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Frantz Fanon's Psycho-Politics: From Psychiatry to Revolution

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between psychiatry and politics in the thought of Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. The article aims to demonstrate that Fanon developed a unique approach to psycho-politics that dialectically engages psychiatry and politics from his earliest works. Fanon's psycho-politics can be traced from his work in the early 1950s, namely his doctoral dissertation and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). From his doctoral dissertation to *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon tries to explain colonialism as a psychiatrist. This search manifests itself again in Fanon's best-known work, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Although *The Wretched of the Earth* is known as the influential work of a political militant, it is the book of a scientist-thinker who analyzes colonialism from a psychiatric perspective. However, the connection between Fanon's psychiatric thought and practice and his political writings has not been sufficiently revealed. Fanon has been thought of as a "Third World militant." But there is a dialectical relationship between Fanon's theory and practice of psychiatry and his political thought. Understanding Fanon's thought can only be possible by analyzing its psycho-political structure. The aim of this article is to examine the development of Fanon's political thought through his earliest psychiatric writings and clinical practice, to link psychiatric theory and practice to his political theory, and thus to outline Fanon's psycho-politics.

Keywords: Frantz Fanon, psycho-politics, revolutionary psychiatry, alienation colonialism, racism

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1. Introduction: Algeria Notes of a Psychiatrist and Beginnings

The new chief physician of the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital in Algeria, a French colony since 1830, described an unusual doctor-patient dialogue in one of his articles in the institution's weekly newspaper (7 January 1954):

> Some days ago, I drew a very abrupt reply. I asked a patient from Reynaud what the date was. "How do you expect me to know the date? Every morning, I am told to get up. To eat. To go to the courtyard. At noon, I am told to eat. To go to the courtyard and afterward to go to sleep. Nobody tells me the date. How do you expect that I should know what day it is?" (Fanon, 2018, p. 315)

The chief physician, who had been immersed in the study of the relation of the experiences of (Black) consciousness to action during the period leading up to his mission in Algeria, agreed with the patient: "The calendar is a schedule of action" (Fanon, 2018, p. 316). Two weeks later, in the hospital's newspaper, he wrote about the Algerian patients' sense of place: "The patients do not have the feeling of being anywhere" (2018, p. 317). That is to say, the Algerian patient lacks a consciousness of time-space to comprehend himself as a subject, to give meaning to his experience and to take action.

Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), the revolutionary psychiatrist who would become synonymous with the Algerian Revolution, was the chief physician who recorded this dialogue, which took place at a time of great change in the history of modern Algeria, in the same year that the National Liberation Front (FLN)[1] appeared on the stage of history as a political subject against French colonialism. A year later (1955), when he came into contact with the National Liberation Front, Fanon the psychiatrist also began an active political life. Fanon, a political revolutionary, would complete and radicalize the head physician when, in an article in the newspaper *El Moudjahid* (November 1957), he identified the emergence of the National Liberation Front as the milestone of a new calendar against colonialism: "It is the point of departure of a new life, of a new history, of the history of Algeria turned totally upside down and renewed on entirely new bases" (Fanon, 2018, p. 569).

The starting point or new beginnings defines Fanon's thought better than any other word.[2] In his earlier work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon describes this as a subjective and objective restructuring of the world, or subjective-objective revolution:[3]

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[1] The National Liberation Front (Arabic: جبهة التحرير الوطني Jabhatu l-Taḥrīri l-Waṭanī; French: Front de libération nationale, FLN). The National Liberation Front "is a nationalist political party in Algeria. It was the principal nationalist movement during the Algerian War and the sole legal and ruling political party of the Algerian state until other parties were legalised in 1989. The FLN was established in 1954 from a split in the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties from members of the Special Organisation paramilitary; its armed wing, the National Liberation Army, participated in the Algerian War from 1954 to 1962" ("National Liberation Front (Algeria), 2023)

[2] For a comparative analysis of the thoughts of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Hannah Arendt and Stuart Hall in terms of the concept of "beginning", see. Mollaer, 2019, pp. 134–138; 256–279.

[3] Fanon dialectically links these two dimensions: "In spite of this it is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process… The black man must wage his war on both levels: Since historically they influence each other, any unilateral liberation is incomplete, and the gravest mistake would be to believe in their automatic interdependence… Reality, for once, requires a total understanding. On the objective level as on the subjective level, a solution has to be supplied" (Fanon, 2008, pp. 4–5).

> I defined myself as an absolute intensity of beginning. So I took up my negritude, and with tears in my eyes I put its machinery together again" (Fanon, 2008, p. 106).
>
> What I am asserting is that the European has a fixed concept of the Negro… From the moment the Negro accepts the separation imposed by the European he has no further respite… We shall see that another solution is possible. It implies a restructuring of the world (2008, pp. 23, 59–60).

Fanon would probably agree with Plato, who sought a solution to the crisis of the Greek police with a philosophical beginning: "For the beginning, which among human beings is established as god, is the savior of all things" (Plato, 1988, pp. 163–164). In Fanon, the beginning is a response to both the European crisis —exposed by Aimé Césaire[4]— and the black crisis. In the word "beginning" there is an undaunted revolutionary hope, a Third World optimism, despite the suffocation of capitalism and the "race" question. As the Marx epigraph to the concluding chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* suggests,[5] the point is that the poetry of social revolution must turn to the future, without the temptations of the past to suffocate *praxis*, in order to make its own beginning. Fanon has left the beginning as a legacy. His last work, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), ends with this appeal: "For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way o f thinking, and endeavor to create a new man" (Fanon, 2004, p. 239).

2. The Experience of Revolutionary Psychiatry

How did Fanon begin as a psychiatrist-thinker? Although the Algerian experience, beginning with his posting to Blida in October 1953, was a critical transition in Fanon's life, his psychiatric experience dates back to earlier years. Born in the French colony of Martinique, Fanon fought in the French army during the Second World War, joining the Fifth Battalion of the Free French Forces in the Antilles (1943–45), returned home to complete his high school education (1945), and left for France (1946) to study at university on a scholarship available to soldiers who had participated in the war. He studied medicine in Lyon and began his specialization in psychiatry with a scientific study on "mental disorders." One of the most important stages in Fanon's working experience as a psychiatrist was the Saint-Alban Hospital, where he worked as a resident doctor (1952).

Saint-Alban, in central France, provided a safe haven for artists, thinkers and activists during the Second World War and was the site of one of the great experiments in twentieth-century psychiatry. The creation of a community of artists, thinkers and activists among staff and patients was a key part of this collective and interdisciplinary experiment. At Saint-Alban, Fanon participated in an extraordinary psychiatric practice and worked with renowned revolutionary psychiatrists.

The chief physician with whom Fanon worked as his assistant was the Catalan revolutionary psychiatrist François Tosquelles (1912-1994), one of the founders of Institutional Psychotherapy. As a Marxist, Tosquelles had fought on the republican side against the fascists

[4] Aimé Césaire (1913-2008), known for his work *Discourse on Colonialism* and poetry books such as *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, is one of the pioneers of the intellectual struggle against colonialism in the Francophone world.

[5] Fanon quotes the following passage from Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire*: "The social revolution . . . cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped itself of all its superstitions concerning the past. Earlier revolutions relied on memories out of world history in order to drug themselves against their own content. In order to fi nd their own content, the revolutions of the nineteenth century have to let the dead bury the dead. Before, the expression exceeded the content; now, the content exceeds the expression."

in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). The fascists had triumphed, but the anti-authoritarian tendencies that developed in the Marxist United Workers Party, and the anti-fascist experience itself, would persist in Tosquelles' conception of psychiatry as the "liberation of the mind from occupation." Tosquelles, who placed Marx and Freud at the centre of his thought, established an experimental and revolutionary community in the Spanish refugee camp where he was held for a while after arriving in France, which was the core of the activist psychiatry approach in Saint-Alban. One of the figures behind the psychiatric practice at Saint-Alban was the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Jean Oury (1924-2014), a pioneer of Institutional Psychotherapy, who worked at the hospital after the Second World War. Oury inspired both Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and Fanon. The motto of the revolutionary psychiatrists of the Saint-Alban circle was: "The only cure is to change the world" (Cruz, 2019).

Some researchers of Institutional Psychotherapy also point to Fanon among the leading figures of the Saint-Alban circle (Robcis, 2017). Saint-Alban must have been a unique experience for the Martinican physician in his twenties. Fanon's holistic (social) approach to psychiatry, which confronted biological determinism and neurological reductionism, began to take shape during the Saint-Alban years. Moreover, this intense collective experience would also influence Fanon's medical practice in Algeria (1953-1956) and Tunisia (1957-1960), where he argued that social and psychological phenomena should be considered structurally linked, that colonialism had direct psychological effects, and that psychiatry was political.

3. Critical Science Practice

Departing for Saint-Alban in 1952, Fanon's professional and political enthusiasm was probably accompanied by intellectual self-confidence. His suitcase contained a scientific study (1951) on the socio-cultural factors of mental illness, "emphasising the specificity of psychiatry as opposed to (reductionist) neurology" (Khalfa 2018), an article (1952) analysing psychiatric phenomena from a theoretical point of view,[6] and a book, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), written before he began his professional psychiatric work.

The relationship between the scientist-psychiatrist and the political revolutionary Fanon first manifests itself in *Black Skin, White Masks*. *Black Skin, White Masks* begins with an enthusiastic epigraph taken from Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), which embodied the spirit of the anti-colonial wave, and is one of the pioneering works on the wounds colonialism inflicts on subjectivity. It may seem surprising that in the introduction to such a book the author speaks of a cold-blooded attitude: "…in complete composure, I think it would be good if certain things were said. These things I am going to say, not shout. For it is a long time since shouting has gone out of my life" (Fanon, 2008, p. 2).

The book is characterised by a scientific attitude that can be described as distancing itself from experience. Fanon certainly does not share "conservative essentialism" which means "the claim to exclusive ownership of an experience, shared only with members of one's group" or "that is, it seeks to have its past experience recognized as an unimpeachable source of group identity in the present" (Jay, 2005, p. 407): "A nostalgia for the past has seemed to persist. Is this that lost original paradise of which Otto Rank speaks?" (Fanon, 2008, p. 91). For Fanon, experience is not a sacred origin to be embraced uncritically. Fanon questions the "metaphysics" of Black and White and, in doing so, pulls himself out of the place in which the fragments of black experience are situated: "The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black

[6] Fanon's first article, entitled "The North African Syndrome", was published in *L'Esprit* (February 1952). This article appeared in Fanon's posthumous book *Towards an African Revolution* (1964).

man in his blackness. We shall seek to ascertain the directions of this dual narcissism and the motivations that inspire it" (2008, p. 3).

Fanon underlines a research that will question the polarisation he refers to as two metaphysics. Such an enquiry cannot be conducted with an attitude of total immersion in the experience. Only an attitude that critically analyses experience can diagnose how both sides are in a state of closure. The critical attitude here is compatible with a broadly Hegelian notion of science, based on the premise that the familiar cannot be known and that true knowledge is possible through a movement of distancing from experience that breaks familiarity. Fanon's seemingly detached attitude, then, is not that of the positivist scientific subject who approaches his object in a scientific manner, but that of the humanitarian or social scientist who is able to problematise his own experience. Therefore, the author of *Black Skin, White Masks*, at the risk of provoking the reaction of his Black "brothers", asserts that: "The black is no more to be loved than the Czech, and truly what is to be done is to set man free" (Fanon, 2008, p. 2).

Fanon shockingly claims that there is no Black and White: "The Negro is not. Any more than the white man" (2008, p. 180). This means a rejection of the essentialist attitude of the Negro movement and the colonial discourse expressed in the Negro "mission" and the White "burden": "There is no Negro mission; there is no white burden" (2008, p. 178).[7] These categories are themselves the product of colonialism.[8] The essential fundamentalism of metaphysical conceptions of Blackness and Whiteness incompatible with a critical scientific practice is questioned by Fanon. For this reason, Fanon looks at the Négritude movement, which his teacher Césaire helped found, from a critical distance (Sedinger, 2002, p. 50).[9] Because an attitude that accepts these dualities as given and does not question them is irresponsible:

> Following the unconditional affirmation of European culture came the unconditional affirmation of African culture. Generally speaking the bards of negritude would contrast old Europe versus young Africa, dull reason versus poetry, and stifling logic versus exuberant Nature; on the one side there stood rigidity, ceremony, protocol, and skepticism, and on the other, naïveté, petulance, freedom, and, indeed, luxuriance. But also irresponsibility (Fanon, 2004, p. 151).

4. Towards the Concept of Alienation

In any case, we cannot help but think that there may be some merit in the claims of Fanon commentators who argue that the first version of the book (*Black Skin, White Masks*) was not accepted by his supervisor when it was submitted to the University of Lyon as a thesis for specialisation in psychiatry (Hudis, 2015, p. 24).[10] It is almost impossible to determine the

[7] This phrase ("white burden"), which appears in the title of a poem by Rudyard Kipling ("The White Man's Burden", 1899), has become a pattern that explains and justifies the "civilizing mission" of colonialism.

[8] "What is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact" (Fanon, 2008, p. 6). Diana Fuss explains Fanon's ideas in terms of identification and ascribed identities, which are integral to colonialism: "Claiming for itself the exalted position of transcendental signifier, 'white' is never a 'not-black.' As a self-identical, self-reproducing term… In contrast, 'Black' functions, within a racist discourse, always diacritically, as the negative term in a Hegelian dialectic continuously incorporated and negated. Fanon articulates the process precisely: 'The Negro is comparison' (Fuss, 1995, p. 144).

[9] Négritude is a Black or African cultural-political movement that developed in the 1930s. The word (Négritude), which transforms the pejorative "negro" into a positive meaning, was first used by Aimé Césaire in *Return to My Native Land* (1939) (Young, 2001, p. 265).

[10] Hudis cites the claim of Fanon's biographer Ailce Cherki. According to this, Fanon's work was not accepted because of the subjectivism of its author. Moreover David Macey (2012, as cited in Khalfa, 2018, p. 173), another biographer of Fanon claims that *Black Skin, White Masks* could not have been conceived as a scientific treatise (doctoral dissertation). Even if the situation

motives of the scientific thesis jury. However, we can make a guess based on the content of *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Although Fanon describes his book as a "clinical study" in his introduction (2008, p. 5), it is not difficult to guess why it might have been considered too poetic and subjective for the medical speciality. Fanon had experienced his political socialisation in the first half of the 1940s under the influence of the great Martinican poet and thinker Aimé Césaire (1913-2008), who was also his high school teacher, and had even experimented with writing poetry. Readers of *Black Skin, White Masks* will immediately recognise his magical poetic language inspired by the black surrealist poets of the 1940s. The text draws the reader in with its poetry and subjectivity. In a secular mystical atmosphere recalling surrealism, individual and collective experience mingle. However, for the reader identified with the struggle against colonialism, this exciting style, which makes the text valuable, could be considered too "literary" or "philosophical" in the context of the scientific paradigm of the early 1950s.

Furthermore, in the fourth chapter of the book, which analyses the dominant discourse attributing a "dependency complex" to the colonised, a shift in the researcher's attitude towards his object is noted. Here Fanon criticises the French psychoanalyst Octavio Mannoni's (1899-1989) *Prospero and Caliban: Psychology of Colonisation*. Mannoni explains the psychology of the colonised in terms of an inferiority complex and, according to Fanon, tries to make the complex appear as something that existed before colonisation: "Why does he try to make the inferiority complex something that antedates colonization?..(62) I sincerely believe that a subjective experience can be understood by others... But it does seem to me that M. Mannoni has not tried to feel himself into the despair of the man of color confronting the white man. In this work I have made it a point to convey the misery of the black man. Physically and affectively. I have not wished to be objective" (2008, pp. 62–64).

When we come to the conclusion of the book, we realise that there is no trace of the objectivity of the beginning. The alienated are his own brothers and sisters, and the problem of colonialism, which leads to neurosis and alienation and which must be solved urgently, is still there. How can such a hot topic be treated with a cold objectivism? Fanon warns the reader about this:

> The situation that I have examined, it is clear by now, is not a classic one. Scientific objectivity was barred to me, for the alienated, the neurotic, was my brother, my sister, my father. I have ceaselessly striven to show the Negro that in a sense he makes himself abnormal; to show the white man that he is at once the perpetrator and the victim of a delusion (2008, p. 175).

If there is a transition here, the key concept is alienation. Fanon submitted a detached text —that is, separate from *Black Skin, White Masks*— to the University of Lyon as part of his specialisation in medicine (1951). In the first important published text by the psychiatrist Fanon, the style has changed, the scientific procedures in practice have been respected, the poetic narration of subjective experiences has given way to a technical language, but the main idea that would characterise his later work has also appeared vaguely. In other words, Fanon, the future psychiatrist, here reveals one of the central concepts of the well-known thinker Fanon when he writes that neurosis is shaped by external, social, cultural factors: Alienation.

In the first draft title of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), the term alienation was central. Although the title changed on the way to publication, the original context retained its critical

is as Macey suggests, the above comparison retains its value insofar as it shows us the encounter (or tension) between Fanon the psychiatrist and Fanon the political revolutionary.

place in the book. In the introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon explains alienation with the inferiority complex and argues that it should be analysed as a two-dimensional process.

> The analysis that I am undertaking is psychological. In spite of this it is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization —or, better, the epidermalization— of this inferiority… . It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny (2008, p. 4).

Fanon arrived at the concept of alienation through his early intellectual endeavours centred around phenomenology and Marxism. Marxism, which triggered the Third World's praxis of emancipation, had been on Fanon's agenda since his early sympathies with Césaire, and Hegelian Marxism provided a theoretical framework for understanding freedom and alienation in opposition. Indeed, at the time Fanon began to write, a Hegelian intellectual revival had been going on for some time. The atmosphere of return to Hegel created by Alexandre Kojève's (1902-1968) lectures on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in Paris in the 1930s and the turning point created by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) with *Being and Nothingness* (1943) were the cornerstones of this philosophical mobilisation. The new translation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1941) by the Hegel expert Hyppolite was read with great interest by leaders of the pan-African movement such as Césaire and Senghor, and Hegelian categories such as particular-universal and freedom-alienation were adapted to the anti-colonial struggle. Fanon would both inherit this intellectual accumulation and remain in dialogue throughout his intellectual life with Sartre, whose famous book would be a breakthrough in the interpretation of Hegelian phenomenology. The common feature of all these Hegelian revivals was that they contained a phenomenological dimension, which Fanon would combine with a psychiatric analysis. Fanon would have no difficulty in using the phenomenological argument of the alienation of the subject from itself to interpret the alienation of the Black. In the chapter "The Negro and Recognition" of *Black Skin, White Masks*, the critical analysis of the concept of alienation, based on the phenomenology of Hegel (1770-1831), the great philosopher of alienation, is noteworthy.

In addition, the Saint-Albanian experience pioneered by Tosquelles was certainly influential in placing the concept of alienation at the centre of Fanon's psycho-political thought. In fact, according to Institutional Psychotherapy, there are two types of alienation, the overcoming of which constitutes the cure itself. Institutional Psychotherapy puts forward a psycho-political framework that combines psychiatry and politics at the centre of alienation: The alienation caused by mental illness and the alienation caused by living under capitalism (Cruz, 2019).

In sum, by the early 1950s, Fanon's thought was dominated by a concept of alienation that drew on a variety of intellectual sources: phenomenology, Hegelian Marxism, anti-colonialism and revolutionary psychiatry.

5. Alienation and Dialectics

In Fanon's thought, alienation functions as a complementary term of dialectical thought, at the intersection of philosophy and psychiatry, linking theory and practice. Few thinkers in the twentieth century have described alienation as skilfully as Fanon. The theory of recognition, which carries the main idea that one can only be a complete human being when one's existence is directed towards and assumed by another, goes back to Hegel, but no one has described

the socio-political experience of being despised, unrecognised and ignored as eloquently as Fanon.

Moreover, the fact that his texts are written by a subject who experiences "the fact of blackness" (Fanon, 2008, pp. 82–108) has created a Fanonian magic. Fanon's magic means that the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of Fanon is a pathos with a strong subjectivity dimension. However, when one looks at Fanon's oeuvre as a whole, one realises that the subjective dimension and pathos are also embodied in a revolutionary logos that tries to articulate collective experiences. On the other hand, Fanon always mobilised very intense emotions. The only possible problem here is that a one-dimensional approach risks breaking the dialectic Fanon carefully constructed between theory and practice.

When this risk becomes reality, Fanon is seen as the source of unthinking spontaneous activism, reduced to a theorist of violence or an uncritical Third World prophet. The first to recognise such a problem of interpretation was Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), who was not very favourable to Fanon's thought, at least in terms of its influence. In *On Violence* (1970), Arendt refers to Fanon's thought. Apparently, she was drawn to Fanon's thought because of its (negative) impact on the Black Power movement and student movements of her own time. But then she adds the following:

> I am using this work (*The Wretched of the Earth*) because of its great influence on the present student generation. Fanon himself, however, is much more doubtful about violence than his admirers. It seems that only the book's first chapter, "Concerning Violence', has been widely read. Fanon knows of the 'unmixed and total brutality [which], if not immediately combatted, invariably leads to the defeat of the movement within a few weeks" (Arendt, 1970, p. 14).[11]

On the other hand, reductive interpretations that ignore the philosophical and psychiatric background in Fanon's thought have persisted despite such intellectual interventions. However, the two constitutive and inseparable dimensions of Fanon's thought are philosophy and psychiatry.

6. Revolutionary Transition

As a revolutionary psychiatrist, Fanon, from his first text to the end of his work, sought to develop a dialectical approach to psychiatry, combining the diagnosis of the environmental, cultural and social substructure of psychiatric problems with a neurological analysis. This approach led him to the idea that reforming the hospital as a social institution was an integral part of treatment. At the beginning of this article, we mentioned how Fanon drew attention to the time-space consciousness of Algerian patients in the institutional newspaper of the Blida-Joinville Hospital. Writing a year later (14 April 1955), he asked: "Is every institution not in constant danger of vitiation?" Psychiatric rehabilitation should therefore start at the institution: "You have to place yourself at the heart of the institution and interrogate it" (Fanon, 2018, p. 334–335).

In the intellectual line of the psychiatrist Fanon there is a moment of revolutionary transition from the centre of the institution to the centre of society. Fanon moves from the reform proposal to the revolutionary transformation of the society of which the institution is a part. Institutional reform is not enough, society must also change. The revolutionary question that

[11] It is Arendt who says that Jean-Paul Sartre, in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, goes much further than Fanon himself in glorifying violence (Arendt, 1970, p. 12).

made the Lyon PhD psychiatrist a recognised thinker is embodied in this critical step: What is this society? Revolutionary thinker Fanon's best-known book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, provides a detailed answer to this question: It is a "colonial society" (Fanon, 2004, pp. 14, 64, 66, 67, 82, 170, 172) created by European colonialist expansionism and exhibiting its own specific dynamics, which cannot be fully understood from the perspective of "modern (Western) society" as an abstract and universal term.

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon writes that, unlike European-modern society, colonial society was divided into white and black, with a Manichaean distinction: "Primitive Manichaeanism of the colonizer-Black versus White… The colonial world is a Manichaean world… Sometimes this Manichaeanism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject. In plain talk, he is reduced to the state of an animal" (2004, pp. 93, 6–7). A careful examination can show step by step the formation of the Fanonian argument that underlines the radical difference of colonial society. Although his experience as a physician in Saint-Alban in central France was decisive for the theory and practice of revolutionary psychiatry, Fanon's encounter with the colonial phenomenon as a psychiatrist took place at the Blida-Joinville Hospital in Algeria, where he was appointed (1953) after passing the chief physician's examination. The Blida experience, in a hospital environment with a majority of Algerian patients, on the one hand gave him the opportunity to apply the revolutionary experimentalism of Saint-Alban and on the other hand brought him face to face with a new reality. Fanon, the chief physician of Blida-Joinville, tried to understand this new reality on basically two levels: Cultural and social.

7. Cultural Diversity

In his psychiatric writings and notes, Chief Physician Fanon often raises one issue: Language. Fanon was socialised in the Antilles world, which distinguished itself from Africa and identified itself with Europe. The first chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, devoted to the issue of language, deals with the black man's encounter with the French language. The first place where assimilation manifests itself is French. While Sartre, who supports the movement trying to raise African consciousness, expects the black poet to reject the French language, the Antillean, who tries to speak French like a Frenchman, overrides this (2008, p. 18). Antillean do not see himself as Negro. He is an Antillian, the Negro lives in Africa. The Antillian essentially behaves like a white man.

Fanon develops this Antillean reality, which forms the image of "black skin and white masks" in his first book, in the article "Antilles and Africans", which appeared in *Esprit* in 1955 and was later included in *Towards the African Revolution*. The pre-war Antillean thinks that there is a fundamental difference between himself and the African, sees the African as a negro and himself as a European, and, like the European, feels a sense of superiority towards the African (Fanon, 1967, pp. 17–27).

A Martinican raised under the domination of French culture, Fanon's first problem when he arrived in Algeria was his ignorance of Arabic and Berber. As chief physician of Blida-Joinville, Fanon was able to communicate with his Algerian patients through a translator. This indirect communication was a major problem for Fanon, a psychiatrist who from the beginning had been interested in phenomenology (through his readings of Hegel and Sartre) and participated in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) in which language is the constitutive element of the cultural world:

> Going through an interpreter is perhaps valid when it comes to explaining something simple or transmiting an order, but it no longer is when it is necessary to begin a dialogue, a dialectical exchange of questions and replies, alone able to overcome reticence and bring to light abnormal, pathological behaviour. But as Merleau-Ponty said, 'to speak a language is to bear the weight of a culture.' Unable to speak Arabic, we did not know the elements of affective or cultural patrimony apt to awaken interest (Fanon, 2018, p. 368).

Institutional therapy required an understanding of the social practices through which the psychiatric phenomenon was shaped. Fanon, however, lacked this essential element:

> We can now understand the reasons for our failure. We said that the ward meetings had turned out not to be productive. This is essentially because we did not speak Arabic and had to make use of two interpreters (for Kabylian and Arabic). This need to have an interpreter fundamentally vitiated doctor patient relations (2018, p. 367).

The difficult hospital conditions, in which patients were segregated into Europeans and natives, and in which there were structural barriers to the contact of native patients with the science of psychiatry, were compounded by the language barrier of the chief physician. Despite these difficulties, Chief Physician Fanon did not hesitate to put into action the plan that had been developing in his mind for some time. In recognition of the importance of establishing social relations in the hospital, patients were called by name —not by numbers, which reduced them to objects— Muslim and Christian religious holidays were celebrated with enthusiasm, cinema events, sports matches and excursions were organised, craft workshops were set up, and a Moorish coffee house was opened. The aim is to realise the desire in *Black Skin, White Masks* to "become human" by making contact with concrete reality. If mental illness is often characterised by a change in the concept of the "I",[12] it is important to keep the person in contact with the social relationships that construct his or her subjective world in order for him or her to become a whole person.

8. Social Specificity

As Fanon tries to realise his project, inspired by the experiment in Saint-Alban, he is confronted with cultural questions he had not encountered before. Difficulties persist in the Muslim men's ward of the hospital, which is divided into one hundred and sixty-five European women and two hundred and twenty Muslim men. The main problem arises from the unquestioning application of Western techniques or categories in the other ward. In other words, what is faced this time is the problem of grasping the "specificity of the Algerian Muslim community" (Fanon, 2018, p. 367), which lies on a more comprehensive level than the language problem: "By virtue of what impairment of judgement had we believed it possible to undertake a western-inspired social therapy in a ward of mentally ill Muslim men?" (Fanon, 2018, p. 362).

The critical transition in Fanon's thought can only be revealed from a perspective that dialectically assesses the transformation of his identities as psychiatrist and thinker. However inspiring the experience of Tosquelles and Saint-Alban may have been, Fanon as the "Marx of the Third World" as we know him today was born out of his intense quest, as chief physician of the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital, to understand the structure of a social environment he had not encountered before. This search has led to the following practical conclusion: The

[12] "It is always necessary to remember that mental illness is often manifest through an alteration in the notion of the 'I' " (Fanon, 2018, p. 318).

principle of the social context of psychic phenomena must be applied to the new situation encountered in Blida-Joinville:

> We had naively… adapted to… Muslim society the frames of a particular Western society at a determinate period of its technological evolution. We had wanted to create institutions and we had forgotten that all such approaches must be preceded with a tenacious, real and concrete interrogation into the organic bases of the indigenous society… How was a structural analysis possible if the geographical, historical, cultural and social frames were bracketed? (Fanon, 2018, p. 362).

In other words, the first result of this enquiry is the acquisition of a geographical understanding of the social. This geopolitical consciousness will take a sharp form in Fanon's last works. Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> The colonial world is a compartmentalized world. It is obviously as superfluous to recall the existence of "native" towns and European towns, of schools for "natives" and schools for Europeans, as it is to recall apartheid in South Africa. Yet if we penetrate inside this compartmentalization we shall at least bring to light some of its key aspects. By penetrating its geographical configuration and classification we shall be able to delineate the backbone on which the decolonized society is reorganized… Governed by a purely Aristotelian logic, they follow the dictates of mutual exclusion (2004, pp. 3–4).

Nevertheless, we must remember that Fanon, a psychiatrist at the time of Blida, was still in charge of a medical institution in a French colony. Even if this clinical experience did not suddenly make Fanon a "prophet of the Third World", it allowed him to practically explore the phenomenon of colonialism. Fanon, the chief physician of a psychiatric hospital in Algeria, mentions critically the dominant assimilationist attitude that colonialism expects from a psychiatrist, the arrogant disregard of assimilation for the specificity of the native. What needs to be done, beyond assimilation, is for the psychiatrist to change his or her own perspective instead of expecting the effort from the native. At this stage, Fanon mobilises the output of Institutional Psychotherapy towards a sociological and anthropological perspective. According to Fanon, it is possible to comprehend "social phenomena in North Africa" by applying the holism that Marcel Mauss envisaged for the study of sociology (Fanon, 2018, p. 363). For this purpose, the biological and psychological will be handled in a relational manner with sociological phenomena, and a number of approaches in contemporary sociology and anthropology will be included in the study: "Socio-therapy would only be possible to the extent that social morphology and forms of sociability were taken into consideration" (Fanon, 2018, p. 364).

When Chief Physician Fanon turned to the study of social forms, an analysis that would later be identified with him gradually came to light: The "French settlement in Algeria" led to a change in the property regime and the remodelling of social classes. The development of large-scale land ownership leads to the landlessness of the peasantry, creating a large mass of unemployed people, and the proletariat and the lumpen proletariat are born from the masses migrating from the countryside to the cities. The collapse of nomadism and the gradual revival of semi-nomadism in North African society occurred in this process. The traditional structures of authority and group cohesion that existed with nomadism disappear. The nomads are replaced by the proletariat and the lumpen proletariat, while urban suburban areas emerge to form the patients of psychiatric hospitals. In his sociological notes, Fanon, a psychiatrist trying to understand the society he lived in, also mentions the contrast between Maghreb cities and

villages. In the cities of the Maghreb, where the European population is dominant, the Western lifestyle prevails, while the villages share a traditional and organic lifestyle. Oppositions such as village—urban and traditionalism—Westernism, which are socio-political phenomena that will be deepened in *The Wretched of the Earth*, are dominant themes in these early sociological notes. In the colonies, spatial segregation is combined with a division in time. There is a large mass of people who do not have the Western universal and abstract experience of time. The lumpen proletariat, concentrated in the suburbs of the cities, with its "peculiar logic" poses "a serious threat to the security of the city" and challenges the antagonisms created by the colonial order (Fanon, 2004, p. 81). All of these developments exhibit a dynamic that the coloniser and the "indigenous" nationalist parties failed to grasp. Fanon also differs from Marx with regard to the position of the lumpen proletariat, that is, its revolutionisation in colonial social conditions.[13] The class situation in France is different from the class composition in colonial Algeria. In the first chapter of *The Class Struggles in France*, Marx mentions that in France the provisional government mobilised the lumpen proletariat in order to create a class distinct from the industrial proletariat and to "set the proletariat against each other." However, according to Fanon, the situation of the classes in the colony is different:

> The lumpenproletariat constitutes a serious threat to the 'security' of the town and signifies the irreversible rot and the gangrene eating into the heart of colonial domination. So the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed, and the petty criminals, when approached, give the liberation struggle all they have got, devoting themselves to the cause like valiant workers. These vagrants, these second-class citizens, find their way back to the nation thanks to their decisive, militant action. Unchanged in the eyes of colonial society or vis-a-vis the moral standards of the colonizer, they believe the power of the gun or the hand grenade is the only way to enter the cities. These jobless, these species of subhum ans, redeem themselves in their own eyes and before history (Fanon, 2004, pp. 81–82).

As we have seen, in trying to grasp the specificity of Algerian society, Fanon extends the problematic from language difference to social structures. Analytically, we can speak of a shift from cultural difference to the level of social forms. The culturalist approach that fixes culture as a super-category is unacceptable for Fanon's thought. In the concluding chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, he writes as follows:

> It is not because the Indo-Chinese has discovered a culture of his own that he is in revolt. It is because 'quite simply' it was, in more than one way, becoming impossible for him to breathe (2008, p. 176).

The specificity of Algerian society can also be traced in a socio-psychological context, in the different attitudes towards madness. From a sociologist-anthropologist approach, the chief physician of the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital analyses the different reactions to mental illness. In Algeria, mental illness has a traditional and sacred aura. Since the Westerner perceives mental illness as a subjective catastrophe, he holds the patient responsible for his own words and actions. As a result, the patient is locked up and controlled. The Maghrebi, on the other hand, has a completely different understanding of madness. Since mental illness is not attributed to the will, subjective responsibility is relatively lightened. The patient is not excluded

[13] Marx defines the lumpen proletariat as follows: "Lumpenproletariat, the rabble on the heights of bourgeois society… in all large cities, forms a mass sharply distinct from the industrial proletariat, a recruiting place for thieves and criminals of all sorts, living upon the offal of society, people without a definite mode of making a living, loafers, *gens sans feu et sans aven* [people without a hearth and without a home], different according to the degree of culture of the nation to which they belong, but never denying the lazzaroni character" (Marx, 2018, p. 51).

from the group. Unlike the Western understanding, which presupposes that the patient encounters a subjective destruction, it is assumed that the disease does not damage the self since it is thought to come from outside. Thus, the Moorish patient preserves his social relations; instead of being labelled as an outsider: "Respect is given to a mentally ill person because he remains a human being in spite of it all" (Fanon, 2018, p. 424).

9. A Revolutionary in Algeria

Fanon's political revolutionism in Algeria did not happen all at once, but was the result of the psychiatrist Fanon's intellectual development at a particular moment. The psychiatrist Fanon's turn towards an analysis of colonialism is reflected in his analysis of guilt attitudes in Algeria. "Conducts of Confession in North Africa" (1955) takes us to the heart of colonial society. Confession is a phenomenon identified with "Western culture", from religion to philosophy and literature, and has often been discussed in order to express the rootedness of the tradition of subjectivity in the West. For example, in *The Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor evaluates Augustine's thought as a transition between Plato's "self-mastery" and Descartes' "disengaged reason" and as one of the origins of the paradigm of "inwardness" that would evolve into modern conceptions of self and identity (2001, p. 127). It is thought that confession confirms the existence of the inner sphere with the duality of inside and outside (realm) it establishes, and that a rich introversion is the source of self and subjectivity.

The Confession moves from religion to philosophy and literature, but its focus is on the subjectivity on which the various external forms in these fields (such as individualised religiosity, the inner space for independent reason in philosophy and the foundation of the novel) are based. Subjectivity is here the Archimedes point on which moral responsibility can be grounded. But what does confession (or its opposite) mean in the colonial context? Generally speaking, the conclusion from the case study is that the Algerian denies his or her guilt. The expert (psychiatrist, jurist, policeman, etc.) appointed (externally) by the colonial administration in Algeria is surprised to find himself confronted by the accused, who usually denies his guilt completely: "Responsibility for the act is not taken but totally lacking, as is thus any subjective assent to the sanction, any embracing of the sentence or even any guilt. The expert cannot discover the truth of the criminal" (Fanon, 2018, p. 411).

When the signification regime is in crisis, stereotypes are ready to be turned into "a cultural bludgeon."[14] The accused is a liar. "Lying North African" is derived from the preceding established regime of signifiers (of the type "lazy or sneaky North African"). Fanon's analyses of how the myth of the Negro is created, especially in *Black Skin, White Masks*, foreshadow Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Just as Orientalism constructs the Oriental with an image of the Oriental, the coloniser creates the Negro and attributes to him a self-image with which he will be in constant conflict:

> In Europe the Negro has one function: that of symbolizing the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul. In the collective unconscious of *homo occidentalis*, the Negro —or, if one prefers, the color black— symbolizes evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, famine… Hence a Negro is forever in combat with his own image (2008, p. 147, 150).

[14] Fanon quotes this statement from Bernard Wolfe's article published in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1949 (Fanon, 2008, p. 136).

Fanon stresses "the lived experience" against the sterotypes, images, myths and signifiers in which the North African is trapped. Returning to the issue of confession, for Chief Physician Fanon, what really matters is "the lived experience of the act, its justifications, the conflict that this act attempts to go beyond" (2018, p. 409–410). The truth of the action can be understood by analysing the conflict or contradiction that the confessional attitude (or its opposite) seeks to overcome. This means grasping the agent and the action by placing it on a larger and more structural ground than itself.

In his highly original series of essays entitled "Conducts of Confession in North Africa", which outlines his critical thought, Fanon also makes critical reference to the attitude of a character in a Jean-Paul Sartre theatre play. Fanon, who follows popular culture closely, may have seen Sartre's play *Les mains sales* (Dirty Hands), first performed at the Theatre Antoine in Paris in April 1948, or the film adapted from it in 1951. This political drama stages the major themes of Sartre's existentialism. The play centres around Hugo, a young communist who uses the nickname Raskolnikov (a reference to the protagonist of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*). Just like in *Crime and Punishment*, there is a murder. The existentialist Sartre develops the play not in terms of the identity of the perpetrator of the political murder, but in terms of the motivations for the act and the motivations that led to the act. The philosophical content of the play centres on the existentialist justification of Hugo's undertaking of the act:

> Sartre's Hugo said that his act is all that is left to him. To deny that act, to reject it, not to 'claim responsibility' for it, is lived by him as a fundamental alienation of his being. On the contrary, to accept responsibility for that act is to deny the incoherence, it is to escape the world of the absurd and discontinuity; it is lastly to give his life a meaning (Fanon, 2018, p. 413).

Here, let us return to *Black Skin, White Masks*, published three years before "Conducts of Confession in North Africa" (1955), in order both to develop the subject of action and confession and to draw attention to Fanon's multidimensional and long-term critical dialogue with Sartre. In the chapter entitled "The Fact of Blackness", Fanon acknowledges the philosophical value of Sartre's analyses of the existence of the other, but offers a critical commentary. At first glance, one might think that Sartre's phenomenological ontology in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), based on the irreconcilability of self and other, is useful for explaining the asymmetry of the colonial environment. However, Fanon does not consider phenomenological ontology enough to explain colonial society. According to Fanon, the White in the colony is also a Master, not just an Other or an Other without history. Sartre's analysis cannot therefore be applied to the consciousness of the colonial or the Negro. Fanon here —just as he did in the context of Hegel, Marx and psychoanalysis— critically interprets Sartre's phenomenology through the practice of reading it in the context of colonial society as a different structure and form (Mollaer, 2018). This commentary develops the issue of the specificity of the colonial:

> Jean-Paul Sartre had forgotten that the Negro suffers in his body quite differently from the white man… Though Sartre's speculations on the existence of The Other may be correct (to the extent, we must remember, to which Being and Nothingness describes an alienated consciousness), their application to a black consciousness proves fallacious. That is because the white man is not only The Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary (Fanon, 2008, p. 106).

In "Conducts of Confession in North Africa", existentialism is again tested in terms of this specificity. Sartre's attitude of embracing action and responding to the absurd is not enough

to explain the attitude of colonial people towards confession. Worse, colonial psychiatry has a negative legacy in this regard: Ignoring cultural difference, or the specificities of colonial society arising from the colonial structure, leads to the problem being reduced to biological difference and the issue being judged as a 'racial' inability to assume responsibility. The existentialist approach condemns the "such a neurotic contracture of consciousness" (Fanon, 2018, p. 413) caused by neuroses deeply related to colonialism, or it circles around a system it cannot comprehend. In any case, the reality of the criminal cannot be discovered: "We gravitate around a system that, ontologically, escapes us" (Fanon, 2018, p. 416).

The subject of confession sheds light on the structural context that shapes actions and the particular sociality of experience(s) in colonial society. Confession has two poles, one moral and the other civic. The first of these is related to sincerity. But Fanon, who pursues structural conditions, does not find this sufficient. He focuses on the other pole related to citizenship. In modern political theory, confession is closely related to the confirmation of the social contract since Thomas Hobbes. The social contract is based on the uniformity of society and a minimum consensus on the values to be approved. Likewise, Henri Bergson, who comes from a different school, associates Raskolnikov's confession with re-inclusion in the social group in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. However, in colonial society, is there harmony and a consensus of values, or a society to be normatively reincorporated into? For this, the offender must (had to) feel bound by the social contract before confessing. The possible confession of the Algerian means accepting the "contract" in the colonial society. Therefore, in his act of denial, the Algerian either acts out of a lack of commitment to the contract or implicitly resists a contract that was realised under domination. Therefore, the main way to understand the truth of the Algerian's action is to analyse it in the context of colonial society, not in the abstract modern conception of society and social contract. Otherwise, the "planet-wide" politicisation of the colonial people cannot be understood with the existing paradigms, from colonial psychiatry to existentialism and social contract theories. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon puts the Aristotelian "political animal" argument on the foundation of psychiatry. The conflicting mechanism of colonialism transforms the colonised man into a political creature even in his most everyday actions:

> People are sometimes surprised that, instead of buying a dress for their wife, the colonized buy a transistor radio. They shouldn't be… The colonized, underdeveloped man is today a political creature in the most global sense of the term (2004, p. 40).

It should be noted that Fanon made these analyses during his contact with the Algerian National Liberation Front (September 1955). In this process, the dialectical relationship established between psychiatry and revolution manifests itself in the form of a more critical analysis of society. In "Ethnopsychiatric Considerations" (Summer 1955), written at roughly the same time as his article on confession ("Conducts of Confession in North Africa" (September 1955), whereas previously the problem had been presented as the lack of understanding or the assimilationist attitude of the North African specialist, this time it is diagnosed in a strictly political manner as "racism":

> This racism, which people living in the Maghreb know well because they are the victims or silent witnesses of it, or else participants in it, insinuates itself even into reputedly 'scientific' minds. The simple juxtaposition of medical texts or publications on the psychiatry of North Africans constitutes an arresting condensation of racism with scientific pretentions (2018, p. 405).

Black Skin, White Masks (1952), published before the beginning of the active revolutionary struggle in Algeria, paved the way for this analysis. In the book it is shown that the theories of Freud, Adler and Jung are far from understanding the "psychopathology" of the Negro. It explains how "the myth of the Negro", created by centuries-old colonial discourses, leads to a "authentic alienation" of the black person: "The myth of the Negro, the idea of the Negro, can become the decisive factor of an authentic alienation" (Fanon, 2008, p. 158). What is important here is that the analysis is based on psychiatric observations and case studies. Fanon particularly draws on these observations and case studies in his attempt to illuminate the myth of the Negro that reduces black existence. From his first book to his last, Fanon the thinker collaborated with Fanon the psychiatrist. The key term in the epigraph of his first book, taken from Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, is "inferiority complex": "I am talking of millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement." Fanon's is also a discourse on colonialism, but based on the analyses of a psychiatrist trying to overcome the alienation of the colonised.

After addressing the problems of racism in psychiatric literature and confessional attitudes in North Africa, Fanon wrote articles on Moorish Muslim attitudes towards madness and on the sociology of Muslim women's perception and imagination. In the meantime, he has been involved in the Algerian War that started in 1954 and has been in contact with the Algerian Liberation Movement for nearly two years. As the massive massacres perpetrated by colonial France in Algeria escalated (Fanon, 2018, pp. 563–568), it became increasingly clear that Fanon, Chief of Service at the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital, was in a structural impasse in his mission to end alienation. In December 1956, at a time when French forces were massacring all civilians living in the Glacières neighbourhood of Blida, the Chief Physician resigned from his post in a letter to the French colonial authorities. In the letter, the idea that alienation could not be overcome under colonial conditions is evident:

> Madness is one of the ways that humans have of losing their freedom. And I can say that, placed at this junction, I have measured with terror the extent of the alienation of this country's inhabitants. If psychiatry is the medical technique that sets out to enable individuals no longer to be foreign to their environment, I owe it to myself to state that the Arab, permanently alienated in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization. What is the status of Algeria? A systematic dehumanization. Now, the absurd wager was to want at whatever price to ensure the existence of some values whereas lawlessness, inequality, and multiple daily murder of humanness were erected as legislative principles (2018, p. 434).

Both the results of Fanon's psychiatric studies conducted in Algeria for three years and the brutalisation of the colonial violence that has escalated have revealed that the situation is unsustainable. The current events that have bloodied Algeria clearly show that "this is neither an accident nor a breakdown in the mechanism", but is structural in nature (Fanon, 2018, p. 434). Only six months after Fanon's resignation, this time in Tilimsan, Algeria, the whole city was bombed by the French colonialists (Fanon, 2018, p. 565).

In fact, if the structural reasons that led to Fanon's resignation are analysed in terms of their theoretical roots, the comparison between Hegel's theory and colonial society in the chapter "The Negro and Recognition" in *Black Skin, White Masks* provides a clue. The dialectical reciprocity at the centre of Hegel's phenomenology is absent in colonial conditions. While dialectical phenomenology suggests that the consciousness of the Self exists as something that is recognised, that one can only become a complete human being when one is recognised

by another, reciprocity is constantly abolished by the historical-social conditions of the colony. What happens is not recognition but slave labour:

> At the foundation of Hegelian dialectic there is an absolute reciprocity which must be emphasized… here (in the colony) the master laughs at the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work. In the same way, the slave here is in no way identifiable with the slave who loses himself in the object and fi nds in his work the source of his liberation. The Negro wants to be like the master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns toward the object. Here the slave turns toward the master and abandons the object (Fanon, 2008, p. 169, 172).

This analysis appears in "Conducts of Confession in North Africa" in a different theoretical context but to explain a similar problem. The North African lack of confession presupposes a society of recognition in which mutual recognition works like clockwork:

> It is because the wrongdoing is lived as an irreversible vitiation of existence, of one's own existence, that Bergson saw in Raskolnikow's confession the price for his reintegration into the group. But how can we not remark that these different attitudes postulate a reciprocal and prior recognition of the group by the individual and of the individual by the group? Such attitudes presuppose concrete and everyday relations with a dialectical foundation (Fanon, 2018, p. 414).

This lack of reciprocity inherent in the structure of colonialism would remain central to Fanon's later work. For example, in his lectures on social psychopathology at the Institute of Higher Education in Tunis in 1959-1960, the "problem of racism" intersects with the "problem of the encounter": "In a society that is as divided as American society, to what extent can a Black encounter a White? When a Black American is face to face with a White, stereotypes immediately intervene" (Fanon, 2018, p. 525).

10. Psychiatry of the Wretched

Deported shortly after sending his letter of resignation to the colonial governor in Algeria, Fanon moved to Tunisia, which became one of the centres where members of the exiled Algerian Liberation Movement gathered. Arriving in Tunis in January 1957, he worked as a psychiatrist under a pseudonym at the Manouba Hospital, and then founded the Day Psychiatric Centre at the Charles-Nicolle Hospital. On the other hand, especially from this period onwards, we see the active political revolutionary much more clearly. The political revolutionary Fanon's membership of the editorial board of the liberation movement's newspaper *El Mujahid*, his authorship, the various political-diplomatic posts assigned to him by the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, and his political writings have led some commentators to underestimate his psychiatric dimension. However, Fanon continued his psychiatric work, which he had begun in his doctoral thesis and *Black Skin, White Masks*, until the end. Fanon, a psychiatrist working in various hospitals in Tunisia, wrote an article in which he argued that the phenomenon of agitation, which in traditional psychiatry was analysed for mechanical reasons, should be understood dialectically, as an experience and placed in a social context (1957), continued to innovate in psychiatric practice by working on day care in psychiatry (1959), and lectured on social psychopathology at higher education institutions in Tunisia (1959-1960).

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), all this scientific accumulation is reworked, by an author who at the time was suffering from an almost incurable disease and felt that what was on his desk was his last work. Although the first chapter, "On Violence", is the most popularised part of the book, probably due to Sartre's preface, the case study continues in the long fifth chapter: "Colonial War and Mental Disorders." At the beginning of the chapter, the psychiatrist Fanon both confirms that the work in question continues without interruption and tries to make his voice heard for the last time in a remarkable way to the reader who has been stuck in the previous chapters:

> We shall deal here with the problem o f mental disorders bom out of the national war of liberation waged by the Algerian people. Perhaps the reader will find these notes on psychiatry out of place or untimely in a book like this. There is absolutely nothing we can do about that (2004, p. 181).

Here the psychiatrist Fanon presents the reasons for continuing the work of scientific psychiatry: "The truth is that colonization, in its very essence, already appeared to be a great purveyor of psychiatric hospitals" (2004, p. 181). The article "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" focuses precisely on this problem, which is the relationship between colonialism and psychiatry: From severe reactionary disorders (such as "impotence in an Algerian following the rape ofhis wife" and "random homicidal impulses in a survivor of a massacre") to other cases caused by the Algerian War (such as suicidal tendencies and paranoid delusions in a 22-year-old young Algerian under the guise of "terrorist activity"), it analyses dozens of cases of psychiatric symptoms and psychosomatic disorders arose during or immediately after the systematic use of torture by the colonial administration.

The chapter concludes by returning to an old topic under the heading "From the North African's Criminal Impulsiveness to the War of National Liberation": The problem of crime, closely related to confession, is reviewed. The colonial discourse claimed that the Algerian was born a criminal, just as the "Negro myth" dehumanised the black. The discourse of the Algerian people as lazy, born liars (as we have seen in the problematic of confession), born thieves and born criminals could not be dismissed as the delusional ideas of a few racists that could be taken as exceptions,[15] because, according to Fanon, they were taught as "scientific" knowledge in more than twenty universities. In this discourse, which consolidated its authority through scientific disciplines, "racialist arguments spring forth with special readiness." The essentialist and racist message is quite clear: "You can't get away from nature" (Fanon, 1965, p. 40).[16]

In the same chapter, Fanon places criminality, labelled as the essence of the Algerian people, in a socio-political context, based on the argument of the social context of psychiatric phenomena. From the beginning of the Algerian liberation struggle, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of ordinary crimes attributed to the Algerian as inherent: "The criminality of the Algerian, his impulsiveness, the savagery of his murders are not, therefore, the consequence of how his nervous system is organized or specific character traits, but the direct result of the colonial situation" (2004, p. 233). Fanon's critique of the "Negro myth" in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) makes its final appearance in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

[15] Fanon underlines the systematic nature of racism in his 1956 essay "Racism and Culture": "The habit·of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw, must be abandoned" (1967, p. 38). In his analysis, Fanon reveals that racist myths are not exceptions, and he analyses the unconscious investment in the subject, considering that the issue cannot be dealt with only at the level of consciousness (Fanon, 2008, p. 109–163).

[16] Fanon's cited article ("Algeria Unveiled") is important in that it evaluates the praxis of cultural transformation created by the Algerian national struggle as a critique of cultural essentialism.

with an analysis that places the Algerian psychology essentialised by the coloniser in the context of praxis.

Had Frantz Fanon, who died at a very young age, continued his analyses as a psychiatrist, one wonders what kind of a characteristics his work would have acquired. Undoubtedly, Fanon's background in scientific investigation saved him from falling into pure speculation and gave his thought a dialectical character by embodying his critique of colonialism. In the last sentence of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon states: "My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who questions!" This questioning human being has always had two important dimensions. Fanon's identities as a psychiatrist and political revolutionary continue to guide critical theory. Are we not in urgent need of this in our world where discrimination and racism are deepened by class inequalities?

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