Fanon, “On National Culture”
student of Aimé Césaire in Martinique
assimilation; negritude
later serves in French Army, university education in France
becomes a psychologist in Algeria in 1953
during struggle for de-colonization
helps National Liberation Front (FLN) (1954-1961)
Algerian independence granted in 1962
Fanon dies of leukemia in 1961

Decolonization
1947: India
1955: Tunisia; 1956 Morocco
1957: Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana
1958: Sékou Touré in Guinea (other French-speaking African colonies later)
1960: Senegal (Léopold Senghor), Niger, Togo, Dahomey, Gabon, Chad, Mauritania, Nigeria, Congo
1961: Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi
Fanon developing a kind of psychology of effects of colonialism
explanation of grounds for revolution and, to some degree, violence

How do colonized restore a sense of dignity?
personal past and culture needed
but where is such culture to be found?
in nation, in continent, in race, in religion?
somewhat reactionary oppositional logic at first
search for Golden Age, or pan-black perspective
what are some of the difficulties with this?
fetishization & exoticization of cultural remnants of pre-colonialism
but how does that become active, activated, so
that it’s not simply nostalgia
transformational logic required to some degree
past with an eye to future
example of “African Dawn” by Keita Fodeba
Despite calls for national consciousness & culture here, Fanon was deeply interested by the idea of a larger African unity, a sort of United States of Africa

But also says, “We however consider that the mistake . . . lies in wishing to skip the national period” (247).

What is the idea of a “nation”?
How does one come to identify as “American,” or not?
What is “culture”?
What is relationship between the two?

“National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension” (247).

What is the distinction begin drawn here?

“If the building up [of the nation] is true, that is to say if it interprets the manifest will of the people and reveals the eager African peoples, then the building of a nation is of necessity accompanied by the discovery and encouragement of universalizing values” (247)
For next time: Sembene Ousmane, *Guelwaar*

Ousmane, Marxist, labor organizer in Senegal
gets a grant from Soviet Union in 1961 to study cinema
first African to make a feature film

*La Noire de . . . (Black Girl, 1966)*

characters speaking in Wolof, French, Arabic (perhaps others?)

ritual unearthing of the past, of ghosts

what is the nation, what is Senegalese culture here?

how perceive closing: “I am Senegalese.”

compositional elements

simple, elegant montage

horizontality of image

colors: black, orange, red, brown, yellow

occasional contrast w/ blue

Who is the audience for this movie?

Senegalese, foreign art houses?