

February 27, 1985

Dear Kevin:

Since I don't ever seem to get enough time before I have to leave, I hurry to say something rather superficial, but at least I want you to tell Prof. Vasquez that you did bring it to my attention and I was very interested in it. It happens, however, that the Director of Humanities Press has died and I'm not sure of the direction the Press will now take, or that my opinion would account for much with a new Director. I would have been glad to recommend it, and I do not think that either Clio or Idealistic Studies would be the outlet he's seeking. I happen to be leaving and will not return until after the special event in Detroit around my Archives on March 21. The point is that I want you to show him my continued interest. Indeed, I don't remember what I told you (the remark you refer to) about Prof. Vasquez -- but I definitely was not conscious that he was a mulatto and had come to you at the time the others at HSA had hassled him.

I am returning his thesis, "What is Dialectics?" You might be able to make something out of my scribbles on it. But what I want to call attention to is that you should say that what I told you now is that there were several places where I especially noted I completely agreed with him. One is on page 3, when he insists that Phenomenology of Spirit "is not a questions of a radically diverse dialectic, as Hartmann maintains, but of one and the same dialectic."

And I especially liked the following page 4, where he insists that "choosing freedom means being capable of freeing oneself ... This man is absolute negativity." The reason I was so attracted to your remark that this professor came over to you on Fanon was because one of the things I criticized on p. 6 (final para.) is to tell him that considering both master and slave as man was exactly what Fanon had taken great exception to and made a most original contribution about in his Black Skin, White Masks when he denied the whole concept of reciprocity. In fact, I consider that the very idea that Marx had in mind in extending second negativity because it required revolution was where he thought he pinpointed exactly what was wrong in the Hegelian dialectic when it talked of reciprocity instead of totalX~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ly uprooting that relationship.

You may also call to his attention that purely from a translator's (i.e. a technical) viewpoint, he should know that the Unhappy Consciousness is very popular, is standard, and it would take any English-speaking person to say what is Vasquez talking about when he quotes Hegel about "unfortunate" consciousness. Not only does "unfortunate" not capture all that is meant by "unhappy", but it brings in a wrong principle as if that very important stage was merely a question of luck. I do not go for his translation of entfremdung as strangeness.

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