This implies that it is not correct to think of the opposite of violence as nonviolence; to speak of nonviolent power is actually redundant. Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it.[27]

So, if we discuss this within decolonization, as Fanon does, Arendt is saying that, absolutely, violence can destroy the power of the overlords, but the leaders of the revolution will not gain power through the means of violence.

It is also important to note that Arendt is not a pacifist, and states that "in private as well as public life there are situations in which the very swiftness of a violent act may be the only appropriate remedy [and] under certain circumstances ... is the only way to set the scales of justice right again."[28] However, she also says that "since when we act we never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can remain rational only if it pursues short-term goals. Violence does not promote

[26] Ibid, 47.
[27] Ibid, 56.
[28] Ibid, 63-64.

causes, neither history nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction; but it can serve to dramatize grievances and bring them to public attention. ... [V]iolence ... is more the weapon of reform than of revolution [and] [n]o doubt, "violence pays", but the trouble is that it pays indiscriminately."[29] She makes the point that violence can gain results, but when faced with violence, people will agree to almost anything, even to "nonsensical and obviously damaging demands."[30]. And then her main complaint against violence, is that, as a means, it can "overwhelm the end", resulting in an "introduction of the practice of violence into the whole body politic. ... The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world."[31] So, Arendt says that violence is not power, but is sometimes necessary to destroy power, or create change, and works to do that, but is it worth it?

Before I discuss Fanon's conception of violence and its relationship to politics, I want to address the notion that violence creates change – displacement - but is not power. There are, of course, different forms of power, such as those related to energy, mechanics (or physical power), and political (interpersonal power), with the latter being the concern of this essay. Violence certainly is a force which creates change, or displacement, in that it can destroy things, people, organizations, and institutions, but this represents a physical displacement. Furthermore, the result of this physical destruction is unknown, because when a powerful person or a power structure is destroyed it is impossible to say what new power structure will emerge, so the resulting change is not necessarily to the long-term interests of the perpetrators of the violence. So, while violence absolutely has physical power, it does not have a voice and therefore does not have political power.

Like Arendt, Fanon sees violence as "the only appropriate remedy" and the "only way to set the scales of justice right again" within the context of colonization. He says this because "the agents of government speak the language of pure force...advis[ing] [the native] by means of rifle butts and napalm... bring[ing]... violence into the home and into the mind of the native."[32] So, because of the use of constant violence by the oppressors, the "native's back is to the wall, the knife is at his throat" because this violence is "kept very much on the surface all through the colonial period",[33] from which it seems violence is the only escape. "The starving peasant ... is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms ... his liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost. ... [C]olonialism ... is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence."[34] Arendt, and others, take this language to be a prescriptive advocacy of violence, while I believe, it is a description of the mindset of

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[29] Ibid, 79-80.
[30] Ibid, 80.
[31] Ibid, 80.
[32] Fanon, 38.
[33] Ibid, 58.
[34] Ibid, 61.

the colonized, gained from Fanon's observation, psychological expertise, and his closeness to both the colonized and colonizers. Due to his immersed experience, it seems obvious that Fanon is speaking as an ethnographer would, through the words and thoughts of his subjects. He even says, "We have seen that it is the *intuition* of the colonized masses that their liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force [and] [i]t is because violence (and this is the *disgraceful* thing) may constitute ... the slogan of a political party."[35] Fanon considers advocacy of violence to be disgraceful and considers the need for violence to be intuitive to the colonized – these are not the words of somebody who promotes violence.

Also like Arendt, Fanon says, "it is an urgent matter to decide on the means and the tactics to employ: that is to say, how to conduct and organize the movement. If this coherence is not present there is only a blind will toward freedom, with the terribly reactionary risks which it entails."[36] So, we can see here that Fanon realizes that without strategy, without the guide of power, pure violence as a means of escape carries great risk. He also makes the point that, "in certain underdeveloped countries the masses forge ahead very quickly, and realize two or three years after independence that they have been frustrated, that "it wasn't worthwhile" fighting, and that nothing could really change ... [and] for 95 per cent of the population of underdeveloped countries, independence brings no immediate change."[37] And, echoing Arendt's 'means overwhelm the ends', Fanon says, "[a]lready we see that violence used in specific ways at the moment of the struggle for freedom does not magically disappear after the ceremony of trooping the national colors."[38] "The atmosphere of violence, after having colored all the colonial phase, continues to dominate national life."[39] "[T]he statesmen of underdeveloped countries keep up indefinitely the tone of aggressiveness and exasperation in their public speeches *which in the normal way ought to have disappeared.*"[40]

While I believe I have shown that Fanon does not advocate for, or glorify violence, he does recognize some of the benefits that arise from nationalist violence. He says that while colonizers attempt to divide the colonized, "violence unifies the people" against their oppressors. "Violence is a cleansing force, [freeing] the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect."[41] However, while these are some positive results from violence, you will see that each of them is simply a returning to normal after the damage done by the oppressors, meaning that without the devastation of the violence inflicted upon them, the victims would have no need to commit violence to gain these 'benefits'.

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[35] Ibid, 73, emphasis added.
[36] Ibid, 59.
[37] Ibid, 74-75.
[38] Ibid, 75.
[39] Ibid, 76.
[40] Ibid, 76-77, emphasis added.
[41] Ibid, 94.

So, we have seen that, Fanon, like Arendt, recognizes that desperate situations create a 'need' for violence, though is not an advocate of violence and also sees that the means of violence can overwhelm the ends, resulting in a more violent world. Any benefit that Fanon sees arising from violence is simply a counter to the opposing violence, attempting to restore some form of normalcy. However, due to violence begetting violence, this normalcy can never fully return, since the colonizers brought "violence into the home and into the mind of the colonized."[42]

Conclusion

In this essay, I proposed anchoring a theory of power to that used in physics. I do not suggest that physics has any authority over the definition, but I found that it does work with widely respected conceptions of power, as espoused by Lukes and Foucault. I defined power as 'capability of A to apply a force to B, resulting in the displacement of B, within some amount of time'. The first benefit of tying a political phenomenon to a logical, mathematical formula is that it prevents it from being misappropriated in the future, as I believe power is natural and pre-language, and a misappropriation would prevent people from being able to accurately understand and analyze power. Another benefit is that it presents the possibility of dissecting the phenomenon to see its components. I found that a political power situation consists of an imperative, an incentive, an assessment, a consent, and a resultant action. Testing it against Lukes' and Foucault's conceptions of power revealed that it works, and that different conceptions of power are simply 'alternative interpretations and applications' of power, which, according to Wittgenstein, is thoroughly acceptable.

Having broken power into its components, I was then able to analyze violence with respect to power. I found that while violence can be an instrument or modifier of power, or the result of power, it is not power in and of itself because it has no voice with which to offer an imperative to direct the behaviour of the target. Furthermore, if violence is used as a modifier, or is the result of an unheeded threat, the violence is due to the impotence of the perpetrator.

With a theory and understanding of power and violence, I then proceeded to analyze Arendt's and Fanon's conceptions and uses of power. While Fanon does not explicitly define power, his use of it is a common one, which corresponds to the definition I posited. For Arendt, while her 'concerted action' appears to be a different conception of power, by breaking it into its components, I showed it is no different than any other definition of power, meaning it matches both mine and Fanon's conceptions of power.

In analyzing their uses of violence, despite what appears to be common knowledge, both Arendt and Fanon agree that violence is necessary in some situations, but that the means overwhelm the ends, leading to more violence. I also showed that Fanon does not glorify violence and instead uses the language he does because of his

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[42] Ibid, 38.

unique training and experience, speaking as an ethnographer using the language of his subjects.

The main contribution of this paper is that it offers a compelling definition and understanding of the nature of power. It also makes the case that we should seek to refine and then preserve our definition and understanding of power, preventing it from apparent attempts at misappropriation, while still allowing alternative interpretations and applications of it. Additionally, the method I used to define power offers a useful tool to understanding and analyzing other thinkers' conceptions of power.

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