Black soul white artifact

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Fanon's clinical psychology and social theory

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To the memory of my father

Contents

List of abbreviations

Titles are by Frantz Fanon unless otherwise attributed.

'Agitation'	'The Phenomenon of Agitation in the Psychiatric Environment' ('Le Phénomène de l'agitation en milieu psychiatrique')
Christianity	*Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race,* E. W. Blyden
Colonialism	*A Dying Colonialism*
'Confession'	'Confessional Behaviour in the North African' ('Conduites d'aveux en Afrique du Nord')
'Day Care'	'Day Care – Its Value and Limits' ('L'Hospitalisation de jour en psychiatrie, valeurs et limites')
'Ethnopsychiatry'	'Ethnopsychiatric Considerations' ('Réflexions sur l'ethnopsychiatrie')
'The Maghrebian Muslim'	'The Attitude of the Maghrebian Muslim Towards Madness' ('L'Attitude du musulman maghrébin devant la folie')
Masks	*Black Skin White Masks*
'Mental Health'	'Aspects of Mental Health in Algeria' ('Aspects actuels de l'assistance mentale en Algérie')
Prospero	*Prospero and Caliban,* O. Mannoni
'Racism'	'Racism and Culture'
Revolution	*Toward the African Revolution*
'Sociotherapy'	'Sociotherapy in a Ward for Muslim Men' ('La Socialthérapie dans un service d'hommes musulmans')

Spokesman	*Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of E. W. Blyden,* edited by E. D. Lynch
'Syndrome'	'The North African Syndrome'
'West Indians'	'West Indians and Africans'
The Wretched	*The Wretched of the Earth*

Introduction

In February 1945 a young black soldier from the Antilles, fighting for the Free French forces in Europe, was awarded the Croix de Guerre for heroism in combat. The soldier's name was Frantz Fanon and the award was presented by Colonel Raoul Salan. Ten years later these two men were fighting on opposite sides in the Algerian revolution. Salan became a commander of the French forces in North Africa and later led the notorious Fascist Organisation Armée Secrète. Fanon was fated to become one of the legendary figures of Africa's decade of revolution. The irony of his meeting with Salan remained with Fanon throughout his life. It was a reminder of the forces of accident and fate which did so much to shape Fanon's own destiny.

Frantz Fanon was born on 20 July 1925 on the small island of Martinique. He received his education at the *lycée* where Aimé Césaire was one of his teachers. After returning home from war service Fanon completed his secondary schooling before embarking for Paris and a higher education. Fanon arrived in Paris in 1947 with the intention of studying dentistry but soon turned to medicine and then to specialisation in psychiatry. After graduating under one of the most radical psychiatric teaching programmes then available, Fanon took a position at the hospital at Blida, outside of Algiers. During his years in Algeria Fanon worked in the daytime treating war casualties. These casualties included French soldiers suffering mental disorders in consequence of their daily work torturing FLN suspects. At night Fanon treated the victims.

Fanon survived at least two assassination attempts on his life only to fall victim to leukaemia which was finally diagnosed late in 1960. After learning of his illness Fanon wrote his most famous work *The Wretched of the Earth.* This book was composed in the space of ten weeks while Fanon was ill and burdened with the knowledge of the

certainty of his approaching death. Fanon died in a hospital in Washington DC on 6 December 1961. He was thirty-six years old.

During a period of less than eight years Fanon wrote three books which have become standard texts on the subject of colonialism and racial oppression. Since his death his personality has also become a symbol for revolutionary romanticism.

Fanon's life can be seen as tragic in the sense that both the revolution for which he fought and his own unique contribution to revolutionary theory were left incomplete. Since his death, only specific and often peripheral aspects of his work have attracted attention, and usually for the worst possible reasons. Fanon has rarely, if ever, been taken seriously as a political theorist. The epoch to which Fanon belonged and the generation of which he was a member are now passed. Therefore the time has come to judge the significance of Fanon's work. Since his death Black Nationalism in North America has done much to break down the myths which for generations had mortgaged the future of black Americans. The last two decades have also seen a tightening of the grip of First World economies over the former colonial nations. There are now fewer societies in which racism is an integral part of the mechanics of political control. But this does not exclude the need for a scientific exploration of the relationship between racism and class rule from the perspective of the oppressed. This is one of the reasons why Fanon is still important.

Frantz Fanon is the only major writer who has attempted to approach the problems of national liberation and social revolution from the vantage point of psychopathology. This alone serves to distinguish him from other contemporary political theorists; it also creates substantial difficulties in the interpretation of his work.

Fanon's writings are most original and most worthwhile where he operates outside the boundaries of orthodox political theory. Unfortunately his inventiveness has helped to confine criticism to those features of his life and work which assail the sensibilities of both Marxists and liberals. This fact has tended to obscure Fanon's major intellectual achievements. Above all else it has hampered recognition of the fact that his work embodies the predicament of African socialism.

The complexity of Fanon's writing is indicated by the number of genealogies with which his theory may be linked. As a psychophilosophical analysis of the relation between individual ills and the social, political and cultural orders, Fanon's work may be likened to that of Géza Róheim, Erich Fromm, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud. Conversely, Fanon's West Indian origins place him in the company of E. W. Blyden, Marcus Garvey, Aimé Césaire and

George Padmore. In terms of this genealogy, Fanon's work is an attempt to resolve the problems of personal identity created by the strained relationship between African, European and New World cultures. Alternatively, Fanon may be likened to Marx, Lenin, Debray, Guevara and Mao, as a theorist advocating revolutionary change to oppressive and redundant social systems. It is also feasible to compare Fanon's psychology of colonialism with that school of ethnopsychiatry represented by Porot, Carothers and Mannoni. In this context *Masks* and *The Wretched* are critical works designed to attack the idea of the underdevelopment of the African's personality. Fanon's writings also place him in the company of those such as Nyerere, Nkrumah, Cabral and Touré who fought for an independent Africa. Finally, Fanon can be seen as a member of a broad contemporary European philosophical tradition; like Nietzsche, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Jaspers his work is a quest for personal authenticity and meaning in a post-Christian world of moral uncertainties.

These intellectual and political figures are variously people with whom Fanon shared a common project (Fromm, Blyden), individuals from whom Fanon drew inspiration (Nietzsche, Sartre, Césaire), or opponents whose presence is felt in Fanon's work in the form of a continuing dialogue, however disguised (Lenin, Mannoni). This diversity has encouraged the dangerous practice of approaching Fanon in terms of a search for sources or influences. Since these influences are so great in number it is not surprising that this practice has often succeeded in losing Fanon in the process. To avoid this problem the initial task for any analysis is to expatiate Fanon's dominant intellectual preoccupations and to explore the manner of their resolution in the course of his intellectual development. It is to just this task that the present work is addressed.

All of Fanon's works form part of a single theoretical construct. This construct is both unified and essentially coherent even though the manner of Fanon's presentation of his theory is often fragmented and obscure. There is no epistemological or methodological break between Fanon's earlier and later works. The proof for this interpretation is found in Fanon's clinical psychiatric writings which he published in medical journals during his years in Algeria and Tunisia. These psychiatric writings show *how* Fanon traversed the gulf separating an individualistic psychopathology and the theory of revolutionary nationalism found in *The Wretched.* As such the clinical writings represent the only avenue through which Fanon's psychology of colonialism can be adequately judged.

The three principal paradigms around which Fanon's theory is

woven are *negritude, ethnopsychiatry,* and what may loosely be termed *African socialism.* It is only through an exploration of Fanon's response to these paradigms that the broad dimensions of his theory may be traced and identified. For example, Fanon's psychology of colonialism is largely unintelligible unless read as a counter-psychology to that presented in Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban.* It is of no more than passing interest that these three paradigms also reflect aspects of Fanon's personality: negritude his quest for personal identity, African socialism his desire to 'return to Africa' and ethnopsychiatry his professional training and occupation. Many of the elements of Fanon's theory of colonialism can be seen reflected in his own life's experience. In his life as in his writings we find the themes of dispossession, enforced subordination before fools, and rage against injustice. Whether these experiences made of Fanon himself a colonial neurotic is not an interesting question. Nor should this question be of concern to any person other than those who knew and loved the man. It is not for any such biographical reason but rather because Fanon was both unique and representative of a generation that it is important to examine his intellectual legacy.

The areas of Fanon's work which have attracted the most severe criticism are his class analysis of Africa, his advocacy of violence, and his generalised and abstract theory of revolution. Until now these problem areas have been explored almost exclusively in relation to his biography. It cannot be denied that there are major flaws in Fanon's theory. What is in dispute is the nature of the evidence amassed in criticism of him. Before all else it is necessary to prepare the ground for a critique of Fanon by establishing conclusively the origins of the major weaknesses in his theory. Such an examination proves that the principal flaws are due to the undigested influence of negritude especially upon his theory of class struggle, and to the discord between Fanon's political project and his socio-psychiatric methodology. Once this has been done then we can begin to understand Fanon's work for what it is.

Fanon's greatest achievement is as the chronicler of colonialism. In describing the condition of being colonised he provided a psychopathology of colonial domination that is both unique and compelling. Yet *The Wretched* is not, as is so often supposed, a handbook for revolutionary action. It is a panegyric to the inevitable failure of the African revolution.

Chapter 1

The three paradigms: negritude, ethnopsychiatry and African socialism

1. Negritude

Negritude had its origins among the children of the diaspora. Its uniqueness lay in the response of writers and poets to the subordinate and symbiotic relationship experienced by New World blacks in all their contacts with whites. The evolution of the literature and philosophy of negritude can be traced from the Afro-Cuban renaissance movements of the early nineteenth century, through the writings of E. W. Blyden and Marcus Garvey, to its consecration in the poetry and philosophy of Léon-Gontran Damas, and Aimé Césaire. Negritude was essentially a celebration of black African cultural values by blacks who had little or no first-hand knowledge of Africa.

Like its predecessors, negritude was both a protest against domination and an attempt to seek relief from the discomfort of colonial racism. It was almost inevitable that the initial impetus for cultural renaissance movements should come from the West Indies since it was in the New World that the problem of personal identity was felt most acutely. In the West Indies the nexus of colonial racial stereotyping and the impact of deculturation reached their zenith. And for the West Indian the possibility of retreat into traditional beliefs and institutions was absent. In fact the recurring themes of negritude – exile, alienation, racial consciousness and the mystique of the African cultural heritage – are expressive of the situation of New World blacks.

The nature of the ideology that negritude was to put forward is best seen in the writings of E. W. Blyden[1] who in many ways is the direct forefather of the movement. Born in the Danish West Indies, Blyden immigrated to West Africa as a young man. His copious writings on the subject of the African Personality foreshadow the preoccupations of the proponents of negritude, if only because the dilemma

they confronted was the same. His work also reveals the weaknesses common to a philosophy of a black soul when offered as a solution to the problem of racial oppression.

i The situation of the Negro

Blyden believed that because of his subordinate position *vis-à-vis* the European, the New World Negro was denied all possibility for proper self-development. The social pressures to which he was subjected destroyed the natural ideals and aspirations of the Negro. All opportunity for intellectual and moral development was blocked. Blyden noted that these 'social pressures' were substantiated through the anti-Negro sentiments found in popular western literature and art. Although initially the Negro child would revolt against the deprecation of his race in standard school text books, Blyden laments that finally the black child would resign himself to his 'inferiority' (*Christianity*, p. 76). The depiction of Jesus as a Caucasian is but one example Blyden cited of the subtle inferiorisation of the Negro race which sets in motion the cycle of self-hatred so common in the New World.

According to Blyden the strain of inferiorisation is exacerbated for the New World Negro by his exile from Africa. On the subject of exile Blyden writes: 'They never feel at home. In the depths of their being they always feel themselves strangers in the land of their exile and the only escape from this feeling is the escape from themselves' (*Christianity*, p. 77). In exile the Negro is pathetic, servile and emotionally underdeveloped. Assailed by the weight of a dominant European culture the Negro soon decides that the only hope for salvation lies in imitation of the white race (*Christianity*, p. 76). Consequently self-hatred and a compulsion for imitation come to define his emotional horizons.

(a) The contribution of the Negro to the world

Blyden's most original argument was that all races possess specific moral and psychological characteristics. These characteristics he held to be god-given and represented the essence of a race. While each people must seek to advance according to the parameters set by its own peculiar traits, the final advancement of humanity is dependent upon the unique contributions of all races to a universal culture. Every race requires the specific social and cultural conditions that would allow for its natural development (*Christianity*, p. 75). Blyden believed that the Negro race had a major contribution to

make: 'The Negro is on a different plane, religiously, from the white man. He has a more spiritual nature and may yet be the teacher of his master in spiritual matters' (*Spokesman*, p. 205). To the technical knowledge and material abundance of the west the Negro race can add the spiritual values essential for the coming world civilisation (*Christianity*, p. 110). Blyden writes of the Negro that: 'He will bring as his contribution the softer aspects of human nature. The harsh and stern fibre of the Caucasian races need the milder element. The African is the feminine; and we must not suppose that this is of least importance in the ultimate development of humanity' (*Christianity*, p. 111). The same line of argument was later to be developed by the followers of negritude, especially by Senghor, in his theory of a coming universal civilisation.

It follows from this concept of racial personality that the Negro must not attempt to imitate the European experience, since Anglo-Saxon approaches to living are applicable only to that race. The Negro is not a European in embryo (*Christianity*, p. 276) and all attempts to make of him a European lead only to stunted and one-sided development. Because the Negro must 'return to the source' of his natural self, the victims of the diaspora must return to Africa. But the recolonisation of Africa by the Negroes of the New World would exclude those of mixed blood, for Blyden, like Garvey, had a loathing of Mulattos whom he derided as 'those racial cripples'.

Through his concept of complementary racial characteristics Blyden sought to rehabilitate the African by contrasting a materialistic and violent Europe with a spiritually aware Africa. The real threat to the development of the African personality lay with the barbarism of Europe and not with any shortcomings of the Negro race (*Spokesman*, p. 203).

Blyden's writings were a direct response to the situation of the Negro. This situation, felt most acutely by West Indian blacks and middle-class Africans, involved the challenge presented by a number of major problems. These included Europe's economic, political and technological superiority; the effects of the diaspora which had, for the West Indian, severed all substantive links with Africa; the corrosive influence of colonial racism; and finally the contradictory needs of the Negro to accept the benefits of the European civilisation yet retain a sense of personal identity and self-worth. These problems were felt first by the West Indians and later by the western-educated Africans of the West African coast. July summarises their dilemma where he writes: 'The more the African struggled to improve his lot, the more he was engulfed; the more he turned from the old Africa the more he was obliged to protect his African

identity.'[2] This prevailing attitude toward the west, both in Blyden and the poets of negritude who followed him, is one of profound ambivalence. It is an ambivalence which exists as a paradox in Blyden's writings – Blyden hoped to see the establishment of a cultural climate conducive to the expression of the Negro genius which would at the same time allow for the infusion into black culture of the best of western civilisation. In neither Blyden's own theory nor his social experience were these two ever reconcilable. In the writings of Senghor and Césaire these contradictory needs are also expressed as ambivalence and although they take a less ethereal stance than Blyden on questions of race and culture the *raison d'être* of their work is the same.

ii Negritude as social theory

In all the writings of negritude the theme of alienation from the primal source is expressed in the form of a nostalgia for a lost world. Alienation is presented as a personal, cultural, but essentially racial problem emanating from the experience of a race rather than from a class or nationality. By treating alienation as a purely personal experience on the one hand and as the experience characteristic of a race on the other, negritude foreshadowed an abstract solidarity joining all members of the Negro race irrespective of the social or economic realities governing the interests of individuals. Because of this there is a tension within negritude between a vision of the isolated individual alone with his struggle for identity and an enjoyment of the support provided by his membership in a universal solidarity of race. This abstract solidarity is presumed to answer the need for psychological comfort against the slights of colonial racism.

The second preoccupation of negritude concerned the quest for individual liberty framed exclusively in terms of an abstract universal freedom. This liberty was primal in the sense that it celebrated the spirit of the race inherent within each individual. Blyden thought this liberty could be achieved by the repatriation back to Africa of all New World blacks. In the writings of Senghor and Césaire freedom is envisaged as a spiritual return to the source in which the genius of the race can gain expression – a re-discovery and celebration of an immutable racial identity through the symbols and myths of ancient and vanished cultures.

The poets of negritude sought to understand and to change colonial reality by explaining the colonial relationship in terms of a clash of fundamentally different cultures; differences in the level of mate-

rial development or differences in the nature of the dominant economic systems being far less important than differences in the spiritual preoccupations of Europe and Africa. The proponents of negritude hoped to prove that through the contribution of African civilisation European society could be transformed and a new and emancipatory world culture invented. The influence of African visual arts on Cubism and Surrealism and the critical success of black poetry inspired the hope that Africa could compete on equal terms with Europe.

In viewing colonialism exclusively in terms of the relations between individuals or races – rather than in terms of the relationship between social classes – negritude was not readily compatible with traditional theories of imperialism in which economic interest was always held paramount. In fact the influence of negritude on African political theory has meant a revisioning of previous theories of imperialism. Consequently within the literature of African socialism criticism of the cultural destruction accompanying imperialist expansion is matched only by a moralistic condemnation of the grotesque materialism of European civilisation. Until the last decade almost no attempt was made to construct a political economy of colonialism nor to understand the relationship between indigenous culture and European trade.

The quest for personal identity and the pursuit of abstract freedoms encouraged the growth of an ingrained ambivalence in the poetry, literature and social theory of negritude. Initially there was an ambivalence toward a collective past which by being idealised became all the more remote. Secondly there was an ambivalence about change and the direction which change should take in accommodating traditional cultures. Greater change would merely make old institutions and values the less habitable. Because of the social and economic problems which during the 1960s were hidden behind the label of 'the strains of modernisation' the mentality of the negritude movement became widespread among the new elites of independent Africa. What the new elites saw in negritude was the opportunity to ignore all questions concerning the development of the productive forces and the distribution of wealth in favour of the cultivation of an exotic nostalgia and personal advantage.

iii Sartre's 'Orphée noir'

The first and still the most convincing attempt to come to terms with negritude as both an aesthetic and an historical force was made by Jean-Paul Sartre in his famous essay 'Orphée noir'. 'Orphée noir'

was an important influence in Fanon's intellectual development and we are told in *Masks* that Sartre's essay had a great effect upon Fanon in his personal struggle with the problem of racial identity.[3] More relevant still, Sartre's dialectical interpretation of negritude had an impact upon all subsequent interpretations of the movement.

In his essay, Sartre set out to explain the occurrence of black poetry and to uncover the source of its inspiration. His approach was to present the problem in terms of the question why the European proletariat could not produce such artistic work. His answer to this entailed making a clear distinction between the *objective* and *subjective* situations of the black and the metropolitan working classes. Although in objective terms the oppression experienced by the blacks is similar to that of the European working class, subjectively it is vastly different. The white proletariat, unlike its colonised equivalent, does not suffer the internal or psychological contradictions which, according to Sartre, are the source of all poetry.

The plight common to the black is the experience of the shock of white culture which produces a form of self-exile. This means that the black has ceased to live negritude as his existential experience. The Negro worker is also placed in an objective position very different from that of the white proletariat. For both the black and the white working class the instruments of production are owned by an antagonistic class, but in the case of the Negro the technique of production is itself borrowed. Because of this double 'alienation' his dependence, like his oppression, is absolute.

Sartre distinguishes between two methods used by the poets of negritude; first, the subjective approach in which the search for a black essence is carried on within the black poet's personality. This journey within is akin to a Dionysian descent. In the second or objectivist method, the poet seeks out the qualities of the Negro personality in the remnants of the former African civilisations. The revalorisation of customs, myths, and archaic symbols are the products of this historical search (pp. 39–40, 117). Whichever path is chosen, the results, in terms of both artistic merit and political commitment, are much the same (pp. 31–2).

It is Sartre's belief that negritude is not simply an apolitical literary movement but that its concern with a rejection of the cultural hegemony of colonialism is in fact a preparation for social action. In the case of Césaire's subjective path, the refusal of European culture led directly to opposition to colonial rule. Sartre observes that the defining quality of Césaire's poetry is one of resentment. In broader terms Césaire's work is an attempt to understand the substance of

the human plight. Sartre appears to believe that the black, because of his unusual historical situation, is more familiar with the condition of oppression than is the metropolitan working class. In fact Sartre equates black consciousness with consciousness of oppression and, as such, with political awareness. Thus the black man's struggle for liberation becomes the struggle for the liberation of all. The Negro race is the universal class in embryo. Yet before there can be solidarity among the oppressed there must first be the destruction of the subjective aspect of black oppression; this cleansing can only be achieved through the agency of negritude.

The best-known aspect of Sartre's essay is the dialectic he proposes in placing the negritude movement in historical context. Sartre's dialectic posits white supremacy as the thesis, its negation is negritude, and the synthesis is human society devoid of racism. Therefore negritude is a necessary step toward the liberation of both blacks and whites. It is but one aspect of a larger dialectic that cannot by itself answer the substantive questions that it poses, i.e., the end to the oppression of the Negro race. The dialectic of negritude is the first step in the development of a proletarian consciousness.

Yet in general Sartre is highly enthusiastic about the artistic achievements of the movement and the political promise that negritude suggests, and without reservation he affirms the necessity and progressiveness of negritude in breaking down the subjective conditions oppressing the Negro race. Sartre had been the first to clarify the aesthetic and political pretensions of the movement and thereby to explain why negritude represented a major step by black intellectuals in their journey towards liberation. Since Sartre's pioneering essay, a new generation has taken up the cause of negritude as a positive social force.

iv The sympathisers

Those most sympathetic to the ideology of negritude find virtue in the movement's response to the problem of individual identity and its pretensions as a political and cultural force. Lilyan Kesteloot, Abiola Irele, and Claude Wauthier[4] are representative of those who give their unconditional support to the achievements of the movement. All take the movement's pretensions to political and social radicalism seriously, thereby opening negritude to criticisms that it has tended to foster reactionary political ends.

Kesteloot, Irele, and Wauthier assume that there is a close connection between the ideology of negritude and the emergence of

African nationalism in the post-war period. For them the movement belongs to that plethora of cultural renaissance movements of the late nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries found in Africa and the New World. Kesteloot, Irele, and Wauthier have very similar views on the movement's attributes. These include the premises that negritude is a permanent historical force that will not evaporate with the demise of colonialism; that negritude provides the basis for the new values upon which a re-emergent Africa can be built, and that as a response to colonial domination negritude was emancipatory in the political, aesthetic, and psychocultural spheres.

Through these attributes negritude is held to prefigure African nationalism, and act as a watershed for the final political challenge to European hegemony; for, as Irele comments, negritude furnished the mystique and part of the energy for African nationalism. The underlying assumption in Kesteloot's, Irele's, and Wauthier's argument is the belief that colonialism drew much of its energy from the cultural oppression of the African and West Indian. In challenging the myth of European cultural superiority the proponents of negritude issued a direct challenge against the foundations of colonialism itself.

It is significant that, although these authors are positive in their assertions that negritude was politically progressive, they all show considerable anxiety in their attempts to establish their case. Irele vacillates between arguing that negritude is an overt political ideology and that its political connotations are remote. Much the same uncertainty is found in Wauthier and in the work of Janheinz Jahn.[5] Although it does play a part, the problem is not simply one of distinguishing between the imminent and the distant political influence of the movement. The uncertainty of Kesteloot, Wauthier, and Irele is ultimately a reflection of the politics of the ideology itself, which was caught between ignoring the bitter realities of colonial life as experienced by the petty bourgeoisie and a radical opposition to European hegemony. Negritude was to remain without any social programme of its own, a fact which does much to expose the mythologising ethos of the movement.

One of the reasons why negritude remained within the grip of a rampant passivity was because of its self-contradictory nature; it was supposed to be a conscious response to the challenge of colonialism and simultaneously an expression of a unique black ontology left untouched by historical experience. The first concern elicited the rhetoric against European cultural superiority. The latter induced the political quietism which has been the movement's crowning achievement.

Following in conformity with Sartre's distinction between the objective and subjective methods used by the negritude poets Kesteloot in *Les Ecrivains noirs de langue française* points out that the works of Césaire and Senghor suggest two quite different understandings of the movement. Césaire, for instance, employs the term negritude to describe a particular attitude toward life, while Senghor views negritude as the ensemble of black cultural values. This distinction opens up an issue which is perennial in any discussion of negritude: does the doctrine propose a causal link between race and cultural production, or are the artistic and metaphysical qualities present in African and New World art due to social and historical factors? Kesteloot attacks Sartre on this very point when she writes: 'But one should not confuse the characteristics of Negro culture with the imaginary "black essence" of which Sartre spoke. Race has nothing to do with this aspect of negritude. The black is not of a different essence from us. Raised entirely in a white milieu, isolated from his traditions, he will think, act, and behave as a white' (p. 115). Yet, despite this, Kesteloot's entire argument runs directly counter to such an interpretation. She not only proposes a separate and quite distinct black metaphysic and aesthetics but she makes no attempt to relate either of these to anything other than racial characteristics. Kesteloot's failure to draw any distinctions between African and New World black poetry is indicative of her self-contradictory position.

Although it supposedly challenged the basis upon which colonial rule was founded, the very ethos of the movement was antithetical to the growth of revolutionary nationalism. Yet without exception the apologists for negritude claim that it was instrumental in bringing about the end of the colonial presence. Irele, Kesteloot, Jahn and Wauthier claim that negritude was emancipatory in two respects: first, as a reflex challenge to the cultural hegemony associated with colonial rule and, second, as a direct precursor of African socialism. Yet Jahn, Irele, Kesteloot and Wauthier cannot account for the ease with which negritude became either politically irrelevant or an ingredient in sustaining the reactionary strain common to African political thought. For them negritude was by its very nature revolutionary.

2. Ethnopsychiatry

The term ethnopsychiatry is normally applied to the study of the psychology and behaviour of non-western peoples. In Africa, Asia and the Pacific the history of this specialised branch of ethnographic

science runs closely parallel with the history of European colonialism. In its most primitive guise ethnopsychiatry was virtually a branch of zoology. Research into the shape and dimensions of the skull of primitive man and theorising into the relationship between these features and the absence of cultural achievement were common during the early decades of European colonisation. The sciences of personality, however, soon transcended these purely vulgar foundations and important gains were being made in the study of colonial peoples even before the end of the First World War.

By 1920 there were a significant number of practitioners engaged in research into the psychology of primitive peoples. Although today much of this work appears to be overtly racist there were individual scientists whose work was motivated by either a liberal humanism or an evangelical Christianity who found much to admire in the behaviour of colonial peoples. The work of many of these pioneers in the field was inspired in one way or another by the new theories of personality, especially those of Freud, which were then coming into vogue.

The first authentic clinical study of indigenous people was carried out by the British psychologist W. H. R. Rivers in his expedition to the Torres Strait Islands in 1898. Rivers carried out experiments into the visual perception of the islanders and later carried out similar work among the Todas people of India.[6] Rivers' most detailed work in ethnography was carried out in the Pacific and he published a mammoth two-volume study of Melanesian society in 1914 in which he concluded that he could find no major differences in the visual acuity between civilised and uncivilised peoples.

Despite the intricacies of his work on Melanesia Rivers' principal interest in ethnopsychiatry lay not in the physiology of primitive peoples *per se* but rather in the application of such research to the understanding of the ancient cultures upon which European civilisation was founded. Rivers believed that all civilisations emanated from a single point which in turn explains the similarities of cultures in geographically remote areas. In his work on Melanesia, Rivers argued that the local culture had been created through the influence of successive intruding peoples who purveyed elements from the central cultural fund, located, according to Rivers, in ancient Egypt. By identifying the original elements which are preserved in primitive cultures Rivers believed that it would be possible to enhance our knowledge of the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Sumer and Babylon. Rivers' work had also a more immediate purpose since his research was intended to disprove the then revolutionary theo-

ries of Jung and Freud concerning universal or typical symbols. According to Freud and Jung the similarities between disparate cultures are to be explained by such basic characteristics of the human personality as the Oedipal drama or the collective unconscious. Rivers, of course, explained these similarities in terms of a single cultural origin.

Ten years after Rivers' death Stanley Porteus carried out similar empirical work among the Australian aborigines.[7] Employing a wide variety of then popular clinical tests Porteus measured such features as memory, intelligence and temperament. Porteus took great care to allow for the influence of adaption to the environmental conditions in which the aboriginal peoples of Northern and North Western Australia lived and he discusses at length the role played by beliefs and social structure in the development of perception and intelligence. Porteus found that, even when allowing for the play of environmental factors, the aborigines tested did uniformly poorly in most basic skills. However, rather than submit to the current prejudice concerning the innate intellectual and social inferiority of the aborigine, Porteus warns that the results are anything but conclusive because of the originality of the subjects and the inflexibility of the testing instruments available. Porteus also defends the aborigine against accusations that as a people they are lazy and improvident and on the whole his account of indigenous culture is sympathetic.

A similarly empathetic strain in early ethnopsychiatric research is found also in the voluminous writings of Edwin Smith and Melville Herskovits and in the fascinating psychoanalysis of a Southern Rhodesian black in Wulf Sachs' *Black Hamlet* which was first published in 1937.[8]

Like Rivers, however, most researchers exploring the psychology of colonial peoples were not motivated by any inherent interest in the primitive mind. The study of the primitive, whose lack of intellectual and social development mirrored the childhood of mankind, was hoped to be a means of furthering understanding of the distant origins of human civilisation. In the case of black Africa the bulk of this research provided nothing like a general theory of the African mind and very often it merely followed the contours suggested by popular prejudice and myth. The social context of such research was never considered relevant and no thought was given to the possible effect of the colonial relationship upon African societies. That particular branch of ethnographic research which emphasised physiology and cortical underdevelopment was popular until as late as the mid-1950s, and although over time the methods of data collection

became more sophisticated, the underlying assumptions remained much the same.

Later ethnopsychiatric practitioners have shown a predominant interest in the divergence between the sociopsychological characteristics of African and European man. The absence in the former of certain emotional disorders and the apparent unimportance of psychic traumas held to be fundamental in Freudian and neo-Freudian theory stimulated enormous research interest. The thought now occurred that perhaps there was something unique about these peoples who did not conform either culturally or psychologically to the assumptions of European metapsychology. This line of interest opened up the possibility of a general theory of the African mind which incorporated the influence of the colonial relationship as an important variable in the formation of personality.

This change in the focus of ethnopsychiatric research was due to the play of two factors: there had been an internal change in psychiatric practice and theory which had pushed one stream of psychiatric researchers away from physiology as the basis of a science of the mind. Culture and social history were now becoming incorporated into theories of personality development and the consensus over the very definition of mental illness was no longer a universal hinge holding the discipline of psychiatry together. This change was accompanied by a change of attitude within the colonial sciences. Primitive cultures were being slowly reinstated as genuine human societies which demanded the same kind of respect previously reserved for a small range of literate civilisations. Initially it had been the asymmetry between these societies and European states that had aroused fascination as a possible source of furthering understanding of Europe's distant past; such studies were used in much the same way, if invariably without the same subtlety, as Max Weber used his research into Islam and Buddhism as an adjunct to his theory of capitalist development. Later the asymmetry became in itself a source of interest as a possible explanation why these societies had not developed. The very raising of the possibility of development shows how far ethnopsychiatry had advanced.

Within the boundaries of Fanon's work the division between the earlier and later phases of ethnopsychiatry is identified as corresponding to the differences in methodology and achievement between Antonin Porot of the University of Algiers and the British psychiatrist J. C. Carothers on the one hand, and Octave Mannoni on the other. These are the only ethnopsychiatrists whom Fanon examines to any depth and he makes no reference whatsoever to the

more gentle and humane science of people such as Rivers or Porteus. This omission is significant, for his ignorance of the work of such people embittered Fanon and encouraged him in a belief in the racist foundation of all European science in the colonial setting. It was only with the publication of Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban* that the point was reached at which an independent and authentic ethnopsychiatry became possible. Now, for the first time, social history was incorporated into the heart of a theory of the African mind. Before Mannoni, ethnopsychiatry was unconcerned with the relationship between colonial domination and personality. Nor was any interest shown in the problems posed by the implicit ethnocentrism of European science in the study of the psychology of non-western peoples. Without these two elements it was impossible for ethnopsychiatry to provide a systematic and accurate theory describing the psychological reality and hence the uniqueness of the African.

The work of J. C. Carothers and of Octave Mannoni is best representative of Fanon's understanding of the science of ethnopsychiatry. Their research was carried out during the post-war period and was purported to have application to the continent as a whole. On the other hand, the research carried out by the School of Algiers, under the direction of Antonin Porot, was confined to the study of the Maghrebian peoples and most of its original work had been completed before the outbreak of the Second World War. Fanon attacks Porot, Carothers and Mannoni in *The Wretched* and also provides a summary of the principal findings of Porot and Carothers[9] in a clinical essay published during Fanon's years in Algeria. Carothers' most important research is found in his study of the Mau-Mau rebellion, *The Psychology of Mau-Mau,* while Mannoni is best known for his research in Madagascar, published under the title *Prospero and Caliban.*

In 1955 Fanon wrote what he termed an essay of systemisation entitled 'Ethnopsychiatric Considerations' in which he summarised the central findings of Porot, Carothers, Sutter, and Gallois on the psychology of the African.[10] In his paper Fanon made no attempt to evaluate this research but chose rather to provide a descriptive account of the work of the individuals he identified as being the leading specialists in the field. 'Ethnopsychiatry' is a short paper which is quite unique among Fanon's writings for it contains no indication whatsoever of Fanon's prejudices on the subject at hand.

The first attempt to conduct an investigation into the psychological life of the North African was undertaken in 1918 by Professor Porot of the University of Algiers. Porot concluded that the princi-

pal characteristics of the North African Muslim were markedly different from those of the European. The profile he draws of the Muslim is hardly flattering: the Muslim shows little or almost no emotion; he is extremely credulous and susceptible to suggestion; he is stubborn; he displays mental puerility with less curiosity than the average European child, and he is accident prone. Porot followed up this earliest report with later investigations in 1932 and 1935. In the later works he examined the criminal impulses in the North African maintaining the validity of his earlier findings and adding that the Kabyle was not prone to the defects of the Muslim population but was on the contrary quite intelligent and industrious.

In his systematised portrait Porot describes the Algerian as being violent by heredity; he is a congenital compulsive who cannot control his behaviour or channel his aggressive impulses to socially constructive ends. His aggressiveness is likely to take the form of homicide. Porot found that, in the case of melancholia or depressive illness, the Algerian personality exhibited unique characteristics. Porot and his researchers discovered that, contrary to the pattern found in the European, the Algerian melancholic would turn not to suicide but to murder. In explanation Porot argued that, because his personality structure precluded introspection or reflection, the Algerian would never analyse his own feelings or actions. Because the melancholic has above all else an over-active moral conscience the Algerian could never develop a classic depressive illness.[11]

The report of 1935 was presented at a congress of psychiatric practitioners in Brussels with Porot concluding his remarks on the North African Muslim with the comment '. . . of whom the superior and cortical activities are little developed, is essentially a primitive being of whom his vegative and instinctive life is ruled by the diencephalon' (p. 1). In the more advanced species cerebral activity is dominated by the cortex, which controls the higher functions of the brain. By arguing that the North African's brain is dominated by the diencephalon, Porot was presuming that these Muslim people were neurologically quite primitive.[12]

Porot and Sutter, in a study conducted four years later, further developed the earlier reports to trace the reason for the unusual brain function and behaviour of the Muslim. They argue that the Muslim's apparent primitivism was not due to a lack of maturity or blockage of an otherwise normal development but on the contrary represented the usual path of evolution in these people. The diencephalic dominance in the Maghrebian Muslim is logically adapted to his life's requirements. It is not the result of the play of particular

environmental factors but has far deeper roots. They write, 'it must have its substratum in a particular arrangement of the architectonics of the dynamic hierarchy of the central nervous system' (p. 2). Porot refutes any idea that the origin of the diencephalon dominance implied that it was a reversible condition.

Following upon the work of Porot and Sutter, Gallois employed encephalographic techniques in his studies of the black African. Gallois concluded that there was substantial evidence of neurological immaturity or what Porot had termed, diencephalic dominance. Fanon remarks: 'Thus was the hypothesis of the School of Algiers proved on the psycho-physiological plane – the black African closely resembling the North African, there being a uniformity of all African peoples in this regard' (p. 2). Finally in 1954 Dr Carothers, working for the World Health Organisation, undertook an ethnographic study which although confined solely to the English-speaking regions arrived at conclusions in conformity with the earlier French studies.[13] Carothers found that the African's lack of aptitude for synthesis was caused by the underemployment of the brain's frontal lobes, thereby concurring with the portrait of cortical sluggishness and diencephalic dominance suggested earlier by Porot.

Fanon's conclusion in 'Ethnopsychiatry' is simple and is offered without critical comment: studies carried out in different regions and stretching out over a period of more than twenty years all suggested the presence of a primary brain deficiency in the Maghrebian Muslim and in the black African. This research was all the more convincing since none of the authors referred to the work of the others.

The School of Algiers had gone even further to explain the violence and pseudo-melancholy of the Algerian by reference to his mental debility and the dominance of his behaviour by the diencephalon. All this research suggested that since the source of the African's primitivism lay in a genetic inheritance, his lack of cultural achievement had to be accepted as fate.

When examined in some detail, the work of J. C. Carothers remains among the most interesting of the early ethnopsychiatric theories. More than thirty years after Porot's initial research, Carothers began work in East Africa on mental disease and personality. His most original studies were devoted to the Mau-Mau movement and to the relationship between that movement and the basic personality of the African. Although there is no evidence that Carothers was familiar with the work of Porot, most of his conclusions mirror the conclusions of The School of Algiers. It is important to remember

when reading Carothers, and especially when confronted by his outright dismissal of the relevance of the Kikuyu's demands for land-rights to the outbreak of the rebellion, that his research was commissioned by the British Government. It was equally unfortunate that his interest in the Mau-Mau rebellion and his attempt to apply a theory of personality in explaining the conflict was inspired by the same sinister fascination that the movement held for many western observers.

Carothers was careful to point out that, although the insecurity felt by the Kikuyu had its origins in the period prior to the major European settlement (p. 5), the rebellion was essentially a protest against the crisis of transition from a traditional to a modern culture. Faced with the need to adapt to change and robbed of any sense of security the Kikuyu turned to violence.

Of all the ethnic groups in Kenya, the Kikuyu were the most susceptible to the strains associated with rapid social change. Carothers' profile of the Kikuyu emphasises their tenuous sense of security, their incapacity to tolerate anxiety, and the depth of their contact with the imported European and Asian cultures (pp. 8–11). Furthermore, the Kikuyu displayed a forest psychology, living as they did on the edge of forbidding jungle (p. 4). Carothers argued that to the Kikuyu the forest represented a foreboding force which was alternately protective and threatening. This mentality, like the other aspects of the Kikuyu personality, fostered a propensity for extreme and violent behaviour.

Apart from the specific characteristics of the Kikuyu, Carothers makes reference to the play of certain features common to the African personality which stimulated the outbreak of the rebellion. Carothers argues that the thinking of the African is childlike, that he lacks all capacity for reflection and foresight, that emotion rather than intellect governs his behaviour, that he cannot withstand anxiety, that he is prone to violence, and that he displays little capacity to adapt to change (pp. 2–7).

Accordingly, the Mau-Mau rebellion was predetermined by these deficiencies in the African's constitution which, when combined with the tensions experienced by the Kikuyu, led to the eruption of atavistic violence. Carothers' explanation of the revolt is best summarised in his account of the African's attitude to personal responsibility. The African attributes all his misfortunes to forces lying outside of his control; Carothers writes of these misfortunes: 'They are seen as the work of evil wills and, since the power of these wills is now largely replaced by the power of the European, the latter is

apt to be regarded nowadays as the sole author of all evil' (p. 12). Therefore, under the stress of anxiety and insecurity, the Kikuyu, in a response Carothers interprets as neurotic, turned against the European whom they wrongly believed to be the cause of their misfortunes. Commenting on the solutions offered by Mau-Mau to the ills of the Kikuyu, namely a return to traditionalism, Carothers observes:

> The attempt to reinstate the old ways was mainly based on this [neurotic hatred of the Europeans] and when this Emergency is over, it will be seen for the artificial thing it really was. For if anything is clear in Kenya, it is that for the Kikuyu at any rate the ancient cultural modes have had their day and it is time to build on new foundations. (p. 21)

Carothers concludes that the only solution to the Kikuyu demands lies in the introduction of strong leadership for the African who, like the European adolescent, needs firm guidance (p. 19).[14]

In his account of the reasons for Mau-Mau, Carothers dismisses any suggestion that there were social, political or economic grounds motivating the Kikuyu's protest. The Mau-Mau arose because of the inability of the African personality to adapt to change and because of the 'neurotic' predisposition of the Kikuyu when faced with stress and insecurity. The violence of the Mau-Mau and their radical rejection of European authority must be traced ultimately to the childlike quality of the African personality rather than to the influence of socioeconomic conditions. The onus for the rebellion rests with the deficiencies characteristic of the native Kenyans and not with the policies of the British colonial government.

i Prospero and Caliban

Although Octave Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban* was published seven years before Carothers' study of the Mau-Mau it is in every respect a more sophisticated account of the psychology of colonial conflict. Mannoni was primarily concerned with the way in which the economic inequality between the races was played out in social practice, and how the mythology this inequality generated was expressed. He viewed the colonial situation not as one in which two races or socioeconomic groupings came into conflict but rather as a situation where two different, and alternate, types of personality confronted each other. Because of the unique quality of the colonial relationship, Mannoni felt that it was necessary to employ techniques drawn from psychoanalysis in order to come to terms with

such forces as racism and nationalism. Without access to depth psychology, such facts as the failure of the communist parties to influence the decolonisation process must remain a mystery.

Mannoni defined the colonial situation according to the subjective satisfaction it afforded the coloniser and the psychological impact his presence had upon the subordinate community.

> In short, then, what I want the reader to realize is that a colonial situation is created so to speak, the very instant a white man, even if he is alone, appears in the midst of a tribe, even if it is independent, so long as he is thought to be rich or powerful or merely immune to the local forces of magic, and so long as he derives from his position, even though only in his most secret self, a feeling of his own superiority. (p. 18)

Because of this secret motivation, colonial exploitation and colonial racism are not the same as other forms of oppression. The men who seek out a vocation as colonialists are attracted both by the promise of subjective superiority and by a covert sense of identification with the subject community. Therefore, at the root of the colonial vocation lies an extreme ambivalence; the colonialist is driven by an admiration for a lost freedom, the image of which he supposes to see in the native, and by a contempt for their primitivism.

Mannoni characterises the colonial type by the literary figure, Prospero. The colonial type is an individual in whom a grave lack of sociability is combined with a desire to dominate; a man so ridden with misanthropy that he seeks out a world without men. The colonial type shares with Shakespeare's Prospero a lack of awareness of the world of others, a world from which he flees because he cannot bear men as they are.

Mannoni draws a distinction between the first colonisers, essentially noble, adventurous men, and the later, effete Prosperos who came to the established colonies. The long-term colonialists suffered a gradual erosion of their basic psychological drives which sapped them of all creative energy. Over time, those following a colonialist vocation came to represent a decadent element cast off from European society. Although the propensity to racism existed in the European psyche prior to colonial settlement, those who came to choose the colonialist vocation were particularly prone to racial hatreds.

Mannoni based his psychology of the colonial relationship upon the alternate concepts of *dependence* and *inferiority*. In *Prospero*

these terms are employed to denote different types of personality, mentality, and even civilisation.[15] While both terms are present within any individual personality, one will tend to dominate while the other is repressed. In psychodynamic terms the *inferior type*, typically European, will attempt to ward off a sense of inferiority or worthlessness; conversely the *dependent* individual, such as the Malagasy, is motivated to attach himself to a master or patron, thereby seeking to assuage a terror of abandonment.

The predominance of the dependent personality among non-western peoples explains, for Mannoni, the stagnation of their civilisations, the retention of beliefs in magic, and the persistence of emotional and infantile modes of behaviour. The ego of the 'primitive' is so feeble that panic will follow the slightest threat to established patterns of authority. Because of this anxiety all impulse toward change is avoided. But Mannoni is emphatic that there is no *constitutional* imperative governing the Malagasy's dependence complex. If a Malagasy were brought up in Europe he would exhibit inferiority and not dependence. The cause of the nature of his personality structure lies in the social and psychological environment.

Mannoni claimed to have discovered the roots of dependence in the Malagasy's worship of their dead. Because of the authority that resides with the dead, the Malagasy child, unlike his European counterpart, is never able to challenge established authority, and thereby acquire a personal sense of power and responsibility. His capacity to forge a personality for himself and to exercise his own will was stifled. The Malagasy believed the living merely act as agents for the will of the dead as divined through magic ritual. Once the dead were established as the highest moral authority, the emotional development of the Malagasy was fated toward dependence.

The basic emotional need of the Malagasy was to establish a dependence relationship with some higher power. If this bond were ever threatened, the Malagasy would be thrown into panic with the ensuing crisis leading in turn to hostility and violence.

Mannoni's analysis is quite ambiguous since, although maintaining that neither type of personality, inferior nor dependent, is the more advanced (especially in a moral sense), he contends that the Malagasy, like all non-western peoples, must evolve in the direction pioneered by occidental man. Mannoni portrays the Malagasy as a people lacking the strength to pass through the crisis of abandonment to arrive at inferiority and finally independence. The panic that follows any threat to dependence was assuaged not by an acceptance of the challenge of independence but by recourse to

superstitions and magic practices. This type of behaviour that had been interpreted by Porot and Carothers as proof of cortical sluggishness was, for Mannoni, evidence of the vagaries of the psychology of the colonial relationship. This relationship was the theatre in which the drama of a shift between alternate and historically sequential types of personality was being played out.

Mannoni's view of western man is essentially tragic. Through the achievement of inferiority, man has become a spiritual orphan severed from the comforting support of magic ritual and the reassurance of dependence upon superior authorities. This sense of inferiority is the psychological force supplying the creative drive for change and invention characteristic of western civilisation. The occidental personality has the capacity to treat the threat of abandonment as a challenge for furthering his independence. Mannoni believes that the 'experimental spirit', the hallmark of western man, is the direct result of this transcendence. As inferiority is the price paid for this spirit, Mannoni's occidental man is both *heroic* and *tragic*.

This tragic view of the inferior personality is particularly evident in Mannoni's analysis of the *évolué* caught in the process of passing from dependence to inferiority. The change in shifting allegiance, from attachment to traditional cultural mores to European culture, involves the transformation of the entire structure of the personality. Life for the Malagasy who achieves only a veneer of Europeanisation will be akin to that of a repressed homosexual living among other homosexuals – it will be intolerable (p. 75). Greater cultural sophistication only increases awareness on both sides of the presence of irremovable racial differences as the *évolué* is driven into the company of Europeans who will never accept him as an equal.

Civilised natives who have renounced their own ethnic community will suffer painful psychological conflicts often culminating in hostility toward Europeans (p. 24). The *évolués* who are best adjusted to their cultural transmutation, will be those who retain their Malagasy personality while adapting it to their new cultural milieu.

Mannoni's analysis of inferiority and dependence leads him to the conclusion that not all peoples can be colonised in the sense that not all peoples are capable of achieving, psychologically, the status of a colonised people. Colonialism requires the existence of a personality-type that prefigures the colonial relationship (pp. 85–6). The potential for colonisation in Madagascar was furnished by the personality weakness of the Malagasy in that they suffered the need for a dependence relationship. Because of this need, the French came to occupy the same position in the Malagasy psyche as did the Mala-

gasy's ancestors, the dead (pp. 85–6). Without dependence, colonialism, as we know it, would not have been possible.

Although the colonial relationship is quite unique in regard to the psychological needs it fulfils, it is also extremely unstable. Colonialism could never have lasted for any extended period of time, for it was 'too unrealistic, too emotional – one might even say too neurotic' (p. 7).

In *Prospero and Caliban* Mannoni also made some attempt to map out the psychological preconditions necessary before the Malagasy could pass from dependence to successful political independence. Presuming that to be a centre of authority unto oneself is the prerequisite for sustaining a modern political system, the problems associated with political autonomy could be seen in embryo in the Malagasy child.

Mannoni feared that the granting of political independence would place the Malagasy in an untenable situation. If the bonds of dependence were suddenly broken, and no substitute or psychological support made available, the individual would be thrown into panic and then despair (p. 65). Whether this severance took place between two individuals or between larger social bodies the result would be much the same.

The Malagasy's claims for political independence would lead to a form of government more arbitrary and repressive than that of the colonial regime it would replace (p. 124). Citing the rebellion of 1948 in support of his theory, Mannoni implies the absence of any objective grounds for political violence; for at the time of the rebellion the material conditions of the Malagasy had in fact improved. Mannoni explains that these improvements, rather than causing a spiral of rising expectations which were then frustrated, created a fear of still further change. The outbreak of violence resulted from a sense of guilt engendered by the prospect of desertion which the changes aroused.

Despite the immense problems associated with the colonial relationship, Mannoni still believed that, ultimately, colonialism was a progressive force. The administrative framework set up by the French encouraged the Malagasy to redirect his dependence to a remote centre of authority, namely the French colonial administration. This transference created a certain amount of room for manoeuvre, allowing for the first time the possibility for growth in the Malagasy personality. The granting of independence would not necessarily stimulate further innovation, but would most likely precipitate a regression in the face of insurmountable psychological problems. For

instance, the Malagasy would be incapable of sustaining the institutions of a democratic political system since the role of a democratic opposition party would throw into question the bonds of authority, thereby creating guilt and anxiety.

Mannoni suggests that the slow transition to political independence could best be achieved through reviving the traditional councils (*fukon 'olona*) at the local level. These councils could serve to open channels for the evolution to both psychological and political independence while preserving the bonds of attachment.

The transference of dependence would thus shift from attachment to individuals to attachment to the group. In this way the Malagasy's preoccupation with routine, so akin to the behaviour of the obsessional neurotic, could serve as a protection against insecurity.

In summary, Mannoni's central thesis supposed that the Malagasy was faced with the need to alter the basic structure of his personality as a *precondition* for entering the modern world. The colonial situation had encouraged the dependence of the Malagasy upon the European and, although the presence of the white man may have been generally reassuring, it had also aroused anxiety. Thus, while colonialism was an answer to the needs of Prospero and Caliban, it encouraged a degree of psychological regression in both Europeans and Africans thereby generating a unique set of psychological problems.

3. African socialism and class conflict

In the period after the First World War the devaluation of the African past that had accompanied the setting up of the modern colonial empires came under attack for the first time from contemporary anthropology. Scientific research had established the existence in pre-colonial times of sophisticated social and political organisations which bore comparison with then contemporary European societies. The impact of this research was felt far beyond the boundaries of the scientific community. The pre-colonial past became a rallying point in the literature and ideology of African socialism. Such diverse figures as Sékou Touré, Tom Mboya, Kwame Nkrumah, Léopold Senghor, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta and Amilcar Cabral all found inspiration in what they took to be the mode of social organisation unique to the African continent. In the literature of African socialism the myth of the pre-colonial past came to serve two purposes; first, it acted as a model of a social design that was both humane and egalitarian, virtues antithetical to colonial rule; second, it served

as a repository for the qualities of the African personality which contrasted so strongly with the vices thought to be characteristic of occidental man. In each instant the glories of the pre-colonial past condemned colonial domination and refuted the colonialist belief in the inherent backwardness of the African.

There is no single set of beliefs which can be said to represent justly the doctrine of African socialism. What has gone under the name of socialism has been conterminous with nationalism to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to discover a point at which they are distinct ideologies. The twin birth of these philosophies has blurred the outlines of each and has done much to inhibit the doctrinal aspirations of socialist theory.

There are of course a number of beliefs characteristic of the literature of African socialism. These include the assumptions that the achievements of pre-colonial societies rehabilitate the African, both historically and contemporaneously, from the accusation that Africa is irredeemably backward, and must remain dependent upon European values and techniques; that because of the pull exerted by the communalist social fabric of African societies, the reflex to decolonisation must be seen as originating from within Africa and not from the play of external forces; and, finally, that communalism in traditional Africa rules out the possibility of the existence of class divisions in contemporary society. This set of presuppositions about the past and the future is common to most African political theory.

Not surprisingly these cornerstones of African socialism have not been conducive to a theoretical understanding of colonial and post-colonial society. This is manifest in, for example, a simplistic portrayal of imperialism in which imperialism is equated, almost exclusively, with colonial occupation, or else interpreted in accord with a shallow theory of neo-colonial domination. It is also obvious in a tendency to minimise the effects of capitalist penetration, especially in regard to rural Africa and to dismiss analysis of the new elites in anything other than cultural terms. Finally, the African socialist romantic attachment to the past is evident in the playing down of the question of the role of the forces of production and the need for modern technology.

Unfortunately the tendency to mythologise the distant past and to romanticise the virtues of village life in the present has contaminated the scientific analysis of contemporary African societies. This, in turn, has often been regurgitated back into the life of government and the practice of politics thereby validating the inertia and self-interest of incumbent regimes. Bourgeois ideology and bourgeois

science have achieved an impressive collusive unity on a stage vacant until quite recently, except for the shadowy presence of a hackneyed Marxism. Only now, more than two decades into the independence years, are the beginnings of a radical sociology becoming visible.

It is in the arena of class analysis that the tension between African reality and ideology and the demands of a critical theory have been most acutely felt.

i The class analysis of Africa

There has been a great deal of controversy in contemporary scientific literature on the question of the possibility of applying theories of class conflict to African political systems. Western scientists are divided between a liberal stream which prefers the use of a branch of elite theory and a stream (both Marxist and non-Marxist) which favours class analysis. This dissension has been compounded by the fervour of political leaders in promoting the myth that African societies are classless. Invariably those who favour elite theory are more conservative than their opponents.

The fact that there are substantial difficulties in applying a class analysis to African states is evidenced by the format that so much of the literature takes. Many of the more elaborate analyses recognise the need to resolve problems of methodology and classification.[16] These problems are of two basic kinds: first, there is the imperfect fit of western class categories to African societies and, second, the fact of the transitory character of contemporary African social structures. Each of these problems is recognised in one guise or another by both class and elite theorists.

The categories of social class drawn from European experience do not find a ready fit in the absence of the familiar divisions between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Even where such divisions do exist the composition and origins of classes are likely to be at odds with European expectations in what are essentially agrarian societies. Leaving aside the question of political behaviour and political consciousness, African social formations have few of the attributes of their metropolitan counterparts whether in terms of basic economic characteristics or in terms of membership. Perhaps the single most important reason for the popularity of elite theory is the minuscule size of the indigenous middle classes in relation to the peasantry. For such commentators as P. C. Lloyd and Robert Miller[17] this is sufficient reason in itself for rejecting class analysis. The factor of

size applies also to the African working class, the existence of which as an independent social entity is by no means generally accepted.

While radicals and conservatives argue that the social structures of Africa are quite unlike those found in Europe, there is a tendency for both factions to treat the latter as a normative model. Thus the lack of symmetry between African and European classes is seen to throw into doubt the very existence of classes in the former. In the writings of J. Woddis, the need to square African reality with European expectations can be seen as a direct response, present even in the radical literature, to the normative status afforded western social formations.[18]

The imperfect fit of western categories is clearly seen in the problems arising from the communal ownership of land. The relative absence of land alienation in West and Central Africa has meant that the peasantry has not been separated from the ownership of the means of production. As rural populations comprise the vast majority of the peoples of black Africa, counterposed as they are to minuscule western-educated ruling groups, it is tempting to characterise such societies as being composed of rural masses and urban elites rather than social classes. Just such a characterisation was promoted by ruling nationalist factions in the immediate post-independence period, and it remains popular in the literature of conservative political science. The basic assumption of both groups is the absence of any significant divisions within the rural population which exists simply as an amorphous body.

There are various criticisms of the concept of an amorphous peasantry, most of them concerning the question of the presence of internal divisions between upper, middle, and lower groupings. The research of such people as Polly Hill, Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul, V. Allen, J. Woddis and, more obliquely, E. Wolf has thrown into doubt the existence of a homogeneous peasant class.[19] Each of these critics argues that the unevenness of the colonial impact was felt not only in the cities but also among the rural population. Leaving aside the question of pre-colonial inequalities, it is certain that such factors as the penetration of a money economy, the imposition of taxes, the introduction of migratory and wage labour, and the creation of urban social differences, the effects of which often flowed back into the villages, all contributed to the growth of social and economic inequalities in the rural sector. The work of V. L. Allen is particularly suggestive in arguing that the objective relationship of the peasantry to the means of production, like that of the migratory wage labourer, is an exploitative one.[20] Although the peasant is not

directly involved in selling his labour, nevertheless he does rely in part upon the sale of cash crops for his subsistence. In this way he is exploited through the mechanism of price. Amilcar Cabral's study of the Guinean peasant provides a parallel analysis giving precedence to the political problems attendant upon such disguised forms of exploitation.[21]

The most important element common to the critics of 'the amorphous peasantry' is the belief, often implicit, that the rural African was subject to the penetration of a capitalist economic system and exploited by that system for the duration of the colonial era. Therefore the economic and social parameters that define the peasantry are directly traceable to the colonial impact. In general the elite theorists and the African nationalists who reject this proposition assume the peasantry to be largely untouched by the penetration of the market economy.

The resort to migratory wage labour, so widespread among the peasants of southern Africa, is a second important element cited in defence of the elite school. This labour pattern is viewed as further evidence of the non-fit of class categories and proof of the transitory pattern of social stratification. In this context migratory labour is interpreted as being a half-way house between peasant life and the permanent wage-labour activity of an authentic proletariat. Critics differ in their assessment of the significance of this labour pattern and of the definitional problems it poses in the identification of the peasant and proletariat classes. Are those peasants who periodically engage in wage labour to be identified as peasants or proletarians? By what method is a decision to be made about their social identity? The categories of wage labourer and peasant are somewhat fused for that section of the African working class which alternates between these two modes of economic activity, while the scale of migratory labour is such that it is often cited as a major barrier to applying class categories in social and economic analysis.

Whatever attitude is adopted on the question of migratory labour, it is incontestable that it forms a structural feature of the labour pattern of much of the southern half of the continent and that any analysis of social differentiation must pay cognisance to it.

The two final factors that contribute to the problems of applying the categories of class analysis concern African traditionalism and the nature of the political and economic relationship between the metropoles and the former colonies. Both radical and conservative science admit the importance of ethnic ties in directing the distribution of goods and services and in determining political behaviour

and consciousness. Cohen, who is an advocate of class analysis, lists such factors as size, acquisition of skills, and the degree of market specialisation during pre-colonial and colonial periods as variables influencing the status of ethnic groups.[22] Most elite theorists argue that although such ethnic bonds may not completely exclude class ties they are far more important in the formation of attitudes and behaviour. In general, elite theorists assume ethnic ties to militate against the play of more substantive influences on political behaviour thereby excluding the application of the categories of social class.

Class analysts have great difficulty with the fact of ethnicity, which often cuts across class cleavage and thus blocks what could otherwise be clearly defined lines of interest. Because of this, ethnicity is often said to hinder the formation of social classes and, where cleavages based upon objective economic differences have occurred, to preclude the emergence of coherent class interests. In the case of both the African proletariat and the African bourgeoisie, ethnicity is seen as a fundamental barrier to the development of a modern, urban class consciousness.

Elite theorists see in ethnic loyalties a barrier to economic and social development because they run counter to ties based upon these criteria believed to be characteristic of political consensus in western states. Conversely, class theorists tend to assume that ethnic ties camouflage class interests which are then promoted beneath the banner of tribal affiliation. For example, Kitching argues: 'The effect of this concentration on tribal rivalries is to preclude the possibility of the poor developing an explanation of their situation in terms of a grossly skewed distribution of income from which all Ruling Class members benefit. This is the essence of its "ideological" function.'[23] Cabral agrees with this view, attributing 'tribalism' to the political manoeuvrings of colonialist and ruling elites. In fact Cabral goes so far as to define tribalism as a political weapon of the new elites.[24] In reply, elite theorists claim that the pull of the cities is too weak to disengage fully either the urban proletariat or the new bourgeoisie from their attachment to traditional loyalties, thus the functioning and ultimately the maturation of the political system is hindered.

The final impediment to the use of class analysis is invoked only by practitioners of class theory, since elitists usually ignore the set of relationships involved. Elite theorists simply assume that the political autonomy of the new states is substantive and that whatever degree of economic control is retained in the hands of the metropole should have no place in the analysis of the indigenous social structure. Borrowing Cohen's terminology, this concerns the

influence of 'the external estate' upon the formation and behaviour of indigenous classes. While such factors as ethnicity, communal land ownership, and the low level of the forces of production all throw doubt upon the existence of specific social entities, the influence of the 'external estate' puts into question the status of the indigenous social system as a whole. In general, the supporters of neo-colonial theory, such as Cabral, presuppose that despite the trappings of national independence, the metropolitan bourgeoisie maintains its position as the ruling class.

The rhetoric of African nationalism has played a major role in ensuring the unpopularity as well as the immaturity of class theory. With few exceptions, nationalist leaders have espoused the myth of a classless Africa in reference both to the historical past and to the immediate independence period. This is true of such people as Nyerere, Nkrumah, Senghor, Houphet-Boigny, Kaunda, Mondlane, Lumumba, Touré, Mboya and Oginga Odinga. Where cleavages did arise, as happened during the colonial period, these were dismissed as being merely ephemeral.

The assumed homogeneity of African societies prior to European penetration is a cornerstone of African socialism. Communal ownership of land and the absence of the type of social divisions found in Europe are cited again and again as proof of the fundamental differences between African and European societies. For instance, Nyerere argues that in traditional Africa every man was a worker and there was no division of ownership and labour. Exploitation among indigenous groups was unknown.[25] For nationalists like Nyerere the rejection of colonialism included the rejection of the economic system that supported it. The capitalist mode of economic organisation was antithetical to the African temperament.

There are three major factors sustaining the 'African socialist's' belief in the classlessness of African societies, and, while the mixture of these ingredients varies, they are to be found in nearly all the writings of radical and reformist nationalists. As already mentioned, the communal ownership of land is taken as proof that there is no substantial cleavage between classes. In fact the rejection of a Marxist framework by the more radical socialists such as Cabral, Mondlane and Machel sprang from the importance they attached to the communal ownership of the means of production. A second factor encouraging the myth of a classless Africa originated from the writings on the African personality and negritude, and was absorbed into the rhetoric of African socialism. Although it usually remains

unstated, the traits associated with the African personality are essentially a residual category of those qualities identified with occidental man. Tom Mboya gives a succinct summary of these dimensions of personality where he writes: 'I refer to universal charity, which characterizes our societies and I refer to the African thought processes and cosmological ideas which regard man not as a social means but as an end, an entity in society.'[26] The African's innate sense of social and community responsibility, and his preference for man over things, were held to arise from the absence of class divisions in the past and would, in turn, guarantee that such cleavages could not develop in the future. A belief in this basic personality type is found among even the least rhetorical of African nationalists and, as such, constitutes part of the popular mythology of political life. The third element is the belief that all existing social cleavage was the direct result of colonial domination and not a permanent feature of the social landscape. Once the colonisers had retreated, the social order would return to normal as the temporary cleavages dissolved. This line of argument is usually implicit rather than overt, and little mention is ever made of the political machinery that would allow this normalisation to take place. Leaving aside the practical drift of Tanzanian socialism, this notion is present in the sentiment that sustains the Arusha Declaration.[27]

Two points follow from this line of reasoning. First, since the final goal of all socialist systems, whether African or European, is the creation of a classless society, Africa appears to be closer to achieving that end than its western counterparts. All that needs to be done to realise the socialist vision is to allow the re-emergence of the basic traits of the African personality.

Second, because African societies do not suffer from the divisive class structure that bedevils European states, there is no need for a class struggle to institute socialism. On the influence of African social structures and history, Mamadou Dia observes: 'It also means that in the perspective of a socialist evolution Africa is undoubtedly the continent called to reach more rapidly than others the supreme stage of a classless society, where the simple administration of things will substitute for the government of men.'[28]

By having avoided an evolution such as Europe's, Africa may be able to go forward far more rapidly on the basis of an indigenous humanism, which capitalist development has elsewhere destroyed. Africa stands advantaged by the personality structure of its people and because of the opportunity it has of avoiding the mistakes made

by the European states in the course of their earlier development. At its most grandiose this line of argument presumes that Africa will lead a global regeneration of mankind.

African socialists have created numerous problems for themselves in espousing both the myth of a classless Africa and the vague outlines of western socialism. Since one of the basic tenets of classical Marxism is that all history is the history of class struggle, it follows that the classlessness of pre-colonial Africa is proof of the nineteenth-century imperialist belief that Africa was a continent without a history. The only writer who has attempted to resolve this theoretical question is Amilcar Cabral. In the essay 'The Weapon of Theory'[29] Cabral argues that pre-colonial Guinea did in fact have social classes but that there was no class conflict. Because of this it is necessary to rephrase the Marxist assumption that all history involves, by definition, class conflict as the motor force of historical change. Cabral argues that the force driving historical change is the mode of production and that class conflict is but an aspect of a far wider dynamic. The absence of awareness of this problem is characteristic of the shallowness of what has until recently gone under the name of African socialism.

The close affinity between the presuppositions of western academics in proof of the classlessness of African states, and the rhetoric of African socialism is not coincidental.

Chapter 2

Negritude

The ideology of negritude was a vital influence in the development of Fanon's political thought. Its relevance is not confined to *Masks* but can be traced throughout the length of Fanon's three books and his collected essays. The fourth chapter of *The Wretched* contains a detailed critique of negritude or, as Fanon prefers to term it in his last work, negroism.[1]

While almost all of Fanon's critics have commented upon the importance of the negritude movement in the evolution of Fanon's politics none has attempted to explore the relationship in detail. This gap is evident even in the major studies devoted to his writings.

Renate Zahar in her study of Fanon's theory of alienation presents an historical account of negritude yet makes no attempt to establish the nature of the impact of the philosophy upon *Masks* or *The Wretched.* Zahar is simply content to reproduce the thesis of Sartre's 'Orphée noir'[2] as the definitive critique of the movement. David Caute does emphasise the influence of negritude upon Fanon's intellectual development making note of the peculiarly West Indian environment that gave birth to the movement. Caute argues that Fanon, while both attracted and repulsed by the doctrine of a 'black soul', gradually relinquished all sympathy to the ideology.[3]

In her monograph, Irene Gendzier provides the most detailed account of the subject. Gendzier argues that while Fanon's attitude was open and changing between the early essays and *The Wretched* he eventually arrived at a strong stance against negritude.[4] Gendzier believes that in the earlier writings Fanon demonstrates a degree of sympathy for the ideology which was gradually eroded by his growing awareness of its political limitations. As she is chiefly concerned with the effect of negritude upon Fanon's biography, Gendzier concentrates very much upon Fanon's struggle with the question of personal identity.

The conclusions of these three major studies are indicative of the conventional wisdom regarding Fanon's critique of negritude. Without exception Fanon is assumed to have initially endorsed the tenets of negritude (*Masks*) but gradually become antagonistic to what he perceived as the political limitations of the ideology (*The Wretched*). Supposedly, negritude was of interest to Fanon *solely* because it touched upon the question of personal identity which so preoccupied him. As his preoccupation became more political and less psychobiographical so his interest in the movement waned. I believe that both of these interpretations are incorrect and greatly simplify the influence of negritude on Fanon's political theory.

While in his first and last major works Fanon constructed elaborate critiques of the negritude philosophy, there is in fact a substantial shift in his attitude toward the movement between the years 1952 and 1961. If the substance of these critiques are examined in detail, it is apparent that Fanon became *more* rather than *less* sympathetic to negritude with the passing of time. He is more willing to concede the movement a progressive role in *The Wretched* than in *Masks*. This 'inverse' shift in Fanon's estimation of the movement is important for what it reveals about the nature of Fanon's own intellectual and political maturation. It also does much to explain Fanon's view of social classes and his assessment of various factors involved in the decolonisation process.

1. Fanon's critique of negritude

In *Masks, Colonialism* and *The Wretched* Fanon is preoccupied with questions of identity and personality as well as with the problem of the relationship between social institutions and individual biography. Since negritude was initially inspired by the same range of problems, there is a natural affinity between Fanon and such figures as Senghor and Césaire.

In his later writings Fanon frames most of his judgements of the mechanics of colonial domination by reference to the cultural hegemony that the metropoles exercised over their colonies. From the time of writing 'Racism' Fanon was constant in the belief that racism was the ideology of colonialism. Therefore the assaults upon personality that are documented in *Masks* and *The Wretched* must be seen as an integral part of the exercise of colonial rule. Fanon agreed with Césaire that the imperial powers found strength in the devaluation of the culture, the history and even the personality of the peoples it sought to dominate. This devaluation had two distinct

yet interrelated components: at the subjective level the personality of the colonised people was viewed in the most derogatory light. Alternatively, the collective past of the native community was cited as further evidence of a natural feeblemindedness.

By a close reading of each of Fanon's major works it is possible to discover how he responded to the movement and the way in which he came to appropriate several of the tenets common to the writings of Césaire and Senghor. But in doing this it also is necessary to understand the influence of Sartre's essay 'Orphée noir' upon Fanon's judgement of the political and historical significance of negritude.

In his first work Fanon's attitude is paradoxical. In his study of the Antilles one would expect Fanon to be sympathetic at least to the motives behind the negritude movement. Yet in *Masks* Fanon is extremely hostile to negritude especially as an answer to the problem of black identity. He is scornful of the works of Senghor and of Cheikh-Anta Diop in particular for what he perceived as the social and political failings of their poetry.

In *Masks,* Fanon is emphatic that negritude is unsatisfactory as a defence against the assaults of colonial racism. It is not capable of furnishing an answer to the needs of black identity. The reasons for this are threefold: (i) that the claims for the existence of a black soul are readily demolished in the European cultural and political environment; (ii) that there are no 'black values' just as there is no black 'situation' or black 'problem'; and (iii) that there can be no return to the past since the black people's future necessitates coming to terms with European civilisation. Yet Fanon also intimates that negritude, or more specifically the notion of a 'psyche of ascent' proposed by Césaire, may be a precondition for black liberation.

The belief that negroid people experience a unique perception of the world is the most fundamental tenet of negritude. Senghor's famous epithet that emotion is to the Negro as reason is to the Greek is the most succinct statement of this belief. Thus although the Negro people are bereft of worldly goods they possess something of value which is denied to the Caucasian race – namely a sensual intuition. This unique black metaphysic was somewhat akin to a life force that the white race had lost during the process of history. Fanon summarises this belief when he writes ironically: 'Like a magician, I robbed the white man of a "certain world", forever after lost to him and his' (*Masks,* p. 128). In Fanon's view this assertion of a unique black perception can have no impact whatsoever in changing the derogatory view in which the European held the Negro.

To the assertions of a black metaphysic the white replies that this

merely represents a phase of human development through which the white race has already passed (p. 129). The Negro in repeating an outworn cycle is further condemned to a marginal role in world history. Ironically the strivings of the negritude movement reinforce the European view that the Negro and his cultural achievements belong to the childhood of the world (p. 132).

A second tenet of negritude is the belief in the existence of *black values*. Because of the denigration of Negro culture the black is driven to promote the idea of specific values which are conterminous with racial typing. These values flow out of the individual dimensions of the Negro personality. According to Senghor, Negro values include anti-materialism, communalism, mutual responsibility and concern with the community over and above the individual. Many of the same values appear also in the mythology of African nationalism and socialism in both French and British Africa. Fanon is unequivocal in attacking this belief, stating that 'My black skin is not the wrapping of specific values' (*Masks*, p. 227). He argues that values and race do not of necessity coincide and, when they do, the reason for coincidence should be sought in the surrounding social and historical milieu. The idea of a common set of Negro values or qualities of personality originates from white racist ideology. Therefore, by reviving the myth of black values, the proponents of negritude had merely given weight to an already powerful racist ideology. Writing in an autobiographical vein Fanon decries the effect of this new myth of black values: 'I secreted a race. And that race staggered under the burden of a basic element. What was it? Rhythm' (*Masks*, p. 122). By consecrating a myth of racial purity which was merely a restatement of the archaic stereotype of the Negro, Senghor and Diop had invented a new burden for the Negro race.

In a direct refutation of negritude Fanon argues that the fact of race is in itself irrelevant to the plight of the Negro. If there is an historical experience common to all blacks, that does not mean that there is a Negro value-system, or even a Negro people as a sociological entity. Endorsing the sentiments of a poem by Jacques Roumain, Fanon writes, 'Exactly, we will reply, Negro experience is not a whole, for there is not merely *one* Negro, there are *Negroes*' (*Masks*, p. 136). The social experiences of Negroes is as various as that of whites.

Fanon is also highly critical of what he identifies as the atavistic aspect found in the poetry of negritude. Negritude ideology proposed that there could be an effective return to the past as a precondition

for freedom from the domination of European culture. This should be essentially an aesthetic journey by which all the *cult objects* of primitive man are taken up and reinvested with value (*Masks*, p. 127). The backward gaze of negritude leads to two projects, a concern with re-descent into a black soul and a preoccupation with the historical achievements of the Negro race. Fanon is ambivalent about the notion of a re-descent or psyche of ascent, to use Bachelard's term. He argues that it represents an embrace of 'humanity at its lowest' (p. 127) which is highly irrational and easily refuted by European supremacists. To seek the revaluation of that which is without value contributes nothing to easing the conditions of oppressed blacks. Ironically, Fanon proposes that through a path of personal catharsis, a method described by Sartre as the essence of Césaire's poetry, the black may achieve liberation. Fanon expresses this view when he writes: 'There is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born. In most cases, the black man lacks the advantage of being able to accomplish this descent into a real hell' (*Masks*, p. 10). The promise of this personal descent is the eradication of that racial self-hatred which leads alternatively to a white-mask neurosis on the one hand and to negritude on the other.

Although damning the negritude of Senghor and Diop, Fanon does begrudgingly concede that Césaire's psyche of ascent may represent a progressive movement for the black (*Masks*, p. 195). Fanon believes that by a process of psychic re-immersion the black could root out and destroy the European collective unconscious that lies at the centre of his suffering. 'Then, once he had laid bare the white man in himself, he killed him' (*Masks*, p. 198). From this point the black could then be free to pursue the path that Fanon favoured – a progressive and genuine assimilation into the main stream of European culture (p. 12). The erection of a white mask would then be unnecessary with the dissolution of the archetype that had transmitted the myth of the 'dirty nigger'. But Fanon does not make any attempt to connect this strategy with the negritude philosophy.

At the centre of *Masks* is the belief that for the black there was no choice other than to seek an accommodation with the superior culture of Europe (p. 228). Any doctrine that proposed a return to the distant past was recessive. Referring to this nostalgia for a pristine past as the second Negro response (p. 130), in contrast to Césaire's psyche of ascent, Fanon attacks this backward-looking trend in negritude on two grounds: first, it presents, as a basis for action in

the present, an historical situation which corresponds to no existing reality; second, this return to the past changes nothing in the life situation of the oppressed black. On both grounds it is futile.

In his long critique of Mannoni, Fanon argues most vigorously against any notion of a basic Malagasy personality. Similarly, in attacking the writings of Cheikh-Anta Diop, he protests against the assumption of a basic Negro type. Remarking upon Diop's work on Bantu philosophical thought, supposedly a trans-historical phenomenon which clings to all Bantu peoples irrespective of their cultural situation,[5] Fanon states: 'Now we know that Bantu society no longer exists. And that there is nothing ontological about segregation. Enough of this rubbish' (p. 186). The Bantu peoples of South Africa live under conditions of frightful exploitation and it is this exploitation and not the remnants of some distant ontology that determines the quality of their daily lives (p. 184).

The most vocal attack Fanon makes on negritude, an attack he reiterates at various points of *Masks*, is that negritude changes nothing in the daily life of the Negro (pp. 117, 184, 185, 230). Furthermore, in concentrating so much upon the question of race, the advocates of negritude pursue a path that is contrary to the best interests of the black peoples. Fanon believes that the Negro problem is one of social experience and historical accident, not racial typing (p. 202). He writes caustically of the search for the 'universal' which inspired so much of the literature of the movement, 'He [the black] is looking for the universal! But in June, 1950, the hotels of Paris refuse to rent rooms to Negro pilgrims' (*Masks*, p. 186). Rather cynically Fanon likens this search for historical origins to Otto Rank's idea of nostalgia as a wish for a return to the tranquillity of the womb (p. 121).

In *Masks* Fanon portrays negritude as a dead-end which contributes nothing to the alleviation in the present of the suffering of the black. Inadvertently it contributes to the continuation of that suffering by perpetuating a preoccupation with the past (p. 226). Because it functions purely within the confines of an abstract intellectualism, the negritude movement ignores the connection between social conditions and cultural affiliation. The failure of negritude is its failure to address itself to the urgent problems of social justice in preference to an esoteric preoccupation with the past.

In his first work Fanon summarises his critique of the negritude movement with the following passage:

> I shall demonstrate elsewhere that what is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact.

> The educated Negro, slave of the spontaneous and Cosmic Negro myth, feels at a given stage that his race no longer understands him.
>
> Or that he no longer understands it.
>
> Then he congratulates himself on this, and enlarging the difference, the incomprehension, the disharmony, he finds in them the meaning of his real humanity. Or more rarely he wants to belong to his people. And it is with rage in his mouth and abandon in his heart that he buries himself in the vast black abyss. We shall see that this attitude, so heroically absolute, renounces the present and the future in the name of a mystical past. (*Masks*, p. 16)

In *Masks*, Fanon is quite unequivocal that negritude was a barrier to the liberation of the Negro. Yet still he retains a place for Césaire's psyche of ascent as a liberative instrument in so far as it furthers the genuine assimilation of the Negro into western culture (p. 203). Thus one aspect of Fanon's rejection of negritude was the fear that it presented an obstacle to the integration of the West Indian into full membership of the French Union. Also, he is sympathetic to Césaire's psyche of ascent as a possible answer to the problems of personal identity. Negritude, either as a search for specific black values or as an attempt to rewrite the history of the Negro race, flounders upon its obsession with the past and its inadequacy when confronted with the problems of the present. In summary, Fanon's admitted attitude is one of unrelenting hostility.

i Racial and political consciousness

Three years after the publication of *Masks*, Fanon published an article entitled 'West Indians and Africans'[6] in which he attempted to set his first book into an historical context. This essay carries forward many of the themes suggested in *Masks* and as such is helpful in explicating that text. 'West Indians' also reveals a substantial shift in Fanon's assessment of the political significance of the movement.

What are Fanon's criticisms of the movement expressed in 'West Indians'? In what way do these differ from his attitude in his earliest work? As in the first work, Fanon takes dispute with the concept of a Negro people (*Revolution*, pp. 27, 28). Even to employ the term robs individual Negroes of the possibility for individual expression (p. 28), and by implication perpetuates the racist assumption that all blacks are alike. Fanon concedes that while Negro peoples may in

fact share common cultural influences (p. 27) they, like all peoples, are subject to a vast range of social, historical, and geographical experience, 'The truth is that there is nothing, *a priori* to warrant the assumption that such a thing as a Negro people exists' (*Revolution*, p. 28). The mere use of the term induces blacks to behave in conformity with the stereotype it projects. Beyond this, Fanon questions the assumption of a natural solidarity of belief and, by implication, of political ideology among the ranks of black peoples. The problem is essentially one of the connection between race and culture, although Fanon at this stage does not pose the question in these terms.

In 'West Indians' Fanon is unrestrained in passing judgement upon the detrimental features of the negritude movement. In reference to *Masks*, he asserts: 'I was not unaware of the fact that within the very entity of the "Negro People" movements could be discerned which, unfortunately, were devoid of any attractive features' (p. 27). While negritude is not specifically mentioned, the target for Fanon's comments is obvious. Fanon extends this rejection of an affective or natural solidarity of black peoples to include, for the first time, direct reference to the influence of class interest. He argues that in Martinique the question of race is secondary to that of social class (p. 28). Solidarity occurs along lines of objective economic interest which cut across 'natural' lines of racial solidarity. Consequently: 'A Negro worker will be on the side of the Mulatto worker against the middle-class Negro' (p. 28). The impact of racial factors is subordinate to economic influences, or, as Fanon prefers, they belong to a superstructure as 'ideological emanations' (p. 28). The determining lines of political identification are economic, not racial. Any idea of racial solidarity such as espoused by negritude should inevitably be subordinate to the influence of class position upon the various participants in a political conflict.

The concept of class interest introduces the possibility that Fanon could now for the first time identify the social foundations of negritude in terms of both its avowed historical project and its ideological function.

In 'West Indians' Fanon's criticisms of negritude are mediated by an overriding approval for the political impact of the movement. In the Antilles the adoption of negritude led the black Antillean inexorably toward a political radicalisation which would not otherwise have been possible. Fanon argues that a shift occurred in the psychological orientation of the West Indian over the period of the war. Prior to 1939, the blacks identified with the Europeans against

the 'inferior African'. They believed themselves to be 'Europeans' rather than Negroes in what was an embrace of the white-mask psychology. This identification was authenticated in Europe where the West Indian was accepted as a quasi-metropolitan (p. 30). For a West Indian to be mistaken for an African would be tantamount to a personal disaster.

During the war a large part of the French fleet was blockaded in Fort de France, Martinique. This swelled the ranks of the European population with a large number of sailors who were to display a latent racist mentality (p. 32). Under the impact of this unexpected racist assault, the West Indian responded by reversing his view of the world. Having clambered after a white identity he now adopted negritude. Fanon refers to this 'axiological abrogation' as the Antillean's first metaphysical experience. This experience corresponded to a political radicalisation which saw the birth of an Antillean proletariat (p. 34). Once the blacks of Martinique had systematised their political consciousness they turned naturally toward a Marxist ideology.

The acceptance of the doctrine of negritude corresponded to the proletarianisation of the Antillean black who formerly had laboured under the delusion of a white identity. Fanon believed the barrier to the acceptance of blackness, and consequently of political reality, to be irony. He notes: 'It is true in the West Indies irony is a mechanism of defence against neurosis. A West Indian, in particular an intellectual who is no longer on the level of irony, discovers his Negritude' (p. 29). The intellectual is able to maintain an absurd belief in his 'European identity', without becoming neurotic, through the agency of irony. He knows his position is absurd yet he prefers to maintain it. The erosion of this ironic sense acted as an impetus to the adoption of negritude which in turn stimulated an awakening political consciousness.

Although Fanon is now willing to admit a politically progressive role for negritude, he remains highly critical of the movement as an answer to the question of black identity. This is evident where he proclaims 'It thus seems that the West Indian, after the great white error, is now living in the great black mirage' (p. 37). Even if the historical impact of the movement points in the direction of political reform, the philosophy of negritude is still a snare and a delusion.

So far as the problem of individual identity is concerned, the major question which arises from Fanon's essay is this: would the political awakening of the Antillean proletariat have taken place without the

psychological re-orientation of the black from Europe to Africa? While Fanon appears to answer no, he refuses to concede negritude the significance that it apparently deserves.

The remaining essays and journalism in the collection *Revolution,* add little to the criticisms of the movement found in 'West Indians'. The only addition is a degree of concretisation of the previous arguments. In *Masks* Fanon intimated that the poets of negritude were engaged in the simulation and affectation of cultural production. The taking up of artifacts from long-lost civilisations bore no relevance to cultural life as the framework for social experience. In 'Racism' he comments that such black intellectuals are committed to the cultivation of culture (p. 51), and contrasts their quest to the surety of traditionalists who live within the framework of an authentic culture. Unlike the followers of negritude who had completely severed all ties with the national culture, these traditionalists continue to attach dynamic meaning to indigenous institutions (p. 52). The cultural affiliations of the intellectuals are abstract whereas those of the traditionalists are substantive.

Fanon is also critical of negritude because of the apparent paradox it entails (p. 52). The idea of the existence of a fundamental African mentality is promulgated by those who, through the experience of western education, have moved farthest from familiarity with such values. Fanon refers to this phenomenon when he writes: 'This falling back upon archaic positions having no relation to technical development is paradoxical. The institutions thus valorized no longer correspond to the elaborate methods of action already mastered' (p. 52). The native intellectual's embrace of negritude appears irrational. There is a hiatus between the sophisticated skills and techniques that these intellectuals have come to master and their adherence to a doctrine which celebrates primitivism and traditionalism. Although this falling back upon archaic positions can be readily understood as a form of self-defence against being overwhelmed by European culture (p. 52), the paradox remains.

Extending his endorsement of the movement as a progressive challenge to white domination, Fanon turns to argue for its subjective importance. In the later essays of *Revolution* Fanon interprets negritude as a reflexive response to European cultural hegemony which leads eventually to political resistance. He notes that: 'On emerging from these passionate espousals, the native will have decided, "with full knowledge of what is involved", to fight all forms of exploitation and of alienation of man' (*Revolution,* p. 53). The

paradoxical return to a concern with the pre-colonial past serves to radicalise the native intellectuals against the colonial system in the present. It is seen by Fanon that 'the plunge into the chasm of the past is the condition and the source of freedom' (*Revolution*, p. 53). Negritude leads, inexorably, to revolutionary action (p. 53). The colonial experience provokes either a neurotic quest for assimilation or a retreat into the confines of slowly dying traditional institutions. The revolutionary effect of negritude is found in the distance it establishes between the colonised and the culture of the European power. Fanon explains that the importance of this distancing effect is that: 'It is not possible to take one's distance with respect to colonialism without at the same time taking it with respect to the idea that the colonized holds of himself through the filter of colonialist culture' (*Revolution*, p. 114). By breaking down the idea that the colonised has of himself, negritude can initiate a genuine challenge to colonialism to the extent to which that system depends upon cultural hegemony.

In his sociology of the Algerian revolution, *Colonialism*, Fanon makes few references to negritude. This absence of interest is rather curious as it cannot be explained by the fact that the context is for the first time Africa and not the West Indies. Like *Masks*, *The Wretched* contains a detailed critique of negritude. It is apparent that between writing the essay *West Indians* and *The Wretched* Fanon had come to believe the dissolution of indigenous culture to be a major feature of the colonial system. The failure of France and Britain to destroy completely the African's confidence in his own culture was of great significance in the decolonisation struggle. In the case of Algeria, differences in personality and values which separated the Muslim from the French populations held the promise of Algerian nationalism.

In *Colonialism* Fanon examines the modes of cultural adaptation undertaken by the Muslims in response to the various intrusions made by the French state. From this study, Fanon formulates what he believes to be a law of the psychology of colonialism: 'In an initial phase, it is the action, the plans of the occupier that determine the centres of resistance around which a people's will to survive becomes organised. It is the white man who creates the Negro. But it is the Negro who creates negritude' (*Colonialism*, p. 32). The shifting attitudes of the Muslims toward the veil, western medicine, and the radio reflected changes in the policies of the French. But the Muslim's decision to take up or reject these instruments was auton-

omous. The Algerian's attitude of passive defiance, whilst expressive of the antagonisms of the colonial relationship, was always founded upon a choice freely made.

ii Criticisms of negritude in 'The Wretched'

In his final work, Fanon extends and develops the critique of negritude found in the earlier writings. While all the familiar themes are present, there are a number of original criticisms which are not found elsewhere.

Fanon's basic criticism of the movement is that it is too abstract. This abstraction appears in the practice of lumping all Negro people under a single category, thereby denying the heterogeneity of Negro experience. Like the colonial racists, the poets of negritude presume race to be the determinant of the individual's social identity.

Reiterating the criticisms first voiced in *Masks* and 'West Indians', Fanon argues that there is no natural or substantive solidarity among Negro peoples because of the fact of race. Like the colonialism, which it aims to refute, negritude's affirmation of black values takes the entire continent as its frame of reference (p. 170). Movements promoting cultural renaissance tend to place all Negroes into a single category; if only because 'the efforts of the native to rehabilitate himself and to escape from the claws of colonialism are logically inscribed from the same point of view as that of colonialism' (*The Wretched*, p. 170). It is from this source that such movements derive their abstract quality. Yet, in contrast to the Pan-Islamic movements, the proponents of negritude encourage this abstraction by failing to concede importance to national loyalties (p. 172). Certainly the blacks of Latin and North America like the African and the West Indian share a need to discover a cultural matrix (p. 173), guaranteeing the individual a sense of personal identity. Subjectively, these groups share common ground through their experience of European racism, but objectively their problems are quite heterogeneous (p. 174). Fanon comments that 'Negro-ism therefore finds its first limitation in the phenomena which take account of the formation of the historical character of men' (*The Wretched*, p. 174).

Culture is first and foremost national, not racial, and its determinants are those very same forces which shape the economic and historical foundations of man's experience. Fanon is emphatic that race alone signifies little about a social group for in no sense is there a determining link between racial type and cultural production. In a direct attack upon negritude, Fanon insists: 'There will never be such

a thing as black culture because there is not a single politician who feels he has a vocation to bring black republics into being' (*The Wretched*, pp. 188–9). To support black culture is to pursue a political dead end. The idea of black civilisation only serves to obscure the realities of Negro existence.

In *Masks* Fanon had made reference to the abstractness and artificiality of negritude in proposing the historical achievements of black peoples in the past as a palliative for the alienation of blacks in the present. In *The Wretched* he reiterates this same criticism where he highlights the contrast between the idealised view of the black promoted by negritude and the reality of grinding poverty. 'Men of African cultures who are still fighting in the name of African-Negro culture and who have called many congresses in the name of the unity of that culture should today realize that all their efforts amount to is to make comparisons between coins and sarcophagi' (*The Wretched*, p. 188). The search for a black soul is nothing but a quest for the exotic and the native intellectual soon discovers that his own culture cannot furnish any historical figures comparable to those supplied by the colonising power. In turning to the actual social conditions of his own people the intellectual will discover that 'he is terrified by the void, the degradation and the savagery he sees there' (*The Wretched*, p. 177). This realisation very often drives the intellectual into a blind alley. An exceptional 'sensitivity' and 'sensibility' (p. 177) are the psychological result of this tragic quest to escape the grasp of colonial cultural dominance. Fanon expresses the fear that very often this sensitivity will lead to a retreat rather than to an advancement in political consciousness (pp. 176–7). Alternatively it may lead to an active opposition to the colonial presence (p. 177).

Because such movements as negritude seek to justify the place of the Negro race solely by reference to past achievements, they all too readily fall under the spell of the European supremacism which they wish to destroy. It is for this reason that Fanon believed such movements can never of themselves change the colonial relationship.

iii Affirmations of negritude in 'The Wretched'

In *The Wretched* Fanon maintains an implicit distinction between the *objective failings* of the negritude movement and its *subjective necessity*. Even though it presents no direct challenge to colonial domination, it does provide relief to the psychoexistential plight of the native intellectual, and as such serves a progressive role. But

Fanon is unsure as to the necessity of the connection between subjective relevance and political progressiveness. The deculturating impact of colonial rule can lead native intellectuals from despair at the impossibility of genuine assimilation to the adoption of negritude and finally to a radical political commitment (p. 177). Conversely intellectuals may progress from despair at the agony of twin nationalities, to the adoption of a universalist mentality (p. 176). Although the subjectivist impact of negritude is capable of generating a revolutionary consciousness by affording intellectuals a degree of emotional stability, Fanon implies that the path will lead most commonly to a belief in the brotherhood of man.

In his final work Fanon goes to great lengths in his attempt to identify the historical significance of the movement. Such movements as negritude which are motivated by ideals of a cultural renaissance are a direct response to the colonial intent to destroy indigenous culture. Fanon comments of colonialism that: 'By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today' (p. 169). The aim of this work of cultural destruction is to legitimise the colonial project under the guise of a civilising mission. The desire to establish the existence of a worthwhile national culture in the past is a vital need for the few western-educated intellectuals. While this search changes nothing in material terms, it nevertheless represents a progressive step. Initially, it assuages the anxiety of the *évolués* who feel threatened by the overwhelming authority of European culture (p. 168).

In seeking out the contours of pre-colonial history the intellectuals find 'some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others' (p. 169). This search also leads the educated to some intimate contact with their own people from whom they have been largely estranged (p. 168). Although Fanon does not acknowledge the significance of social class, this renewed contact between the native intellectual and the people presents the possibility of an alliance between the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

The return to the source causes important changes in the *psycho-affective* equilibrium of the petty bourgeoisie (p. 168). If the intellectual does not free himself from the pull of the colonialist cultural matrix the consequences may be tragic: 'This tearing away, painful and difficult though it may be, is, however, necessary. If it is not accomplished there will be serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without an anchor, without a horizon, col-

ourless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels' (*The Wretched,* p. 175). This 'return to the source' is not simply an aesthetic journey but a necessary step in the painful process of rehabilitating the *colonial personality.* The parallels between this inward journey to freedom and Fanon's account in *Masks* of the psyche of ascent are obvious. In each case a process of psychological cleansing is the necessary preparation for social liberation.

In *The Wretched* Fanon's achievement is to establish a linkage between this *subjective challenge* answered by negritude and the *objective need* for social change that calls negritude, initially, into being. The 'return to the source' promises to resolve a number of interconnected problems; it promotes the psycho-affective disalienation of the native intellectual, while establishing some solidarity between urban and rural classes. Where this solidarity is established it will concretise the abstract cultural demands of the western-educated elite which is the only faction capable of supplying the leadership for a nationalist movement.

Fanon believes that the action of movements such as negritude reverberates throughout the colonial system: 'The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native' (*The Wretched,* p. 169). Cultural renaissance has an important anti-colonial role to play since it foreshadows the emergence of political challenges to imperialism. Such a movement not only changes individuals but lends support to the claims for change to political institutions and the relationships that those institutions legitimise. In a context where colonial rule derives part of its *raison d'être* from cultural lethargy and social stultification the promotion of indigenous culture involves *a priori* a questioning of the colonial relationship itself. Of this connection Fanon comments: 'In such a situation the claims of the native intellectual are no luxury but a necessity in any coherent programme' (*The Wretched,* p. 170).

The battle against colonialism begins in the field of the interpretation of pre-colonial history. While on the surface the clamouring after the recognition of the achievements of pre-colonial societies appears to have little political significance, Fanon argues that the reverse is actually the case. Even if the intellectual's preoccupation with rehabilitating a national culture is limited to the writing of history and the study of aesthetics it does much in justifying the action of politicians.

In his early writings Fanon is quite paradoxical in the criticisms he makes of the negritude movement. From the time of writing the essay 'West Indians' he accepts negritude as a subjectively necessary counter to the psychologically damaging influence of colonial deculturation. Alternatively he dismisses the movement's pretensions as a social force. Negritude cannot change the conditions of economic and political oppression under which black people are forced to exist. Over time Fanon grows to accept negritude as part of a larger historical movement in which colonialism will gradually be dissolved. Fanon's enthusiasm increased even though his preoccupation with questions of personal identity waned considerably after 1954. It was not until *The Wretched* that Fanon admitted that the search of native intellectuals for a worthwhile historical past had any positive political significance. His final statements on national culture and negritude indicate that perhaps only negritude could free black intellectuals from the mental sedimentation of the colonial experience.

2. Fanon and Sartre's 'Orphée noir'

The most remarkable aspect of Fanon's attitude toward the poetry and philosophy of negritude is the fact that he was more sympathetic to the movement in his later work than in *Masks*. The explanation of this change is found in Fanon's gradual appropriation of Sartre's dialectic. Through the medium of Sartre's thesis, Fanon was able to reconcile those elements of the philosophy of negritude, already present within his own work, with a growing commitment to revolutionary socialism. For this reason it is important to trace the changes in Fanon's attitude toward Sartre's essay over the range of Fanon's major writings.

In *Masks* Fanon makes a number of specific criticisms of 'Orphée noir'. Because of his hostility at the time to negritude his initial response to Sartre's essay was quite negative. Besides dismissing the myth of a black soul which Sartre had found so productive both aesthetically and politically, there are three points of criticism that Fanon levels against Sartre's thesis.

First, he takes dispute with Sartre's interpretation of negritude and language. Sartre had argued that part of the revolutionary intent of the black poets was revealed in their attack upon poetic language. Although the black poets had, like the Surrealists before them, set out to destroy the French language, unlike Breton, Aragon and Prévert they had been motivated by the wish for emotional catharsis – the wish to disgorge their internalised whiteness (p. 26). Fanon is

adamant that Sartre's comments are not relevant to the Antilles since Creole (the Antillean attack upon French) is no longer a lingua franca. Because of its use as the medium of education, French would soon replace Creole. The Antilleans' acceptance of French is proof, for Fanon, of their cultural integrity.

Fanon's second point of contention with Sartre is expressed in highly personalised terms. Certain sections of *Masks* are written in the first person and in one such passage Fanon makes an impassioned attack upon Sartre for having destroyed black zeal (*Masks*, p. 135). Fanon expresses anguish over that aspect of Sartre's thesis which places negritude as a minor term in a larger dialectic. Fanon interprets this as an assault upon the integrity of blacks in emphasising the 'relativity of what they were doing' (p. 133). Sartre's dialectic implied that the meaning the Negro chose in opposing white racism was predetermined. Even in the act of revolt the theme of the action of the Negro was created by the European. Fanon admonishes Sartre for having failed to understand the plight of the Negro and the dimensions of his need for liberation.

The area of greatest divergence between Fanon and Sartre occurs over the effect of Sartre's dialectic. While he does not directly challenge the formulation of the dialectic, Fanon abhors what he believes to be its implication. He complains of Sartre: 'he was reminding me that my blackness was only a minor term' (*Masks*, p. 138), and goes on to lament the untenable situation in which Sartre's critique had placed the black. These pages are quite remarkable for the impression they convey. It appears from the tenor of Fanon's comments that although he had been a vocal supporter of negritude, Sartre's essay had shaken his commitment. Yet nowhere in *Masks* is there any evidence that Fanon had at any time subscribed to the philosophy of the movement. In fact the only indication of any sympathy for negritude appears in the pages expressing dismay at Sartre's dialectic.

There are two possible ways of resolving this problem. One may assume that in his earliest work Fanon accepted Sartre's dialectic as valid if only because he makes no direct comment to the contrary and less than two years later in the essay 'West Indians' he has no hesitation in endorsing Sartre's thesis. Conversely it is possible that Fanon actually reversed his earlier negative judgement of negritude and in time came to accept Sartre's interpretation as to the progressive character of the movement. To untangle this problem formally it is necessary to make a distinction between the subjective project of negritude and its objective influence upon colonial life. The rever-

sal which took place in Fanon's admitted estimation of the movement between the years 1952 and 1954 occurred because of the consanguinity between his own conception of disalienation and that suggested in the poetry of Senghor, Césaire and Diop.

In *Masks* Fanon could find no objective worth in the celebration of the existence of past African civilisations, neither would he admit that the idea of a descent into the embrace of a black soul, found in negritude, was in any way useful. This was so, despite the fact of the considerable amount of common ground between Fanon's conception of disalienation presented in *Masks* and Césaire's and Senghor's poetics. By the time of writing the essay 'West Indians' Fanon had come to accept the possibility of negritude as a progressive force if only because of its subjectivist project promoting emotional health among black intellectuals. Although he was to remain antagonistic to the movement's preoccupation with fossicking for historical artifacts, Fanon's sympathy for what was the core of the negritude philosophy is gradually less equivocal as one moves from his earlier to his later writings. In time Fanon was able to admit something of his debt to the movement.

i Fanon's affirmations of Sartre's thesis

Fanon shares common ground with Sartre over a number of specific issues and, while these areas of agreement are not exclusive to the question of negritude, they bear upon the solutions Fanon arrived at in his final critique. In fact the way in which Fanon comes to appropriate Sartre's dialectic reflects both the evolution of Fanon's thought and his growing political radicalism.

In *Masks* Fanon argues that a descent into a real, personal hell is a condition for the liberation of the Negro. By adopting a method *analogous* to Césaire's psyche of ascent (p. 10), the internal antinomy symbolised by the white mask may be cast out and the individual freed from the oppression of the past (p. 10). Fanon was oblivious to the closeness of his own solution to the problem of alienation, to the poetic method, and even to the imagery, of Césaire.

The gradual accommodation that occurs between Fanon's interpretation of negritude and Sartre's dialectic is most obvious in the essay 'West Indians'. In arguing that in the Antilles the adoption of negritude was a defence against the assaults of European racism, Fanon concedes that the movement serves a progressive role. By 1954 Fanon had come to believe that negritude was a vehicle for the growth of political consciousness which in Martinique had led directly to

the birth of a proletariat. Its subjectivist project stimulated the rejection of economic subordination by both intellectuals and members of the working class (*Revolution*, pp. 33–6). The same evaluation of negritude appears in other parts of the collected essay (*Revolution*, pp. 53, 114) and indicates a substantial change in Fanon's attitude.

By 1960 Fanon was willing to accept that negritude had a worthwhile role to play in the individual's search for cultural identity, especially in the case of the intellectual. In accord with Sartre, he argues that cultural renaissance movements have an important and progressive function in preparing the ground for a political challenge to colonial oppression. But in contradistinction to Sartre, Fanon's third term in his dialectic is revolutionary nationalism, not a socialist society devoid of racism.

The influence of 'Orphée noir' is also present in the typology of colonial literature found in 'On National Culture'.[7] Fanon distinguishes between three phases of indigenous literary production: the first is an assimilationist literature which is purely imitative and is geared to a metropolitan audience; this is followed by a period of 're-immersion' into the symbolism and myths of indigenous culture. Although Fanon refrains from using the term, this obviously corresponds to the phase of negritude;[8] the final phase is the revolutionary period when national literature sets out to inform the people and awaken their political consciousness (pp. 78–80). The shift between the first and second forms heralds the rebirth of artistic vitality and the growth of political consciousness. Clearly this typology has been extrapolated from 'Orphée noir'.

In summary, what begins as a fierce attack upon 'Orphée noir' ends with Fanon's acquiescence to Sartre's dialectic. Fanon makes no attempt to acknowledge this debt, and no reference to 'Orphée noir' is made after *Masks*. Yet Fanon's changing attitude toward the negritude movement runs parallel with his gradual appropriation of Sartre's dialectic. It was not until Fanon had accepted the dialectical significance of negritude that he could acknowledge the movement as politically and psychologically important. Conversely, there is a degree of reluctance on Fanon's part to concede the approbation that Sartre extends to the African and West Indian poets. Very often when writing of the repercussions of negritude Fanon will caution that it can lead to a political quietism or a universalism that is politically regressive (*Revolution*, p. 37, *The Wretched*, p. 176). Yet this reluctance is not substantiated by any hesitance in accepting Sartre's dialectic as valid.

Despite the evidence in *Masks* that Fanon felt much sympathy for

Césaire's psyche of ascent, his interpretation of the goal toward which that ascent was directed is quite different from Césaire's original vision. What is one of the most striking passages in *Masks* explains the reason for this distance between Fanon and Césaire. It also exposes an aspect of Fanon's political consciousness which was to bring him into conflict with Marxist figures such as Sartre. In the opening pages of *Masks* Fanon writes, 'However painful it may be for me to accept this conclusion, I am obliged to state it: For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white' (*Masks*, p. 12). The white destiny to which Fanon refers is not a more elaborate white mask but, rather, the full assimilation of the West Indian into the mainstream of European economic and cultural life. Fanon's politics at the time of *Masks* were far from Sartre's Marxism of 1950. At the conclusion of *Masks* Fanon reiterates this notion of a white destiny: 'The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white. Long ago the black man admitted the unarguable superiority of the white man, and all his efforts are aimed at achieving a white existence' (*Masks*, p. 228). The question of a white existence exposes the concept of alienation which is implicit in Fanon's study of the Antilles. Fanon believed the West Indian to be closer to liberation than the black African simply because he defined liberation as the achievement of a white existence. The qualities which Fanon associates with whiteness are primarily economic and cultural but apparently exclude the kind of psychological characteristics described in *Prospero and Caliban*. Whiteness occurs above a certain economic level and only when the problems of a 'human minimum' are solved can liberation from cultural and political oppression take place.

In *Masks* Fanon assumes that there are two dialectics governing the liberation of the Negro – the first is primarily economic and the second psychoexistential.[9] In terms of the analysis presented in *Masks* these dialectics correspond roughly to the geographical and sociopolitical distance between continental Africa and the West Indies. Once the problem of economic alienation has been resolved, then the question of cultural liberation can be effectively posed. Fanon is quite unequivocal in rejecting negritude as having any bearing upon the resolution of the first problem; it is irrelevant to the plight of the African and the problem of a human minimum. In the Antilles the distinguishing feature of colonial alienation is its intellectual character but, in the future, intellectual alienation will confront the African, since the two dialectics are sequential.

Fanon's major dialectic in *Masks*, addressed to the psychoexisten-

tial alienation of the Negro, is heavily derived from Sartre's 'Orphée noir'; the thesis is white racism, the antithesis is negritude, or, alternatively, the white mask, and the synthesis is a new humanism in a world freed from racism. The step from the second to the third terms is bridged by Fanon's application of the psyche of ascent suggested by Césaire's subjectivist method. It is bridged by a process of self-reflection which the progressive infrastructure of *Masks* was intended to generate. This is a narrow dialectic that is confined to the Antilles or, more specifically, to the West Indian middle class. The politics of Fanon's solution is assimilation and it is in perfect conformity with the formal prescriptions of French colonialism.

The second dialectic applies to the condition of the African who suffers directly from crude economic exploitation; the thesis is white economic exploitation, the antithesis is social revolution, and the synthesis is a new social order. Sartre's dialectic implies that negritude must always lead the Negro beyond aesthetics to the threshold of socialist theory. For Sartre a human society without racism is, by definition, a socialist society. In *Masks* there is no such conclusion. Fanon's actional man is not socialist man. In his later work these two dialectics are incorporated into the theory of revolutionary decolonisation.

By examining Fanon's work in light of his judgement of negritude, a number of inconsistencies become apparent. It is clear that he believed, even in *Masks,* that the condition of the black was determined primarily by economic factors. Therefore to achieve disalienation presupposes changing both economic and social institutions. This in turn raises the problem of how and to what extent such change is to occur. Should there be simultaneous change in the mentality of the individual and in the ordering of social institutions? Do such changes represent discreet steps in a single process or perhaps they correspond to the geographies of Africa, and the West Indies?

In *Masks* and 'West Indians' Fanon claims that there is no political or economic discrimination in the Antilles, which could account for the transmission of a European collective unconscious. The racial stereotyping of the Negro could not be explained by reference to existing economic conditions. In contrast, South Africa has a social order in which apartheid promotes and legitimises the prevailing economic relationships between the races. There, racism is functionally specific.

The tragedy of the Antilles is that economic change had not been matched by change in the way that the white viewed the black and

consequently the way in which the black viewed himself. The psychoexistential perception of race had become atrophied as each group approached the other through a haze of historically redundant stereotypes. Negritude, rather than offering a solution to the problem of the 'Tower of the Past' (p. 226), as Fanon terms the source of black alienation, serves only to perpetuate it. This explains Fanon's antipathy to the objectivist stream in negritude that sought to justify or revalue the black personality in the present through the existence of black civilisations in the distant past.

Fanon's critical attitude towards the suffocating weight of the past applies equally to the racist collective unconscious of the European and the archaic metaphysic of the poets of negritude. The past in this sense is analogous to the past of the neurotic which dominates his present and thereby mortgages his future. The white-mask psychology of the Antillean and the ideology of negritude both relinquish the possibilities of the present under the coercion of the past.

In an oblique but important attack upon negritude Fanon likens the attitude of the movement to the past to that of a dog lying on its master's grave. Those who would believe that a dog has a soul would find proof in the sight of a dog sitting by its master's grave until it starved to death. Fanon points out that: 'We had to wait for Janet to demonstrate that the aforesaid dog, in contrast to man, simply lacked the capacity to liquidate the past' (*Masks*, p. 121). Likewise the black's preoccupation with dead civilisations bestows no evidence of his virtue in the present but, like the dog, only proves his incapacity to dispel the past as the determinant of his actions.

Fanon coins the term affective ankylosis (p. 122) to define the hardening of the Europeans' sensibility with regard to the Negro. The white, like the dog, cannot obliterate the past (p. 122) while the Negro falls into the trap of accepting the past as definitive. Confronted with each other, the Negro seeks revenge for past wrongs or rehabilitation through distant achievements while the white stumbles after expiation for the sins of his race.

In *Masks* Fanon was convinced that negritude was little more than a neurotic response to a neurotogenic situation. In the Antilles the white mask, the original defence against racial oppression and anxiety, had been gradually replaced by negritude. Fanon's reply to the claim for the existence of a black soul was that the future of the Negro lay in 'being white' and pursuing a white existence. Certain of Fanon's clinical papers show just how deeply committed he was to a belief in the universality of European cultural standards. This

explains, at least in part, why he supported the idea of a white existence and how it was possible for him to reject negritude.

In *The Wretched* Fanon is uninterested in negritude as a code of aesthetics or as an artistic movement, despite the references to artistic production found in 'On National Culture'. Having defined culture as a political activity, Fanon is determined to assess negritude in terms of its political pretensions. Throughout *The Wretched,* despite certain considered affirmations, Fanon is unconvinced as to the necessary political progressiveness of cultural renaissance movements. Often he warns that such movements too easily lead into a dead end, since they are essentially subjectivist responses to colonial domination.

The harshest criticism Fanon makes of the movement, particularly in his early work, concerns the primacy of political and social realities which he believes negritude ignored. The importance Fanon attaches to such factors grows rather than diminishes over time, and it is apparent that in *Masks* he is far from certain about the direction such change should take. Yet where Fanon is politically most confident, as in the latter pages of *The Wretched,* he goes so far as to imply that cultural renaissance movements are virtually pro-nationalist.

3. The radical left critique

Fanon was not alone in his antipathy toward negritude. During the 1960s the movement inspired numerous attacks from African intellectuals who felt that, rather than forwarding the cause of decolonisation, negritude had become a barrier to liberation of the continent. Such writers as Mphahlele, Soyinka, Keita and Cabral[10] have elaborated lengthy critiques intended to encourage the re-orientation of African intellectuals away from the metaphysics of a black soul. In one sense the history of the movement is a metaphor for the failure of the radical nationalism. The claim by the proponents of the movement that its major achievement was to prefigure African socialism has, in light of the post-independence malaise, turned into a damning criticism.

Mphahlele, Soyinka, and Keita trace the relationship between the aspirations and achievements of the doctrine in the light of the political emancipation of the continent. Their critiques are important as they explicate the connection between the content of the

doctrine as a 'radical' philosophy directed against colonial rule and the politically conservative ends to which the myth of a black soul has been put. Cabral, on the other hand, highlights what is perhaps the most important question which arises in regard to negritude, namely the connection between the philosophy of negritude and its role as the ideology of a particular social class.

While there are some minor differences of approach, Mphahlele, Soyinka and Keita agree in broad outline upon the vices of the ideology. They claim that negritude spread political mystification by emphasising cultural production as an abstraction while ignoring the more urgent issues of the colonial relationship. Because the movement was the preoccupation of educated elites and the victims of the diaspora, it promoted a view of African culture which lacked any real substance. In practice, the movement's exotic façade and its powerlessness to impose changes on the colonial system were consistent with the interests of those it served, namely the indigenous bourgeoisie. Keita goes so far as to accuse negritude of inadvertently serving the interests of imperialism; he points out that: 'Negritude is actually a good mystifying anaesthetic for Negroes who have been whipped too long and too severely to a point where they have lost all reason and become purely emotional.'[11] Emotionalism attracted attention away from the substantive isssues in the relationship between Africa and European capital. Keita goes on to argue that the supporters of negritude did not contest the colonial relationship because there was nothing in the doctrine which necessitated political opposition. The native middle class for whom the doctrine held such appeal chose to adopt a subjectivist opposition to colonialism but refrained from taking an objective or political stance (p. 19). In this way negritude served to emaciate the national middle classes' potential radicalism.

Keita, Mphahlele, and Soyinka imply that the failure of negritude was inevitable not simply because of the tenacity of colonial and neo-colonial forces but because of the profound lack of direction at the heart of the movement. Soyinka argues that the preoccupation with the distant past helped to perpetuate the injustices of the present. Much the same view is found in Markovitz's detailed study of the politics of negritude in Senegal.[12] Far from acting as a liberative instrument in promoting the formation of nationalist and socialist opposition, negritude stands accused of helping to truncate those very forces. Consequently, African socialism was still-born, in part, because of and not in spite of the influence of negritude. As a

'counter-mythology' negritude had proven to be as mystifying as the colonial racism it sought to destroy.

These criticisms pose the question of the relationship between negritude as an ideology and the social class which espoused it. Amilcar Cabral's essay, 'Identity and Dignity in the Context of the National Liberation Struggle', suggests an answer. Cabral disputes the belief that cultural production, or rather the production of intellectuals, inevitably increases prior to the outbreak of a war of national liberation. This is true only of the indigenous middle classes and of the victims of the diaspora who have been subject to sustained contact with the culture of the colonialist. Immediately prior to the period of nationalist struggle, the middle classes become preoccupied with the idea of a 'return to the source', that is, with questions of personal identity posed exclusively in relation to indigenous culture. Because of their ambiguous proximity to the cultural and material wealth of the colonialist and the impossibility of their full participation in that world, they come to suffer from a 'frustration complex'. This in turn stimulates an obsession with personal identity. In political terms what is most distinctive about this search for identity is its individualistic character.[13] The greater the degree of acculturation and alienation from traditional cultural ties the greater the need for personal identity. Consequently, it is almost inevitable that the doctrines of negritude and Pan-Africanism should have originated from among the ranks of New-World blacks.

Cabral believes that this quest for identity is politically sterile unless it leads to a commitment against imperialism and an active identification with the bulk of the people, the peasantry. He makes a distinction between a quest for personal identity that is subjectivist and politically sterile and a 'return to the source' that stimulates radical political action. So long as the search for identity precludes the indigenous community as a collectivity, it is doomed to be reactionary.

Cabral is careful in identifying the social origin of those indigenous elements engaged in the quest for identity. In the case of the peasantry it makes no sense to talk in terms of a return to the source since they, as a class, have never left the confines of an indigenous cultural matrix. Because the impact of colonial acculturation is exclusive to the few urban centres, the peasantry is relatively untouched. In Africa the cultural influence of the metropole has been confined to a single class, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus negritude is the ideology of that class which, while objectively enjoying a com-

paratively high standard of living, is in subjective terms the most prone to feel the slights of European cultural arrogance. In order to understand the ideology of negritude it is necessary to locate the class to whom it appeals. That class is the petty bourgeoisie.

The two most important conclusions that arise from the work of Cabral and the other radical critics of negritude concern the implicit political conservatism of the ideology, and the relationship between the movement and the class situation of its protagonists. Although Fanon was well aware of the first point he made no direct reference to negritude as the ideology of the petty and national bourgeoisie. There are various indications in *The Wretched* that Fanon was aware of the political dead end to which negritude could lead, yet he neglected to explore the possibility that by its very nature negritude was destined to serve the interests of a single class. In short there is an hiatus between Fanon's class analysis of colonialism and his critique of negritude. If he had established a connection between the two, and such a connection is suggested in the essays 'Racism' and 'West Indians', then much of the confusion in his analysis concerning objective and subjective modes of opposition would have been avoided.

In *Masks,* where Fanon is most embittered in his criticisms of negritude, he makes little reference to the politics of the movement apart from some ephemeral comments upon the need for social action and radical change. He rejects the philosophy because of what he believes to be its failure to answer the subjectivist needs of petty-bourgeois blacks. Yet, despite Fanon's insistence upon the need for social and economic liberation, he confines his analysis to the petty bourgeoisie of the Antilles and he ignores completely the relationship between social class and alienation. Because of this, like the poets of negritude, Fanon tends to universalise the plight of the marginalised indigenous petty bourgeoisie and assumes that its situation is representative of all colonised blacks.

What becomes clear in plotting Fanon's varied responses to the negritude movement and philosophy is the influence of negritude on the formation of his political and social thought. The familiar idea of a specific black sensibility is present in Fanon's view of national culture, in his assessment of revolutionary consciousness among the peasantry, and in his interpretation of the reflex to revolt. Although he does not admit this influence, nor that of Sartre's 'Orphée noir', his theory of peasant revolution owes much to the poetics of negritude.

In *The Wretched* Fanon finally resolves the problem of identity

through his belief in the resilience of national or pre-colonial culture. Significantly, the substance of this cultural matrix was denied to the victims of the diaspora and in part explains Fanon's differing conclusions in *Masks* and *The Wretched.* In *The Wretched* Fanon concretises the concept of a black sensibility by endorsing the role played by traditional culture as a springboard for revolutionary action. His appropriation of negritude led him to the glorification of the peasant class that is found in *The Wretched,* but it also precipitated the grand paradox in Fanon's theory of revolutionary consciousness. This paradox is found in the contradiction between Fanon's beliefs that colonial states are culturally sclerosed, and that the surviving national culture is the principal factor generating the decolonisation process. The closer Fanon moves to an acceptance of negritude the greater the paradox.

Fanon's critique of negritude also provides insight into his political radicalisation in the years following *Masks.* His rather ambiguous and uncertain attitude towards French colonialism in the earlier work is reflective of his judgement of the relative importance of economic and psychoexistential factors in colonial alienation. In *Masks* Fanon does not connect the plight of the black in the present with colonial exploitation. However, he assumes that there is a connection in the case of the African where racism serves recognisable political and economic ends. The concept of the European collective unconscious expresses Fanon's political conservatism in 1952. In his critique of Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban* he maintains the same distinction between alienation in Africa and in the West Indies.

In 'Orphée noir' Sartre had argued that negritude would encourage the growth of a radical political consciousness and thereby assist in the creation of a socialist Africa. In *Masks,* unlike *The Wretched,* there is no such theme.

4. Conclusion

The intellectual sophistication of negritude reveals its paradoxical nature. Ultimately, the failing of negritude is Fanon's failing. Negritude did not attempt to refer to a thriving, ongoing national culture since the colonial experience had removed the middle classes from contact and adherence to indigenous mores. Always negritude refers to the idea of an indigenous culture divorced from recognisable social realities. It is a mythos of idealised attributes. Where Fanon writes of national culture and the distinctive qualities of peasant life he takes the mythos of negritude as his guiding star. Because of this,

Fanon came to idealise the peasantry in a manner parallel to the idealisation of distant African culture found in the writings of negritude and, earlier, in Blyden's concept of the African personality.

Sartre's dialectic was important in the development of Fanon's theory, not because it allowed Fanon to accept in essence a philosophy that he had genuinely rejected. Sartre's dialectic enabled Fanon to reconcile the acceptance of negritude implied originally in the concepts of alienation and disalienation he employs in his first work.

The distinction Fanon makes between the objectivist and subjectivist methods of the movement is superficial. In the way in which Fanon employs these terms, both are based upon a single conception of alienation. There are important differences between the poetic methods of Césaire and Senghor but, when these differences are viewed in terms of the transformation of negritude into a radical ideology, these differences do not suggest two distinct political projects. It was at this point, the point at which negritude poses as a social philosophy, that Fanon took a wrong turning; it was here that he sought to justify to himself his acceptance of an essentially conservative, subjectivist method for liberation while maintaining his radicalism through attacking the alternate stream in the negritude movement. Likewise, Fanon's twin dialectics, even when related to the twin geographies of the Antilles and Africa, are a blind. After writing *Masks* Fanon did not jettison the goal of a white existence simply because of his growing radicalism. He rejected the concept of a white existence in a final consummation of his acceptance of the negritude vision of alienation and liberation. Having committed himself to these concepts, and having never abandoned them, he was fated over time to draw his own theory closer and closer to negritude; to adjust his own theory to its theoretical and sociological foundations.

In *Masks* Fanon laid the basis for his entire intellectual career. Not even the pull exerted on him by his Algerian years ever allowed Fanon to abandon the subjectivist and bourgeois concepts of alienation and liberation he inadvertently absorbed in his initial confrontation with the philosophy of a black soul.

Chapter 3

Ethnopsychiatry and the psychopathology of colonialism: Fanon's account of colonised man in *Black Skin White Masks*

Fanon's early writings on colonialism are heavily imbued with the tradition of psychoanalytic theory. The eclecticism of *Masks* is such that it incorporates the whole gamut of the intellectual spectrum, ranging from Freud and Adler to Jaspers and Sartre and Helene Deutsch. The sixth chapter of *Masks* entitled 'The Negro and psychopathology' indicates why this width is so great: Fanon aimed at nothing less than the invention of a theory of the psychic life of colonial man. He believed this project necessary in the absence of any coherent body of thought to provide a satisfactory account of the psychology of the Negro. The existing literature was either unconcerned with the non-European or else gravely lacking in objectivity.

According to Fanon, there are substantial difficulties in attempting to apply such theories as those of Freud, Adler, and Jung to the study of the Negro. These difficulties arise because of the differences between the cultural milieus of western Europe where such theories originated, and colonial Africa and the West Indies where the Negro peoples live. In the Antilles Fanon found no significant incidence of mental disorders which fitted the categories of western science. Furthermore, the neurosis and other pathological behaviour that did occur appeared to be related in some fundamental way to the social and cultural situation of the Antillean. Because of this it would be necessary to apply a method of analysis that took cognisance of social, as well as individual history.

Beyond this cultural difference in personality and illness Fanon indicates the presence of a basic variance deriving from racial identity. This variance when coupled with the influence of social history is so marked that there exists a dialectical substitution between the two races, in terms of both psychological typing and somatic predisposition (*Masks*, p. 151). No single set of categories was available to

somatic or psychological medicine that applied, accurately, to both races. In the psychological sphere the very drive for socialisation stemmed from quite different motivations (*Masks*, p. 151). Fanon argues: 'The earliest values, which Charles Odier describes, are different in the white man and in the black man' (*Masks*, p. 151). This was apparent by the almost complete absence of an Oedipal complex among Negroes which, in the case of the Antillean, saw less than a three per cent incidence of Oedipal neurosis (*Masks*, p. 154).

Significant differences also appear in the realm of physical disorders (*Masks*, p. 154); for instance, both the symptomatology and occurrence of physical illness, among the Negro peoples, bears little similarity to the categories employed in western medicine. Fanon provides no empirical evidence for these claims, but is content to suggest the need for some adjustment when applying techniques drawn from European experience to illness in Negroes.

In his later work Fanon remained faithful to the belief in the existence of alternate psychologies. In *The Wretched* he explains that in Africa the libido functions in a way which to Freud would have seemed inexplicable. 'One of the characteristics of underdeveloped societies is in fact that the libido is first and foremost the concern of a group, or of the family' (*The Wretched*, p. 43). For example, if a man has a dream depicting infidelity with another man's wife, he will make a public confession, and perhaps recompense the 'injured party'. The atmosphere of communality which surrounds the individual's psychic life serves to integrate the community, and to allocate status positions within it. In this way the individual's sense of security is assuaged, and the legitimacy of the community authorities is given magical sanction (*The Wretched*, p. 43). This 'socialisation' of the libidinal function runs parallel with the communalist character of African social orders, and appears as its psychodynamic correlative.

In *Masks* Fanon's basic thesis is that the colonised Antillean and his white master live within the grip of a psychoexistential complex (p. 14). The effect of this complex is evident in the dreams of the Antillean which reveal that in his psychic life he thinks of himself as white. How is this absurd self perception possible? Why is it necessary and what are the costs paid by the individual for this grotesque rite? In attempting to answer these questions Fanon examines the experience of the Negro in the life spheres of language and sexual relationships, the latter concern being in accord with the procedure of psychoanalysis. But in contradiction of psychoanalytic theory he proposes that the pathologies of affect within even the

sexual realm are derived ultimately from inequalities present within the wider social structure (p. 13).

In Martinique the dream of turning white was a common salvation dream among the black and coloured populations. The magical salvation offered in the dream was a solution to the painful circumstances in which the Martiniquan was forced to live. The world as perceived by the Antillean was Manichean in character; divided into clearly demarcated regions. These exclusive spheres corresponded to specific values; the white to the world of wealth, beauty, strength and virtue, and the black to a world of poverty, sexual prodigality, primitivism and worthlessness.[1] The salvation dream expresses the secret wish of all black Antilleans – the wish to be white. The same desire dominates the psychic life of the black woman, especially in her attitudes and behaviour toward white men.

When in Europe, black women would go to inordinate lengths to avoid all contact with men of their own race. To be seen in the company of a black man would be detrimental to her hopes of attracting a white husband or lover. Salvation, for these women, from the curse of being black, lay in the promise of finding a white husband. Fanon viewed this drive as a pathological condition, the motive of which he found both delusional and repulsive. He employs the term 'lactification' to describe the neurotic wish of the black woman to whiten her colour through proximity to or miscegenation with a white man (*Masks,* p. 47). In fact, this term is appropriate in defining the primary goal of the black Antillean's behaviour.

In *Masks,* Fanon traces out the various strategies resorted to by the black man in his attempts to elude the stigma of his race. For the Negro, the only possible escape from the tragedy of being black was through entry into the social and cultural milieu of the European. All his efforts to make himself at home in the world were aimed to develop those features of personality and behaviour, which would insulate him against his hatred of his own damning colour. In the absence of such protective qualities, qualities synonymous with a white mask, the Negro has no semblance of ego strength. For him life becomes unbearable.

1. The symptomatology and the myth of Negro inferiority

In his first book Fanon frames the problem of colonial alienation by reference to two factors he believed fundamental to relations between the black and white populations in the Antilles. The first was that the Negro was despised by the white community because, in west-

ern culture, black skin is associated with impurity. The second was that the black Antillean accepted this judgement and despised himself. As a defence against the burden of his race the Negro would imitate the European's manner of speech, dress, and when possible seek out white sexual partners.

When confronted with the world of the European the black would experience a dreadful anxiety at the prospect of revealing his innate inferiority; his greatest fear is that of behaving 'like a nigger'.[2] Fanon explains that in psychoanalytic terms what is so damaging about the myth of the evil nigger is that the myth cannot be dealt with through the unconscious (*Masks*, p. 15). Each day of his life he is faced with the reality of his social and ultimately his existential inferiority. Furthermore, this suffering is heightened by the fact that for the Negro there is none of the affective amnesia that is present in mundane neurosis. The neurotic may temporarily forget the cause of his suffering or even the fact that he suffers – the Negro cannot.

The work of Anna Freud on the development of the ego and in particular her concept of ego withdrawal as a dynamic factor in neurosis provides Fanon with a useful parallel. The ego withdrawal of the neurotic in the face of voluntary social contact is obviously similar to the withdrawal and flight of the Negro when confronted with the world of the European. The Negro, like the neurotic, is faced with the frightening prospect of having to abandon one field of activity after another. Everything he touches is tainted with failure and worthlessness and each successive abandonment produces a greater insularity. The Negro cannot succeed because he is a Negro. In him the quest for achievement is soon stifled.

Affective erethism is the term Fanon coins to describe the massive sensitivity of the Negro. It is in response to this sensitivity that the black man is drawn toward the white woman and the black woman to the white man in a neurotic search for redemption. The gradation of Martiniquan society according to the varying tones of skin colour is the social corollary of this neurotic preoccupation with race.

Conversely the European perception of the Negro race has its origins in a psychological mechanism Fanon terms affective ankylosis (*Masks*, p. 122). Parallel with the Negro's hypersensitivity, the European adopts a particular attitude toward the man of colour, an attitude which serves to characterise the European personality. Invariably he will view the black as innately inferior. To the European the Negro is a member of a biologically inferior species, a creature impervious to anything of value especially in the domain of

culture. Underlying this perception is the European's awareness of the past historical inequalities between the races. Fanon employs the analogy of a dog which sits patiently waiting on its master's grave for his return; the dog dies of starvation because it cannot obliterate its past. The European behaviour toward the Negro is based upon a perception of race drawn from the earliest contacts between Africa and the west.

When viewed from the perspective of Fanon's intellectual milieu, the concept of affective erethism appears as a negative restatement of one of the fundamental propositions of negritude. In the philosophy of Senghor and Césaire, the worldly sensitivity of the Negro places him in intimate contact with the life force of the cosmos. The Negro is more sensitive than the Caucasian both toward his own body and to the forces of nature. Yet, in *Masks* Fanon interprets this hypersensitivity as a pathological condition arising from the colonial experience. Although the term affective erethism does not appear in *The Wretched* Fanon argues that the same pathology is present in the muscular tension characteristic of the Algerian: it is this tension which finds expression in the communal violence and fratricide so common among the indigenous North African. In Fanon's work the sensitivity of the Negro, his crippling sense of inferiority, and his perpetual nearness to rage all relate to a single psychic structure supposedly engendered by colonial domination.

In seeking to explain the Negro's flight from the world, his crippling sense of dread, and his neurotic denial of race, Fanon follows the line of enquiry suggested to him by psychoanalysis. In *Masks,* Fanon draws a distinction between the normal role of the family and the character it exhibits in the colonial situation. In both European and pre-industrial societies, the family acts as a filter through which the world is first presented to the child. There will be an intimate connection between the structure of the family in terms of the values it inculcates into each new generation and the structure of the nation. Under normal circumstances, the family is the primary unit of socialisation through which the individual receives, then internalises, a code of behaviour and a set of expectations. These values are secreted in the super-ego and carried by the individual throughout adult life (*Masks,* pp. 148–9). In this way the family provides each member of society with a sense of continuity and an appropriate mode of conduct. The family is essentially the nation in miniature (p. 148).

Since there is a natural continuity between the standards of behaviour operating within the family, and those of the wider soci-

ety, the individual will, without trauma, readily traverse the distance between the two during the process of maturation. But where the family unit is absent, or damaged, the effects upon children and adults may be catastrophic, as Fanon's study of the North African immigrant worker shows.[3]

In the case of the colonised, the family will assume its normal function until the child comes into contact with the *mores* of the dominant white culture. 'A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world' (*Masks*, p. 143). The black child is traumatised by the clash between the values and self-perceptions transmitted to him by his family and the negation of those values once he comes into direct contact with European culture. Fanon observes that, in the Antilles, the structure of the black family has no substantial links with the structure of the nation. Because of this, the black child will ultimately have to choose between his family and European society. Fanon explains that 'in other words, the individual who *climbs up* into society – white and civilized – tends to reject his family – black and savage – on the plane of imagination' (*Masks*, p. 149). This trauma may result in the casting off of the previously internalised family structure, which is in turn repressed and incorporated into the id. This process is in direct contrast to the path followed by the European, for whom the family structure belongs as an important element in the super-ego (pp. 147–50). Although failing to acknowledge the connection, Fanon's analysis assumes that a rupture in the psychological orientation of the black will lead to neurosis or, as Fanon prefers, to affective erethism (p. 60), only if it corresponds to a previous trauma experienced in childhood (p. 146). The rejection of the family, on the level of imagination, can only occur in alignment with the 'childhood Erlebnisse' (p. 149) – that of the Negro as dirty and inferior. The initial problem lies in the infantile trauma caused by the black child's subjection to and absorption of the collective unconscious of the European community and its agents.

There are two aspects to the rupture occurring between the black's experience within the family and the social *mores* without; the first is the myth of 'Negro inferiority' which, while first encountered in childhood (especially through the schooling system), is everywhere verified by the social inequality lived by the adult; the second is a more subtle rupture. It is the break between the asymmetrical values of the Negro and Caucasian races. As previously noted, Fanon believed the earliest values of the two races to be quite distinct.

Therefore, the black is not only faced with the negative aspects of the myth of the inferior Negro, but also the need to initiate a transformation of his system of reference in order to achieve alignment with that of European culture. Ironically, the notion of a basic difference between the races, in terms of primary values and perceptions, corresponds to the philosophy of negritude, which Fanon, in *Masks* at least, found so contemptible.

Fanon explains the occurrence of trauma in the black child, even when that child has had no substantial contact with Europeans, in the following way: in all societies there exist natural outlets for the aggression of both children and adults in a process that psychoanalysts term 'collective catharsis' (p. 145). For children, games and comics are two convenient means for channelling aggression into harmless avenues. In the Antilles, magazines and comics, the vehicles for collective catharsis, are produced for white children by white men. In all of this popular literature, the symbols for malevolence, evil, and fear are represented by the figure of the Negro (pp. 146–7). The Negro child, coming into contact with this popular symbolism will, like his European counterpart, identify with the fictional characters who, as representatives of good, are opposed to the figure of the evil Negro. In identifying with the prejudices of white civilisation, he unknowingly absorbs the cultural assumptions of negrophobia. Of the black child Fanon observes: 'He invests the hero, who is white, with all his own aggression – at that age closely linked to sacrificial dedication, a sacrificial dedication permeated with sadism' (p. 147). Ultimately, the result of this psychological dislocation is the gradual emergence in the black child of 'the formation and crystallisation of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white' (*Masks*, p. 148). The Negro comes to think of himself as white, since to do otherwise would be to stand self-condemned. Through contact with the products of popular European culture, the black child is faced with the choice between accepting himself as dirty and worthless, or denying his own colour. Either solution is self-damaging.

All Negro children in the Antilles are subject to infantile trauma, yet the development of a debilitating affective erethism in adulthood occurs only when there is dramatic confrontation with Europeans, which shatters the illusion of the white mask.

Fanon is rather unclear in distinguishing between the propensity for the development of a white-mask psychology, supposedly universal in the Antilles, and the incidence of acute ego collapse (p. 154). At one point, he claims that the shattering of the white mask

will only occur when the Negro ventures to the metropole, thereby suggesting that acute psychoneurosis is confined to the more privileged members of the petty bourgeoisie (p. 149). The seeds of trauma are widespread in so far as primary education and western cultural artifacts are disseminated throughout the black community, but the eruption of trauma in adulthood, that is, the shattering of the white mask is confined to the *évolué* class. Thus, while all Antilleans live the situational neurosis of believing themselves to be white, only the *évolués* experience the trauma accompanying the destruction of the white mask.

Through childhood contact with the dominant European culture, the black acquires the prejudices and habits of the European toward the Negro. What is truly tragic is not only that the white selects the figure of the Negro as the symbolic repository for the malevolence of this world, but also that the Negro comes to select it for himself. The Negro in Martinique actively participates in forging the instruments for his own oppression. He enslaves himself (p. 192).

There are a number of anomalies in Fanon's account of the transmission of racial typing. In *Masks* Fanon's examples are almost always drawn from his European experience, and the pathologies of affect he describes usually concern the *évolué* class. As Fanon's black child, traumatised through contact with western popular culture, is hardly representative of the African experience, it is obvious that Fanon's West Indian study is relevant to that context alone. Alternatively, the psychoexistential complex observed in the Antilles may be seen as applicable to the African petty bourgeoisie, but to no other class. The symptomatology of the inferiority complex which Fanon describes in his first work is relevant to a single class, even though the model it suggests of the colonial personality is present in all of Fanon's subsequent writings. This in turn raises a tension between Fanon's psychopathology of colonialism and his later theory of class conflict which has implications for his entire work.

To this point, Fanon's analysis of the psychosocial condition of the Negro is reasonably clear. He presents the concepts of ego withdrawal, affective erethism and affective ankylosis to define the parameters of a psychopathology of the Negro and to indicate how the social order in the Antilles creates a neurotic-like mentality. But Fanon's analysis faces one major problem. *How and why is the figure of the Negro selected as the symbol for evil in the western mind?* Fanon goes so far as to claim that, beyond being an image of evil in European culture, the Negro is a 'pathogenic object' (*Masks*, p. 151). Through his exploration of negrophobia as an emotional disorder

Fanon had sought to understand this defining characteristic of European civilisation. In pursuit of this end he turns to the writings of Carl Jung on the collective unconscious, C. Legman on American popular culture and Alfred Adler on inferiority.

In applying the Adlerian and Jungian schemas to the situation of the Antillean, Fanon modifies the central concepts in each system in order to render them socially and historically specific. This line of approach hints at a rejection on Fanon's part of the presuppositions of Freudian metapsychology.

Fanon begins his analysis by arguing that European civilisation is characterised by the presence of an archetype of the Negro at the heart of what Jung terms the collective unconscious (p. 187). Into this archetype are secreted all the malevolent instincts of the European, as the figure of the Negro becomes the repository, in imagination, of the vices and repressed desires of western man. But, in contrast to Jung, Fanon seeks to transmute this concept from an ahistorical mechanism located in inherited cerebral matter to an historically specific psychic structure that is open to continuous social reinforcement. On this point Fanon is highly critical of what he believed to be Jung's failure to distinguish between instinct, the *a priori* of human existence, and habit, as socially acquired behaviour (p. 188). At a second level Fanon attacks Jung for his Eurocentricity. Jung had argued, without offering any ethnographic evidence, that the baser desires of all racial groupings are symbolically associated with blackness. Therefore the imago of the Negro would be similar, if not identical, in both Caucasian and Negro peoples even though in the case of the latter this would indicate a turning of the organism against itself. Fanon rejects Jung's claim and insists that the choice of blackness as a symbol of evil is characteristic of homo-occidentis alone (pp. 190–1).

The fact that the imago of the Negro is the same in both races can only be understood when the collective unconscious is correctly defined as 'the unreflected imposition of a culture' (p. 191). Since the collective unconscious of the Antillean is derived from the culture of the dominant European community, the archetypal forms imbedded in the Negro's unconscious will be the same as those found in the psyche of the metropolitan Frenchman. In the Antilles, it is normal for both whites and blacks to be anti-Negro. The anima of the black is nearly always that of the white woman, while the animus is that of the white man (p. 191). In terms of his internal psychological orientation the Negro is white, while in every social encounter he is reminded of his black skin. This conflict explains

the bizarre attempts of the Antillean to emulate the speech, manners, and attitudes of the European community.

In Adler's model, each person is faced with a perpetual contest between his own ego and that of all others for personal dominance. According to an Adlerian schema, the Antillean personality is characterised by the desire to dominate 'the other' (*Masks*, p. 212). He is preoccupied by a quest for security which compels him to seek the approbation of Europeans. All the actions of the Antillean are performed for the benefit of 'the other' (the European), as the only means whereby he can corroborate his search for self-validation. In applying the Adlerian model to Martinique, what emerges is a portrait of a society of comparisons, that is, a neurotic society. However, while Adler had proposed a psychology of the individual, the fact that Antillean society is itself 'neurotic' drives Fanon back from the individual to the nature of the neurotogenic social structure itself.

The Antillean does not compare himself with the white man *qua* father or god but rather compares himself with his fellow Antillean against the pattern of the white man as the governing term in a triadic schema. In Adler's model each person is faced with a perpetual contest between his own ego and that of all others for personal dominance. Because of the constant third term in the case of the Antillean, Fanon concludes that the governing factor is socially rather than individually based (p. 215). 'The Martinique is and is not a neurotic. If we were strict in applying the conclusions of the Adlerian school, we should say that the Negro is seeking to protest against the inferiority that he feels historically' (*Masks*, p. 213). As in his encounter with the psychology of the 'cosmic Jung' (p. 151), in which Fanon replaced the ahistorical model of Jung's collective unconscious with his own concept of a European collective unconscious, his purpose is to prove that the inferiority of the Negro must be understood in terms of political and social institutions.

In his study of the psychology of comics C. Legman[4] had sought to understand why it was that the American Indian, in popular culture, was invariably depicted as a figure of evil. He found an explanation in a process of projection tied to the guilt felt by white Americans over the genocide of the Indian race during the past century. But an even more important explanation lay in the presence within American culture of a twin preoccupation with violence and death. Legman suggests that these preoccupations stem from the substitution of violent phantasies for forbidden sexuality and as a surrogate to channel aggression felt against the prevailing economic and social orders. In each instance the conflict between instinctual need and

social stability is achieved at the cost of an acquiescence to social evils and an all-pervasive sense of personal discontent.

Employing Legman's thesis without critical comment, Fanon proposes that it is through just such a process of projection and sublimation that the figure of the Negro comes to shoulder the burden for the European's sense of sexual guilt. By projecting his sexual anxiety onto the figure of the black the European retains his own emotional equilibrium. Various forms of prejudice exist between black and white, Jew and Arab, Jew and Gentile. In each instance one group achieves a sense of superiority through the inferiorisation of another race. All racial groups, with but one exception, gain compensation in this way. Fanon refers to this hierarchy of prejudices as 'the racial distribution of guilt' (*Masks*, p. 103). But with the Negro the distribution of guilt ends, for the Negro is allowed to feel superior to no one. Under normal circumstances the Negro people would themselves select a race to symbolise the lower emotions to the extent to which they were engaged in the process of the sublimation of the aggressive and sexual drives. In his later work Fanon will arrive at the conclusion that colonialism rules out this possibility.

2. Negrophobia

As with all phobias it is essential that the object arousing dread should also be secretly attractive. In psychoanalytic theory, the attraction of the phobic person to the object of his fear provides the key to the understanding of the phobia. Employing this insight, Fanon argues that the negrophobic woman is neurotically attracted to the Negro as a sexual partner, while the negrophobic man is most likely a repressed homosexual (pp. 158–9 and 183). The avowed loathing for the Negro is a means by which the phobic person hides from himself his own sexual perversity. Since the archetypical figure of the Negro is saturated with sexual connotations, it is an obvious selection as the repository for sexual ambivalence. Ten years later, in *The Wretched*, Fanon was to forward the same line of argument in explaining the behaviour of the French toward the Algerian; the European's belief in the Muslim's proclivity for violence revealing a hidden admiration (*The Wretched*, p. 246). In both instances, a covert admiration and neurotic projection creates the necessary psychological environment for colonial racism.

The incidence of negrophobia in the white man has its specific origins in a felt sense of sexual inferiority. The negrophobic's hatred of the black arises from a diminution felt in relationship to the com-

mon phantasy of the Negro's massive sexual powers (pp. 159–70). The white man envies the Negro's primitivism – his joy for life – and his unrestrained sexual potency.

This imago of the Negro in the European unconscious was substantiated by Fanon's own clinical experience, which revealed the presence of sado-masochistic sexual phantasies in association with the figure of the Negro. This association was present at all levels of European society and there was no apparent variation reflected by class origin of the subject (p. 166).[5]

In the case of the European woman's common phantasy or fear of being raped by a Negro, the explanation lies in the absence of outlets for aggression during childhood. In the absence of such outlets, the female's entry into adult life will predispose her to feel sexual ambivalence towards the Negro (p. 179). The repressed desire to be raped, usually expressed as a phobia, represents the sublimation of a wish to attack her own mother, the original target for her free-flowing fund of aggression (p. 179). In short, the imago of the Negro is a convenient means by which the white woman retains her psychic balance.[6]

Fanon's account of the psychodynamics of negrophobia in both white men and white women presupposes a certain psychic dependence of the European upon the black. Through the mechanism of projection, the imago of the 'genital nigger' absorbs that fund of sexual guilt which is the inevitable product of cultural development. In the case of the negrophobic woman, the function of the Negro imago is even more important, since it resolves unavoidable aggression. So important is this process of racial mythologising that Fanon claims no proper understanding of racism is possible without reference to the sexual sphere (p. 160).

Fanon's account of negrophobia raises several important questions regarding the balance between the social and metapsychological factors promoting racial antagonism. In *Masks* Fanon argues that sexual anxiety, prevalent among negrophobes, has its origins, not in actual traumatising experience, but in a substratum of phantasy material transmitted to the individual during childhood by the surrounding culture. In accord with his critique of Jung, Fanon would have to identify these elements as being not archaic but of historically recent origin. Also he would have to presume that the anima and the animus, because they are maintained through habit as opposed to instinct, must vary over time and place. The anima of the African Negro would be different from that found among Antillean blacks. Yet Fanon accepts Jung's assumption that these are universal in form. A further problem arises over why this phantasy

material is present in the popular culture, and what specific social interests it serves. If it serves none, as Fanon's interpolations to Jung's theory supposes, then is culture, and particularly popular culture, entirely random and meaningless? Both of these problems indicate a basic weakness in Fanon's interpretation of the relationship between culture and personality.

In *Masks* culture is viewed as a function of personality and as an outgrowth of the conjunction of individual biography, social structure and history. Fanon accepts the existence of an unconscious but, in contradiction to Freudian practice, he insists that the concept be used in alliance with an understanding of the sociohistorical situation of the subject (*Masks*, p. 100).

In the most important reference Fanon makes to Freud, he writes: 'It is all too often forgotten that neurosis is not a basic element of human reality' (*Masks*, p. 151). Therefore Fanon cannot be consistent in agreeing to a vision of personality and culture based largely upon Freud's libido theory. Yet in his psychology of racism Fanon does just that.

In conformity with Freud, Fanon believes that the work of building a civilisation requires the restriction of sexual activity and the postponement of libidinal gratification. It is from this soil that the need for racial stereotyping grows. In fact Fanon's account of scapegoating and the role of sexual repression in racism could more readily have been drawn from Freud, and in particular from *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, than from Legman who simply appropriated certain elements of the Freudian metapsychology. In *Masks* racial prejudice directed against the Negro is shown to be the special price of man's divided nature. The formation of culture is drawn according to the designs of the unconscious and to the conflicts between the anarchic drives of the organism and the work of building a civilisation. It is in this territory that Fanon absorbs the fundamental tenets of the Freudian theory of personality as a homostatic system which has culture as its product. In his later pronouncements on cultural change in *Colonialism* and *The Wretched* Fanon views culture as an historical activity. Yet in his general theory, like Freud, he presupposes that culture is shaped almost exclusively according to the immutable demands of man's primeval nature.

3. Liberation in *Black Skin White Masks*

Fanon intended that his first book should serve as an instrument to help end the alienation of the Negro. It was to function in much the same way as psychoanalysis does in freeing the neurotic from his

illness. In this, Fanon accepted the principle that, for the Negro, as for the neurotic, to be liberated required the removal of those obstacles to a healthy existence that haunt the individual's present, obstacles that derive directly, if in transmuted form, from the neurotic's past. In both instances liberation cannot be bestowed from without but must be evinced through an *active* process of self-understanding. Fanon makes his intention perfectly clear where he writes of *Masks:* 'This book, it is hoped, will be a mirror with a progressive infrastructure, in which it will be possible to discern the Negro on the road to disalienation' (*Masks,* p. 184).

The parallel with the process of cure associated with the psychoanalytic method is almost perfect. But Fanon claims of his analysis that he is not pursuing an individualist psychology divorced from the social and historical context of the subject. Although in his first work the outlines of that context are quite abstract, Fanon's admission of its importance raises the further problem of the degree to which cure or disalienation demands the changing of the social order itself. His forays into the field of methodology were intended to enable him to construct an adequate psychology of the Negro as the first step on the path to liberation. As such, his attacks upon Freud and Mannoni and his interpolations to the theories of Adler and Jung were intended to be staging posts in the creation of a revolutionary psychology.

In his critique of Mannoni, Fanon comments that under certain circumstances the socius is more important than the individual in the formation of illness (*Masks,* p. 105). Supposedly, within specific sociohistoric contexts emotional disorders are entirely due to exogenous factors. Antillean society and Mannoni's Malagasy are two such contexts. Therefore the Antillean's dream of turning white cannot be resolved through the use of traditional psychoanalytical methods. Armed with this knowledge Fanon defines his obligation to his Antillean patients in the following way: 'As a psychoanalyst, I should help my patient to become *conscious* of his unconscious and abandon his attempts at a hallucinatory whitening, but also to act in the direction of a change in the social structure' (*Masks,* p. 100).

Throughout *Masks,* as in his later works, Fanon's proposals for achieving liberation are drawn between two extremes: the first concerns the socialisation of the individual and, in particular, the role of the family; while the second deals with those other institutions which characterise the life of the community. While a response to the first range of problems can be found within the realm of psy-

chotherapeutics, the second requires an analysis of the social system itself and a programme of active political change. But how should the individual gear his political behaviour and to what end? It is upon his answers to these questions that the adequacy of Fanon's analysis depends.

In *Masks* Fanon concludes that it is necessary to employ a bilateral approach in the pursuit of disalienation. The first aspect of this approach involves a process of self-reflection similar to that associated with psychotherapeutics, while the second requires change in the spheres of education and popular culture. Fanon also intimates the existence of a further dimension suggesting a second path to liberation. This second path consists of a direct attack upon the oppressive socioeconomic conditions under which the African lives. At times Fanon appears to wish to combine these two dialectics within a single struggle, while at others he separates them according to the geographies of Africa and the West Indies. Consequently, it is possible to interpret Fanon's concept of bilateral change, as a recognition of the need for both psychological and economic renovation within each single colony, and as a designation of the differences between the African and West Indian environments.[7]

The motivations and, by implications, the means for disalienation of an *évolué* from Guadeloupe will be very different from those of a Negro labourer from Abidjan (p. 223). In the first case the problem is of a psychocultural nature, while in the latter the influence of economic factors is dominant.

In his study of the Antilles Fanon is markedly ambivalent in his attitude toward the white-mask wearer. He denounces the stultification of middle-class life and the intellectual alienation which accompanies it, while supporting a view of history that accords pride of place to the *évolué*. In the first pages of *Masks* Fanon comments that the range of problems he is about to analyse have not yet acquired significance for the 'jungle savage', that is, presumably, the African peasant. For the African the question of liberation has yet to arise because the question of alienation, as a psychopathological condition, has yet to be posed. It is only with the kind of alienation suffered by the Antillean that the problems of reification (*chosification*), and thus of a humanist liberation, arise. On the path to liberation the Negro emerges from the experience of economic deprivation, through the internalisation of that inequality in the imago of the dirty nigger, to the final destruction of that myth with the emergence of the Negro as an actional man.

Historically the tragedy of the Negro is that he has not been the

creator or inventor of his own values nor the creator of his own world. Both as a slave and as a nominally free man he has been subordinated to the values and actions of others. The origin of the Negro's alienation lies in the fact that he did not force the end of the slave period but accepted a liberty that was bestowed upon him. To be free he must experience the anguish of liberty (p. 221) and take upon himself the responsibility for his own freedom. The function of Fanon's first book is to abet this liberation by helping to clear away the debris of unconscious wishes and motivations so that the Negro can himself become an authentic source of action. Yet, with only one exception, Fanon gives no indication as to what he considers an acceptable level of social change accompanying this change to personality. In his discussion of the European Collective Unconscious, and the method of its transmission through the agency of popular culture, he recommends the publication of separate comics, magazines, history texts and children's songs for the black child (pp. 148–9). This would supposedly halt the dissemination of the negative archetype of the Negro, thereby freeing the adult from the trauma lying in childhood experience. Obviously such change would take at least one generation to complete and would be dependent upon a public policy sensitive to the myriad ways in which racial stereotypes are transmitted. Fanon presumes that such a programme would arouse no conflict of interests since racial stereotyping serves no social or economic purpose.

By omission, Fanon implies that it is possible and necessary to effect a change to the personality of the individual prior to changing social institutions. He also assumes that psychological change will bring about change in the social order, although conceding that the relationship between these two spheres is muted. Fanon rejects the use of a Marxist analysis because he believes that such an approach is based upon the illusion that economic solutions can be given to problems of affect and that changes in the sphere of production and ownership will necessarily lead to changes in personality. Irrespective of how one regards this interpretation of Marxism, Fanon's alternative is to support a programme aimed at liberating the consciousness of individuals in such a way as to alter the dominant social institutions.

In his account of liberation through subjective introspection Fanon proposes that disalienation can only be achieved by a process of self immersion or Dionysian descent. The black must confront the despair of his life's experience and thereby suffer the anguish of liberty. Fanon suggests the dimensions of this catharsis in the first pages

of *Masks:* 'There is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born. In most cases, the black man lacks the advantage of being able to accomplish this descent into a real hell' (*Masks,* p. 10). This upheaval involves the risking of the self through the acceptance of existential anguish as the precondition for disalienation. Only through the means of such catharsis can the Negro hope to achieve an absolute reciprocity in his relations with all men.

The most distinctive feature of Fanon's account of this path to individual liberation is that it is not based upon rational discourse or reflection, as in psychoanalysis or traditional psychotherapeutics, but upon an acceptance of personal despair or 'horror'.

The origins of this method of cure are supposedly to be found in the quotations that appear at the beginning and end of *Masks.* Fanon quotes Nietzsche's aphorism 'that the tragedy of man is that he was once a child' (pp. 12 and 231). The end of man's childhood will come about when the European Collective Unconscious and the archetype of the dirty nigger, that poisonous residue from the past, are destroyed. Fanon would have us believe that his cathartic method is an amalgam drawn loosely from Nietzsche and from Jungian psychology. Although the dismissal of reason as an instrument for disalienation is Nietzschean, it is also synonymous with Césaire's poetic method from which it has been borrowed.

While there is evidence that Fanon was uncertain of the applicability of the white-mask psychology beyond the confines of the Antilles, the model of affective erethism he invents in *Masks* is complementary to the account of the colonial personality developed in *The Wretched.* Although the symptomatologies in the two instances are different, the same model of personality disintegration, described in the cycle of anger, self-doubt, dissociation and despair, is found in Fanon's psychologies of the Antillean *évolué* and the African peasant. Fanon makes no recognition of the fact that his theory suggests that the manner of neurotic defence or compensation against colonial despair is very much relative to class position. The invention of a white mask is characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie, while the peasants find outlets for their suffering in far more direct forms of aggression.

In the case of the Antilles Fanon's concentration upon the liberation of the consciousness of the individual, as distinct from the social and economic foundations of illness, leads to the assumption that the experience of a single class, the petty bourgeoisie, is representative of the experience of all Antilleans.

The extent of Fanon's conservatism in 1952 can be gauged if the conclusions he presents for achieving disalienation in *Masks* are contrasted with those found in Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive.*[8] This comparison is an obvious one because of Fanon's familiarity with Sartre's monograph and his admission of its influence in his own understanding of the plight of the oppressed. Sartre's study is ostensibly a political sociology of anti-semitism in which he argues that such prejudice is the vice of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and is rarely found among the ranks of the working class. He believes that anti-semitism serves the purposes of the bourgeoisie in representing an attempt to heal the natural divisiveness of class society. Sartre summarises the political function of prejudice when he writes: 'The significance of anti-semitism is as a mythic and bourgeois representation of the class struggle and it would not exist in a society without classes.'[9]

As the hatred of the Jew is an integral part of bourgeois society, the only cure for anti-semitism lies in the creation of a socialist state. Despite the considerable influence of Sartre's study upon *Masks,*[10] Fanon chooses to ignore the socialist tenor of *Réflexions sur la question juive.* This omission further highlights Fanon's failure to link his colonial psychology with identifiable political forces.

If a comparison is made between *Masks* and Fanon's later writings, it is apparent that his initial conservatism and his refusal to reject French colonialism was due, in part, to the absence in the Antilles of a coherent national culture presenting an alternative to the assimilationist policies of the French. In 1952 Fanon formally rejected negritude as an *ideology of identity,* that is, as an answer to the problems of psychoexistential alienation. Yet in his later work he takes up the idea of an idealised African culture as the basis for disalienation. In *Masks* Fanon makes no direct reference to the issue of national culture, while in *The Wretched* and *Colonialism,* as well as in several of the essays in *Revolution,* he seeks to bridge the gulf separating the need for individual identity and the machinations of political institutions, by laying emphasis upon the residues of precolonial culture. In the Antilles no such national culture existed.

In *Masks* Fanon insists that the origins and the phenomenology of colonial alienation can be understood only when placed within the context of the immediate social and economic environments. He then proceeds with an analysis which, although positing economic factors as causally related to colonial racism and the negrophobic quality of European civilisation, fails to establish any connection whatsoever between economic interest and colonial

alienation. The existence of such a connection is mentioned at various points of *Masks*, while Fanon's analysis moves inexorably towards proving that racism is the result of an historical accident.

In his study of Martinique, Fanon was drawn toward a Marxist or neo-Marxist ideology, yet, despite the example of Sartre and Césaire, he shied away from its attraction. Social reality in the Antilles taught him that alienation could not be described or explained, nor was it experienced in terms of a particular political system. Therefore the Marxist definition of alienation as a function of the labour process was inadequate. But, in this, Fanon confused the limits of psychological investigation and in particular the heritage of psychoanalysis with the wider possibilities which lay outside his political imagination.

Within the psychoanalytic tradition, liberation is always conceived of in terms of individual behaviour and never in the sense of collective experience. Psychoanalysis can offer no guidance in prescribing change to social institutions except in the most abstract terms. In consequence, the solution Fanon arrived at in framing the problem of alienation in the Antilles is equivocal and is fraught with tensions. Fanon's solution in *Masks*, his first attempt to understand the colonial world, was to embrace the myth of a universal brotherhood; that iron cage of the liberal imagination.

Chapter 4

From psychiatric practice to political theory

1. The clinical writings[1]

All Fanon's works contain material dealing with psychiatric phenomena. This is true not only of the earlier and more clinical of his writings, *Masks,* and the formal psychiatric articles, but also the polemical texts *Colonialism* and *The Wretched.* Fanon himself makes no clear distinction between the political and the psychological realms, although rather curiously in the final section of *The Wretched,* he apologises for turning to the subject of psychopathology (p. 200). The question of the balance between political and psychological analysis in Fanon's theory is raised in the relationship between the earlier and later texts. Some critics have gone so far as to compare Fanon's intellectual development with that of Marx, the progression in Fanon's case being from psychopathology (*Masks*) to revolutionary socialism (*The Wretched*), while Marx's advance was from philosophy to politics.[2]

Fanon's writing displays a marked political radicalisation as a result of his Algerian experience. There is in effect a considerable ideological distance between the authors of *Masks* and *The Wretched.* But the Algerian experience does not explain how, in terms of the inner workings of his theory, the changing focus of Fanon's thought occurred. Nor does biography alone tell us how Fanon chose to resolve those important questions dealing with personality and politics first raised in his study of the Antilles.

By examining certain of the clinical papers Fanon published between the years 1954 and 1958, it becomes possible to unravel the complex relationship between his early and later works. These articles are the only medium through which Fanon's theory of the colonial personality can be understood.

Although the originality of *Masks* and *The Wretched* rests in

Fanon's achievements as a political psychologist, this aspect of his work has attracted little systematic analysis. This is so, despite the fact that, without exception, Fanon's critics accept the importance of his psychiatric training in the formation of his political theory.

In the following pages I will argue that, despite all the manifest contradictions in Fanon's work as a whole, there is no hiatus between his early and later writings. From the time of writing *Masks* Fanon always envisaged liberation as being essentially a release from the phantoms which haunt the psyche of the individual. Without such basic change to personality the rearrangement of institutions could not be effective in freeing the Negro from the weight of the past. To understand why Fanon should have remained faithful to this vision of disalienation it is necessary to understand the psychiatric practice which informs his revolutionary theory. In doing this, Fanon's work can be divided between a sociology of mental illness and a critique of ethnopsychiatry.

In his sociology of mental illness, Fanon set out to analyse the influence of environmental factors in the aetiology and treatment of mental disorders. Fanon believed that it is only by using a sociocentric mode of diagnosis and therapeutics that the problem of mental illness can be effectively approached. The most explicit statement of this philosophy of psychiatric practice is found in the articles 'The North African Syndrome', 'Day Care – Its Value and Limits', 'The Phenomenon of Agitation in the Psychiatric Environment', and 'Aspects of Mental Health in Algeria'.[3]

The ethnopsychiatric critique focusses upon the application of western medical practice and research in the colonial environment. Ethnopsychiatry is typified for Fanon by the figures of J. C. Carothers and Professor Porot of the University of Algiers. The research of such men added scientific support to the popular mythologies concerning the African, thereby colluding in the continuance of colonial rule. Fanon's use of the term ethnopsychiatry should not be confused with that far broader body of research into the psychology of colonial peoples associated with the work of such people as W. H. R. Rivers, Edwin Smith and Stanley Porteus.

In his critique Fanon's intention was to expose the barely disguised ideological mission of ethnographic science in colonial Africa and to replace the racist foundations of that research with a genuinely scientific perspective. The writings which fall into this category are *Masks*, 'The Attitude of the Maghrebian Muslim Towards Madness', 'The North African Syndrome', the descriptive essay 'Ethnopsychiatric Considerations', 'Sociotherapy in a Ward for Mus-

lim Men', 'Confessional Behaviour in the North African', and the fifth chapter of *The Wretched,* 'Colonial War and Mental Disorders'.[4]

These two paradigms, the sociocentric model of medical care and the ethnopsychiatric critique, co-exist in all of Fanon's works and there is something of a shifting emphasis between them over the range of his writings. What is important about these paradigms is that they form the connecting thread between Fanon's more individualistic psychopathology and his political sociology. Where Fanon achieves even a tenuous integration of the two, as in *Masks,* he arrives at an amorphous commitment to the need for social change; where he develops an adequate union, Fanon was led to institute a radical critique of colonialism.

In his first major work, Fanon makes an unsuccessful attempt to weld these two streams, the sociocentric and the ethnopsychiatric, together. Fanon's invention of the rudiments of a Negro psychopathology, led him to an examination of problems raised within the schema of ethnopsychiatry and, in turn, to a *belief* in the need for social and political change. But, in this work, the sociology of mental illness is quite superficial, and Fanon relies upon highly abstract models of personality and illness drawn from existing literature. Because of this there is a tension between the theory of a white-mask psychology and the question of social stratification. In *Masks* Fanon resolved this ambiguity by inflating the level of his explanation into the realms of metapsychology through his concept of the European Collective Unconscious. This difficulty which Fanon encountered in his first work was to become a permanent feature of all his writings on colonialism and personality.

In the popular works Fanon makes little effort to establish direct linkages, of the type suggested in the clinical writings, to explain the relationship between the aetiology of mental illness and the immediate social environment. In *Masks* Fanon explains the predicament of the Antillean on the basis of a 'time slack' between the historical past where the Negro was a slave and the present where he clamours for equality. In essence, Fanon assumes that the solution to the problem of alienation lies beyond the sphere of political action. What is needed is a voluntary change of mentality to remove the non-economic mechanisms which promote the imago of the 'savage, genital nigger'. The economic foundations of slavery having disappeared, it is time to demolish the cultural residues of that history. Paradoxically Fanon makes a number of references to the primacy of economic factors in the alienation of the Negro, yet nothing

in his analysis explains how economic forces impinge upon the normal development of personality. This is indicative of a general cleavage in Fanon's work between his description of social formations and his explanation of personality disorders. Because of this, it is all the more important to examine the results of the clinical research Fanon carried out in Algeria and Tunisia.

In attempting to explicate the relationship between Fanon's twin preoccupations, the psychopathology and political sociology of colonialism, it is helpful to examine in detail the essay 'The North African Syndrome' since it is the best introduction to Fanon's sociology of mental illness and his critique of ethnopsychiatric science. Also, I shall examine the sociology and the ethnopsychiatric material before turning to Fanon's account of the relationship between culture and personality and his theory of colonial personality presented in his later works. This procedure is intended to reveal the *process* by which Fanon moved from a psychological and largely apolitical critique of colonial domination (*Masks*) to the mature theory of decolonisation contained in *The Wretched.* This process may best be described as Fanon's progression from psychiatric practice to political theory.

i The sociology of a psychosomatic disorder

In style and subject matter Fanon's early article 'The North African Syndrome' falls between the political and psychiatric realms, dealing as it does with the politics of the medical treatment of expatriate Arabs living in France. Written for a left-wing magazine, Fanon's usage of medical terminology places the article somewhere between the popular and psychiatric writings. 'Syndrome' demonstrates Fanon's concern with the social foundations of illness, and in it is found his most explicit statement on the appropriate methodology for psychiatric practice.

The article is presented in the form of three central theses: that the behaviour of the expatriate North African seeking treatment leads staff to question the authenticity of his illness; that upon entering hospital the North African enters a pre-existing framework which predetermines the kind of treatment he will receive; and, finally, that it is essential to make a situational diagnosis of the North African's illness, taking account of his work and social life as elements in the aetiology of his malady.

When seeking treatment the North African will confront the physician with a series of vague complaints. Invariably he is unable to

be precise about the location of his pain or of its occurrence over time. Under such circumstances the physician will have difficulty in establishing an accurate diagnosis. Often the patient will not follow the course of treatment recommended, either taking all the prescribed medicine at once or discontinuing treatment if there is no immediate relief. He may return weeks later with the same symptoms thereby aggravating the hospital staff. A combination of the non-specific nature of his illness and his recalcitrance regarding prescribed treatment leads medical staff to doubt the authenticity of the symptoms and the very presence of illness. His ailment will come to be described as functional. Quite incorrectly Fanon explains that since there is no evidence of any lesion the physicians have no alternative but to conclude that the 'illness' has no objective reality. As Fanon was only too aware, the term functional is normally employed in those cases where, in the absence of any structural abnormality, syndromes can only be formulated descriptively in terms of impairments to functions. This is the case with a large number of both somatic and psychosomatic disorders and the absence of a lesion would never be accepted by any competent physician, then or now, as proof of the absence of an illness.

From hospital staff's experience of 'malingering' North Africans, grows an oral tradition which purports to explain the disorder. These Arabs are referred to as suffering from the North African Syndrome – a pseudo-psychosomatic illness. It serves the patient's need to escape from work, to enjoy the warmth and inactivity of the hospital environment and, in short, to live out the role of social parasite.

Fanon's second thesis postulates that the attitude of medical staff is based upon a number of negative presuppositions. Every doctor brings a host of assumptions to the examination of any symptom irrespective of the nature of the illness at hand. An attitude of what Fanon terms neo-Hippocratism dictates that the physician be preoccupied with the diagnosis of a function, namely the illness, rather than with the diagnosis of an organ. Again, incorrectly, Fanon argues that the physician works backward from the symptoms to the lesion on the premise that every symptom by definition requires a lesion. Because of the absence of any lesion in the North African Syndrome, each new Arab patient is automatically labelled a pseudo-invalid, the sufferer of an imaginary complaint.

The third thesis contains Fanon's answer to the mystification that surrounds the diagnosis of the North African Syndrome. He bases his argument upon the work of a Dr Stern and adopts an approach which he refers to as sociocentric. According to this methodology,

when treating any disorder it is necessary to construct a situational diagnosis which involves first, constructing a full profile of any organic lesions and second, defining the social situation of the patient. Using Stern's method, Fanon examines the various life spheres of the expatriate North Africans; of his relations with his associates, he has none; his occupations and preoccupations are simply the search for work; his sexual contacts are limited to prostitutes and rape; his sense of security is nothing other than a multidimensional anxiety; the dangers that threaten him show that at all levels he is a sick man. Fanon explains: 'Without a family, without love, without human relations, without communion with the group, the first encounter with himself will occur in a neurotic mode, in a pathological mode' (*Revolution*, p. 23). In the absence of any worthwhile social life and the supportive presence of friends and family, these men are fated to become ill.

Fanon is convinced that he has discovered the reasons for the Arab's functional illness in the social circumstances of their daily work lives. In this analysis, Fanon seeks to establish two points of divergence from the dominant oral tradition; first, that the North African is genuinely ill for although his non-specific pain may be without lesion it is not without reality; second, that since the cause of the disorder is social the most obvious avenue for treatment and cure involves changing the patient's social life. In answering the first point Fanon is misleading since he implies the existence of a belief which even those physicians treating the North Africans with such insensitivity would have vigorously denied. Fanon's account of diagnostic practice in regard to lesions and functional illness is extremely crude in terms of the existing body of medical opinion. If such patients were being treated as malingerers then this was due to the failure of the ethics of individual practitioners and not, as Fanon wished to believe, because of some basic flaw in current medical philosophy. The emigrant is diagnosed as a pseudo-invalid because the racist attitudes present in the wider culture had infected the relationship between patient and physician. Why Fanon should create this impression about medical philosophy is itself significant, for the reason lies in the overall design of 'Syndrome'. Fanon had set out to show that before all else medicine must treat the patient as a social actor and that modern medical practice had somehow lost sight of this need.

Fanon argues that to return these men to the same circumstances that precipitated the original disorder would only guarantee the recurrence and continuance of the illness. In contrast to his earlier

study of the Antilles, in which he had baulked at the need for social change to end the pathologies of effect afflicting the West Indian, Fanon is quite confident of the implications of his analysis. Having argued in 'Syndrome', that it is the French public as a whole that is responsible for the syndrome, Fanon concludes that the only cure is to alleviate the poverty and unemployment in North Africa which necessitates migratory labour. Psychologically these men would be better off at home since it is impossible to provide a satisfactory social environment for them in France. But this in turn raises the problem as to whether or not the expatriate North Africans are ill. If, as Fanon claims, these men are debilitated solely because of the social environment in which they are forced to live, then they are not ill in the sense in which that term is normally understood in medical practice. In denying that these expatriate workers are pseudo-invalids, Fanon ends by claiming that they are ill but only in a metaphoric sense. What Fanon achieves, in effect, in 'Syndrome' is to medicalise a problem he defines as being essentially social and political in nature. By emphasising the social foundations of the North African Syndrome Fanon is drawn into creating a tension between his concept of illness and the way in which he defines the relationship between medicine and political oppression. This tension is highlighted in Fanon's conviction that contemporary medicine has taken a narrow and misleading view of the dimensions to illness. The sociocentric approach which Fanon attributes to Stern has its foundations in nineteenth-century practice and was codified by Adolf Meyer, among others, long before Fanon began medical practice. Therefore it is curious that Fanon should take Stern's work as innovative when, as an undergraduate, he must have been subject to such ideas as a natural part of traditional procedures.

The reasons for the ambiguities in Fanon's account of lesions and sociocentric practice lie in the wider theoretical problems with which Fanon was then wrestling. Fanon was fighting in his own mind to come to terms with the issue of how individual ills were related to social process, a problem which he had first approached in *Masks*. In essence, this problem concerns the human and political condition of colonial peoples. The political difficulties that Fanon had expressed in his first book re-emerge in the 'Syndrome' article. Most important, these difficulties were to plague Fanon for the rest of his intellectual career.

ii The sociology of mental illness

In all Fanon published just three clinical papers exploring the social context of mental illness. These articles are 'Aspects of Mental Health in Algeria' written in 1955 in conjunction with Drs Dequeker, Lacaton, Micucci and Ramée, which gives a profile of psychiatric care in Algeria; 'The Phenomenon of Agitation in the Psychiatric Environment', 1957, a sociology of hospital conditions and the management of the violent patient; and finally, 'Day Care – Its Value and Limits', 1959, written with Dr Geromini, is an account of the experiment which Fanon instituted at Blida in adopting the methods of Tosquelles.

These three articles demonstrate different aspects of Fanon's attitude towards diagnosis and treatment. The first is the most superficial in that it deals essentially with problems of administration and not with psychological phenomena as such;[5] the second is more revealing in the connection Fanon seeks to establish between the eruption of violent or hallucinated behaviour and the psychiatric institution as a social milieu; the final article delineates important elements of Fanon's methodology in the treatment of mental illness.

In aggregate, these articles reveal much about Fanon's understanding of the aetiology of mental disorders and his approach to a cure. They tell us what Fanon considered to constitute a disalienating environment, and they help to illuminate his understanding of the roots of violence.

Throughout his career Fanon remained a firm adherent to the sociocentric approach outlined in 'Syndrome'. His advocacy and practice of day-care hospitalisation and ergo or work therapy are consistent with a belief in the social origin of mental illness. In the practice of day-care and work therapy, Fanon stresses the importance of the patient maintaining control of as much of his normal range of daily activity as possible. If, because of illness, the bonds of daily contact with friends, family and work mates are severed, then the chances of recovery are lessened. In such circumstances the intervention of the therapeutic instrument, the hospital, while intended to alleviate suffering, only serves to add to the patient's burden.

The emphasis in 'Syndrome' upon the wider social spheres of individual life and the interflow between these spheres and the process of mental illness is found also in the formal psychiatric writings. In

all his works Fanon makes the assumption, mostly implicitly, that there is a connection between colonialism as a pathogenic social system and the incidence of mental disorders found among colonised peoples. In *Masks* 'the illness of the colonised' takes on a peculiarly intellectual character. The white-mask psychology of the Antillean is very much akin to obsessional neurosis. In *The Wretched* the predicament of the native is transposed into muscular tension, the terror of demons, alcoholism and fratricidal violence. In each case individuals lose emotional control of their lives because they have been deprived of autonomy in the ordinary choices of existence.

In the psychiatric and popular writings Fanon deals formally at least with the same social group. The psychiatric patients at Blida, Manouba, and Charles Nicolle were colonial subjects, yet Fanon does not attempt to explain the range of psychological maladies he encountered at these institutions in terms of a theory of a colonial personality. There is no suggestion that the end of the French presence in Algeria would have cured Fanon's patients. But a sociological approach to medical practice provided him with the impetus to seek the cause of illness outside the family environment. This approach gave Fanon the methodological certainty that the locus of illness and the appropriate means for treatment fall within a larger context than that of the individual patient abstracted from his normal milieu. These two principles are of fundamental importance to Fanon's political theory.

In 'The Phenomenon of Agitation in the Psychiatric Environment' Fanon deals with the psychopathology of the disturbed or violent patient and the role played in the evolution of such illness by the immediate social environment of the institution. The central thesis proposes that in the recourse to hospitalisation every effort must be made to ensure that confinement in no way worsens the patient's condition. Fanon's concern is that all too often a patient's original illness is exacerbated by the social deprivation that is characteristic of psychiatric hospitals.

Beginning by rejecting the typology of agitational disturbance proposed by his teacher, Tosquelles, Fanon argues that there are two forms such disturbances take: in the first of these, agitation is essentially organic in origin, while in the second, psychogenic factors which are unrelated to organic damage dominate. The latter type of illness has attracted by far the most research, since this condition more accurately reproduces the life experience of the individual, and the patient usually remains accessible to contact with other people.

As the problems for the management and treatment of agitated patients are considerable, the easiest means by which to deal with them has traditionally been confinement in an isolation cell. Fanon connects the sudden aggressive outbursts of these patients with the repressive structure of the mental institutions which confine them. Violent behaviour within the hospital environment places the structure and atmosphere of the hospital itself into question.

What is the nature of the hospital as a social order? In which way does the hospital experience modify behaviour? According to Fanon, the environment of a mental institution is defined by the disastrously poor field of social experience that it provides. The internees have little, if any, chance to enjoy even the rudiments of an ordinary social life and, where they are further confined within an isolation cell, their social pauperisation is made complete. Fanon is careful to draw a distinction between the structure that is typical of psychiatric hospitals and the attitudes and behaviour of individual staff members. The deprivation of confined patients and the catastrophic results which such confinement often has are the result, not of the sadism of individual staff members, but of the nature and structure of the institution as a whole. To initiate a curative programme means, not simply removing the furniture of repression – the straightjackets and cells – it requires the creation of a disalienating environment. Fanon concedes that staff members do resort to coercive means, threats, and even blackmail. Perhaps they will threaten to return a difficult patient to the isolation cell, but these are only the most superficial of the problems associated with agitated patients.

The confinement of a difficult patient will not lead to any improvement in the patient's condition but usually serves to encourage anxiety. Under such circumstances the initial illness will worsen and the hospital staff will witness the emergence of new symptoms. There will be less response to sensory stimulus and often a gradual overall withdrawal accompanied by sudden outbursts of aggressive behaviour. These outbursts will come to be cited by the staff as justification for the confinement, thereby trapping the agitated patient in a vicious circle.

Perhaps the psychiatrist will view this aggressiveness, the sudden gaiety, the visual hallucinations as evidence of a massive orality. Fanon concedes that there may be value in such interpretations, but that the new symptoms are also something else; these symptoms reveal 'an aggressive personality, protesting vehemently, filled with anguish tied to infantile frustrations' ('Agitation', p. 23). The behaviour of the confinement cell is perfectly understandable in light of

the patient's physical and social environment. Once the real world of sensory and affective richness has been withdrawn, the descent into hallucination and regression is inevitable. Fanon writes: 'The thought in flight is taken in the flow of images without any possibility to escape with the benefit and actualizing help of others' (p. 23). Within such conditions the characteristic anxiety, solitude, and aggressiveness of mental illness are elevated to new heights.

Fanon is quite emphatic that there is no satisfactory mechanistic explanation for hallucinatory behaviour. Quite wrongly he argues that there is no convincing evidence establishing positive links between changes in the patient's physiological condition and the incidence of hallucination.[6] The explanation for the descent into this type of regression is to be found in the 'existential context' of the patient's immediate life. The evaporation of the real world, which defines hallucinations, results from the emergence of a pseudo-world at the base of the patient's self-perception and of his relations with others. Fanon cites as proof of this interpretation the fact that the most agitated patients are those who haven't managed either to separate successfully the real from the unreal worlds or to achieve a resolution where the unreal world dominates. These patients uncomfortably inhabit both worlds.

Quoting the physician Parchappe, Fanon argues that the key to the patient's regression is the severance of all dialectical and creative relations with others. The isolated patient lacks the opportunity to see himself and his actions mirrored in the world of other people. Given this perspective, 'The hallucination is rather a type of total behaviour, a type of reaction, a response by the organism' (p. 23). The therapeutic implications arising from this analysis are quite clear; the hospital should work to prevent the quarantining of the patient from his normal environment. This is not to propose day-care or outpatient treatment for agitated patients, but rather to argue that the hospital should invent a meaningful social life within its walls.

The primary aim of the institution must be to free the patient from his fears. This task is particularly difficult with the agitated whose sometimes violent outbursts create real problems of management. Fanon scorns any suggestion that the psychiatric hospital should be a microcosm of the outside community, for to speak thus of the hospital is patently absurd. The reason why an individual has sought treatment is because he or she could not cope in just such an environment. By its very nature the psychiatric institution is called

upon to serve a paradoxical role: for the community the hospital provides a means by which it can rid itself of a madman, while for the sick person it represents his final chance to rediscover his lost sanity.

Once a person has been admitted, Fanon recommends a balanced regime of insight therapy with both group and individual psychotherapy and the appropriate use of chemical agents. He cautions against pacifying disturbed patients with drugs simply to render them more manageable.

The hospital as a therapeutic instrument must always direct its treatment through the lens of a substantive understanding of the patient's condition. The agitated patient is a particularly tragic figure caught in a web of an ambiguity from which he alone cannot extract himself. He both knows and does not know that he is ill and his violent outbursts are but a futile attempt to achieve just such an understanding. The hospital staff must therefore initiate the steps necessary to understand the patient and then, most important, to assist him toward the goal of understanding himself. In his concluding remarks Fanon summarises this most succinctly where he writes: 'Thus even at the bottom of these disordered anarchical behaviours, of meaningless sentences, the fundamental ambiguity of existence is entirely assumed' (p. 24). Such understanding is both possible and necessary even with patients whose behaviour appears totally irrational.

The great danger of hospitalisation, which in the case of the agitated patient is necessary for both the sick person and the community at large, is that it discourages retention of the rudiments of normal life already severely strained because of illness. Within the hospital an initial condition can quickly worsen and the patient be beset by a 'second illness', institutionalisation. In the more dramatic case of the violent patient, the initial confinement may be added to by 'total' confinement in an isolation cell increasing again the likelihood of the 'second illness'.

Fanon's approach to the treatment and diagnosis of these disturbed patients is illuminating because of his insistence upon the relevance of immediate social data. If such data are relevant with these destructive patients then obviously the social history of the individual is always a vital factor in psychiatric practice. Furthermore, it is significant that, in his only clinical study of aggressive behaviour, Fanon makes no mention of the possible cathartic effects of violence upon personality. If, in *The Wretched,* Fanon had sup-

ported a view that the use of violence is necessarily curative, then one would expect to discover some trace of this in his earlier clinical writings.

There is a close affinity between the psychodynamic model explaining the reflex to violence in *The Wretched* and 'Agitation', and Fanon's account of colonial alienation in *Masks*. While the kind of emotional sensitivity documented in *The Wretched* is not perfectly analogous to that described in Fanon's first book, each is based upon the same range of assumptions which, however, are never fully systematised within Fanon's theory.

In *Masks* Fanon notes that the absence of relief, afforded by the forgetfulness of full delirium or affective amnesia, exaggerates the colonial's propensity to violence while denying him respite from his suffering. This factor underlines the drift in Fanon's argument which implies the presence of a dreadful tension within the psychological life of the colonised, a tension which during the colonial period never gains adequate expression. In the earlier work this tension is termed affective erethism, while in *The Wretched,* it furnishes the psychological dynamic within the theory of violence.

In *The Wretched,* where he writes of the emotional sensitivity of the native, Fanon delineates the psychological economy that fuels the impulse to violence: 'This sensitive emotionalism, watched by invisible keepers who are, however, in unbroken contact with the core of the personality, will find fulfilment through eroticism in the driving forces behind the dissolution of the crisis' (*The Wretched,* p. 44). Unlike the disordered behaviour of the psychiatric patient, an aspect of the personality of the colonised remains intact. Again the origin of a reflex to violence is the social order and what may appear to the casual observer as meaningless aggression is in fact a protest against an untenable situation.

Fanon assumes that there is no sense in which it is possible to resolve a psychiatric conflict without procuring a simultaneous alteration in the relationship between the individual and his normal social milieu. While, in *The Wretched,* this perception underlines Fanon's authorisation of the use of violence, it also suggests a recognition of the limitation of violent action; if violence is not directed positively towards a restructuring of society, then it can have no influence in liberating the individual from the psychic ills which haunt him.[7]

In Fanon's theory the sublimations associated with affective restabilisation, communal violence and the terror of phantoms, supposedly endemic to colonised peoples, exhibit the same psychologi-

cal pattern as the hallucinatory process in the agitated psychiatric patient. In each case what is apparently disordered behaviour has meaning as a 'neurotic' resolution of impossible conflicting demands. These demands originate in the social milieu and can only be understood in light of the individual's social history.

Like the agitated patient, the peasant employs magical means to keep alive a sense of autonomy. In dreams the native creates a magnificent freedom: 'During the period of colonization, the native never stops achieving his freedom from nine in the evening until six in the morning' (*The Wretched*, p. 40). Like the psychotic, the peasant's retreat into hallucinatory activity establishes a surrogate liberty. In both cases the retreat is self-defeating.

According to Fanon, in each instance an authentic resolution is to be found in changing both the mentality of the individual and the world in which he lives. With the psychiatric patient the psychiatrist interpolates himself between the patient and the stimulus to the illness. In this way the patient is allowed a limited contact with the conflictual conditions of his life. Thus the therapist can control the flow of pathogenic material and even the phantasies which dominate the individual's behaviour.

Like the mental patient who cannot become healthy without first understanding his personal past, the peasant must learn to abandon those forms of self-destructive behaviour which typify colonial life. Indulgence in intercommunal violence and the projection of the essence of the conflict against imperialism onto the level of phantasy are incompatible with liberation. In both instances disalienation requires a resumption of the normal dialogue between the total personality and the individual's social experience. This at least is Fanon's conclusion.

In the article 'Day Care – Its Value and Limits' written with Dr Geromini in 1959 Fanon provides the most explicit statement of his attitude towards the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. This article also carries forward the central propositions of Fanon's sociology of medicine.

'Day Care' was published after Fanon had completed *Colonialism* and it stands as the last major article prior to *The Wretched*. There is, however, no indication of either a stylistic or a conceptual nature which places the article as a departure from the other psychiatric writings.

Fanon's advocacy of the use of day care as a method of treatment for mental illness was markedly different from the more traditional approaches in vogue in public institutions during the early 1950s. In

traditional practice the confinement of a patient was envisaged as a means of protecting the patient from himself and of sheltering him from the conflicts of everyday life. Added to this motive was the overriding, if somewhat concealed, intention of protecting the community from the patient.

Fanon and Geromini argue that with full hospitalisation the conflictual situation which is presumed to underlie the patient's illness is bypassed, with the hospital taking over responsibility for the individual. The patient is assumed to be incapable of making even the most elementary decisions concerning his management and well-being. The consequence of this hermetic existence is that, although the patient is offered appeasing surroundings without drama or crisis, his life will rapidly become less and less socialised (p. 7).

Confinement involves a recognition by the sick person that he must surrender his flagging autonomy to the guardianship of the hospital staff. But this protection of the patient from himself will inevitably worsen his original condition. As Fanon and Geromini note: 'Confinement breaks the narcissism of the patient, crucifies him in his tentative self confidence and engages him in a traumatic manner in the way of regression, of fear and anguish' (p. 9). Thus the confinement succeeds in deepening the very condition that it proposes to alleviate.

In the case of full hospitalisation the patient's contact with his family is severed. Since the family members are encouraged to exclude the sick person from their activities, the group's unity, already strained by the fact of illness, is shattered. Most often hospitalisation will encourage regression, as the patient feels abandoned. Fanon and Geromini clearly identify the consequences of such hospitalisation, noting that: 'If the family in its decisive reproach to the patient signifies that they will recognize him no longer, that they participate in a life fundamentally different from his, what possible disintegration and what possible (innumerable) bridges are offered to his phantasies and to his regressions?' (pp. 9–10)

Hospitalisation, in limiting the field of individual action whether it be using a razor or purchasing a box of matches, encourages the patient to focus his aggression against the institution which he resents for placing these restrictions upon his behaviour. The patient comes to feel himself free only in opposition to the hospital which confines him (p. 4). Fanon and Geromini argue that the patient's aggression will usually be most pronounced during the initial phases of confinement, but will soon give way to apathy and compliance as the individual becomes gradually institutionalised, and thus more

hopeless. They conclude that this is borne out by the fact that the most difficult inmates are the recently ill who have not become resigned to the role of mental patient. Those best adjusted to hospitalisation will tend to flee from any opportunity of assuming responsibility. The most ill are the patients who have accepted confinement. The comparison Fanon draws between difficult patients and the apathetic is somewhat misleading in that he ignores the differences between these two groups which have their origins within the very nature of the individual illnesses. Certainly the issue of the length of hospitalisation is relevant, as some patients do become progressively more apathetic with the passing of time. But at least some of those patients Fanon identified as being difficult would have remained so despite lengthened periods of hospitalisation. The reason for this would lie in the type of their illness and not in the length of their time in hospital.

In place of these negative features of full confinement, Fanon and Geromini propose the method of day care, a programme which manages to avoid the probability of gradual chronicisation. Their enthusiasm for this approach is directly related to their interpretation of two principles of psychiatric care. The first concerns a specific philosophy of psychological science. The second concerns the aetiology of mental illness itself.

Fanon defines mental illness as a pathology of liberty which constricts the range and meaning of individual action.[8] Hospitalisation, in further limiting the field of activity, serves to exacerbate the underlying problem of choice. What needs to be done is to bring into focus the existential content of an illness and confront conflict as it is lived by the patient. The second principle relates to what for Fanon constitutes a healthy relationship between the individual and his social milieu. In ordinary life the individual is immersed in a multiplicity of bonds, duties, and responsibilities that constitute the life blood of his existence. With total confinement, another dialectic is developed. This dialectic is referred to in both *Masks* and *The Wretched* as analogous to that between a master and a slave. In this way the patient is robbed of all pretence to autonomy ['Day Care', p. 3], as the theme of his actions is provided by the other; that is, in this case, by the medical personnel of the institution. The possibilities for autonomy are replaced by subordination, passivity, and acquiescence.

The hospital world is a pseudo-society, completely lacking in that dynamic dialectical flow so necessary for ordinary social life. Conversely, day hospitalisation, in allowing the patient to maintain

continued contact with his normal milieu, means that it is concrete society itself which is the medium for treatment and care (p. 6).

From the therapist's point of view the methodological advantage of day care is that it allows the life of each patient to be studied starting from situations which are always concrete. The patient's life is not suspended during the period of treatment. Through the medium of day care an 'existential analysis' can be implemented which takes full cognisance of the structure of the family group in relation to the patient and which allows a substantive analysis of the aetiology of the illness.

In the psychiatric writings, Fanon demonstrates quite conclusively that whatever the degree of personality disintegration suffered prior to confinement, further regression will automatically follow upon experience of the limiting, coercive, and oppressive conditions found in hospitals. In a hospital milieu these negative features will arise for two reasons: the first is the need to manage patients with as little trouble as possible given limited staff resources, the second is the rupture forced between the patient's everyday life prior to illness and his experience within the hospital. Confinement within the walls of a hospital produces a second confinement, adding to the fact that the patient's illness has already placed severe limitations upon his field of action. Only in recent years has attention been given to the kinds of problems associated with the career of the psychiatric patient as a social role. During the period in which Fanon worked in public institutions it was usually assumed that an individual suffering from an emotional disorder did not require the range of social, intellectual and recreational activities which, outside the hospital milieu, are taken for granted as constituting the substance of everyday life. During the mid 1950s, at the very time when Fanon took up his post at Blida, psychiatric care in public hospitals was undergoing a revolution. In Britain and on the continent major changes in mental hospitals heralded the progression from custodial to therapeutic care. The introduction of workshops and vocational programmes were to greatly reduce the hospital population even before the use of phenothiazine drugs which were to further revolutionise psychiatric practice. But, in introducing such changes into a colonial hospital, Fanon was engaging himself in a far more radical experiment than his metropolitan counterparts.

The sociology of mental illness exposes a number of problems in Fanon's theory. In the medical writings Fanon argues that illness occurs in response to an alienating environment, that is, an environment which fails to provide for the social needs of the patient. Fanon

demonstrates how this process of alienation works with a person who is already ill and confined to a psychiatric hospital. And yet, he makes no comment on the way in which a pathogenic environment, the patient's family or his total social experience, contributes to the development of mental illness, or why some people with this experience become ill and others do not. Beyond this immediate problem lies the equally important need to distinguish between illness (embracing a wide variety of mental disorders) and social trauma. In the political writings, Fanon reproduces the same argument moving from an analysis of the larger social institutions and groupings, the state, classes, etc., to smaller units such as the family. But in neither instance does Fanon adequately describe how a process of change leading to emotional crises, or conversely to liberation, comes about. In the political writings this is particularly true in regard to the role of social institutions in the satisfaction of individual needs. In this respect Fanon's failure to establish outward connections between the individual experience of the mental patient and the social milieu, is paralleled in the political material by his failure to establish the same connections in the opposite direction. This leaves an uneasy fit in the analysis between individual experience and social structure, even though in the political work the nature of Fanon's analysis calls for the establishment of substantial linkages between these two spheres. It also poses a problem as to the status of the term mental illness.

This problem of 'fit' between the individual psychology and the wider frame of reference is present in most of Fanon's writings. In *Masks* Fanon argues that one should never assume that changes within the political or economic orders will necessarily lead to concomitant changes of mentality, yet his entire analysis is predicated upon a belief in the existence of just such an intimate relationship between these spheres. When he arrives at the question of the meshing of individual and social change, Fanon hedges his position by arguing for bilateral action, but leaves the content of that change largely a mystery. He provides no definitive model which connects such an undertaking with social or political institutions. Because of this, both the political and the psychiatric writings remain tentative in just those areas in which Fanon's analysis demands authority.

The psychiatric writings also raise a problem in regard to the status of Fanon's 'existential analysis'. In the clinical material, Fanon makes several direct references to his use of an existential mode of therapeutics and at several points he advocates the superiority of using such an approach. This holds true both in the management of

the patient within the hospital ('Agitation') and in the treatment and diagnosis of the patient in terms of his normal environment ('Syndrome' and 'Day Care').

Existential psychoanalysis is now most closely associated with the names of Binswanger, Jaspers and Frankl. All three were German and all gained their interest in an existential therapeutics from the philosopher Heidegger. Binswanger in particular attempted to construct a mode of dasien analysis. Rejecting the libidinal theory he hoped to replace it with a new vision of biography. But in his hands the interpretation of what constitutes biography rests upon a perception of personality in which the social foundations of illness are as irrelevant as they are in Freudian metapsychology. Binswanger's achievements proved to be dependent upon his unique talents as a therapist which left little enduring residue in terms of theoretical gains.

The work of Frankl is more lasting in the sense that he sought to ground his existential analysis within a theoretical perspective. Frankl's concept of noological illness was intended to identify a type of emotional disorder which arises in response to the character of contemporary western civilisation. Noological illness defines an existential malady which differs in a quite fundamental way from psychogenic neurosis. This type of disorder affects a distinct area of the personality untouched by ordinary neurosis. It does not have its origin in a conflict between primary drives but arises from the conflict between values relating to man's quest for meaning; the quest for the concrete meaning of man's existence. By omission Frankl excludes from this quest for existence the labour process and the need to satisfy the demands of material satisfaction or reproduction. Noological illness is a post-scarcity concept in a world of material abundance and spiritual malaise.

On the question of material interest and noological illness Frankl's analysis collapses as he vacillates between claiming that noological disorders are and are not a form of neurosis. Frankl confesses that a problem of definition arises because of the social foundations of the illness. Under the shadow of Freud and Jung Frankl accepts the assumption that maladies which are traceable to the play of social formations cannot be accommodated within the concept of neurosis. Neurosis cannot be rational. Thus the same tension at the heart of Fanon's clinical research is found also in Frankl's attempt to thematise an existential psychoanalysis.

There was no specific technique of existential psychoanalysis available to Fanon in his work at Blida. There was a novel rhetoric

deriving from the work of Jaspers and Binswanger but there was little, other than a shining new vocabulary, to recommend it. Frankl's major innovation which he named paradoxical intention was an isolated technique unrelated to any broad change in the reorganisation of psychotherapeutics. In his clinical writings Fanon employs the term existential analysis as a synonym for sociocentric therapy. Like Frankl, his use of this epithet does nothing to resolve the problems originating in the sociology of mental illness.

iii The ethnopsychiatric critique

In an article entitled 'The Attitude of the Maghrebian Muslim Towards Madness', published in 1956 in collaboration with Dr Sanchez, Fanon commenced this research aimed at overthrowing the School of Algiers. This article contains the first detailed research into the question of the Muslim's attitude towards madness. As such it was intended to correct the misconceptions of western observers who assumed, rather disparagingly, that the North Africans venerate their insane. 'The Maghrebian Muslim' represents Fanon's first attempt, as a clinician, to replace the conventional wisdom found in ethnopsychiatry with an authentic scientific viewpoint.

Fanon and Sanchez began their study by outlining the attitude of the European towards the mentally ill, an attitude which is somewhat ambiguous. The westerner believes that insanity alienates a man from himself so that the behaviour of the mentally ill cannot be viewed in the same way as that of a normal person. Allowances will be made even when the sick person does damage either to himself or to others. But accompanying this attitude is a belief that a sick person may in fact be partially responsible for his illness and that he may seek, however covertly, to benefit from it. The sick person, apparently incapacitated during the working hours of the day, may rise from his bed to receive his evening meal, or the aggressiveness of a disturbed patient may subtly combine an intention to do harm with involuntary actions. Consequently it is common in the case of malingering patients for hospital staff to adopt a hostile attitude and for the community to think of the solitude of the mental patient as a form of moral constraint exercised on the individual by his illness.

In the attitude of the European towards the mentally ill there is therefore a paradox; the ill are assumed to be both alienated from themselves, the victims of circumstances beyond their control, and also responsible for their illness and behaviour. Fanon and Sanchez

imply that the resort to punishment of patients within mental hospitals emanates from this ambiguity regarding volition.

In the Muslim's attitude towards madness the sick person is deemed to be totally innocent of any complicity in his condition. The disorder is the result of the will of the spirits; Fanon and Sanchez explain, 'The patient is an innocent victim of the spirits who possess him. It is not his fault if he is rude and threatening or if he persists in a total derangement' ('The Maghrebian Muslim,' p. 25). Because the will of the sick is totally subordinate, the community will never attempt to exclude the sick nor behave in an aggressive or suspicious way towards them. The deranged and difficult psychotic may be subject to restraint or 'punishment', such as confinement, but this is only to subdue the malevolent spirits and in no respect implies a judgement of the sick person. Because mental illness is entirely accidental it is seen as affecting only the appearance of the individual. The underlying personality is always intact.

Since the spirits causing the illness may depart at any time, treatment in the form of traditional cure is never abandoned. Perhaps a visit to a shrine or a marabout will be undertaken with a person who has been deranged for many years. Since mental illness is caused by the intervention of the spirits there is no reason for a person to hide the fact that he has in the past been ill. No shame could be attached to a condition in which a person has not been directly involved. Mental illness is something that happens to a person as distinct from something that a person does.

Fanon and Sanchez concede that the informal approach of the Muslim community to the care of the psychiatrically ill is valuable on the human plane as a supportive device. But, while the sick are not excluded from the community and are cared for with considerable sensitivity, in quantitative terms this approach is not sufficient to provide efficient treatment or cure (p. 26).

Up to this point Fanon and Sanchez accept the European account of the Muslim's attitude towards the insane. What they dispute is the motive attributed in explanation of the Muslim's behaviour. They argue that the ethnocentric outlook of the European had obscured the principles guiding the native communities' attitudes. The assumption that the Muslim's tolerance towards their ill was derived from a veneration of the sickness itself is rejected outright. Fanon and Sanchez write: 'It is not the madness which arouses respect, patience, indulgence, it is the man attacked by madness; it is the man who engenders respect' (p. 26). The European gives care to a tuberculosis victim not out of veneration for the bacillus but because

of concern for the patient. Likewise the Muslim's care for their insane is motivated by an overriding concern for the sick person, not for the illness. There are occasions on which a person who is insane may be venerated by the community who believe him to be a saint or to posses divine quality (Baraha). But such people are not regarded by the Muslims as suffering from mental illness.

There are two quite separate categories that the Muslims employ with regard to their insane; the majority are seen as attacked by malevolent spirits and are accepted as ill. A second group, far smaller, who by European standards are also ill, are believed to have divine insight, and it is this group who are venerated. Unfortunately, European observers had taken this esoteric group as representative, and had applied the community standards operating in regard to them to all derangements.

'The Maghrebian Muslim' is an example of Fanon's intention to debunk the popular mythologies present in European psychiatric practice in the colonial world. Fanon and Sanchez quote no documented evidence supporting the belief that the Muslim venerates insanity, intimating that it springs largely from an oral tradition. As in the case of the North African Syndrome the ingrained hostility of western physicians when confronted with the Muslim is the major source of mystification. By regarding the traditional attitude as one of veneration, the European denies the existence of coherent and worthwhile values within the Muslim community, and relegates to the status of infirmity that which actually represents a deeply felt concern for the mentally ill.

In terms of practice, the aim of Fanon and Sanchez's investigation is to facilitate the replacement of traditional methods with modern European techniques. This could only be achieved with a full understanding of the native community's attitudes and values towards their ill. Although the tone of the article is subdued, it is motivated by a deep antipathy to the ethnocentrism of existing attitudes.

In *Masks* and *Colonialism* Fanon describes how the cultural arrogance of the European towards colonial peoples leads directly to the kinds of confusions and mythologies that are present in the belief that the Muslims venerate their insane. Fanon's personal experience of the difficulties in applying European categories of treatment to his patients at Blida added weight to his earlier doubts as to the applicability of western science to non-western peoples, while cementing his commitment against existing ethnographic research.

In the work of Porot, the North African is portrayed as being compulsively dishonest. Not only is he prone to inexplicable outbursts

of violence but he is also an inveterate liar. In the article, 'Confessional Behaviour in the North African' written in conjunction with Dr Lacaton and published in the year before 'The Maghrebian Muslim', Fanon sets out to explore the question of the North African's unwillingness to admit responsibility for a crime or act of dishonesty. In Algeria the entire European community and, in particular, magistrates, police, and employers all testify that the North African is a liar by nature, that he is cunning and cowardly, and that this explains his failure ever to admit culpability. Fanon and Lacaton dismiss such views as unscientific and set out to frame the problem in terms of a broad analytical perspective. As in the later 'The Maghrebian Muslim' this framework is a response to both the earlier and very crude work of Porot on the Muslim personality as well as the mundane prejudice of the European community.

The authors argue that confession or admission of guilt is a most complex social act that can only be understood by reference to the relationship between the individual and the community. For instance, when a legal or medical practitioner is attempting to discover the degree of responsibility for a crime, he must pay cognisance to the ideas and values of the criminal, the meaning of the act, its justification, and the state of mind of the criminal at the time. In effect he must come to an understanding of the way in which the criminal resolves for himself the questions of guilt and responsibility.

As the act of confession normally serves to allow the criminal to regain membership of the social community from which his crime had excluded him, the Muslim's refusal to confess presents a particularly complex problem. This is especially apparent when the Muslim's behaviour is compared with the attitude of the Kabyles. The Kabyle community which enjoys the support of a vibrant traditionalism governing the contracting of marriages and the exchange of land does not exhibit any of the dishonesty characteristic of the Muslim. For them as for the average European the act of confession serves a normalising function.

How does the Muslim behave and what explanation can be offered for his behaviour? When a Muslim makes a confession most often he will later claim that he did so under duress. Alternatively, he may maintain his innocence even under the weight of incontrovertible evidence as to his guilt. To explain this apparently irrational conduct Fanon and Lacaton propose that it is necessary to interpret the exact way the Muslim's crime excludes him from his own and the European community. The effect of confession as a form of ran-

som for the guilt attached to a crime is only comprehensible within the specific social context of the crime and the confession: 'The reintegration of the criminal through the confession of his act depends upon the relationship of the group to the individual. There cannot be a reintegration if there has not already been an integration' (p. 659). Where there is no bond between the individual and the community by which he is being punished, confession serves no worthwhile purpose to the criminal. As the supposedly universal code of ethics that underlies the criminal code is not shared by these criminals, they fail to respond positively to the imposition of punishment.

Fanon and Lacaton treat the divorce between the practice of the colonial legal system and the Muslims' sense of their accountability before that system as the key to the problem of confession. The absence of an authentic point of contact between the two communities explains the Muslim's reticence in confessing. Even when he does confess, this does not have the same psychological significance that confession has for the European: 'The refusal of the Algerian to authenticate the social contract by the confession of his act which is expected of him signifies that his often whole-hearted submission which we have noted must not be confused with his acceptance of his guilt' (p. 660).

While Fanon and Lacaton's article exonerates the Muslim from the stigma of being a congenital liar, 'Confession' is more important for what it implies about the nature of the social system in colonial Algeria. The authors demonstrate quite conclusively that an apparently unambiguous social act, confession, is extremely complex in both its psychology and its social function. Through an understanding of this complexity the authors are able to identify the incomprehension between the European and Muslim communities as the primary cause of the Muslim's reticence. By locating the problem in this way Fanon and Lacaton throw into the question the balance of the social system itself. If the failure to confess is expressive of the absence of a unifying social contract between Arab and European communities, could it be that the incidence of crime is also related to the same cause? In *Colonialism* and *The Wretched* Fanon arrives at just such a conclusion, yet in 'Confession' he withdraws from pursuing this line of argument.[9]

In 'The Maghrebian Muslim' and 'Confession' Fanon had pointed to the way in which western science so readily co-opted popular prejudice, thereby promulgating the idea of the Muslim's innate inferiority. But it is only in his later works, *Colonialism* and *The*

Wretched, that Fanon connects this absorption of prejudice with any identifiable political end.

By the time of writing *The Wretched* Fanon had come to believe that Porot, Carothers, *et al.* were engaged in a quasi-political activity which contributed to the continuance of the colonial system. Fanon explains the reason for his preoccupation with ethnopsychiatry in the following way: 'If we have spent a long time going over the theories held by the colonialist scientists, it was less with the intention of showing their poverty and absurdity than of raising a very important theoretical and practical problem' (*The Wretched,* p. 245). The practical problem concerns the need for political education and the demystification of the Algerian from the prejudices he had come to believe about himself. The theoretical problem, in terms of Fanon's own work, is the need to invent an alternative psychology of the colonised.

Fanon agrees with Porot and Carothers that the African is prone to violence but he denies that this propensity has its basis in any constitutional imperative. Unfortunately the Algerian had come to accept the myth of his compulsive violence thereby, at the narcissistic level, finding a form of compensation for his status as a colonial subject. Intercommunal violence offered the Algerian a perverse image of freedom.

Fanon is adamant that the Algerian is violent because of the social and economic deprivation he experiences and not because of the influence of a primitive neurology. He offers as proof for this argument the variations found between the behaviour of the Algerian at home and the incidence of violent crime among expatriate workers in France (*The Wretched,* pp. 246–7). In the latter there is a marked decline in acts of violence. Furthermore, from the outbreak of the Algerian revolution there was a dramatic reduction in the incidence of violent crimes, a trend that was consistent with the experience of other Maghrebian nations already independent (p. 247). Fanon was certain that, once the Algerian's criminality had been explained as an outgrowth of the prevailing sociopolitical order, the mythology legitimated by the school of Algiers would collapse and with it an important support of the colonial system.

In *Masks,* 'Confession', and 'The Maghrebian Muslim' there is little evidence of his manner of criticism of ethnopsychiatry which was to dominate in *The Wretched.* In his first book Fanon attacks ethnopsychiatry on methodological grounds, while in *The Wretched* he is chiefly concerned with the political implications that such

research carries. Yet, if a comparison is made between the earlier and later works, it is apparent that Fanon does not progress from a methodological to a political critique of ethnopsychiatry even though such a progression is suggested by a cursory reading of *Masks* and *The Wretched.* Fanon vacillates between accusing the ethnopsychiatrists of methodological simplicity, of ignoring the social context of the phenomena at hand, of callousness towards the colonised, of political duplicity with colonial authorities, and of moral default in the face of social injustice. While most of these criticisms appear in all of Fanon's works, it is only in *Colonialism* and *The Wretched* that he actually condemns ethnopsychiatrists as agents of colonialism. For instance, in *Masks* Fanon concedes that although Mannoni is misguided in his study of the Malagasy his 'analytic thought is honest' (*Masks*, p. 83). This is a judgement Fanon would not later make of either Porot or Carothers or even Mannoni. This realisation of the ideological function of ethnopsychiatry parallels Fanon's growing awareness of the need to destroy the colonial system.

In *Masks* Fanon berates ethnopsychiatry for its failure to make allowance for the need for an alternative psychology of the black. Mannoni's failure to provide an adequate understanding of the African was in part due to his application of models of personality drawn from European experience. Porot, unlike Mannoni, did not view his research in North Africa as furnishing a colonial psychology. Porot assumed that the colonial context of his subjects was quite irrelevant to his research. The problem of the Muslim belonged to neurology not social history. In 'The Maghrebian Muslim' and 'Confession' Fanon set out quite deliberately to create a new and scientific perception of colonial man. He sought to replace all previous research, which was based largely upon neurological evidence, with a genuine psychology. This in itself was a revolutionary step. Fanon presumed that the human sciences were relevant in the study of the African. By attacking the school of Algiers Fanon sought to destroy a number of popular myths which served to enslave the Muslim. Through explaining the problem of violence and exposing its social causes the Muslim could be freed from a narcissistic attachment to the myth of his self-destructive mentality. This would also expose the barbaric nature of the colonial relationship in which violence plays such a large role.

The secret history of Fanon's clinical papers on madness and confessional behaviour is that with these studies he proves that in ethnopsychiatry colonialism spawned its own science.

iv 'Sociotherapy in a Ward for Muslim Men'

In 'Sociotherapy in a Ward for Muslim Men', published in 1954 and written in conjunction with Dr Azoulay, Fanon set out to explore the kinds of problems which arise when methods of care and treatment invented in Europe are applied in a colonial context. This article precedes chronologically the other major writings on the subject of ethnopsychiatry and the sociology of medicine. But, because it contains conclusions that are absent from the later material, 'Sociotherapy' reads as if it were composed after and not before 'The Maghrebian Muslim', 'Confession', and *Colonialism*. In 'Sociotherapy' Fanon managed to achieve a degree of resolution to the problems posed by the School of Algiers, and by ethnopsychiatry in general which are more convincing than those found in *Colonialism* and *The Wretched*. Why Fanon did not carry forward the findings of this research to his later writings remains something of a mystery, for at no other time does he again refer to what are important insights.

What is most striking about 'Sociotherapy' is that in this article Fanon suggests an alternative to ethnopsychiatry by tracing the relationship between social class and mental illness. In 'Sociotherapy' Fanon achieved his most successful integration of these twin paradigms, an integration that is more convincing than in any of the other psychiatric writings.

'Sociotherapy' is an account of Fanon's first attempt to apply the methods and philosophy of his teacher Tosquelles in a colonial hospital. At Blida Fanon successfully introduced the Saint Alban approach in the treatment of a ward of European (French Algerian) women. The setting up of patients' meetings, the creation of a newspaper, and regular social events soon became an integral part of daily life on the ward. At first there had been some resistance by patients and staff to changes to established routine. At Christmas the patients organised a party for which they created all the decorations. This led to the development of an increasingly normalised social life with regular dances and cinema nights. A special cinema news-sheet was produced to comment upon the films being shown, thereby helping to increase the therapeutic effect of the evenings. A general hospital newspaper was set up, under the direction of two committees, which propagandised the over-all therapeutic aims of the new programme. Again there were initial problems with one or two patients dominating contributions to the paper and preoccupying the committees with purely personal issues. But after a period of adjustment the paper became a vital source of activity and information.

Closely following Tosquelles' methods, Fanon introduced a programme of ergo- or work therapy which was carefully integrated into the patients' other activities. A knitting workshop under the direction of a staff member made embroidery, curtains, and table cloths while a sewing workshop assembled robes from weave and material bought from the patients' own savings. For the long-term inmates, many of whom had been at Blida for years, these seemingly trivial activities proved beneficial. The opportunity to wear bright new clothes – the product of the patients' own labour – was valuable in alleviating the hitherto lifeless existence on the ward. As Fanon comments: 'These different activities which we have just retraced thus form the plot of a more and more rich social life' ('Sociotherapy', p. 351).

The over-all effect of the change from an inactive existence devoid of any varied social interaction was to renovate the atmosphere on the ward and create the conditions suitable for individual recovery. Of this change Fanon notes, 'not only has the asylum life become less laborious but the pattern of departures increased quite plainly' (p. 351). Thus the methods of Tosquelles proved suitable in the treatment of French Algerian women, a fact which served to highlight their complete failure when applied to a ward of Muslim men.

The same approach brought only indifference and resentment with the Muslim patients. Although Fanon had expected some difficulty in applying the methods of sociotherapy, he had not anticipated total failure. The language barrier was a major obstacle to contact between patients and the senior staff. Since Fanon spoke no Arabic, having abandoned an early attempt to master the language, he, like the other metropolitan doctors, had to employ an interpreter when conversing with patients. This was to prove disastrous since it prevented any therapeutic doctor–patient dialogue from taking place. The problems associated with interpreters were two-fold: often the subtleness of the language would be lost in translation so that the patient could never convey his meaning to the physician; also, the use of interpreters provoked the natural hostility of the patients in reproducing the familiar relationship of subordination experienced before any colonial official (p. 358). Quoting Merleau-Ponty, Fanon laments the fact that to speak a language means to support the weight of a particular culture; unfortunately, the language barrier on the ward coincided with the social barriers of the colonial order.

The initial attempt at setting up a sociotherapeutic programme was proposed to the assembled patients at a general meeting. The elements and aims of the programme, regular meetings, films, plays,

a newspaper, were carefully explained to the patients. But, when instituted, this programme met with complete indifference. The daily meetings failed in the attempt to initiate a genuine dialogue between patients and staff, and after only a brief period they were suspended (p. 352). They were replaced with less formal gatherings of staff and selected patients. Games, singing, and discussion groups were set up with the aim of creating a sense of team spirit and co-operativeness. Again, as with the initial meetings, the patients' interest soon declined and they sank back into their accustomed lethargy, devoting their time to playing cards and dominoes, listening to the radio and sleeping. All efforts to revive a spirit of social involvement within the ward met with abject failure.

Attempts to organise theatrical evenings failed as did the evening and daily meetings. The patients' newspaper attracted only one contribution from a patient, a paranoic who protested that the masculine roles in a hospital play were to be performed by women. None of the patients and only a few of the staff read the paper which came to be written almost entirely by Fanon himself. The innovations instituted in the sphere of ergo-therapy met with little more success. The hospital already had a workshop which produced hats, baskets, and mats while some patients had been employed in menial duties. But this type of work had limited therapeutic value and was never intended to form a part of the patients' treatment. The jobs performed were routine and offered little variation. The inmates would volunteer for these jobs for distraction, to get outside the ward, and for cigarette money.

Fanon's initial step in the setting up of an ergo-therapy programme was the training of an orderly in raffia weaving to lead the patients in the workshop. Again the patients' response was one of indifference. They avoided this work and resisted all attempts on the part of the staff to develop a community spirit. Fanon comments of the programme: 'Thus, not only had we been unable after these months and after many efforts to interest the Muslim patients in a type of collective life which operated in the European quarters, but the atmosphere of the service remained heavy and unbearable' (p. 354).

The conditions in the ward, with chronic overcrowding and the absorption of most of the staff's time in mundane tasks, excluded any real possibility for therapeutic success. Junior staff were occupied with changing linen, settling disputes between patients, and segregating the difficult or violent inmates from the rest of the ward. The atmosphere remained oppressive with the frequent resort to

punishment by confinement in cells and the withdrawal of privileges.

The introduction of a sociotherapy programme merely succeeded in increasing the work load of the junior staff. This in turn served to arouse their active resentment to changes which they thought futile.

In his examination of the reasons for the failure Fanon follows the line of approach common to all his clinical writings. As in the earlier 'Syndrome' he draws away from exploring the subjective condition of individuals to examine the nature of the sociocultural universe which frames the context of individual experience. The methods of Tosquelles had been derived from psychiatric practice in metropolitan France and therein presupposed a set of sociocultural circumstances very different from those found in North Africa. In believing it possible to adopt intact such an approach in a Muslim society Fanon had assumed that sociotherapy would work while putting 'in parenthesis the geographical, historical, cultural and social frameworks' (p. 355). The attempt was doomed to failure in the absence of any effort to come to terms with the organic foundations of the autochthonous society. This transposition of European expectations and methods was based upon an implicit denial of any cultural differences between North Africa and the metropole. More precisely, it assumed the absence of any semblance of cultural originality among the Muslim population.

Fanon and Azoulay give two reasons for the failure at Blida, both of which relate to the expectations they had brought, unwittingly, to their psychiatric practice. First, the official colonial policy of assimilation posited that the North African was a Frenchman and therefore no need existed to take account of or understand the Muslim's unique culture. The direct effect of this policy was that: 'The effort must be made by the indigene since he must attempt to be the type of man proposed for him. The assimilation does not assume a reciprocity of perspectives. There is one culture which must disappear to the gain of the other' (p. 355). Within the hospital context the staff had complied with this belief. The onus lay with the patient to adapt to the methods, values, and behaviour derived from metropolitan practice. To create successfully a therapeutic environment the hospital programme would have to be reorganised from the original assumption of the supremacy of western cultural values to a position of cultural relativism.

The second major source of difficulties arose from the absence of research material on the Muslim. The bulk of the work produced by the School of Algiers had dealt with motor and neuro-vegative phe-

nomena. There was no research available on the sociology of mental illness and no effort had been made by French ethnologists to grasp the totality of the Muslim's emotional life. This set Fanon the task of designing a therapy programme in line with the particular needs of Algerian patients. 'There was a hurdle to get over, a transformation of values to be made. Let us say that it was necessary to pass from the biological to the institutional, from the material to the cultural' (p. 356). These criteria were consistent with Fanon's earlier and later admissions concerning the correct methodology for psychiatric medicine. Although Fanon had previously identified the shift in ethnopsychiatric research from physiology (Porot) to psychopathology (Mannoni) it was not until 'Sociotherapy' that he was able to accommodate this development within his own work. This delay is rather curious since he felt the advance in ethnopsychiatry to be quite revolutionary in the effect it would eventually have upon the ruling myths of colonialism.

In his most clear explanation of the failure at Blida, Fanon writes: 'The biological, the sociological and the psychological have only been separated by an aberration of the spirit, in fact they are indistinctly related or tied. It is the fault of not having integrated into our daily practice the notion of Gestalt and the element of contemporary anthropology that we have known such rude failures' (p. 256). Ignorance of the social and cultural climate of Muslim Algeria had undermined the programme. Fanon had fallen prey to the same ethnocentric blindness which he had found so reprehensible in Mannoni's work on the Malagasy. From this failure Fanon learned that: 'A socio-therapy is only possible in proportion to the account taken of the social morphology and the form of sociability' (p. 356). Before a successful introduction of the sociotherapeutic method was possible, a careful study had to be made of the prevailing modes of social and cultural interaction. In the case of Algeria the physician must be armed with an understanding of the predominant values of Muslim society, including the norms operative in the dominions of aesthetics, religion, morality, and sociability.

In the absence of existing research material, Fanon and Azoulay attempt to provide an outline of the dominant values and social structure of the native community. The bulk of this brief analysis is devoted to economic factors and the development of new classes under the impact of French colonialism. Although Fanon does not argue the point openly, the article suggests the existence of important connections between the colonialist system and the incidence of mental illness among the Arab population.

Fanon and Azoulay examine four spheres of the Muslim's life noting the principal values and characteristics of each. First, Muslim society is theocratic in spirit, with Islamic belief dominating the whole gamut of social life from civil law to morals, science and philosophy, and family behaviour. In practice, no real distinctions are made between the legal and religious systems, so that the Koran can be said to co-ordinate all aspects of the Muslim's life. Second, Algeria is a gerontocratic society, in which the father rules the family with absolute authority. The family itself is organised as an extended unit with many individual families forming a single large conglomerate. The natural social unit is the clan which is governed by a Djema or traditional council. In traditional society the largest unit in which the individual will find his identity is the clan and not, as in Europe, the nation. Third, Algeria is ethnically complex and is composed of various minority groups. The largest of these groups is the Kabyle who, although sharing the same religion as the majority, have a separate language and culture and a strong sense of a separate identity. Besides the Kabyle the lesser minority groups include the Nomads, Mozambites, and Chauvois.[10]

The fourth and most important feature of Algerian society concerns social class; the fact that this structure was in the process of rapid change explained many of the characteristics of the patients Fanon encountered at Blida.

Prior to the French conquest land was held communally and the major economic issue within the community concerned the richness of particular plots of land or the acquisition of animals for farming. On their arrival the French forced a redistribution of resources, with the collective land being expropriated by large private owners. The resultant class system saw a division between a very few major land holdings owned privately, mostly by Europeans, and a mass of small proprietors, or fellahs, eking out a painful existence on tiny parcels of the worst land. While in the past the peasant farmers had often been poor, it was not until the expropriation of the communal land that they had been subject to what Fanon terms 'proletarianization' (p. 357). Over time population pressure on a limited quantity of land, combined with the use of primitive agricultural techniques, led to the fellah becoming progressively more impoverished. This was a new poverty because it was accompanied by a severance of ties with the traditional tribal community.

Many of the farmers were forced by this combination of circumstances to take up day labour which further divided the peasantry into factions of small proprietors and landless labourers. But with

the introduction of modern agricultural techniques on the large estates the demand for rural labour decreased. This forced the landless labourers to seek work in the cities where, in the absence of industrialisation, they found little opportunity for employment. Through the combined action of land alienation and the mechanisation of agriculture, there developed a landless sub-proletariat, the victims of both increasing social inequalities and the absence of local employment opportunity. The emergence of a permanent emigrant labour force to metropolitan France was the final result of this complex process of economic and social upheaval.

Nomadism, which had for centuries been an integral part of the life of the Algerian Muslim, had always been accompanied by a sedentary attachment of some kind. Individual identity was guaranteed through tribal affiliation. In contrast, the new nomadism of those seeking work in metropolitan factories was quite different; it led to a degenerative de-tribalisation in which the normal and positive ties between the individual and the community were eroded if not completely destroyed (p. 358). The bulk of the Muslim patients at Blida were the victims of this systematic de-tribalisation set in motion by the creation of the large estates. An analysis of the patient intake at Blida showed that the majority belonged to the landless peasantry with an equal proportion being divided between the rural and urban labour forces. All but a handful of these patients were bereft of any work skills while only 35 out of 220 actually owned any land.[11]

Fanon concludes that the implications of this study for a psychotherapeutic programme are obvious. The meetings between patients and staff had failed because the staff had no conception of suitable topics for conversation. What common ground would landless peasants share with European women with whom such methods had proven so successful? Likewise the proposed festivals and choral evenings were entirely inappropriate since they ran directly counter to normal practice within local Islamic culture (p. 359).

The Muslim indifference to theatre and team games was inevitable since such activities had no place in the peasant's life experience. Although the films shown had been carefully chosen with emphasis upon action cinema set in the familiar North African landscape, their psychological orientation had been quite alien to the Muslim audience.[12] The patient newspaper had attracted few readers because so few of the patients could actually read, and even those who could were not interested in a paper that merely reflected the deadening atmosphere of the ward. As the Algerian's cultural

life was based upon an oral rather than a written tradition, with most learning being transmitted through oral instruction, a newspaper could find no echo in the normal life experience of the Muslim.

The introduction of ergo-therapy faced difficulties because of the differences in the character and environment of work in the metropole where ergo-therapy had been invented and the near-feudal condition operating in Algeria. The Algerian peasant worked the land as either a labourer or an owner without any degree of specialised skills. The set tasks of weaving or basket making were quite beyond the experience of these men; while the attempt to set up a raffia workshop was doubly fated to fail. The Muslims regarded this type of work as suitable only for women. Ergo-therapy could be made successful if it were reorganised in alignment with the actual work lives of the patients, that is, towards manual labour: 'And if one succeeds in attaching them to a particular plot of land, to interest them in the produce of the work, thus the work will be truly a factor for re-equilibrium; then ergo-therapy would be able to be involved in a specific social activity' (p. 361). When this was combined with the setting up of a Moorish café – the regular celebration of Muslim festivals and occasional visits by a story teller – the first steps towards establishing a therapeutic environment had been achieved.

An immediate reaction upon reading 'Sociotherapy' is astonishment at Fanon's naivety – why should he be surprised that psychotherapeutic techniques which had been successful in Europe should fail when applied to Muslim peasants? This naivety is not only due to Fanon's admitted ignorance of the lives of the Maghrebian Muslims who were his patients at Blida. He was absorbed in the traditions of western psychiatric practice which, as he admits, provide little insight into the emotional life of the African. Like the ethnospychiatrists, Fanon was the carrier of a whole range of presuppositions about personality and social need which had been developed in Europe. Contrary to his protestations in *Masks*, Fanon was not entirely free of the vision of a universal psyche with its eternal patterns of need, growth and maturation, each in turn separated by the same perennial crises.

'Sociotherapy' represents a self-conscious attempt by Fanon to divest himself of the prejudices he had inadvertently carried with him. Fanon viewed the failure at Blida as more than merely technical, since it constituted an ethical default on his part to come to terms with the substance of an indigenous culture. The other major impression left by the article is that of an increased reference to

social factors in explanation of the formation and incidence of mental illness. In 'Syndrome' a formal connection was assumed between the fact of expatriation and the vague but debilitating psychosomatic disorders suffered by expatriate workers. But Fanon did not provide any detailed analysis of the root causes of expatriation, making but a few cursory comments on the need for increased job opportunities to reduce the trend towards migrant labour ('Syndrome', p. 25). Fanon's patients at Blida were drawn from the same population as these migratory labourers, but without the concept of social class Fanon could not explain why it was that these men were oppressed.

In 'Sociotherapy' we are given a detailed historical account of the factors that led to the creation of a landless, unskilled working class. In fact, two-thirds of the discussion of indigenous society is devoted to an analysis of the contemporary social structure and its origins. Fanon and Azoulay have comparatively little to say about the theocratic and gerontocratic features of Algerian society, implying that the expropriation of collective land had eroded these foundations of Muslim life.

At the point where it is relevant to cast judgement upon the nature of the connections between the socioeconomic origins of the patients at Blida and the incidence of mental illness, Fanon remains silent. Is the connection between proletarianisation and mental disorders coincidental or causal? Were the patients at Blida sick because they were landless, unemployed, and de-tribalised in the same way that the emigrant workers to France became ill because they were expatriates? Fanon's Muslim patients in 'Sociotherapy' are marginal men, the heroes of *The Wretched,* trapped between an irreversible process of detribalisation and the fate of a modern poverty on the fringes of the cities. Obviously, a 'cure' for these men must include the opportunity to find employment and thereby the chance to lead a reasonable life. Yet about these issues Fanon says nothing, nor does he comment on the problem that this in turn raises about the nature of the relationship between social analysis and the sciences of personality.

Although 'Sociotherapy' represents a marked advance upon the earlier writings in that, here, Fanon follows through an analysis of the socioeconomic status of the patients concerned, there is still evidence of an underlying timidity on Fanon's part. While Fanon was aware of the direction in which his analysis was leading, his essentially liberal democratic sentiments and his commitment to a universal brotherhood of man blinded him to the contradictions of the colonial relationship.

In the conclusion to 'Sociotherapy' Fanon emphasises the necessity for cultural relativism in the diagnosis and treatment of non-western peoples. With an approach such as sociotherapy, in which the medium for treatment is society itself, recognition must be given to the character of the social life that the patient led prior to illness. Fanon's experience at Blida taught him that in the absence of a body of research which could be used creatively in clinical practice he would have to discover for himself the principles of Maghrebian society. Thus, in applying the sociotherapeutic model, Fanon was forced to develop the rudiments of an independent ethnopsychiatry, an approach, running directly counter to the School of Algiers, which started from the social and historical experience of the subject and not with physiological data.

In writing of the hospital as a social milieu, Fanon is confident of the requirements for inventing a disalienating or curative environment and of the ways disordered behaviour is generated by oppressive confinement. But when referring to the wider social order, he remains, as always, hesitant. Fanon's sensitivity towards what he was later to term national culture and the importance he attaches to traditional *mores* in the maintenance of individual personality is found in embryonic form in 'Sociotherapy'. In 'Sociotherapy' Fanon can be seen attempting to draw away from the two metaphysics which had hitherto exerted such a strong influence over his intellectual development; the metaphysics of negritude and psychoanalysis. Almost imperceptibly the concept of national culture came to be seen by Fanon as filling the gap in his theoretical analysis between the individual (psychoanalysis) and the race (negritude).

Fanon's own judgement of his role at Blida during this time and of the failure of initial attempts to introduce sociotherapy is found in *The Wretched.* Fanon makes an oblique reference to 'Sociotherapy' where he comments: 'We have since 1954 in various scientific works drawn the attention of both French and international psychiatrists to the difficulties that arise when seeking to "cure" a native properly, that is to say, when seeking to make him thoroughly a part of the social background of the colonial type' (*The Wretched,* p. 200). By 1960 Fanon had come to believe that there was a direct causal connection between the colonial social system and mental illness, thereby accepting the implications of his earlier ethnographic studies. In the colonial world the role of the psychiatrist is a political activity. To be 'cured', in this pathological sense, requires the native's acquiescence before the authority of the coloniser and his acceptance of his inferiority as a colonised type.

Chapter 5

Culture and personality

1. The colonial personality

The relationship between African culture and colonialism was raised neither by the posts of negritude nor by the practitioners of ethnopsychiatry. Both schools were deeply concerned with the practice of culture and the apparent simplicity of man's achievements in Africa. Yet, because both viewed African culture as an essentially static arena of human activity, they dismissed the possibility that cultural formations could be a function of human historical experience.

Cultural originality became something of an obsession with the poets of negritude who viewed culture as entirely conterminous with race. The belief that racial identity was the determinant of cultural style was a myth inherited by Senghor and Diop in proof that they were indeed the true heirs of E. W. Blyden. They, like Blyden and Garvey, were anxious to explain away the apparent lack of achievement of the Negro peoples. Like Blyden they discovered that each race possesses a particular genius; that each has its own unique achievements. They understood that these achievements can be, as in the case of the Negro, obscured by the incompatibility of alternative views of aesthetics, and reality.

The belief that race determines culture is, of course, far older than negritude; it has its origin as one of the more nasty and archaic shibboleths of colonial racism. Culture was also a preoccupation of Porot, Sutter, Carothers and Mannoni. The earlier exponents of ethnopsychiatry, Porot and Sutter, explained the North African's lack of cultural achievement as a function of his physiology. The underdevelopment of the Muslim's central nervous system excluded the possibility of his creating a sophisticated material or artistic order. The backwardness of North African societies derived from the backward cortex. Physiology is fate. Twenty years after Porot, J. C. Car-

others employed the same theory of diencephalic and cultural underdevelopment in his study of the Kikuyu.

In Octave Mannoni's work the theory of culture and physiology is much modified. Mannoni agrees with Porot and Carothers that African cultures are backward but his explanation for this backwardness ignores physiological evidence. In *Prospero* culture is viewed as a function of personality. The basic personality characteristics of the Malagasy are faithfully reflected in all aspects of Malagasy culture. Malagasy society is a society of dependence. Yet, in Mannoni's theory, personality is assumed to be modified over time. Therefore the surrounding culture must also be open to change as mankind makes its unilateral ascent from dependence to inferiority. Mannoni is not at all clear as to his understanding of the relationship between history and personality or between culture and personality. Despite qualifications to the contrary, his theory is based upon the assumption that culture grows from personality.

Ethnopsychiatry and negritude shared common ground in that each sought to explain the lack of achievement of African cultures: Porot and Carothers from the vantage point of contempt, and Senghor and Césaire from fear. Neither would allow that culture and personality may only be understood within the specific history of each people.

Fanon's view of national culture in the context of an ascendant colonialism is found in the important essay 'Racism and Culture', written in 1956 and published in the collected essays, *Revolution*.[1] In this essay Fanon attempts to show that colonialism is a dynamic system which, like its supporting ideology, changes with modifications to the prevailing means of production, and he suggests how this is in turn linked with the emergence of the colonial personality.

Colonialism and the fourth chapter of *The Wretched*, 'On National Culture', contain Fanon's testimony on the role of culture within the decolonisation process.

In 'Racism', Fanon argues that there is a reciprocal relationship between culture and racism both for the peoples who practise it and for those who become its victims. In fact, the relationship can be clearly interpreted according to the different phases of colonial domination. Fanon distinguishes between two specific modes of colonial racism. The first is 'vulgar racism' in which the inferiority of the native is proven by reference to physiological science. Claims that the African possesses a smaller brain than the European or that he suffers from a retardation of the critical intellectual functions are familiar to readers of Victorian ethnography. These claims are also

common in the literature of quite recent research. Fanon makes specific reference to the work of J. C. Carothers as an exponent of this science. The second, 'cultural racism', is a more sophisticated form in which the object is no longer the physiology of the individual but the cultural style of a people. References to the lazy cortex are replaced by references to the predominance of 'occidental values' (p. 42) as the distinguishing mark of the backward African. Although no explicit mention is made of Mannoni there is no doubt that for Fanon *Prospero* is the leading text of cultural racism. The shift to cultural racism witnesses a revolutionary change in the colonialist explanation of the inferiority of the native community.

Vulgar racism has been rendered anachronistic through the influence of a number of historical forces. The European experience of Nazism with its apparition of a colonial system in the heart of Europe made the colonies of Africa an embarrassment for liberal democratic regimes. The growing awareness of the working class in the colonising countries, helped to undermine the less sophisticated justifications for colonialism. Finally, the evolution of techniques, by which Fanon means changes to the prevailing means of production, altered for ever the relationship between the Third World and Europe. Each of these three factors contributed to the erosion of the foundations on which vulgar racism was based, necessitating its replacement by a doctrine proposing a hierarchy of cultures. Unfortunately Fanon gives no indication as to which of these factors he deems most important in the shift from one form of racism to another. There is little evidence elsewhere in his writings to provide an answer. Of the three factors, the second, the support of the metropolitan working class, is absent from Fanon's later work, while the influence of the means of production is hardly visible in *Colonialism* or *The Wretched.*

The relationship between cultures and racism is extremely complex. Since racism is but one part of the cultural whole, it must therefore be open to those same factors, generating change, as the encircling culture itself (p. 42). The shift from vulgar to cultural racism parallels underlying changes in the nature of the colonial relationship. Fanon distinguishes between two phases of colonialism, that are conterminous with the two modes of racism. Phase I is that period during which colonial domination is initially established; the indigenous peoples are first subjugated militarily and economically, then dehumanised according to what Fanon terms 'polydimensional methods' (p. 45). This method involves the domination of economic and cultural life. On the psychological plane, the natives' will to live

becomes an indecisive, in fact, 'phantom life' (p. 45), while gradually a guilt complex appears, which is characteristic of all colonised peoples. In economic terms, Phase I of colonialism 'corresponds to the period of crude exploitation of men's arms and legs' (p. 45).

Phase II comes about through the evolution of the means of production. Even the limited amount of industrialisation, that the higher stage of colonialism generates, necessitates, for the first time, more sophisticated techniques in the subjugation of the colonised. With the increased complexity of the means of production, there is a growing need for what Fanon terms 'collaborators' – technically skilled indigenes to man the lower rungs of the colonial state apparatus. This development undermines the old doctrines of physiological inferiority and calls for modification, both in the manner by which the colonised are exploited and in the form of racism that justifies that exploitation. Fanon refers to the growing need to camouflage this exploitative relationship, a need that is present within both the subordinate nation and the metropole. In the latter case, the gradually increasing awareness of the metropolitan working class of the actual character of the colonial system finally renders vulgar racism insupportable.

Fanon is intent upon establishing two propositions: first, that the form racism takes is dependent upon the prevailing mode of the colonial relationship, which in turn is dependent upon the means of production. The shift from vulgar to cultural racism is reflective of what Fanon, in *The Wretched,* terms a shift from extractive to consumer colonialism.

The second proposition is intended to destroy once and for all those arguments which purport to explain racism as a psychological flaw – a disturbing constant of the human spirit that serves no social interests and has no identifiable historical causes. Fanon is quite definite in locating the origin of racism within a special socio-historical context: 'Racism stares one in the face for it so happens that it belongs in a characteristic whole; that of the shameless exploitation of one group of men by another which has reached a higher stage of technical development' ('Racism', p. 47). Thus racism must be viewed according to the ostensible social and political functions it serves, namely the systematic oppression of a people (p. 43).

In Fanon's view, colonial oppression, of which racism is but one element, involves the invalidation of a people's entire way of life; this includes the denigration of their language, dress, food and all accepted social *mores.* The racist or colonialist nations have no

intrinsic interest in the confrontation of cultures, their concern being simply to establish complete control over a given territory. In 'Racism' Fanon implies that there is a need to distinguish between the reactions of two social groupings when discussing racist ideology. The first group is the indigenous middle class, while the second is a residual category comprising all those for whom it is not possible to adopt the cultural style of the occupying power. Fanon proposes that colonial racism renders the national culture *uninhabitable.* The native middle class is coerced into accepting the devaluation of the indigenous culture, while the peasantry and the other residual classes suffer the fate of living in an atrophied or sclerosed culture.

It is common for the black intellectual to turn to the cultivation of culture in an attempt to retain emotional equilibrium. But their cultivation of a distant and now abstract heritage is paradoxical; the members of the most advanced section of the indigenous community embrace a culture that is the most rudimentary. Fanon contrasts this abstract culture with the world of the traditionalist who survives within a simple yet living universe. This division between intellectuals and traditionalists reinforces the distinction implicit in 'Racism' between the peasant class and the petty bourgeoisie. Therefore negritude is the ideology of the urban, western-educated intellectuals. It is an answer, however unsatisfactory, however paradoxical, to the challenges confronting the class of which they are members.

During the initial colonial phase, elements of the native population will attempt to deracialise themselves and desperately seek to adopt the attitudes and behaviour of the dominant group toward their own race. The dominated race comes to accept its condition as caused by its own failings, thereby assuming a burden of guilt for its sufferings (p. 48). In this reaction lies the origin of the two central elements of the colonial personality, namely, guilt and inferiority. Tragically, inferiority and guilt provide further impetus to the desire to jettison any attachment to the national culture. Ultimately, the fate that awaits the *évolués* is the discovery that, no matter how complete their adoption of the cultural style of the metropole, they remain the object of racist contempt.

Fanon claims that the sacking of the local culture, undertaken by the occupying power, does not bring about the immediate destruction of that culture, but institutes a slow, lingering death. This slow wasting is, in fact, part of the deliberate intention of the colonialist, since the atrophied local institutions are employed as organs for colonial administration. Thus the Europeans' respect for local cul-

ture and institutions is really 'a most elaborate sadism' (p. 44). Since there is no organic contact between these co-opted institutions and the wishes of the mass of the people, they gradually become mere empty shells. 'Thus we witness the setting up of archaic, inert institutions, functioning under the oppressor's supervision and patterned like a caricature of formerly fertile institutions' (*Revolution*, p. 44). The local culture becomes progressively more closed and what Fanon terms 'cultural mummification' leads in turn to the sapping of the individual's vitality and capacity for invention.

With the appropriation of the indigenous means of production, the European presence introduces the economic and political conditions favourable for creating cultural atrophy. The destruction of the colonised's original methods for solving its relationship with nature, achieving the means of survival and recording that victory would, in itself, be debilitating. But added to this is the corrosive influence of colonial racism that justifies the usurpation. Tragically, the colonised often comes to view his own former cultural style through the denigratory perspective of the European, and arrives at that despair and self-hatred which characterises the colonial personality.[2] Fanon's account of cultural sclerosis and the emergence of the colonial personality finds a parallel in the anthropological and psychiatric works of Gregory Bateson. Over a period of more than twenty years Bateson developed a linking of the degeneration of personality and culture resulting from the contact between European and colonised peoples with a theory of schizophrenia. Bateson's findings are in many respects complementary to Fanon's. There is no evidence of either man being familiar with the work of the other. It is of interest that Bateson's research in the area of schizophrenia resulting from his New Guinean and Balian experience has been a most important influence on contemporary anti-psychiatry.

In 'Racism' Fanon attempted to place all his previous writings, including *Masks* and the clinical material, into some kind of sound theoretical framework. 'Racism' also represents a series of victories by Fanon over bourgeois liberalism, ethnopsychiatry and negritude.

By exposing the link between racism and economic interest Fanon explodes the myth of racism as a tragic flaw in the human psyche: a flaw deplored in liberal rhetoric yet left untouched by liberal practice. The tradition of viewing racism as a constant of all human societies denies the possibility of attacking the social interests which racist doctrines serve. In rejecting this tradition Fanon achieved a great advance upon the understanding of racism presented in *Masks*.

The victory over the ethnopsychiatrists is achieved at two differ-

ent levels. By showing that the research of Porot and Mannoni corresponds to the dominant ideologies accompanying distinct phases of the colonial relationship, Fanon exposes their work as the product of colonial history. Likewise, the mythos of the retarded African personality is also an historical product. Cultural encystment leads to the development of specific personality traits which Porot had attributed to cortical underdevelopment and Mannoni had explained according to Adlerian metapsychology. The suffering of the patients described in 'Sociotherapy' and explained by reference to the historical experience of the class to which they belonged provided Fanon with the means finally to overthrow colonial science.

Fanon's third victory, a victory he was soon to relinquish, was against the poets of negritude. In 'Racism' Fanon brings to the surface a perception which was buried in *Masks*; that, according to its historical position and its professed *raison d'être*, negritude is the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie. It is a reflex by native intellectuals in response to the strains associated with their class position and their history. Like colonial racism, negritude is only explicable when seen in relation to the underlying political and economic motivations of its agents.

In view of these three successes 'Racism' is the most advanced of all of Fanon's writings. 'Racism' had grown out of the clinical papers 'Mental Health', 'Confession' and 'Sociotherapy' all published in 1954–5 and 'Agitation' and 'The Maghrebian Muslim' published in the following two years. It was crystallised out of Fanon's preoccupation at that time with the problems of cultural relativism and the connection between psychotherapeutic diagnosis and social formations. The theory of class and the relevance of class position in the aetiology of emotional disorders presented in 'Sociotherapy' gives 'Racism' its strength and sensitivity. Yet, after 'Racism', Fanon retreats to such an extent that in his subsequent work he never again reproduces the sophistication or subtlety of this early essay. After 1955 Fanon all too soon resurrects the ghost of negritude and with it an idealised portrait of African culture common to the class from which he had fled.

'Racism' is the main thread joining *Masks* and *The Wretched*. It is also final proof that the clinical articles are the means by which Fanon travelled from metapsychology to political theory. In 'Racism' Fanon is able for the first time to place his theory of personality within a view of culture and history which is genuinely materialist.

i Colonial deficiency

The psychopathology of colonialism, found in the psychiatric writings and also in *Colonialism* and *The Wretched,* is based upon a single assumption, an assumption tentatively suggested in *Masks* (p. 18) – that the seizure of the productive process and the subordination of the indigenous cultural whole to metropolitan economic interests creates a distinct deformation of personality.

In his study of colonial Algeria Fanon explores the two-sided character of the indigenous response to European domination. The colonial personality is essentially a portrait of men made deficient, of whole peoples instilled with fear, and degraded through the destruction of their natural means of sociability. But it is also an account of the cultural withdrawal that accompanies colonialism by which the native population retains a semblance of its originality. In Fanon's theory this originality is seen to hold the promise for a reascendant nationalism.

In *Colonialism* Fanon documents the ravages of cultural sclerosis upon the personality of the Algerian woman and upon the natural workings of the family. The retreat of these women back into the confines of the home and their avoidance of wider social contact, especially with the imposed French culture, resulted in gross infantilisation. The severely limited horizons within which women were permitted to move denied all capacity for innovation. Their world was characterised by inhibitions. In the case of the family, the tendency to authoritarianism by the father and rigid sexual repressiveness among the children were the corollaries of colonial domination.

In *Colonialism* Fanon cites numerous examples demonstrating the inability of the Algerian to distinguish between those aspects of the imperialist culture that are harmful and those that are patently beneficial. This 'colonial deficiency' was nowhere more obvious than in the Muslim's attitude to western medicine. Fanon writes of the Algerian's refusal to accept proper medical care as one of the tragedies of the colonial system: 'The sense of alienation from colonial society and the mistrust of the representative of its authority are always accompanied by an almost mechanical sense of detachment and mistrust, of even the things that are most positive and most profitable to the population' (*Colonialism,* p. 120). The Algerian's response to even genuine offers of help was completely undiscriminating, as they perceived 'the doctor, the engineer, the school teacher, the policeman, the rural constable, through the haze of an almost

organic confusion' (*Colonialism*, p. 102). In the case of medical care the Muslim would approach the hospital and the physician with fear, not hope.

Fanon is careful to explain that such phobic behaviour results from the nature of the colonial system, thereby refuting any suggestion that it reflects a genetic deficiency. In Algeria every aspect of social life was so affected by the colonial presence that science and technology came to take on a special significance. Fanon comments: 'The technical instrument is rooted in the colonial situation where, as we know, the negative or positive coefficients always exist in a very accentuated way' (*Colonialism*, p. 57). The inability of the Algerian to adopt even the limited range of modern techniques offered by the French, derived from the destructive influence of the political context and not, as Porot or Carothers would suppose, the architectonics of the African brain.

In *Colonialism* the organic confusion of the Algerian is seen as precipitating a pattern of behaviour reminiscent of the phobic. The colonial experience debilitates the native people in terms of their social and economic horizons, the lack of opportunity, and the gearing of local productive forces to the demands of metropolitan self-interest. Colonialism is also debilitating in terms of the mentality to which it gives birth.

In *The Wretched*, Fanon reintroduces the argument initiated in 'Racism' and *Colonialism* in claiming that colonial occupation calls a halt to the development of indigenous culture in almost every field of activity (p. 91). The encystment and ultimate destruction of all vitality is a deliberate aspect of colonialist policy (p. 191). Attachment to traditionalism, while presenting a refusal to adapt to the European presence, leads only to inertia. Under such conditions, local culture becomes more and more empty and devoid of vitality: 'It becomes a set of automatic habits, some traditions of dress and a few broken-down institutions' (*The Wretched*, p. 191). In delineating the character of a colonised culture, Fanon draws a distinction between culture and custom: whereas culture is typified by complexity, dynamism and perpetual renewal, custom is merely that obvious objectivity that appears to define a people. 'Culture has never the translucidity of custom; it abhors all simplification. In its essence it is opposed to custom, for custom is always the deterioration of culture' (*The Wretched*, p. 180).

The usurpation of the local productive process severs all creative ties between a people and the means by which they celebrate their own existence.

ii Cultural withdrawal

The cultural withdrawal of the African from the colonial presence also displays a positive aspect. The retreat of the Algerian woman into the narrow confines of her home (*Colonialism*) and the African peasants' reticence when confronted with the European (*The Wretched*) represent a major strength.

In his study of the Algerian revolution Fanon emphasises the creative aspects of the Muslim's withdrawal into traditionalism. By her use of the veil the Arab woman performed an act of resistance, denying the coloniser access to her face and, symbolically, to her person. Fanon refers to the withdrawal of the Algerian woman behind the covering of the veil in the following passage: '. . . falling back upon the fertile kernel that a restricted, yet coherent existence represents, constituted for a long time the fundamental strength of the occupied' (*Colonialism*, p. 51). In this way, the Algerian retained a sense of cultural continuity and positive individual identity. The retreat into the sanctuary of the family became a significant factor in the success of the Algerian revolution since: 'In reality, the effervescence and the revolutionary spirit have been kept alive by the woman in the house' (*Colonialism*, p. 51). The decolonisation process is itself dependent upon the efficacy of national life, which is maintained in the villages.

In *The Wretched* Fanon's designation of the peasantry as the revolutionary class arises from a belief in the revolutionary significance of cultural withdrawal. Fanon comments of the peasantry that they are 'a coherent people who go on living, as it were, statically, but who keep their moral values and their devotion to the nation intact' (*The Wretched*, p. 101). This attachment is vital in the maintenance of an oppositional identity and, ultimately, in the development of a revolutionary consciousness.

2. How colonialism causes mental illness

Fanon's final statement on the subject of colonialism and psychiatric medicine is found in chapter 5 of *The Wretched*. 'Colonial Wars and Mental Disorders' is a chronicle of Fanon's experience between the years 1957 and 1960 mostly spent treating the victims of the Algerian revolution at hospitals in Tunis. The most striking feature of this essay is Fanon's contention that colonialism is the cause of a range of mental disorders. In the psychiatric writings, particularly 'Sociotherapy', Fanon had stopped short of claiming the existence of

a direct connection between the colonial system and the incidence of mental illness, even though such a position had been implicit in his analysis since his earliest work.

In chapter 5 Fanon describes the range of psychological and psychosomatic disorders bred by the Algerian war. He also sketches a critique of ethnopsychiatry which incorporates a restatement of the contents of the earlier descriptive article 'Ethnopsychiatric Considerations'.[3] Fanon now believes that the African's inferiority, the discovery of Porot, Sutter *et al.* is, like those disorders arising directly from the Algerian war, a reactional phenomenon. Both ranges of disorders are a response to a traumatising experience rather than the result of any congenital neurological defect.

According to Fanon, colonial domination produces a colonised personality which is characterised by, among other features, a profound sensitivity. The daily confrontations, which are typically violent, between the native and the colonial system inflict successive psychic injuries leading to the erosion of self-respect. Fanon emphasises that the experience of colonial occupation cannot be compared with that of the French under Nazi rule, since the French were never deprived of the dignity of being a civilised people. The Algerian, on the contrary, was subject to a drastic reification. He was reduced to an aspect of the natural landscape and, like the trees and the camels, was viewed as a force to be pacified, not reasoned with (*The Wretched*, p. 201).

The continuous assault upon personality and the erosion of autonomy and dignity were at the zenith during the period between the wars. Fanon explains that: 'There is thus during this calm period of successful colonisation a regular important mental pathology which is the direct product of oppression' (*The Wretched*, p. 201). Although he gives little detail as to the nature of this pathology, we are left with the outline that it involves self-doubt, hypersensitivity, and a propensity for violence. Fanon refers to the legacy of this subjective aspect of colonialism as the 'tinctures of decay' which he fears may well plague newly independent African nations (*The Wretched*, p. 200).

This portrayal of the aetiology of the colonial personality is both similar to and markedly different from Fanon's earlier statements on the psychopathology of colonialism. In *Masks* and *The Wretched* the account of the process that produces the colonial personality is parallel; in both cases the daily assaults upon the integrity of the personality results in the destruction of the individual's sense of self-worth and the capacity for autonomous action. This produces

as its residues a debilitating self-doubt and swallowed anger which are internalised and directed against the ego. The difference between chapter 5 of *The Wretched* and Fanon's previous works is the direct causal connection argued in the former between personality type and social structure. A specific type of political relationship is the cause of a particular range of emotional disorders. And the form that illness takes depends in turn upon the class position of the individual.

In *The Wretched* the peasants' propensity for intercommunal violence and their passivity induced by myths and magical practices form the parameters of the colonial personality. The peasants' preoccupation with magic and their terror of the supernatural postpone confrontation with the colonial state and project the sources of grievance onto the phantasmic plane where they may be magically resolved. As with neurosis, emotional equilibrium is purchased at the cost of passivity and the real causes of conflict are obscured behind a host of secondary manifestations.

While the term affective erethism does not appear in *The Wretched* Fanon's analysis relies upon the model of personality suggested in *Masks,* especially where he offers explanation of the colonised's hypersensitivity. In *The Wretched,* he argues: 'In the colonial world, the emotional sensitivity of the native is kept on the surface of his skin like an open sore which flinches from the caustic agent; and the psyche shrinks back, obliterates itself and finds outlet in muscular demonstrations which have caused certain wise men to say that the native is a hysterical type' (p. 44). In the case of the peasant, this sensitivity fuels intercommunal violence, and a fear of the supernatural.

Within the peasant class Fanon makes a distinction between two factions: there are those, the more disciplined and politically alert, who form the bulk of the revolutionary challenge to colonial rule; and there is a second faction which through psycho-social pauperisation has been rendered politically unstable and can be won over by the promise of the most elementary concessions. The unchanging pattern of rural life makes this group prone to follow blindly the dictates of traditional leadership even when that leadership throws its weight in support of the colonial state. These factions reflect the two sides of the peasants' response to the colonial experience; the first to cultural withdrawal and the second to colonial deficiency. The response of the petty bourgeoisie involves an adaptation of a somewhat different kind. The intellectuals' attempts to discover a viable identity often lead to tragic ends for 'the native intellectual

will very often fall back upon emotional attitudes and will develop a psychology which is dominated by exceptional sensitivity and susceptibility' (*The Wretched,* p. 177). Driven by the need to establish a sense of personal identity, the intellectual is caught between the choice of a romantic identification with a mythologised traditionalism (negritude) or the desperate attempt to achieve mastery of the cultural practice of the colonising power.

The petty-bourgeois intellectual is debilitated not through the ossification of indigenous culture, but by his familiarity with the cultural life of the metropole. Of this class Fanon argues:

> In order to assimilate and to experience the oppressor's culture, the native has had to leave certain of his intellectual possessions in pawn. These pledges include his adoption of the forms of thought of the colonialist bourgeoisie. This is very noticeable in the ineptitude of the native intellectual to carry on a two-sided discussion; for he cannot eliminate himself when confronted with an object or an idea.
>
> (*The Wretched,* p. 38)

This observation is consistent with the theories of Porot and Carothers and Mannoni, although Fanon makes no acknowledgement of the fact.[4] Behind Fanon's account of the intellectual failings of the petty bourgeoisie lies an assumption about the nature of the opposing cultures between which the native intellectual is forced to choose. In *The Wretched,* European culture is assumed to be barbaric in contrast to indigenous African culture which is seen as profoundly humanist. The moral and intellectual contamination of the petty bourgeoisie is brought about not as a result of the capitalist nature of colonial contact nor because of the accelerated rate of change. The malaise of the petty bourgeoisie is a consequence of the barbaric and barbarising character of western civilisation.

The Wretched also contains an amount of clinical material dealing with disorders arising directly from the Algerian war. These disorders are seen as complementary to the maladies generated by the atmosphere of unchallenged colonial rule. In chapter 5 Fanon divides his case studies between those arising from specific incidents and those originating from the general climate of the war. The first group would normally be classified under the heading of reactionary psychosis, except that these disorders rather than being transitory appear permanent (p. 203). According to Fanon, this fact emphasises that colonial wars are unique even in the pathologies they give rise to (p. 202). Those cases cited as 'reactionary' include both the vic-

tims and perpetrators of torture. The second group of illnesses, includes cases of homicidal and suicidal behaviour, disturbances amongst refugee children, and puerperal psychosis. There are also cases of psychosomatic illness ranging from stomach ulcers to menstrual disturbances.

One sub-category in the second group is of particular interest since Fanon believes it to be peculiar to Algeria. This disorder is a general muscular contraction, confined to males and characterised by an extended rigidity. These patients have difficulty in walking or in ascending stairs and their facial and body muscles are incapable of relaxation (*The Wretched,* p. 236). This same condition had been noted prior to the war and had been assumed to be an original feature of the Algerian's nervous system. It was believed that the stiffness demonstrated the retarded neurological structure of the native with predominance of the extra-pyramidal system preventing subtle movement (*The Wretched,* p. 235). This disorder is not referred to in the medical literature of the day and unfortunately Fanon does not provide any systematic clinical evidence of its incidence.

Fanon's explanation of this characteristic rigidity relates the phenomenon to the experience of the Algerian under French colonialism: 'This contracture is in fact simply the postural accompaniment to the native's reticence, the expression in muscular form of his rigidity and his refusal with regard to colonial authority' (*The Wretched,* p. 235). The Algerian's subjection to insult and abuse gives rise to an all-pervasive tension leading in turn to muscular rigidity. Thus, Fanon transposes the problem of the Muslim's stiffness from the neurological to the sociological plane.

3. Conclusion

The major theoretical problem posed by Fanon's account of the colonial personality concerns the nature of the relationship between politics and psychology. Within the confines of Fanon's own work, the resolution to this question is suggested in the symmetry between the clinical writings and the theory of revolutionary nationalism. In reviewing Fanon's theory it is essential to remember that his political writings were always intended to solve problems usually viewed as lying within the realm of the sciences of personality. However, because of various problems within both his own theory and that of the discipline itself Fanon was never entirely successful in co-joining his practice as a clinical psychiatrist with his commitment to a theory of African socialism.

Fanon's interest in the sphere of politics is consistently unambiguous in the sense that all his work is addressed to the goal of establishing an egalitarian social order. However, his delineations of the causes of oppression and his recommendations for the ending of that oppression are diverse. In Fanon's psychological writings there is no single model describing colonial alienation but rather a number of partly conflicting, partly complementary, accounts of the impact of colonialism upon personality. This is in part due to the fact that Fanon's concern with psychology has three distinct levels: first, there is his clinical involvement at Blida, Manouba, and Charles Nicolle with the victims of colonialism; second, there is a personal or autobiographical interest, best seen in parts of his study of Martinique; and, third, there is a concern with the theoretical problems of social structure and mental illness.

The colonial peoples who appear as the subjects in each of these three distinct phases in Fanon's psychology differ in terms of their class origins, they differ in terms of their immediate cultural situation and they differ in terms of their historical experience. In summary, in each of the three phases the individuals Fanon portrays differ according to the type of colonial situation in which they live. Yet in his clinical writings, as in his overtly political works, Fanon does not distinguish between different colonial settings. This fact accounts in part for the abstract quality of Fanon's class analysis and the more obvious flaws in his model of the colonial personality. Fanon had begun his anatomy of colonialism with the presupposition, drawn variously from the writings of Porot, Mannoni and Carothers, that all colonial peoples are the same. Fanon converted this presupposition into the formula that the colonial experience both within each individual social formation and across geographical boundaries always displays the same characteristics. In following this line of argument Fanon tended to ignore the important and often obvious differences between colonial settings, such as are suggested in his own research in Martinique and North Africa.

Fanon arrives at his theory of the colonial personality through a conscious appropriation and inversion of the findings of ethnopsychiatry and by an unconscious absorption of the metaphysic of negritude. In Africa and the West Indies the colonial presence gave birth to a mythology that both justified and perpetuated European domination. Fanon argues that, in both cases, popular myths of the indigenous people's laziness, brutality, and moral insensitivity are acquiesced in by the colonised themselves and codified in the body

of work known as ethnopsychiatry. In *The Wretched* Fanon concedes that the colonised are lazy and that the Algerian is extremely violent (*The Wretched,* pp. 238, 248). He explains that where colonial rule is stable and unchallenged this propensity to violence is channelled alternately into self-hatred and the muscular tension characteristic of the Algerian. Being impotent to challenge the colonial state, a subject people become ill. This self-hatred forms the substance of the colonial personality described so vividly in *Colonialism* and *The Wretched.* Fanon's explanation of the origins and sociology of this syndrome is the major achievement of his radical psychology.[5]

In examining Fanon's journey from psychiatry to politics it is possible to identify three distinct modes of alienation suggested in his social psychology. These modes correspond respectively to the texts *Masks,* the clinical psychiatric writings, and lastly, 'Racism', *Colonialism* and *The Wretched.* In *Masks,* alienation is defined essentially as a psychoexistential condition; in the clinical writings Fanon's concern is with mental illness as a restriction of individual liberty, and in 'Racism', *The Wretched* and *Colonialism,* colonial alienation is described as the total violation of the individual – existential, political, historical but most distinctively cultural. While none of these categories are exclusive, nevertheless they correspond to the major phases in the development of Fanon's intellectual career. The visible thread joining each phase is the ethnopsychiatric critique and Fanon's sociology of medicine. The invisible connection is negritude.

For the most part the clinical writings document mental disorders which Fanon would have termed mundane. But, in discussing those maladies which derive from individual and familial relationships, Fanon is adamant that it is necessary to take account of the social and historical experience of the subject. Consequently these writings increase our understanding of Fanon's social psychology by providing a number of specific points of reference to the evolution of Fanon's theory. First, they reveal how Fanon viewed the total loss of individual freedom (psychosis) and the phenomenology of medical intervention in that process. Second, they show how Fanon's sociocentric approach encouraged him toward viewing psychiatry as a political activity. The role he ascribes to the patient's social milieu relates both to the possibilities for a cure and to the ethics of treatment. The influence of both of these factors is clearly visible in Fanon's letter of resignation from his post at Blida.[6] Third, the clin-

ical material does establish that the unity of Fanon's thought, however imperfect, is provided by the social psychology that runs the length of his work.

In his attempt to create a political psychology of colonialism Fanon was always faced with the problem of how to weld an individualist psychopathology to a radical social theory. The insights developed in the clinical research are not utilised directly in *The Wretched* and *Colonialism* although they form the basis of the important essay 'Racism'. The model describing colonial alienation as a process (*Masks*) is never cited in the later writings. This fragmentary quality of Fanon's psychology is expressive of the persistent difficulties he experienced in creating a convincing model explaining the interlocking of individual ills and social institutions.

Fanon's problems in constructing a social psychology were further increased by his inflexible attitude toward ethnopsychiatry and his hostility to what he believed to be the failings of traditional medical practice. In choosing figures such as Porot and Carothers as representatives of ethnopsychiatric research, Fanon was encouraged to create an unnecessary contrast between their work and his own. Fanon also created a tension within his own work in portraying somatic medicine as being fundamentally asocial in its methods and its purpose. In truth there is no radical opposition suggested in medical philosophy, between the social world and the diagnosis and treatment of physical illness, an opposition which Fanon assumes at several points in his writings. It has long been accepted that diseases such as tuberculosis and leprosy are influenced by factors such as heredity, diet and even the sway of psychological predisposition. In physical as in psychological medicine the social matrix is always relevant and often important. Fanon's clinical writings suggest that during his years at Blida and Charles Nicolle he treated the usual variety of illnesses found in any metropolitan hospital. These disorders ranged from organic diseases such as dementia and syphilis, which are dominated by structural abnormality, to depressive illnesses, manic psychosis and schizophrenia. And yet because he makes little mention of such illnesses Fanon creates the false impression that all his patients are the victims of the degenerative de-tribalisation of Algerian society and therefore, by extrapolation, the victims of colonial oppression. The clinical papers which should explore directly the relationship between mental illness and the colonial experience are not systematised. Consequently, the clinical writings do not so much provide an intricate model of the colonial personality as suggest the existence, under colonial conditions, of a

heightened propensity toward illness and breakdown. In this sense the clinical writings are and are not part of a broad attempt by Fanon to construct a theory of the colonial personality. From as early as 1950 Fanon believed that somehow mental illness and the colonial experience are inexorably tied together. The clinical writings were the medium through which, within the boundaries of his own intellectual development, Fanon sought to establish the existence of that relationship. This was achieved by Fanon not so much on the surface of the clinical papers, as reflexively: the clinical studies served in providing the impetus to his final and most radical work.

In the clinical writings Fanon accepts that his patients are ill and in need of treatment which, as a physician, he provided. Fanon would not have presumed that the withdrawal of the French from Algeria would have furnished a cure for his schizophrenic or manic patients, yet in his final work he comes perilously close to just such a conclusion. All the evidence from Fanon's political and clinical writings indicates that the colonial personality or colonial neurosis is manifest among only a small proportion of the indigenous community. This is certainly the case in Fanon's empirical research on colonialism and personality in Martinique and Algeria. But Fanon's research indicated that the propensity to such illness was widespread. This was something Fanon was to explore not so much in his writings dealing directly with personality, but rather in his essays on culture and more obliquely still in his analysis of class in *The Wretched.*

Fanon's difficulties with the concept of colonial personality were due in part to factors which lie within the very nature of the research in which he was engaged. Fanon sought to achieve something that most contemporary medical opinion denies is possible; Fanon wanted to use research into the incidence and forms of personality disorders to gain insight into the workings of the historical process. He felt that only through the medium of the personality could one understand the colonial experience.

By defining psychiatry as a political activity Fanon's psychology of colonialism represents a marked departure from traditional practice. In general, psychiatrists have rejected the possibility that functional mental illnesses could be a consequence of class position or of social experience in the sense that individuals become ill because they are powerless. Even if it could be shown that such were the case, the history of psychiatry suggests that the responsibility of the physician would still begin and end with the abstracted individual consciousness. When viewed from the vantage point of its own theoretical foundations, the function of psychiatry has always been to

reconcile discontents with social imperatives which are by admission incompatible with individual wants.

In his letter of resignation from his post at Blida, Fanon gives formal recognition to the socialised form of psychiatry that he had sought to propagandise in his clinical and political writings: 'If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization' (*Revolution*, p. 63). The psychiatric writings are evidence of the tortuous route he travelled in his quest for a revolutionary psychology.

Chapter 6

Class conflict and the liberation of Africa

1. Imperialism and colonialism

Fanon makes virtually no comment on the historical origins of the modern colonial empires of western Europe. Apart from some scattered references in *The Wretched* and the collected essays, he ignored the question why black Africa came under European control during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This omission is itself revealing, since it demonstrates the contemporaneous focus of Fanon's writings on the one hand as well as his heavy reliance upon the traditional wisdom of Marxist theories of imperialism.

Following in the footsteps of Lenin, Fanon believed that the colonisation of the Third World was undertaken by European states in order to advance their perceived economic self-interests. Yet, in contrast to Lenin, he preferred the term colonialism to imperialism in describing this relationship. Fanon tended to equate physical occupation with political and economic domination, rather than viewing the relationship in terms of the more sophisticated mechanisms of capital expropriation that appears in the writings of Hilferding, Luxemburg, Kautsky and Lenin. Although he shared much common ground with Lenin in particular, Fanon also diverged a considerable distance from Marxist theory.

Fanon proposed that there are three distinct phases of colonialism: the first he terms 'extractive', the second, 'consumer' and the last *'ultra-colonialism'*[1] During the initial phase, Europe viewed the colonies primarily as a source of raw materials. This phase of extractive colonialism led to the accumulation of capital that was to finance the most creative period of bourgeois capitalism. Later the colonies became important as markets for European manufactured goods and investment (*The Wretched,* p. 82). Fanon refers to the growing importance of zones of economic influence, and the pitiless war of

competition between rival financial groups, which characterises this higher stage (*The Wretched,* p. 51). With consumer colonialism, the role of national units in the domination of colonies gives way to zones of economic influence. The end of this phase appears to parallel the dawn of what Magdoff has termed imperialism without empires[2] although Fanon says almost nothing about the role of capitalist investment during this process.

The third phase, that of ultra-colonialism, coincides with the period of national independence. Fanon argues that, since the economic equilibrium of the metropoles is dependent upon the maintenance of colonies, any genuine liberation movement would constitute a mortal danger to European imperialist interests (*Revolution,* p. 133). It is inevitable that a struggle for the seizure of world markets should accompany post-war nationalism in the Third World. This phase of latter-day imperialism or, as Fanon prefers, ultra-colonialism, is dominated by the influence of the United States, because of reasons essentially internal to the American economic system. The outlets for United States investment capital had proved insufficient in the immediate post-war period, forcing her to turn to the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. This, in turn, drove America into support for repressive client regimes, such as Diem's in Indo-China.

Fanon's view of imperialism is conventional in the sense that he followed closely Lenin's interpretation of the connection between imperialism and the internal dynamics of the capitalist system. This fidelity to Leninist theory holds for both the consumer phase of imperialism, characterised by the export of investment capital, and the phase of ultra-colonialism which is dominated by the presence of American capital. Fanon's theory is also conventional, within the School of African socialism, in that he ignores the effects of imperialism upon the European social order in preference to studying the impact of imperialism in the colonies. The locus of gravity in the international political arena shifts to the Third World.

Most of the interpretations of imperialism propounded by African socialists are at odds with Lenin and with the tradition within which he wrote. In Third World theory imperialism is equated almost exclusively with colonialism and the category of neo-colonialism is employed in order to distinguish between lower and higher modes of imperialist domination. But the very use of this latter term indicates an eccentric rendering of Lenin's theory. Lenin never conceived of colonialism as a prerequisite for imperialism. On the contrary, colonial control and the competition for territories is merely

an expression of imperialist competition and does not represent its conditions for existence.

The interpretation of imperialism which Fanon shares with the African socialists is superficial and mechanistic in two particular respects. By equating imperialism exclusively with colonial expansion this interpretation has prevented the development of a theoretical understanding of the causes of imperialism and of the economics of imperialist domination. This has been true especially in regard to the internal European economic order. Under a banner depicting the Third World united in opposition to the imperialist west, the possibility of competition between the imperialist states is denied or else subordinated in an imagined collusion between the various centres of capital. No distinction is made or allowed between German, American or Japanese capital. The bourgeoisie in these states is treated as a single entity sharing a unified and complementary set of interests. Fanon does mention the possibility of conflict among the imperialist powers in the scramble for investment outlets but he makes no effort to develop this point or to reflect upon its significance.

The second effect of the crude interpretation of Lenin's theory has been to encourage the myth that Africa is classless. There are now only two classes the boundaries of which correspond to the division between the imperialist powers and the new states of the Third World. The class divisions within the metropoles are obliterated as the profits from the pillage of the Third World percolate throughout European society. African states are likewise an homogeneous mass since all members of the colonial states are subject to imperialist exploitation.

In the light of these two effects it is not surprising that Fanon experienced difficulty in conceiving of the composition of metropolitan society in terms of antagonistic classes. What is more surprising is that he was so successful in constructing an original class analysis of the colonial social system.

2. Fanon's view of class in his early writings

In the early writings there are two major themes that emerge in regard to the subject of social class: first, Fanon's struggle with the problem of the relationship between changes in social structure and changes in the psychological condition of individuals; second, the nature of the relationship between the cleavages of class and race.

These two problems recur in *The Wretched* as they are central to Fanon's analysis of both colonialism and the decolonisation process.

There are very few references to social class in *Masks* and *Colonialism*, while the majority of references that are found in *Revolution* deal with appeals to, and criticisms of, the metropolitan working class. In the earlier writings Fanon prefers the terms coloniser and colonised in place of the more sophisticated terminology of class analysis. In *Colonialism* this preference is so pronounced that Fanon rarely if ever uses the term peasant or bourgeoisie in what is his most empirical work. He employs the term Algerian to cover the entire subject community without any attempt to differentiate between the various social strata that go to make up that wider category. The one exception is the section devoted to the European minority but, again, the distinction is based, essentially, upon race rather than class (*Colonialism*, pp. 127–42).

In *Masks* there are repeated references to the need for bilateral action involving the emancipation of the personality and the reordering of social institutions, but no indication is given as to how such change is to be brought about. In his first work Fanon ignores the influence of economic factors while paying lip service to the supposed primacy of material interests in the creation of alienation in the Antilles. Fanon makes no reference to the social structure of the Antilles which would help to identify the role of economic and social forces or to explain the relationship between these factors and the white-mask psychology. This is so despite the fact that he emphasises the pre-eminence of social factors at each separate level in the emergence of psychological characteristics.

In the opening pages of *Masks*, Fanon provides a clue as to the class focus of his analysis, where he introduces the subject of his study. In investigating the psycho-existential complex that infects the West Indian, Fanon makes clear that he is not writing of the 'uncivilised' African: 'The "jungle savage" is not what I have in mind. That is because for him certain factors have not yet acquired importance' (*Masks*, p. 14). Only where the basic material requirements for a normal life are present, the 'human minimum' (*Masks*, p. 184), does the white-mask mode of alienation occur.

Fanon's study of Martiniquan society is essentially a study of the black middle class into which Fanon himself was born. The direction of liberative change for this class involved not basic economic rights, which they already possessed in comparative abundance, but their acceptance by the dominant white minority. The tragedy of the *évolué* was the discovery that the acquisition of wealth and edu-

cation did not ameliorate white racism but only made it more painfully unbearable.

In *Masks* Fanon is caught in a paradox of his own invention. In a work devoted to examining the origins and consequences of racism he must, by the terms of reference he establishes, pay heed to the character of the relevant social system. The fact that the social order is a colonialist one is vital to Fanon's analysis. *But what exactly does Fanon propose as the relationship between racism and social class?* The answer given in *Masks* is by no means clear. Fanon argues alternatively that racism is the product of a complex and diffuse historical process that is initially motivated by sexual repression, and that racism has its roots in a definable set of economic relationships, serving as a weapon for the ruling class to legitimise its position and buy off the resentment of the struggling middle classes (*Masks*, pp. 86–8). Citing the example of South Africa, he is quite emphatic that racism has a specific social and economic function for the bourgeoisie and he makes no reference to the wider cultural or sexual origins of racist sentiments that elsewhere predominate in his study of the Antilles (*Masks*, pp. 87–8). Fanon could have resolved this problem by arguing that in European civilisation there is a potential for racial hatred arising from a broad socio-historical experience similar to the process Freud outlines in his monograph *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Given the right social and economic conditions this potential is taken up and used by ruling classes for their own ideological interests. But Fanon does not do this.

We know from the central thesis of *Masks* that the tragedy of the black *évolué* is the knowledge that his absorption of western language and culture, and his entry into the ranks of the indigenous middle classes, does not enure him from the barbs of colonial racism. Social mobility merely makes such insults the less tolerable. Fanon argues that among the metropolitan community racism is unrelated to class position, the proletariat is just as negrophobic as the petty bourgeoisie. Yet still he maintains that racism serves quite distinct economic and political functions.

This ambiguity over the relationship of racism to class is gradually resolved in the course of Fanon's intellectual development. The glaring contradiction between the position argued in *Masks* and that found in the essay 'West Indians'[3] documents the process of this evolution. In the earlier work we are told that in the West Indies all social relationships are mediated by the fact of race. Social difference corresponds perfectly to gradations of skin colour. The overlap between race and class is so perfect that: 'One is white above a cer-

tain financial level' (*Masks*, p. 44). The variations in social differentiation correspond to the gradations between Negro, Mulatto and Caucasian. Although Fanon makes no reference to objective economic variations among these groups, he does explore this question in regard to sexual behaviour.

In 'West Indians' Fanon claims that it is *rare* to find hardened attitudes on the question of race in the Antilles. Racial identity is secondary to and obscured by economic differences, for as Fanon states: 'Relations are not modified by epidermal accentuations' (*Revolution*, p. 28). Solidarity occurs along the lines of economic cleavage and not those of race: 'A Negro worker will be on the side of the mulatto worker against the middle-class Negro. Here we have proof that questions of race are but a superstructure, a mantle, an obscure ideological emanation concealing an economic reality' (*Revolution*, p. 28). The lines of social solidarity should fall according to class cleavage and where they don't the reason is to do with 'ideological fog' – factors present within the surrounding political culture.

3. Fanon's theory of class conflict

There were two major obstacles that Fanon had to overcome in constructing a theory of class conflict. He had to justify the use of class analysis in the face of the various difficulties such as ethnicity and the lack of symmetry with European classes that the African social landscape presented. Beyond these immediate problems Fanon had to accommodate within his analysis the presence of an external ruling class. The question of the degree of dependence or autonomy of the national and petty bourgeoisies *vis à vis* the metropolitan ruling class is central to any neo-colonial theory of the state.

Fanon believed there were two fundamental differences between the social structure of a colonised society and that of European states.

First, there was the fact that, in the former, the social order was split into clearly identifiable compartments, while class divisions in Europe were more subtle and appeared less immutable. Second, in the colonial context, the means of production are not only less developed they are far less settled. Fanon explains the first distinction in the essay 'French Intellectuals and Democrats and the Algerian Revolution':[4] 'Within a nation it is usual and commonplace to identify two antagonistic forces: the working class and bourgeois capitalism. In a colonial country this distinction proves totally inadequate. What defines the colonial situation is rather the undifferen-

tiated character that foreign domination presents' (*Revolution*, pp. 90–1). On one side are the colonised and on the other the colonisers. All relationships between these two factions are mediated by the naked power of the state, that is, by the police and the army (p. 29).

The naked use of state power is in marked contrast with European capitalist society where the education system and the habits of generations serve to fabricate harmonious relations between otherwise opposed classes. Fanon employs the term 'structure of moral reflexes' (p. 29) in place of the Marxist concept, ideology, to define this means of achieving social integration. Like Marx, Fanon believed that in capitalist states a veil of moral imperatives served to placate the exploited by hiding from them the nature of their own condition and the causes of their suffering.

In Europe during the middle ages it had been necessary to invoke the idea of divine right to legitimise the differences between Knight and Serf. Contrary to this: 'The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality and the immense differences of ways of life never come to mask the human realities' (*The Wretched*, p. 30). The distinguishing feature of colonial states is their unmitigated crudeness. What parcels out wealth or poverty is the fact of belonging to a particular race. The boundaries of race and class are symmetrical.

The congruence of racial and social differences lead Fanon to reject the applicability, at least in the colonial context, of a Marxist analysis of class. The major barrier was the absence, in the colonies, of an ideology which obscures class divisions. The crude character of colonial domination was so extreme as to erase the usual distinction between super- and infra-structure. Fanon comments:

> In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem.
>
> Everything up to and including the very nature of precapitalist society, so well explored by Marx, must here be thought out again. (*The Wretched*, p. 31).

The ruling class is distinguished not by the ownership of the means of production, but by its racial difference from the original inhabitants. Because of this overriding nexus of race and class, the subject population cannot hope to advance their place in the social order, nor was it possible for them to hide from themselves the fact of their

own condition. The crude nature of colonial domination obviated those kinds of contradictions fundamental to metropolitan society between bourgeois ideology and social reality. Consequently the demands made by members of the colonised community for basic human rights are not made in accord with the prevailing abstract social principles. Because they are daily confronted with the fact of their own oppression, the need for change exists in a crude state in the consciousness of the colonised (*The Wretched,* p. 28).

In *The Wretched* Fanon emphasises the unevenness of colonial economic development which leads to the creation of social cleavage. There is no one uniform means of production which holds undisputed sway over all others, rather there is a multitude of market relationships. Fanon describes this unevenness when he writes of Africa, 'where slavery, serfdom, barter, a skilled working class and high finance exist side by side' (*The Wretched,* p. 85). This unevenness in the economic landscape implies that European-derived categories of class are not adequate when transferred to the colonial situation. This point is echoed in Fanon's distinction between the character and composition of the peasantry, bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat in the two environments.

Like the latter-day commentators on class in Africa, Fanon believed that the class structure was essentially in an embryonic form (*The Wretched,* p. 96).

While nowhere in Fanon's writings is there an explicit definition of his use of the term 'class', it is obvious that he consistently gives precedence to non-economic factors both in defining class position and in explaining political behaviour. In *The Wretched, Revolution,* and *Colonialism* Fanon employs three major co-ordinates in defining class membership. These are the relationship to the means of production; the degree of integration into the colonialist economy; and the mode of cultural attachment. This last factor is the most important of the three, since Fanon believed that the direction of this cultural orientation was the primary determinant of political behaviour and cleavage among the indigenous population.

Because the peasantry is the class most committed to traditional culture Fanon has a tendency to emphasise the virtue of rural life. But in Fanon's theory the key to political cleavage is not so much distance from the cities, the heart of colonialism, but integration into or alienation from the national life which survives in the villages. Fanon believed that the relationship of each indigenous class to this 'national culture' determined political consciousness, and thereby defined class position. This is particularly true of the petty

bourgeoisie; in general Fanon explains the petty bourgeois' behaviour during the nationalist and post-independence periods according to the 'cosmopolitan frame' of its thought and not by reference to the influence of any objective economic interest.

Although Fanon assumes that a mix of the three factors defining class position will determine political behaviour, he tends consistently to give sovereignty to the mode of cultural attachment as the determinant of class attitudes toward revolutionary change.

What are the historical origins of each of the major classes and how is the composition of these classes mutated over time? In all of his writings Fanon associates the existence of class divisions with the advent of colonialism. Like the African socialists and the poets of negritude before them he supposed that pre-colonial Africa was socially homogeneous, so that the origin of indigenous classes had to be sought in the penetration of the continent by Europeans. It was the unevenness of the colonial impact that led ultimately to the emergence of various social classes. Colonialism would never exploit the whole of a country but only those regions in which substantial resources were available 'thereby allowing certain sectors of the colony to become relatively rich' (*The Wretched,* p. 127). In this way the classlessness of traditional Africa was destroyed. Although Fanon provides no direct answer to the question of the origin of each particular class, it is possible to extrapolate a schema drawing upon his study 'Racism' and the major works *Colonialism* and *The Wretched.* A typology of Fanon's view of class is best divided into three major phases: colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the genuine decolonisation period.

While there are substantial differences between each of the periods of colonialism, in all but the final phase (the phase of genuine independence), the ruling class is not indigenous, but is found among the ranks of the metropolitan bourgeoisie.

Fanon divides the formal colonial period into two phases, I extractive and II consumer colonialism. During Phase I of the colonial relationship only three indigenous strata are present: the *peasantry,* the *traditional authorities* and a *minuscule trading group.* It is usually assumed that the phase of extractive colonialism witnessed the birth of the African peasantry because the burden for the extraction of raw materials, in the form of primary produce for trade, was carried out by that class. Unfortunately Fanon makes no comment upon the living conditions of the rural population during this period. All the evidence from the texts of Fanon's other works indicates that he assumed that the peasant class predates colonial penetration. In doing

so he chose to accentuate the continuity of African history and to underplay the extent of the impact of colonialism and a money economy upon agrarian societies.

The impact of colonialism divided the traditionalist leadership between those who were co-opted and acted as agents for the colonial administrations and a second faction which resisted the gradual encroachment of European influence. This differentiation appears to suggest the antecedents of a distinct class drawn from the first group.

In *The Wretched* Fanon makes reference to a trading group which acts as a commercial intermediary in the extraction of raw materials. Presumably this group is, in part, drawn from among the ranks of the collaborationist traditional authorities.

Phase II, the consumer phase of colonialism, saw the fragmentation of the indigenous society into a number of discreet classes; these new classes include a petty bourgeoisie, a landed bourgeoisie, a proletariat and a lumpen-proletariat.

The petty bourgeois and the proletariat classes grew out of the increased sophistication of the economics of colonialism. In 'Racism' Fanon argues that the shift to consumer colonialism requires the incorporation of indigenous elements into the lower levels of the state bureaucracy and into the service industries. The minimal development of local industries adds impetus to the growth of a petty bourgeoisie and is the major factor in the emergence of a minuscule proletariat. It is important to note that both the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat are numerically insignificant. The proletariat is essentially a peripheral class, acting in a sense as a staging ground between the peasantry, which is squeezed by the pressures of market exploitation, and land alienation, and the lumpen-proletariat which constitutes the urban unemployed.

The landed or pseudo-bourgeoisie is, presumably, the cause of the growing pauperisation of the peasantry. Land alienation and increased rural inequalities are reflected in the emergence of this rural bourgeoisie and in the swelling ranks of the lumpen-proletariat. In Fanon's analysis the existence of a lumpen-proletariat indicates the presence of divisions among the peasantry between those destined to enter the ranks of the lumpen-proletariat and those who manage to remain on the land. The final feature of the consumer phase is the declining authority of the traditionalists that accompanies the rise of the petty and landed bourgeoisie.

The shift between the two phases of formal colonial domination is gradual and is distinguished by the emergence of important, if latent, class antagonisms within the indigenous community. For

instance, there is an inevitable conflict of interest between the landed pseudo-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, and between the traditionalist and the petty bourgeoisie.

The neo-colonial period sees the continuing differentiation of the class system and an increase in the inequalities between the upper and lower strata. The petty bourgeoisie, as the inheritor of the political estate, elevates itself into what Fanon terms a national bourgeoisie; a landed bourgeoisie also emerges with the creation of the neo-colonial state; and the plight of the peasantry worsens as it is cross-pressured by the greed and ineptitude of the national middle class.

In the face of severe pressure on land and a general economic malaise the lower strata of the peasantry are pushed off the land and toward the cities where they swell the ranks of the lumpen-proletariat. In fact the rapid growth of the lumpen-proletariat is the distinguishing feature of the neo-colonial phase.

Under neo-colonialism the situation of the proletariat is little changed as, in the absence of any efforts to stimulate local industry, it remains a minuscule and relatively advantaged group. The traditionalist authorities on the other hand, suffer a considerable decline as they come into growing conflict with the ascendant national bourgeoisie.

The major problems in Fanon's typology relate to the origins of the peasant class and the relationship between the landed and national bourgeoisie and the trading group. In general Fanon provides only the most rudimentary account of the extractive colonial period. In *The Wretched* he mentions the existence of divisions between the trading group, the peasantry, and traditional authorities. But he omits to draw any lines of development showing how the peasantry and trading groups come into being under the colonial impact, or of the destiny of the commercial group with the approach of a more sophisticated economic system. The trading group appears the most likely predecessor to the petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie although Fanon makes no such connection.

Unlike subsequent writers such as Wood and Saul, Post, and Cohen, Fanon believes that as a class the African peasantry is not the product of colonial penetration and the influence of a market economy upon indigenous production. Fanon's 'wretched of the earth' form an ambiguous class; they are the victims of land alienation and market exploitation and the direct heirs of a pre-colonial traditionalism. The peasantry is the creation of colonialism and is the only class which stands immune to its effects.

i The revolutionary classes

(a) The peasantry

It is ironic that *The Wretched*, a work so often associated with the romantic glorification of the African peasant and the virtues of peasant life, should contain so many warnings on the political destructiveness of the peasant class. Even a cursory reading of *The Wretched* and Fanon's later essays shows that he was ambivalent in his judgement of the peasantry as a revolutionary force. The weakness of the peasant class derives primarily from the narrowness of village life and from the degeneration of traditional institutions under colonial control. The first source of instability is implicit in Fanon's analysis of the need for petty-bourgeois leadership of any nationalist struggle. The second is given considerable attention in *Colonialism, The Wretched* and the psychiatric writings.

Employing a procedure he uses in discussion of each of the indigenous classes, Fanon prefaces his analysis of the African peasant by contrasting the outlook, composition, and characteristics of this class with its European counterpart. In the history of both bourgeois and socialist revolutions the peasantry has shown itself to be an anti-revolutionary force or at best a mere hindrance to radical change (*The Wretched*, p. 88). In the industrial states it is usual for the peasantry to be politically unaware; it can in fact be deemed to be an anarchical element (p. 88). The characteristics of this class include individualism, lack of discipline, greed, a propensity for uncontrolled rage – in short all the qualities of a politically reactionary force. The qualities of the African rural masses are quite different and in many ways the reverse of those of the European peasant. Fanon writes that in the colonised countries, 'the native peasantry lives against a background of tradition, where the traditional structure of society has remained intact, whereas in the industrial countries it is just this traditional setting which has been broken up by the progress of industrialization' (*The Wretched*, p. 88). The individualism that is typical of the European peasant is found also in the colonial working class, but not in rural Africa. The African peasant who remains on the land 'stands for the disciplined element whose interests lie in maintaining the social structure' (*The Wretched*, p. 88). The primary social responsibility of the individual is to acquiesce in favour of community interests, and always to place these interests ahead of personal wants. Fanon explains that this community centredness originates from the qualities and values promoted by 'national culture' (p. 191) – that is, traditional culture that has its

roots in the pre-colonial past. In the villages the old men are vested with unquestioned moral authority (p. 90), and it is they who help to maintain the attachment to traditional values.

The basic political demand of Fanon's peasantry is for land. Once this demand is satisfied the peasant will have regained both the means of subsistence and the sense of dignity that is essential for civilised life (p. 34). The assumption of substantial land alienation has truth at least in the cases of Kenya, Algeria and Zimbabwe, but bears little relevance to much of West and Central Africa. Fanon's intention in stressing land hunger was to show that the demands of the peasantry are concrete, whereas those of the middle classes are abstract and in his view politically worthless. In fact Fanon arrives at the conclusion that the peasantry is a revolutionary class because of the nature of its claim upon the colonial order. The demand for land necessitates the destruction of the colonial system.

Besides its attachment to the wellsprings of 'national culture', the peasantry is the inheritor of a tradition of revolt that is an important factor in focussing disaffection against colonial rule (*The Wretched*, p. 90). Fanon refers to this tradition as playing a role in the growth of political consciousness, leading to decolonisation (p. 54). The peasantry, having never voluntarily acquiesced in the colonial presence, keeps alive that tradition which began with the unsuccessful attempts to repel European penetration.

Countervailing these virtues, Fanon cites various features of the peasant's life and social psychology that present hazards to any national liberation struggle. During the period of successful colonisation the peasantry gains release from the frustration and discomfort of its plight by acts of violence within its own communities. This violence is invariably directed against members of the same class because the European, the real enemy, is inaccessible (*The Wretched*, p. 40). The native's state of permanent tension requires an outlet in some form or other of violent behaviour. In the case of the Algerian the appallingly high incidence of crime provides Fanon with an indication of the native people's frustration and despair. Alternatively, this latent aggression may be sublimated into myths of terrifying creatures which in turn draws a circle of fear and prohibition around the native's world. These myths, that are far more frightening than the presence of colonial soldiers and police, help to achieve what Fanon terms 'interior restabilisation'. In this way the peasants' dispute with European land owners is magically resolved.

Likewise the dance and possession by evil spirits contribute toward restabilisation, by releasing pent-up violence in forms that present

no challenge to the state (*The Wretched*, p. 44). Fanon explains: 'This disintegration of the personality, this splitting and dissolution, all this fulfils a primordial function in the organism of the colonial world' (p. 45). This psychosocial process is, we assume, most marked among the peasantry but largely unknown among the ranks of the other major social classes.

Fanon's peasantry is severely damaged not only in an objective economic sense, but, more important, in terms of the psychosocial legacy that remains long after national independence has been won.

The concept of colonial deficiency appears in all of Fanon's writings on the peasantry. In *Colonialism* Fanon refers to such effects as magical and fanatical behaviour (p. 27), the infantilisation of the Algerian woman (p. 51), the natives' lack of objectivity (p. 57), the ossification of the family (p. 83), sexual repressiveness (p. 91), the natives' organic confusion in all dealings with the settler (p. 102), and the natives' simplicity (p. 138). In *Revolution*, again writing of the Algerian, Fanon notes stultification, illiteracy and moral asphyxiation (p. 155), spiritual infirmity (p. 111), and the phantom-like quality of the Arabs' existence (p. 45). In *The Wretched* Fanon makes, among other comments, reference to cultural lethargy (p. 73), religious fanaticism (p. 89), obscurantist tendencies (p. 95), spiritual instability and psychological weakness (p. 109), the peasants' precarious consciousness (p. 112), occult instability (p. 183), and the kernel of despair and self-hatred (p. 250). The psychological lethargy of colonialism is found in the form of the colonial personality that it creates. The effects of this personality, presumably rampant among the peasant class, acts as a countervailing force to the pull of traditional cultural ties in the development of a revolutionary consciousness.

Fanon's peasantry is disciplined and has a clear understanding of the need to destroy the colonial system, yet possesses no knowledge of the necessary means to achieve such an end. The peasantry is made a revolutionary class by its attachment to national culture but that is not all. Its spiritual instability and its intellectual and material poverty also make the peasant potentially a reactionary force.

In understanding Fanon's theory of peasant revolution it is necessary to untangle the relative importance he ascribes to cultural sclerosis, the tradition of revolt, the influence of the colonial personality and the pull exerted by national culture in the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness. Fanon's peasant class exhibits a dual mentality; it is by reflex revolutionary, but the severely limited horizons of village life and the devastation wrought by the colonial experience makes it prone to self-destructive outbursts.

Fanon believed that the peasantry was a revolutionary class because unlike the indigenous petty bourgeois and the proletariat it had no material stake in the colonial system. In 'Racism', *Colonialism* and *The Wretched* he supposes that there is a close positive correlation between the contemporary forms of colonial exploitation and the birth of post-war nationalism. This is particularly true in the case of the petty bourgeoisie, the emergence of which as a social force heralded the end of the modern colonial empires. But, within the limits of Fanon's theory, the peasant class stands in such an elemental relationship to the means of production that it is extremely difficult to discern any changes in the consciousness of the rural masses which occur with shifts between the major phases of the colonial relationship. Fanon gives no indication whatsoever of how changes occur in the degree of awareness that the peasant has of the machinery of the state or of its understanding of its place within wider social and market relationships. He simply presupposes that peasant opposition to the European presence is constant throughout the colonial era and that finally it is this opposition that will bring down the imperialist powers.

Apart from its objective economic situation, a fact rarely alluded to in *The Wretched* or *Colonialism*, Fanon cites three factors which favour the peasantry as a revolutionary class: first, the tradition of revolt that is kept alive in the villages throughout the colonial era; second, the colonial personality which provides the immediate reflex to revolution; and finally, the existence of a reservoir of 'national culture' which, despite attempts by the state to destroy indigenous institutions, survives to nourish an authentic national identity.

The first two of these factors are double-edged in that both alternatively promote and retard the development of a revolutionary consciousness. The tradition of revolt and the colonial personality are each conterminous with 'those dark aspects of the revolution' Fanon observed in Algeria, and the brutality of thought and action he feared inevitable in any national liberation struggle.

Fanon's flirtation with negritude encouraged him in the belief that only on the remnants of traditional institutions and values could the foundations of an authentic nationalism be laid. Individualism, greed and covetousness were values Fanon associated exclusively with European civilisation and those influenced by it. The peasantry, largely excluded from direct and continuous contact with colonialist culture, although dominated by the machinery of the colonialist economic system, remained inured to the penetration of western influence. Whenever he wrote about the influence of culture and economic practice upon social formations and personality,

Fanon always relegated the latter to a minor place. The colonial presence in Africa was destructive, not through the play of material interests, but because the European cultural heritage it purveyed was degenerate.

The importance of cultural affiliation to the formation of a revolutionary consciousness is most obvious when the political outlook of the peasantry is contrasted with that of the lumpen-proletariat. In terms of material deprivation, the lumpen-proletariat suffers more than the peasantry from which it as a class is derived. The political primitivism of the lumpen-proletariat results not from its material conditions but from the corrosive influence of 'detribalisation' that is characteristic of the urban slums. Those remnants of traditional culture that lend peasant life its continuity and coherence dissolve in the squalor of the bidonvilles. The extreme immaturity of the lumpen-proletariat is due to the fact that the individuals comprising this class have become detached from the bonds of traditional communities and therefore have undergone a profound psychosocial trauma.

Fanon's references to the political instability of the peasant class are strikingly similar to those found in Mannoni's portrait of the colonial personality; the peasant can be won over by the slightest kindness yet will turn to violence at the merest frustration. He is highly susceptible to mystification and will have great difficulty in understanding his own behaviour. Because of these negative characteristics, Fanon is forced to turn to the dissident elements among the petty bourgeoisie for leadership, a solution he arrives at only with the greatest reluctance. Fanon had difficulty in admitting the need for leadership in the prosecution of a national liberation struggle because he was convinced that the ideology and the impetus for any revolutionary struggle would come from the peasant class itself. The peasantry was to be the creator of the consciousness and the values which alone could transform colonial society. External leadership would only interfere in the expression of that instinct for revolution.

Fanon's model of personality, drawn variously from negritude, the sociocentric practice of Tosquelles, and Fanon's own continuing critique of Mannoni, encouraged him in this conviction which runs so much against the tenor of Marxist theory. Like the nineteenth-century anarchists Bakunin and Kropotkin, Fanon always equated the existence of authority, even revolutionary authority, with repression.

While it is impossible to read Lenin without being aware of the

importance of leadership and organisation, it is quite easy to read *The Wretched* oblivious of the few scattered references to leadership and political education. The only account Fanon provides of political education is cited from his Algerian experience. During the period 1956–7 the French establishment of restricted zones prevented the peasants from gaining normal access to towns. This meant that they were forced to buy all supplies from local grocers who used the opportunity to raise prices, thereby forcing the peasants into debt. This practice was soon halted as FLN officials directed the grocers to comply with fixed prices. The example of such exploitative practices was used by the political commissars in the villages to explain to the people the wider economic and political relationships in which they lived. Through a process of education, similar to that defined by Paulo Freire as conscientisation, the people came to understand how they were abused, that often their fellow villagers were their exploiters, and that the means to prevent such practices lay in their own hands (pp. 153–4). From the ordering of everyday events came the stimulus for the posing of theoretical questions about power and political responsibility.

In *The Wretched* and *Colonialism* Fanon's overriding fear was that the peasantry would play no active part in the decolonisation process but would remain essentially a passive class. While acknowledging the need for political organisation and a revolutionary party headed by radical petty bourgeoisie elements (p. 114), Fanon believed that with the help of even a rudimentary political education the peasant is capable of playing an active role in the revolutionary struggle. He explains this in the following passage: 'Between the nation on a wartime footing and its leaders there is established a mutual current of enlightenment and enrichment. Traditional institutions are reinforced, deepened and sometimes literally transformed. The tribunals which settle disputes, the *djemaas* and the village assemblies turn into revolutionary tribunals and political and military committees' (p. 114). The people's traditional institutions provide the foundation for a modern revolutionary party as the peasants advance from an undiscriminating nationalism to an awareness of the need for social and economic change. The possibility of political enlightenment is dependent upon the strength of traditional institutions more than upon the nature of the party or the quality of the leadership.

Fanon's account of a peasant revolution is unorthodox. In stressing the positive contribution made by the peasant, Fanon chose to devalue the role of political education and leadership. Mention of

these factors is not entirely absent from Fanon's writings but they are peripheral to his central argument. Woddis[5] is correct in his claim that Fanon's party of dissident petty-bourgeois intellectuals has nothing in common with a vanguard based upon the leadership of the proletariat. The inspiration for Fanon's revolutionary peasantry comes from the influence of a nascent national culture and the creative potential of the colonial personality and *not* from absorption of a proletarian consciousness. The antagonism of Marxists towards Fanon's theory of peasant revolution is well founded.

Fanon's account of the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness among the peasantry is ambiguous. On the one hand he indicates that an awareness of the need to destroy the colonial system is immanent in the peasant's view of the world. The peasant requires no external stimulus in the articulation of that need. On the other hand in his distinction between peasant revolts and peasant revolution Fanon mentions the importance of the work of radical intellectuals in the moulding of the peasant's political consciousness. This ambiguity is expressive of the tension in Fanon's theory between his fear and hatred of centralised authority and his recognition of the limitations of the colonial personality as a stimulus to revolution. His asides on the role of the political party and the possibility of the subordinate place of the peasant class under leadership drawn from petty-bourgeois strata clashed with his deep-seated romance with the African personality and his hatred of European socialism. Fanon could never rid himself of the belief that a revolutionary party was essentially a compromise.

(*b*) *The lumpen-proletariat*

Fanon's use of the familiar categories of class theory leads to confusion at several points of his analysis, and nowhere is this more apparent than in his discussion of what he terms the lumpen-proletariat. According to the account in *The Wretched* this class derives *solely* from the landless peasantry which has fled the countryside in search of work and gathers in the slums surrounding the colonial cities (pp. 88–102). These *déclassés* are created by the combined effects of the growing pressure on land, resulting from colonialist expropriation, and natural population growth. It is apparent that when writing of this class Fanon draws heavily upon his Algerian experience.

These landless peasants form a marginal class which is riddled by such social pathologies as alcoholism, criminality, and prostitution. Fanon does not argue that this class consists solely of such types but

that the peasantry from which they are drawn are, through economic and social circumstances, forced into such roles (p. 103). This distinction is important since the factor of land expropriation, and not the disorders of alcoholism and prostitution, is central to Fanon's definition of the lumpen-proletariat. In the article 'Sociotherapy' Fanon provides a detailed exposition on the origins and composition of this class in the case of Algeria.

The French conquest of Algeria allowed the expropriations by French settlers of what had been commonly held land. The best collective land was divided among private owners, thereby bringing about a polarisation between a few large European landowners and a mass of small proprietors or fellahs. The Algerian peasantry which relied upon primitive techniques and small plots of the least fertile land was gradually pauperised. Its traditional ties with a collective tribal identity, based upon the common ownership of land, were shattered. Gradually a new social order emerged in which for the first time there were both small proprietors and landless day labourers. But the process of change instituted by the European arrival did not end there.

With the introduction of the techniques of modern agriculture, the demand for rural labour fell at a time when the supply of labour had reached a zenith. The landless peasantry was squeezed toward the cities in search of the work that was unavailable in the countryside. This migration led only to further poverty since the absence of any major industrial enterprise provided little opportunity to absorb the labour surplus. Consequently, the landless peasant was drafted into the sub-proletariat unless he took recourse to seeking work in metropolitan France. Fanon gives a vivid account of the social-psychological consequences for the Algerian who followed this path in the essay 'Syndrome'.

According to Fanon, the most damaging features of the new or 'regressive nomadism', first from the countryside to the cities then to the metropolitan industrial centres, was the severance of traditional tribal ties: 'These individual "circulations" [of seasonal workers] that are observed now operate outside of all tribal rule and contribute to hasten a dangerous detribalization: the decadence of nomadism is inescapable but it is only replaced by proletarianization' ('Sociotherapy', p. 358). Many of the Muslim patients Fanon came into contact with at Blida were in fact drawn from this stratum.

The forced expropriation of his land condemned the Algerian peasant to wage labour, unemployment and seasonal migration. Proletarianisation brought only chronic poverty and the severance of

all established mechanisms whereby the individual maintained his emotional and social equilibrium. As Fanon comments upon the world of the Algerian sub-proletariat: 'That society that one calls "clotted" – it ferments from the foundations' (p. 358). Quite obviously the social deprivation of this class was an important contributing factor in the high incidence of mental disorders found among its members. The effects of detribalisation alone were sufficient to provoke emotional crises. Again, this line of argument is consistent with Fanon's earlier study of the North African immigrant workers at Lyon.

The lumpen-proletariat, like the proletariat, was created during that period to which Fanon refers to as consumer colonialism, and is therefore a recent addition to the indigenous class structure. During the initial phase of nationalist agitation the lumpen-proletariat shows itself to be a highly volatile group which will sell its support to the highest bidder. Such was the case in Algeria, the Congo, and Angola. Fanon writes of this class that 'Colonialism will also find in the *lumpen-proletariat* considerable space for manoeuvring' (p. 109). The material level of its existence is so low and the degree of cultural deprivation so extensive that the lumpen-proletariat will grasp at any straw in the hope of survival.

In general, Fanon views the proletariat and lumpen-proletariat according to their relationship to the means of production and the degree of deculturation they have experienced. While the proletariat is advantaged in objective economic terms it is subject to the corrosive cultural milieu of the cities. In economic terms the lumpen-proletariat is the most disadvantaged class, recruited as it is from the bottom stratum of the peasantry. Furthermore it suffers severely from the deculturating effects of city life (alcoholism, prostitution, the decay of family unity) and the erosion of 'primordial ties'. Strangely enough Fanon appears to believe this to be a major factor promoting the revolutionary action of the lumpen-proletariat on those occasions on which it becomes the ally of the radical nationalists (*The Wretched*, p. 104).

(c) *The lumpen-proletariat and the peasantry as a revolutionary class*

There is a vast literature on the subject of the capacity of the peasant for revolutionary action. There is a smaller and more recent body of material devoted to the question of the revolutionary capacity of the lumpen-proletariat. This body of work originated principally in response to Fanon's own theory. In both cases the line of discourse

has concerned the peasants' political consciousness and the probability of either class making the transition between revolt and revolution.

Amilcar Cabral in *Revolution in Guinea* questions the assumption that the peasantry is a revolutionary class by drawing a distinction between a physical and a revolutionary force. Because it constitutes the majority of the population of black African states, the peasant class is the dominant physical force. But this does not mean that the peasant will necessarily play a revolutionary role as Cabral's experience in Guinea indicated. Cabral goes on to add that, although they are the most exploited class, that, in itself, does not produce a revolutionary consciousness (p. 63). Cabral concludes his discussion with a covert attack upon Fanon, where he ridicules the idea of the peasantry providing the leadership for the struggle against colonialism.

At other points of *Revolution in Guinea*, Cabral observes that the peasants blindly follow their chiefs (p. 60), that their culture poses a barrier to political teaching (p. 143), and that they are very slow to understand the way in which they are exploited through the mechanism of the price paid for their labour and produce (p. 159).

Ian Clegg in *Workers' Self-Management in Algeria* agrees with Cabral that the peasantry is not a revolutionary class and that the fellahin did not play a revolutionary role in Algeria (p. 180). Yet Clegg diverges from the palaeo-Marxist formula which questions the status of the peasantry as a class. Clegg writes of the Algerian peasant:

> They did have a common identity; but what bound them was the desire to recreate the past. Thus it is not true to say, as some strict Marxists have, that the peasants cannot participate in revolutionary struggle. Objectively, the role of the Algerian peasant in the liberation struggle was a revolutionary one. Equally, in terms of the Fanonist thesis, it is untrue to say that, because they are actively involved in the struggle against colonialism, they form a revolutionary class. Subjectively, in terms of their consciousness, their role is not a revolutionary one. (p. 100).[6]

Because the struggle was not experienced, internally, as a revolutionary activity, with the end of the war the fellahin returned to their old habits.

In Cabral and Clegg, as in nearly all the literature on the peasant and revolution, the key issue is the peasants' ability to transcend the limited consciousness of the village universe, and absorb a mod-

ern political ideology. The other constant in such writers as Wolf, Hobsbawm, and Mao is the assumption that leadership must come from either the working class or dissident petty-bourgeois elements. The prevalence of these two themes is sufficient to emphasise their relative absence in *The Wretched*. In Fanon's vision it is not the village which limits revolutionary potential but the cities. The equating of urban life and wage labour with political radicalism runs against the grain of every proposition in Fanon's writings.

A second issue that arises from Fanon's account of the 'third path', decolonisation through peasant revolution, is whether he, like Debray and Guevara, believed that armed struggle is itself capable of creating solidarity and revolutionary consciousness.

Leaving aside the very substantial differences that separate Fanon from Debray and Guevara, it is apparent that Fanon's third way is unrelated to foco theory.[7] Fanon believed there was no need to rouse the peasantry to insurrection, since the reflex to revolt is a permanent feature of the African peasant class.

Solidarity among the peasants was encouraged by their shared relationship to the means of production (heightened by the absence of a structure of moral reflexes peculiar to the colonial system), and guaranteed by the pull of traditional culture. This solidarity could be further strengthened by political education accompanying the formation of a political party under the leadership of the radical petty-bourgeois elements. But Fanon implies that it is unnecessary to distinguish between the two forms: the natural unity expressed in peasant revolts and a more mature solidarity achieved through an alliance with radical petty-bourgeois and lumpen-proletariat elements.

Fanon's faith in the natural solidarity of the peasant class emanates from his exotic West Indian's experience of Africa. His view of this solidarity is so akin to the writings of E. W. Blyden and other West Indian intellectuals that it is difficult to resist the temptation to draw a parallel between *The Wretched* and the earlier philosophy of the Negro personality. In *The Wretched* the solidarity of the peasant is underwritten by the spectre of negritude. The Africans' natural goodness and the absense of individual interests distinct from those of the community are propositions Fanon borrowed from the poets of negritude. The radical petty-bourgeois intellectuals are further radicalised, not by experience of the hardships of a guerrilla struggle as Debray and Guevara believed, but by contact with the remnants of a national culture that survives in the villages. It is this cultural residue, and not the growth and spread of a proletarian con-

sciousness, that furnishes the direction and impetus for a national liberation struggle.

Although Fanon proposes the lumpen-proletariat as one of the most spontaneous and revolutionary groups, he is quite unclear whether or not its participation is necessary for the destruction of the colonial state. We know that the support of this class is *helpful* in a national liberation struggle, but we do not know if it is essential. This problem is further obscured by Fanon's comments on the political insecurity of the lumpen-proletariat. Fanon suggests that the alliance of the lumpen-proletariat with radical forces could accelerate the collapse of a nationalist movement into a neo-colonial compromise orchestrated by the metropolitan bourgeoisie (*The Wretched*, p. 103). The lumpen-proletariat could so readily become an ally of the forces of reaction and hinder the prosecution of a national liberation struggle, as was the case with the *harkish* in Algeria and the 'road-openers' in Angola (p. 109).

Although wary of the anti-revolutionary potential of the lumpen-proletariat, Fanon believed it to be the only available group, given the conservatism of the proletariat, to bring a struggle into the colonial cites (p. 103). Because of its 'strategic position' it can disrupt the centres of administration and thus bring pressure to bear upon an intransigent colonial bourgeoisie. Where the lumpen-proletariat bursts into spontaneous violence, its actions will hasten the disintegration of the reformist nationalist parties. Therefore, during a struggle for primary decolonisation, the lumpen-proletariat can serve an auxiliary role in abetting the peasantry to forge an authentic independence.

Much later in *The Wretched* Fanon appears to suggest that in a 'second revolution', directed against a neo-colonial dictatorship, the lumpen-proletariat may play an important role. The growth of a landless peasantry which, finding no opportunity for entering the ranks of the proletariat, sinks into poverty and despair is the sign of the fragility of such regimes (p. 105). The stagnancy of the rural sector under the direction of the landed bourgeoisie, and the pull of the cities as the centres of national wealth, act to siphon peasants toward the urban milieu. While this process which creates a large class of urban unemployed is supposed to herald the end of national bourgeois regimes, Fanon provides absolutely no indication why this should be so. We are told nothing of the behaviour of the major classes, including that of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, during such a revolution. These omissions cast serious doubts upon the status of the lumpen-proletariat as a revolutionary class. Fanon's vague

asides on the revolutionary role of the lumpen-proletariat read as an afterthought which within his theory are as unsubstantiated as the promise of the second revolution.

Fanon's account of the lumpen-proletariat as a revolutionary force drifts in two directions; he proposes the lumpen-proletariat as an ally for the peasantry because of its strategic geographical position. It represents the only immediate hope for forcing home a revolutionary struggle at the heart of the colonial system. He is also drawn into sympathy for the lumpen-proletariat because of the sheer misery and poverty in which the members of this class live. Only when writing of the lumpen-proletariat does Fanon equate material suffering with revolutionary consciousness.

Conversely Fanon is wary of the psychological characteristics of the lumpen-proletariat. His patients at Blida, many of whom were drawn from among the ranks of this class, showed him a group of men and women adrift without that sustaining sense of identity which alone could make a difficult life bearable. Their condition was pathological. Yet in *The Wretched* Fanon does not explore this pathology in relation to the social pathology of this group which identifies them as a class which is both redundant and terminal. The lumpen-proletariat is composed of refugee peasants for whom there is no career outside of the urban slums. They are not peasants in the process of joining the proletariat. They are simply the remnants of a beleagured rural economy most of whom will never find their way out of the slums. Fanon was the first to identify the numerical importance of the lumpen-proletariat. He did not identify their political significance.

(d) The proletariat

It is in his attitude toward the working class that Fanon's theory reaches the point of greatest divergence from classical Marxism. Consequently his rejection of the proletariat as a revolutionary force, within both Europe and Africa, has attracted much criticism from the left. In *The Wretched* Fanon is quite emphatic in his claim that the African proletariat is a pampered class (p. 86) which enjoys a comparatively high standard of living at the expense of the peasantry. The colonial working class is characterised by the smallness of its numbers; and by the high economic benefits it receives. Fanon refers to this urban working class as an embryonic proletariat (p. 86) thereby emphasising the immaturity of its economic and social foundations. The economic surplus upon which it thrives is drawn not from its own labour but from that of the peasantry.

Among the ranks of the proletariat Fanon includes such occupation groups as tram conductors, taxi drivers, miners, dockers, interpreters and nurses – in other words it is composed of those working in the service industries (p. 86). Because of their economic position these elements will tend to support the reformist nationalist parties in whom they see a natural avenue for the advancement of their own sectional interests.

Whenever there is a conflict of interest between radical nationalists and the metropole, the proletariat will tend to side with the latter in defence of its advantaged position. During the phase of nationalist agitation the proletariat will join ranks with the reformist nationalists and support demands for independence. But politically it will not move beyond this point, since the dismantling of the colonial economic system would destroy the benefits which it as a class enjoys. Its outlook is highly individualistic (p. 88) and quite antagonistic to that of the peasantry, although no direct conflict of interests is evident to either party during the initial nationalist phase. During the post-independence period, the proletariat will pursue a stragegy of close alignment with the national bourgeoisie, and in a sense will become a parasite upon that already parasitic class (p. 125).

In *The Wretched* Fanon conveys the impression that the African proletariat is insignificant both numerically and politically. It is symptomatic of his contempt for the working class that, of all the indigenous classes, the proletariat is the only one of which Fanon makes no detailed comments regarding the non-economic determinants of its political outlook. His only concession is to hint that the proletariat, like the petty bourgeoisie, suffers from a Eurocentric caste of mind (p. 125).

By contrast, in his appraisal of the trade unions Fanon concedes that the organisations of the working class can further the cause of revolutionary nationalism. During the pre-independence period those trade unions that have broken off their affiliations with the metropolitan centres will tend to play a progressive role, but a role that exaggerates the importance of the proletariat as a class. In fact the creation of national unions is an indication that a nationalist movement has reached maturity. The programmes of these new unions are above all nationalist programmes and their ranks will contain the most conscious and dynamic nationalist elements. The urban workers are capable of an impressive striking power, situated as they are in the service industries so vital to the daily functioning of the colonial cities. On occasion they can bring these urban centres to a

stand-still. Such strike action will tend to have a marked psychological effect upon the settler community, quite out of proportion with the numerical strength of wage earners.

The strategic position of the proletariat in the national economy poses the danger that the trade unions and their members will gain an inflated opinion of their political significance, further discouraging the urban groups from forming links with the peasant class. In fact the peasantry will invariably remain unaware of the urban strife spearheaded by the national unions. 'Thus we see that there is a lack of proportion from the national point of view between the importance of the trade unions and the rest of the nation' (*The Wretched*, p. 97). The lack of proportion between the numerical and the political importance of the trade unions can have a marked influence upon national unity.

In the post-independence period the trade unions are caught in a paradoxical position. Since the proletariat is an advantaged class, the fight for improved wages and conditions carries a discordant note in countries riddled by poverty. The trade unions will become increasingly political in their attitudes, to the point at which they may enter into direct contest for governmental power (p. 97). If so they will be drawn into direct conflict with the national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie will make use of the military and police, the traditional weapons of the colonial state, while the trade unions organise mass rallies. Fanon remarks that the unions may in fact have recourse to a *coup d'état* as the final means of settling their dispute with the ruling middle classes (p. 98). Presumably such a course of action would favour the national bourgeoisie which has formal control over the military and police apparatus. The outlook and interests of the trade unions as political organisations, come increasingly to reflect the position of the proletariat as a labour aristocracy. The atypical economic status of their members debars trade unions in Africa from the pursuit of normal trade-union activity. They have no institutional contact with the peasantry whose interest they will indirectly oppose. Because of this, the organisations of the African working class are confined to the practice of a shallow nationalism behind which lurks the class interests of a labour aristocracy. The most that the trade-union movement can achieve is to hasten the process of economic decline under a neo-colonial regime.

(*e*) *The European working class*

Fanon's attitude toward the metropolitan proletariat varied over time and, even within a single work such as *The Wretched* or the essay

'Racism', it is apparent that he was never completely settled in his assessment of its likely role in the struggle against imperialism. For instance in *The Wretched* Fanon argues that as an exploited class the proletariat had nothing to lose in opposing bourgeois hegemony (*The Wretched,* p. 86), but also that the working class had failed its historical vocation (*The Wretched,* p. 253). Fanon gives no reason why the working class should have so failed.

It is in the collected essays that the most complete account of the metropolitan proletariat is found. In order to resolve what are apparent contradictions, it is helpful to examine these writings in chronological order.

In the essay 'Algeria Face to Face with the French Torturers',[8] Fanon is severely critical of the failure of the French working class to oppose the prosecution of the Algerian war. He argues that the war had exposed a number of myths concerning the attitude of working classes to their governments. The enthusiasm of the French proletariat for its government's actions in Algeria destroyed the myth of the natural opposition between this class and the interests of the state.

Significantly, Fanon poses the problem in terms of the opposition between the metropolitan proletariat and the French government and not as a question of the natural solidarity between the metropolitan working class and the exploited Algerians.

Three months later, in a series of articles again published in *El Moudjahid,* Fanon jettisons his previous restraint to launch a bitter attack upon the French working class and the entire democratic left wing. 'In a colonial country, it used to be said, there is a community of interests between the colonized people and the working class of the colonialist country. The history of the wars of liberation waged by the colonized peoples is the history of the non-verification of this thesis' (*Revolution,* p. 92). He is adamant that the entire French nation benefited from the colonial status of Algeria, and that all classes without exception opposed the liberation of the Algerian people. The absence of opposition to the colonial war effort could be explained by extending Lenin's concept of a labour aristocracy to include the entire French working class. However at this stage Fanon does not admit this possibility.

In November 1958, Fanon published the article 'The Algerian War and Man's Liberation'[9] in which he presents a reversal of his earlier statements. His aim in this article is to examine the relationship between national liberation movements and the struggle of the metropolitan working class for emancipation. He remarks that the dia-

lectical strengthening that exists between these two apparently divorced struggles, although considerable, is often ignored (p. 154). There is a profound solidarity between the working class and the colonised, but because of the play of various social and historical factors the fact of this unity is often obscured.

Fanon explains that during the wars of national liberation that had occurred in the preceding twenty years, 'it was not rare to note a suggestion of hostility, indeed of hate, in the attitude of the colonialist worker toward the colonised' (*Revolution*, p. 154). The reason for this antagonism is to be found in the nature of the imperialist relationship. Relying upon Lenin's concept of a labour aristocracy Fanon attempts to explain this unexpected alienation of the 'two working classes' in the following way: 'The "metropolitan" capitalists allow social advantages and wage increases to be wrung from them by their workers to the exact extent to which the colonialist state allows them to exploit and make raids on the occupied territories' (*Revolution*, p. 154). Presumably Fanon believes that the resulting clash of interests between the metropolitan proletariat and the aims of the national liberation struggles is merely ephemeral and can easily be dispelled. This is so despite the fact that in relation to the Third World Fanon has designated the entire metropolitan working class as a labour aristocracy. The amelioration of the conditions of the European proletariat has been paid for by the labour of the peasants of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In a typically ambiguous passage Fanon's comments upon the natural solidarity of interests between the metropolitan working class and the colonised occur after his denunciation of the possibility of any such alliance taking place. Furthermore there is no mention of an alliance in Fanon's final work.

If one aggregates the few references found in *Revolution* and *The Wretched* on the question of class solidarity and the revolutionary potential of the European proletariat, it is apparent that Fanon held out little hope of support coming from the working class. He was contemptuous of the capacity of the proletariat to ally itself with national liberation movements or even to play a progressive role within European society. There appear to be two reasons for this: first, Fanon believed that, because the working class benefited directly from the super-profits of imperialism, it would oppose national liberation on the grounds of its own immediate material interests. Even if this alienation of interests were temporary, the effect would still be largely negative. Second, Fanon was convinced

that the proletariat was just as racist as the petty bourgeoisie and therefore it would oppose the cause of national independence.[10]

Fanon believed that European civilisation was characterised by the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But he also believed that historically this contradiction had been debased and reconciled, within the framework of capitalism, by imperialist expansion. The possibility that the ending of imperialism would reawaken a class conflict between the metropolitan working class and the bourgeoisie did not interest Fanon in the least. The revolutionary transformation of European society has the same peripheral status within Fanon's theory that the fate of the non-west occupies in the work of Marx.

Chapter 7

The failed revolution

1. The forces of reaction

i The petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie

Fanon begins his discussion of the petty and national bourgeoisie with an analysis of the problems inherent in transferring categories of social class drawn from European experience to African political systems. The bulk of his writings on the national middle class are devoted to its failure to duplicate the achievements of the European bourgeoisie. The African middle class is a pseudo-middle class, just as the African proletariat is a pseudo-proletariat.

Fanon sets out the terminological problems by recounting the differing evolutions of the African and European middle classes. In Europe, national unity was achieved at a point at which the bourgeoisie had risen to economic dominance (*The Wretched,* p. 75). Trade, science and commerce were monopolised by this class. The ascendant bourgeoisie was able to oversee the industrialisation of western Europe and the rapid development of economic infrastructure and transport. At this time all European states were at comparable levels of development so that none enjoyed a substantial advantage over the others (*The Wretched,* p. 75). But the situation in the underdeveloped world is quite the reverse. The new states of the post-war era lack basic infrastructure such as plant and communications; their populations are blighted by poverty and they all lack skilled personnel, such as doctors and administrators. Finally, and most important of all, the development of European capital was underwritten and financed by the exploitation of the resources and labour of the colonised world (*The Wretched,* p. 76). Such a path of development is obviously closed to the Third World states which seek to acquire the basic elements for industrial development.

Because of the play of these three factors the path to economic

advancement, and the process of the formation of social classes in the new states, will be quite unlike that found in Europe.

In *The Wretched* and *Revolution* Fanon established a distinction between two phases of colonialism; the first he refers to as the extractive, and the second, the consumer form (*The Wretched*, p. 51). In terms of class structure, what separates these two phases is the presence within the latter of an educated class drawn from the indigenous population which occupies the lower posts in the state apparatus and in private industry. This class is itself divided between urban and rural factions. Unfortunately Fanon provides no details on the evolution of the latter group, and we are left to wonder if it originates from the inequalities present within feudal society or derives entirely from the transference of urban wealth to the countryside (*The Wretched*, p. 124).

The petty-bourgeois strata provided the leadership of the nationalist movements, whether reformist or radical, that came to fruition in the post-war period. Fanon divides that class into two distinct political factions: the first consists of reformists who readily defer to the interests of metropolitan capital and pursue a policy of minimal demands within a mild nationalist ideology; the second is a radical grouping which demands an end to the exploitative relationship between the metropole and the colony. This second faction has the potential to provide the leadership and ideology, and thereby the impetus which, transcending the bounds of reformist nationalism, adds weight to the otherwise reckless agitation of the peasant.

The two factions of the petty bourgeoisie do not correspond to a division between commercial and intellectual elites, even though Fanon does show a tendency to write of the radical nationalist leadership as if it were composed wholly of intellectual elements. We know from the text of *The Wretched* that a faction of the indigenous intellectual class throws in its lot with the reformist parties, and after independence pursues lucrative careers in the state bureaucracies.

In general Fanon employs the term national bourgeoisie when writing of the indigenous middle class. This is confusing since the term only applies to that urban stratum which inherits control of the state apparatus at independence, and which is by Fanon's reckoning drawn exclusively from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. Fanon's national bourgeoisie is in fact a petty bourgeoisie of primary-school teachers, minor civil servants, taxi owners, and intellectuals working in the trading sector of the national economy. It is not until the post-independence period, and with it the transfer of

the control of the state, that the indigenous petty bourgeoisie acquires the wealth and power to constitute itself into a national or pseudo-bourgeoisie. Presumably at independence the opportunity to acquire sudden wealth exists also for the landed bourgeoisie.

ii The rise of the national bourgeoisie

Fanon's use of the term national bourgeoisie is misleading, applying as it does to that urban middle class which at independence inherits control of the state apparatus. In connecting the emergence of a petty bourgeoisie with the growth of urban nationalism,. Fanon argues: 'The birth of nationalist parties in the colonised countries is contemporary with the formation of an intellectual *élite* engaged in trade' (*The Wretched,* p. 85). It is not until the post-independence period that this class gains control of the state and thereby acquires the wealth and power to constitute itself into a national or pseudo-bourgeoisie. In the pre-independence period there is no national bourgeoisie but only a national middle class composed of petty-bourgeoisie elements. Unfortunately, Fanon often uses the term national bourgeoisie in reference to the pre-independence period thereby confusing the distinction between the two phases of the indigenous middle class. In expiating Fanon's theory it is first necessary to trace the path followed by the petty bourgeoisie in its quest for national independence.

During the colonial period the petty bourgeoisie carries on a continued dialogue with the colonialist ruling class. Initially, its demands upon the system follow the lines of a liberal universalism (p. 119) and are directed to ending specific abuses, such as oppressive taxation or forced labour contracts. Gradually these demands for liberalisation coalesce in the claim for national independence. The intellectual and commercial elites that comprise the leadership and majority following of the urban nationalist movements favour electoral reform and abstract freedoms. The reason why they do not threaten to resort to armed struggle is because they do not desire the destruction of the colonial state. The economic policy they favour is specialised and concerns the advancement of their own sectional interests. The reformist nationalist parties completely disregard the peasant in their propaganda. The eruption of peasant revolts will only encourage the urban nationalist into alliance with the colonialist bourgeoisie. The fear of major rural upheavals leads the national middle class to embrace the principle of a peaceful decolonisation. Fanon explains this tactic in the following way: 'In its sim-

plest form this non-violence signifies to the intellectual and economic *élite* of the colonized country that the bourgeoisie has the same interests as them and that it is therefore urgent and indispensable to come to terms for the public good' (p. 48). Such compromise is entirely consistent with the outlook and the economic interests of this class.

During the struggle for independence, the nationalist elites produce an ersatz conflict by following the principles of a quaint humanitarianism. While they have no political or social programme, and will strenuously avoid the overthrowing of the state (p. 55), Fanon concedes that, in using the language and symbolism of nationalism, the middle class does play something of a progressing role.

The middle-class intellectuals who have been trained in the west will attempt to adopt models of political organisation culled from their European experience. Too often the structure of the national party, like much of its professed ideology, is borrowed without the slightest attempt being made to modify the principles of political practice. The adoption of those institutions represents the mechanical application of a mode of organisation designed for working-class struggles in industrialised societies. It is inevitable that such movements should concentrate upon the urban working class which, although representing the most *politically* conscious elements (that is, the stratum with the most clear understanding of its own class interests), are only a minuscule group in relation to the population at large (p. 86). Fanon equates this particular political consciousness with the pursuit of narrow class interests as opposed to the broad interests of the peasantry as the universal class.

During the period of nationalist struggle the petty bourgeoisie is content to play a conciliatory role, opting for reformist and electoral gains. This approach is in sharp contrast with the demands made by the more radical elements of the intelligentsia and the rural poor. The urban nationalists will make no attempt to support or give direction to the spontaneous eruptions that may occur in the countryside (*The Wretched*, p. 92). This sets the precedent for the spirit of mistrust that is typical of the relationship between the peasantry and the national bourgeoisie during the post-independence period, and which blocks the process of national integration. The gulf that had existed between the urban and rural sectors during the colonial phase is carried over to plague the new nation, therein helping to promote the interests of the neo-colonialist bourgeoisie. Fanon makes direct reference to the use made of regional factionalism by the met-

ropolitan ruling class in furthering the political emasculation of new states (p. 95).

In Fanon's scenario it appears that the petty bourgeois' failure to press for an authentic national liberation derives from its unjustified fear of repressive action by the metropole, as well as from its own objective economic interest in a neo-colonial independence. Fanon is extremely ambiguous on the importance of this second factor, and mostly he is content to deride as childish the reformists' misreading of the climate of the international community which underlies its fear of colonialist violence.

During this period the middle class adopts the self-same attitude toward the peasantry as do the colonialists (pp. 87 and 94). Usually they chose to ignore the rural masses but even on those few occasions when they sought to initiate an alliance with the peasant class, they were discouraged by the active obstruction of the colonial authorities.

During the pre-independence struggle, the nascent national bourgeoisie is firmly opposed by the traditional authorities, the chiefs, cairds, and marabouts, who hold sway over the peasantry. The origin of this conflict is not political but economic. In regard to this clash of interest, Fanon makes a rare reference to the operation of objective economic factors as the primary source of class antagonism (p. 83). The traditional authorities with whom the national bourgeoisie clash had previously colluded in acting as intermediaries for the colonial administration. The young nationalist middle class will come into competition with the feudal elements as its demands for entry into the villages for trade and commerce are blocked by the traditionalists (*The Wretched,* p. 87). The feudal authorities soon come to view the urban elites as their enemies, while their own recalcitrance will serve to harden the hostile attitude of the urban group. Fanon comments: 'The westernized elements experience feelings with regard to the bulk of the peasantry which are reminiscent of those found among the town workers of industrialized countries' (*The Wretched,* p. 88). Over time these sentiments become hardened as the peasantry resists all intrusion by the urban middle class.

In his account of the behaviour of the urban nationalist parties, Fanon notes the existence of two kinds of cleavage: the first is a cleavage between those elements which have been successful and unsuccessful in taking part in negotiating for independence; the second is a cleavage between radical and reformist factions. In the first instance there are no ideological grounds for factionalism, since the

aims of both are confined to a nearly identical self-interest. In the latter, the reformists and radicals conflict over the question of the form that independence should take. During this period the opposition parties in the cities may attempt an alignment with the peasantry, seeing in peasant revolts their chance to edge out their opponents and thereby seize power. This regressive opposition group, like its rival, has no intention of propelling the peasant struggle onto a higher plane, nor of providing political education for the people (p. 92). Its sole aim is to gain the spoils of office. Alternatively, the opposition group may seek an alliance with the minuscule trade union movements.

Where the opposition parties turn to the progressive elements in the trade unions (p. 95), the effects will be likewise 'regressive'. Such an alliance will only achieve a 'settling of accounts' between the labour aristocracy and the reformist factions within the petty bourgeoisie. Because the trade unions have no authentic links with the rural labour force, their claim to power will fall outside the interest and involvement of the peasant. Presumably this kind of confrontation, taking place in the post-independence period, will, irrespective of the outcome of the conflict, pave the way for a more repressive and autocratic style of national bourgeois government.

Fanon's criticism of these losing nationalist parties is three-fold: their sole purpose is to gain power for the pursuit of personal ends; they lack any semblance of a political programme; and in their attempt to seize power they will rely upon the weaknesses, rather than the strengths, of the peasantry. At most these parties can hasten the rate at which the ruling petty-bourgeois faction metamorphoses itself into a national bourgeois oligarchy.

Within the major urban parties there sometimes develops a split between those who seek accommodation with the metropole and those radicals who demand a break with the colonialist system (*The Wretched*, p. 98). Fanon refers to a two-sided process that leads to the isolation and expulsion of the radical clique. Often they will be isolated within the party itself, because their demands are contrary to the position of the majority and the party leadership. Also they will be an obvious target for harsh treatment by colonial authorities who are quick to realise the threat they represent to a reformist independence. The distinguishing feature of this radical group is the high moral principles of its members. Fanon cites no criteria, other than the qualities of personal honesty and high ethical principles of conduct, to define its membership. This potentially alternative national leadership has its origins among the class of itinerant work-

ers, unskilled and seasonal labourers, and the chronically unemployed. These are responsible men who demonstrate a keen spirit of sacrifice, exemplary patriotism, and a strong sense of initiative (*The Wretched*, p. 99).

Out of the opposition between the radical and reformist elements grows an illegalist party which, under the persecution of the colonial police, seeks refuge in the countryside. Through their contact with the peasantry these urban 'intellectuals' are radicalised and learn that political action in the towns will never end nor even modify a colonial regime (*The Wretched*, p. 101). Fanon's African experience taught him that this path to genuine decolonisation had been taken by no black African state.

iii The critique of the national bourgeoisie

Fanon's principal criticism of the national bourgeoisie is that where it comes to power it does so without even the semblance of a programme for economic or social change. It is this fact more than any other which determines the style and performance of national bourgeois regimes.

The faults of the African national bourgeoisie are most obvious when contrasted with the achievements of the European middle class at its rise to power. The metropolitan bourgeoisie, confident in its own authority, could afford to concede some political and economic freedoms to the subordinate classes. Its self-confidence allowed it to follow the contours of a liberal ideology. Fanon writes: 'When the bourgeoisie is strong, when it can arrange everything and everybody to serve its power, it does not hesitate to affirm positively certain democratic ideas which claim to be universally applicable. There must be very exceptional circumstances if such a bourgeoisie, solidly based economically, is forced into denying its own humanist ideology' (*The Wretched*, p. 131). While a ruling class of this type will prepare 'fences' to guarantee its hegemony, such constraints are merely proof of the expansiveness of its authority.

In contrast, the middle classes of Africa, lacking both economic power and the self-confidence that such power bestows, construct a state apparatus that arouses rather than assuages anxiety (p. 132). In the absence of authentic control over the national economy, the fate of such regimes is to become increasingly repressive in the vain attempt to hold onto power. National bourgeois regimes seek to achieve popular support not through seduction, but through coercion.

At independence the national bourgeoisie believes that it can replace the 'defeated' colonial ruling class (p. 119), but the paucity of its intellectual and material resources forces it into nationalising certain sectors of the economy. The sole achievement of such regimes will be to act as the agent for the extraction and transmission of economic surplus from the national economy to the metropole. Under the direction of the new middle classes no major structural changes are initiated, the rural sector stagnates, and the economy falls into an artisan mould (p. 221). The national bourgeois' first move is to nationalise the intermediate sector, that is, to transfer into its own hands the unfair advantages formerly monopolised by the expatriate European community. Such a programme of nationalisation is motivated by the wish for the 'Africanization of the ruling class' (p. 125). Similarly, the landed national property owners demand nationalisation in order to line their own pockets, thereby increasing the exploitation of the rural labour force.

In both rural and urban sectors the national bourgeoisie shows itself bereft of any inventiveness; profits are not reinvested but expatriated, or consumed in the most extravagant and wasteful manner. In the national economy there is no planning, no renovation, only decay.

The urban working class is quick to follow the lead of the national bourgeoisie and demand the nationalisation of those areas, often dominated by non-national Africans, involving craftsmen, artisans, and petty traders (p. 125). Fanon comments: 'From nationalism we have passed to ultra-nationalism, to chauvinism, and finally to racism' (p. 125). Fuelled by old regional and ethnic rivalries and encouraged by the retreating colonial power, national unity crumbles. Regionalism and federalism, religious rivalries and hostility between north and sub-Saharan Africa, all testify to the fading hopes for Pan-African unity and economic co-operation. The national bourgeoisie itself promotes this kind of racism, a doctrine it had previously absorbed in its contacts with the culture of the colonial powers. Fanon observes that this fragmentation reveals the weakness of nationalist regimes for, whereas the racism of the European toward the African had been a racism of contempt, the racial prejudice of the national bourgeoisie is motivated by fear (p. 131). The need for scapegoats in the face of growing discontent is only partially answered by the doctrine of ultra-nationalism.

Trapped between its economic and political limitations as a ruling class and the constraints of a neo-colonialist economy, the national bourgeoisie is soon forced into erecting a more and more

oppressive state apparatus. Only by creating a dictatorship can the middle class hope to hold onto its position. Opposition parties will be banned and their leaders gaoled. Those more radical elements which had worked in line with the demands of the reformist party and had staunchly supported the creation of an economic programme will be thrown aside. Fanon comments of this faction: 'Now that they have fulfilled their historical mission of leading the bourgeoisie to power, they are firmly invited to retire so that the bourgeoisie may carry out *its* mission' (p. 137). The political party that had been the instrument for the rise of the national bourgeoisie to power and had served to focus opposition against the colonial bourgeoisie quickly atrophies (p. 147). The political party now has the sole function of supervising the people. Playing understudy to the administration and the police and the army, the party promotes the values of obedience and conformity in the hope of waylaying potential opposition. Sometimes the party is transformed into the property of a single ethnic group so that the national dictatorship transforms itself into a tribal dictatorship.

Because of the paucity of its economic and political foundations, the national bourgeoisie will seek to legitimise its rule through the use of those same instruments that had sustained colonial rule. In the place of a political party that would inform and unify the people, there emerges a charismatic leader who obscures from the nation the fact that independence is a fraud (p. 155).

The demands of the metropole on the national economy increase, thereby forcing the suppression of all dissent.

The major problem facing national-bourgeois regimes is the limited opportunity for personal advancement. Neither by legitimate nor by illegal means is there enough scope for the bourgeois to acquire the wealth which it as a class believes is its due. Nor does the middle class possess the economic means to buy off public discontent by allowing concessions to the proletariat or the peasantry (p. 133). The decline into a repressive police state is the direct result of the exceedingly narrow economic parameters of the new nation. The conclusion to this phase will herald the emergence of the army and the police force as the arbiters between the national economy and the metropolitan ruling class which continues to dominate political and economic life (p. 140).

The role played by the army and the police increases in importance as both the national economy and the party decay, and the nation sinks into a complete neo-colonial dependence. The major achievement of the national-bourgeois phase is the increased hold

exerted over the national economy by the forces of neo-colonialism (p. 134).

The causes for the decay of nationalist regimes are best seen in the nature of the relationship between such regimes and the metropolitan ruling class. Initially the national bourgeois' demands for independence are genuine, yet, even prior to formal decolonisation, it will find itself severely compromised. The post-independence decline into political dependence is closely related to the limitations of the national bourgeoisie as a bourgeois class. These limitations centre on the middle class's economic fragility, its incapacity to rationalise popular action, its lack of managerial skills, and the historical disadvantage of being deprived, during the colonial era, of the chance to accumulate wealth or to acquire the skills necessary to manage the national economy. Furthermore, the fact that the economy had been designed to complement that of the metropole provides a structural barrier to the national bourgeoisie acceding to the position occupied by the colonial bourgeoisie.

As a class the national bourgeoisie is characterised by the smallness of its numbers, its numerical concentration in the capital cities, and by the types of economic activities in which it engages (p. 119). This class has little knowledge of the actual workings of the economy, since the colonial bourgeoisie had always monopolised its operation. Its minuscule economic resources are only matched by the paucity of its managerial and organisational skills.

Fanon's account of the play between economic and cultural factors in the formation of the outlook and political behaviour of the middle class is highly ambiguous. It is not at all clear to what extent the national bourgeois' alignment with the metropolitan ruling class is caused by cultural affiliation, or by the fact that the means of production and the operation of the dominant technologies are controlled from the metropole. This confusion arises because Fanon consistently plays down the role of objective economic factors in explaining the behaviour of the indigenous middle class. While opening his account of the national-bourgeoisie phase by noting the importance of economic self-interest, Fanon is content to berate the middle class for its moral, political, and psychological deficiencies (pp. 119–20). In commenting upon the limitations of this class Fanon writes that by assimilating the oppressor's culture the native intellectual 'leaves certain of his intellectual possessions in pawn' (p. 38).

He goes on to describe how the native intellectual is incapable of objectively assessing a problem or an idea, and how he usually becomes preoccupied with details to the exclusion of being able to

see the whole. He is a person very much out of contact with his own intellect and with his own feelings. In fact the portrait of the mentality of the national middle class is the same in most respects as the condition of pointalism which Porot and Carothers associated with the African Personality. In resurrecting Porot's portrait Fanon concretises the concept of pointalism by identifying it with the condition of a specific class. Furthermore he argues that this mentality is the product of the petty bourgeois' contact with the culture of the colonising power. Personality, like economic interest and political vision, are a function of class position. It is the urban western-educated elite, not the peasantry, which suffers from intellectual deficiency.

Although Fanon is willing to concede the past creative achievements of the European bourgeoisie, he finds no virtue in the new elites of independent Africa. His contempt for the national bourgeoisie rests upon a belief that, as the beneficiary of the residual spoils of the colonial system, it benefits from the exploitation of the peasantry. The national bourgeoisie is a dependent, unproductive, and superfluous class, the sole achievement of which is the invention of a neo-colonial society. Its existence neither extends nor strengthens the forces of production; it is nationalist without being anti-imperialist. In summary the national bourgeoisie can produce nothing except the necessity for its own destruction.

2. The two escape routes from the national bourgeois phase

i Blocking the road to the national bourgeoisie

Fanon's account of the means for preventing the emergence of a national bourgeois dictatorship also contains his only description of the necessary institutional and ideological characteristics of a genuinely independent state. 'The Pitfalls of National Consciousness' (*The Wretched*, ch. 3) is renowned as a searing critique of the new African ruling class. Less apparent but no less important are the passages describing the limitations of nationalism, and the need for political education as the prime task of any new government. Fanon's analysis of this function of government takes place within a discussion of the institutional arrangements of the army, the political party, the bureaucracy and the economy.

What are the institutional requirements of the new state and how are these best achieved? The first requirement is the nationalisation of those sectors of the economy dealing with trade, small business,

and activities providing commissions from sales. As this intermediary sector had, during the colonial era, been the province of the expatriate European community, it is the first prize sought by the ambitious petty bourgeoisie. But nationalisation creates its own problems in the spectre of a large and potentially corrupt state bureaucracy. To avoid this possibility, Fanon recommends the nationalisation of both wholesale and retail activity and the establishment on a democratic basis of people's co-operatives. In this way, control will be decentralised and subject to constant public scrutiny.

The second and most important requirement is the creation and maintenance of an authentic mass party, a party which is a 'tool of the people' (p. 148). The national party must not be a bureaucracy, controlled and managed by leading party officials, but decentralised in the extreme with at least one member of the political bureau resident in each district. Party officials would not hold any administrative powers and there would be an effective separation of the party and the state administration. This separation of powers decentralises authority and acts as a safeguard against the vices of nepotism. The party leadership should also favour the countryside over the cities, both in terms of policy orientation and by residing outside the colonial capital.

The district political bureaux, acting as channels for the expression of popular demands, provide the avenue for a two-way flow between the leadership and the masses. By direct involvement in the process of government the people achieve sovereignty.

Although emphasising the importance of decentralising the party and the state bureaucracy Fanon is sensitive to the possible criticism that this implies the replacement of the role of leadership with a popular 'general will'. Fanon played down the importance of political leadership as a response to the inflated position of leadership characteristic of national bourgeois dictatorships. But Fanon's occasional references to the positive influence of enlightened leadership is at odds with his barely disguised horror of all forms of authority.

The third requirement concerns the role of the army. Fanon's solution to the threat of the military 'entering politics', is to nationalise the armed forces. The army will be most effective as a school for civil and political education (p. 62). In order to prevent the emergence of a clique of professional soldiers, the number of permanent officers will be reduced to a minimum. Because the function of the army includes the promotion of national unity as well as the physical defence of the state, nationalisation means placing priority upon

political work within the forces. National service, whether civilian or military, will of course be compulsory for all. Fanon proposes the construction of national projects using recruited labour as a means for solidifying national integration and political commitment (p. 163). Likewise, African youth will be encouraged to work in both fields and schools in the service of national development.

Fanon's prescriptions on the institutional arrangement of the state are intended to promote the growth of political commitment among the peasantry. The decentralisation of the party and the bureaucracy will ultimately fail if they are not effective in encouraging popular participation. The only certain means of blocking the growth of a national bourgeoisie is by combining decentralised state institutions with a programme of mass political education.

Three or four times Fanon mentions the importance of 'political teaching' (p. 159) for the health of the nation. Citing the Algerian experience he argues that the illiterate peasantry is capable of readily understanding the wider political and economic realities that frame its life, if these relationships are first explained. Once the people understand the purpose of a particular project they show themselves capable of adapting even the most modern techniques to their own ends, and of releasing their immense reserves of creative energy.

Fanon concedes that there are obstacles hampering the spread of a modern political consciousness. First, the rudimentary character of the means of communication in the new states will slow down the dissemination of knowledge and information and retard the rate at which national integration can be achieved. Second, the narrowness of the village universe, where time is measured in terms of harvests rather than decades, will sometimes mean that change is not welcomed. Finally there is the spirit of discouragement, the legacy from the colonial period, which may dampen initiative. But, because of the positive influence of peasant culture, none of these factors are such as to pose an insurmountable barrier to national development.

Fanon takes pains to point out that nationalism is not a political doctrine which can guide the development of the state after independence. Such major questions as industrial development, the mechanisation of agriculture, and the creation of the tertiary facilities associated with the modern state, cannot of course be answered during the nationalist phase. The even more important issues concerning the very principles of government likewise belong to the life of the new nation. In *The Wretched* Fanon makes it clear that the decision about the content of this national programme is absolutely

vital. But is the face of Third World socialism to resemble Soviet Marxism or anarcho-syndicalism? Fanon's only reply to this problem is to indicate that the ideology of African socialism, embodied in the doctrine of national development, will be as individual to each state as that pantheon which enshrines the memory of the nation's dead heroes. Although Fanon will not admit the possibility, these doctrines must be similar since they reply to that single range of problems faced by all Third World states which seek to avoid the negative features characteristic of national-bourgeois regimes.

Fanon finds the resolution to the problem of building a new society on the foundations of a sovereign peasant population to lie in the fact that the revolutionary consciousness informing the political life of the new state comes from the peasant class itself.

There are two further omissions in Fanon's account of the prevention of the rise of the national bourgeoisie. Fanon makes virtually no comment on the nature of the relationship between the institutions of the state and the metropole and he has nothing to say on the subject of neutralising the activities of the former colonial power. Like other African socialists Fanon believed that neo-colonialism was a solution to the political and economic needs of the imperialist states. But any theory which sees the hand of self-interested capital behind the façade of post-war independence movements cannot hope to explain the characteristics of the new states without referring to the economic needs and aspirations of the indigenous and metropolitan bourgeoisies. In *The Wretched* Fanon does just that. Paradoxically he argues that although the national bourgeoisie creates no new institutions whatsoever (p. 142), the national bourgeois state is characterised by the rapid growth of a corrupt and swollen bureaucracy. This contradiction exposes the absence in Fanon's analysis of an answer to the most important questions set by the existence of the national-bourgeois phase.

ii The relentless dialectic and autarchic development

Like all African socialists, Fanon was faced with the problem how the new states of Africa could achieve the expansion of their productive forces, yet avoid the dangers of neo-colonialism. This problem was compounded by the felt need of newly independent states to flaunt their sovereignty through the rhetoric and imagery of an aggressive nationalism. Fanon employs two concepts – autarchic development and the relentless dialectic – in framing his solution to the Third World's need for autonomy. Both these concepts are

also employed in substantiating the historical necessity for national liberation.

In *The Wretched* Fanon argues that the Third World should opt for an active policy of neutralism and steadfastly refuse to become immersed in the conflicts between the great powers. Neither system, American capitalism, nor Soviet Marxism offers a solution to the problems of African states since both represent a negation of man; capitalism simply violates all human principles, while the Soviet system places an obsession with material production above the needs of people (pp. 78 and 83). In place of these two aberrations, Fanon wishes to see the invention of a new world order that is based on the principles of a humanist socialism.

Africa's need for technical assistance is answered by the moral claim that the former colonies hold against the European powers. The colonial powers owe both a moral and material debt to the Third World, since it was upon the exploitation of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America that the wealth and industrialisation of Europe was founded (pp. 80–1). The former metropoles' obligation to make reparations to the colonies involves a recognition by both parties of the payment of this historical debt. If, however, the metropoles refuse to grant aid, and seek to condemn the former colonies to under-development, then a relentless dialectic will set in (p. 81).

At independence there will be a rush to withdraw capital investment; in fact the rush to get capital out of the colonies will be an indication that genuine decolonisation has taken place. Entrepreneurs will be reluctant to undertake projects in the metropoles because of the relatively low rates of return when compared with colonial investment. Few Third World countries would be able to fulfil the requirements for investment demanded by European capitalists. In the long term no capital would circulate, the rate of return on investment would fall and, despite massive military budgets, international capital would enter a period of decline (p. 83).

By failing to pay reparations, and attempting to condemn the ex-colonies to economic and political degeneration, Europe would be setting the stage for its own ruin. Fanon explains that in the face of such an attitude the former colonies may decide to continue their development within a 'collective autarchy'. The new states of Africa and Asia could band together in a cartel, thereby depriving the west of all overseas outlets. The result of this would be the stagnation of production with a merciless struggle ensuing between the major corporations and trusts for internal European markets.

In the long term, this economic decline would lead to the out-

break of class wars within the capitalist system (p. 83), a possibility that Fanon recognises without enthusiasm. Then and perhaps only then, would the former colonial powers realise that their self-interest lay in giving aid, without conditions, to their former territories. Without the granting of such aid, European capital would be blockaded both in terms of investment opportunities and at the point of market outlets for produced goods. Fanon makes no mention of a blockade in regard to raw material as a possible strategy for the Third World.

The relentless dialectic is an important concept within Fanon's theory of decolonisation, since it appears to guarantee genuine independence for the entire colonial world. The dialectic posits that in the sphere of international politics the Third World is strong, not weak, because, with the option of autarchic development, it holds within its grasp the fate of Europe. The dialectic is capable of precipitating class war within the First World and ultimately the collapse of the European social and economic orders. In the metropolitan context, Fanon associates class war with decay and not regeneration. Autarchic development would sentence the metropoles to decline without the promise of a creative socialist revolution. In *The Wretched* the only solution to the revolutionary backwardness of Europe is seen to lie in the intervention of the Third World. Even so socialism in the west is unlikely.

The colonial world has nothing to fear from the metropoles, for it is they who are economically and politically vulnerable. The key issue for the Third World is not the contest between capitalism and socialism, although this conflict is important in catalysing the decolonisation process. The key issue is the possibility of total world development, which can only be brought about by large-scale investment and aid in the underdeveloped world. Fanon's one fear is that Europe would attempt to form an alliance with the USSR against the Third World (p. 83); but he concludes that this is unlikely, since the Third World nations have no intention of pressing for a crusade against the western states.

The numerous problems that the concept of the relentless dialectic poses, in terms of both the pre-conditions for decolonisation and the possibilities for avoiding neo-colonial dependence, are ignored in Fanon's analysis. The most obvious problem is this: if such a dialectic does in fact exist, then how is it possible for false decolonisation to occur? If, at formal independence, capital is loath to invest in the newly independent states, then it follows that the neo-colonial option has not been taken and the initial effects of the

relentless dialectic will begin to be felt in the metropole. In fact, Fanon remarks that only in a very few countries are all the preconditions for capitalist investment met (p. 82); therefore, presumably, the relentless dialectic will come into effect in most of the former metropoles. The second major problem concerns the distinction between neo-colonialism and genuine decolonisation, and the possibility of the relentless dialectic operating in a neo-colonial context. It appears Fanon believed the latter to be impossible, since such a circumstance presupposes that a national-bourgeois regime could wield a degree of autonomy that is at odds with his account of the character of that class. Thus the spectre of a collective autarchy offers no solution to neo-colonial domination, although it promises to prevent the occurrence of the 'pitfalls of the national conscience'.

Fanon's relentless dialectic is a theoretical device invented to rehabilitate the colonial world from a dependence which appeared inescapable given the Third World's need for aid and investment. It comes into play only where a programme of active social and political change has driven back the inflow of capital investment. According to Fanon's argument, once a nation has been genuinely decolonised, that is, once it has achieved a substantive political independence, the relentless dialectic will ensure that it remains completely independent. Thus, what begins as an exposition on the character of European capital, and promises, within the realm of political theory, to guarantee an authentic independence, ends as a shallow tautology. The relentless dialectic can have no bearing upon the movement towards decolonisation, since its only effect is to guarantee the flow of European aid and investment to the Third World after independence is achieved.

The concept of a relentless dialectic emphasises further the timidity of the national bourgeoisie. Given that the First World is dependent upon the continuance of economic relations with the former colonies, the newly ascendant African elites are in a strong position to demand equitable trade and aid relations, a fact that completely escapes them.

In the concept of the relentless dialectic is distilled much of the tension in Fanon's writings between his avowed internationalism, which holds that all peoples must work together to build a new world order, and his loathing for Europe, its values and history. He refers at one point to the indispensable help that Europe can render to the Third World in the giant task of humanising under-developed economies through the rapid expansion of the local productive forces (p. 84). Yet generally his references to the metropole are contemptuous.

This tension is partially resolved by Fanon's interpretation that European capitalism is on the threshold of a profound decline. Extrapolating from Lenin's *Imperialism*, Fanon reverses the geography of socialist revolution by allocating the key role to the peasantry of Africa. (The peasantry assumes the task of a revolutionary class which has been abdicated by the bourgeoisified working class of Europe.) Yet, surprisingly, Fanon does not welcome the prospect of the collapse of the European economic system. He is quick to explain that the Third World does not need or want the destruction of the European political order, but rather should work toward the humanisation of that world; presumably this involves the marriage of western technology with African humanism. Fanon's argument calls for the 'domestication' of capital once the necessary reparations to the colonies have been made. This line of reasoning distinguishes Fanon's place among the fraternity of African and West Indian nationalists. Like such figures as E. W. Blyden, Césaire, and Senghor, the spectre of negritude defines the boundaries of Fanon's political imagination. The one-sidedness of Europe, its technological excellence which is devoid of humanist values, and the one-sidedness of Africa, with its cultural richness and paucity of technical skills, are both to be overcome by a process of mutual enrichment.

There are certain parallels between those factors Fanon deems central to the decolonisation process and the dynamic set in motion by autarchic development. There is also an apparent contradiction between the threat to the metropolitan economic order from underdeveloped countries and the elegant economic means that Fanon claims these economies possess which can be used to destroy dissident new states (pp. 51–2). Thus the former colonies are capable of bringing down their former masters, and simultaneously are subject to their political whim. This paradox would be resolved if Fanon defined the conditions under which the relentless dialectic poses a threat to the metropoles, and those in which the metropoles retain ascendancy. Unfortunately, he gives no indication of an answer to either of these issues.

In the concept of the relentless dialectic Fanon attempted to resolve, theoretically, the problems posed by the low level of Africa's productive forces and the threat of neo-colonialism. If the First World failed to honour the payment of reparations it would bring political and economic ruin down upon itself. Thus what begins as a moral obligation ends as a matter of self-interest.

Chapter 8

The neo-colonial state

In *The Wretched* Fanon provides a scenario of the formal decolonisation process; he describes the influence of the international political climate on the independence struggles and the action of the contradictions internal to the metropoles; he defines the stances of the various strata of the colonised society and their role within the decolonisation movements. In short, his writings on the subject of formal or primary decolonisation are systematic in the extreme.

Fanon's description of the neo-colonial state under the dictatorship of the national bourgeoisie is equally coherent. He discusses the various agencies which support such dictatorships, from the residual colonial mentality among the peasantry, to the avarice of the national bourgeoisie itself. He refers to the decay of the nationalist parties and the economic subordination of the national economy to the interests of the metropolitan ruling class. Beyond this, Fanon outlines the means by which the rise of such dictatorships may be *prevented,* and stresses the necessary ordering of national affairs in the spheres of economic, cultural, social and military activity to achieve that end.

Yet Fanon's theory leaves completely unanswered the question how, once established, a dictatorship of the national bourgeoisie is to be overthrown. It is the absence of an answer to this question, more than any other single factor, which determines the status of Fanon's theory.

In *The Wretched* Fanon makes numerous references to the fragile and ephemeral character of national bourgeois regimes. Commenting upon the prospects for survival of such dictatorships Fanon writes: 'It is true that such a dictatorship does not go very far. It cannot halt the processes of its own contradictions' (*The Wretched,* p. 132). He goes on to explain that the national bourgeoisie in Africa is 'playing to lose' (p. 139) and that its tenuous hold on the reins of

power 'will not last' (p. 139). His reasons for adopting an optimistic view appear to derive from a belief that these regimes are beset by insurmountable internal contradictions (pp. 142 and 164). Because of the economic and political decay which accompany the rise to power of the reformist middle classes, they will soon be overthrown (p. 143). At one point Fanon's confidence in the rapid destruction of such regimes leads him to write: 'The change-over will not take place at the level of the structures set up by the bourgeoisie during its reign, since that caste has done nothing more than take over unchanged the legacy of the economy, the thought, and the institutions left by the colonists' (p. 142). Its very sterility makes the national bourgeoisie easy to neutralise (p. 142). Fanon goes on to explain how the decay of the national economy, and subsequent political unrest, quickly dissipate the popular apathy that allowed the bourgeoisie to gain power. The degeneration of the economy leads to a swelling of the ranks of the lumpen-proletariat as the poor peasantry is squeezed off the land and into the crowded slums surrounding the major cities (p. 150).[1] Once this point has been reached, the end of the national bourgeoisie is imminent. Fanon hoped that this collapse would lead to the construction of a socialist state favouring the peasantry over the national middle classes and the rural sector over the cities. But he gives no indication of what form a national crisis should take, whether it means the setting in motion of a peasant revolution directed against the ruling classes or a less dramatic democratisation in which the bourgeoisie voluntarily relinquished its power. This problem is not helped by Fanon's intimations that such a crisis is best avoided, rather than resolved, if the national bourgeoisie would freely choose to annihilate itself as a class (pp. 140 and 150).[2]

Fanon's optimism concerning the brevity of the national-bourgeois phase is countervailed by the parallels he occasionally draws between the destination of African nationalism and the fate of Latin American states during the past century. Noting that the new middle class will all too readily act as 'managers' for western enterprise, Fanon bemoans the destiny of independent Africa as 'the brothel of Europe' (p. 123). Comparing contemporary Africa with Latin America, Fanon laments: 'We know today that this fascism at high interest which has triumphed for half a century in Latin America is the dialectic result of states which were semi-colonial during the period of independence' (p. 138). That independent African states had become semi-colonial during the first years following 'liberation' is the theme of Fanon's critique of the national middle class.

Thus in Fanon's final work there is a contradiction between his optimism on the question of authentic independence and his fears that Africa was fated to duplicate the failed revolutions of South America. This contradiction is all the more extraordinary given Fanon's oft-expressed belief that the greatest threat facing contemporary Africa was that of neo-colonial domination. Yet Fanon pays more attention to that question in his essays written before *The Wretched* than he does in his most radical work.

In an article published in July 1958,[3] Fanon had first raised the issue of neo-colonialism and the danger it posed to Africa's liberation. In this article Fanon interprets the problem of economic dependence as being part of a deliberate strategy of the colonial powers to abort authentic decolonisation. He describes the circumstances which may lead to the perversion of national independence in the following way:

> The parties that lead the struggle against colonialist oppression, at a certain phase of the combat, decide for practical reasons to accept a fragment of independence with the firm intention of arousing the people again within the framework of the fundamental strategy of the total evacuation of the territory and of the effective seizure of all the national resources. This style, which has taken form on a succession of occasions, is today well known. (*Revolution*, p. 130)

He goes on to explain that there is also an 'opposite dialectic', the neo-colonial dialectic, that has aroused too little attention, and warns of the strategy of the colonial powers in exploiting this opportunity to prevent the completion of the national revolution.

Fanon explains that in all cases when the question of independence is raised the metropole will show itself to be concerned with one issue and one issue only: the preservation of its economic interests within the former colony. Aid and assistance programmes are set up to provide some disguise for the continuance of the colonial relationship under a new flag. But at this point of his argument as in *The Wretched*, Fanon comments that such a strategy is doomed to failure: 'The novelty of this phase is that it is necessarily brief' (*Revolution*, p. 131). While the national middle class and the intellectuals are content with abstract freedoms and the trappings of independence, the peasants soon demand a change in the material conditions of their lives. 'Thus it is that the struggle resumes with renewed violence' (*Revolution*, p. 132). This second phase of the revolution presupposes a struggle between radical nationalists and a

conservative ruling faction backed by the metropolitan bourgeoisie. The only illumination Fanon gives as to the nature of this struggle is by reference to the experiences of Egypt and Indonesia. Presumably the Egyptian example refers to the Suez crisis, while the latter refers to the short-lived nationalisation of foreign enterprises under Sukarno.

Fanon explains that since the spectre of genuine decolonisation threatens the economic equilibrium of Europe the metropole will be tempted to unleash its full military capacity. Yet he is as emphatic on the necessity for the second revolution as he is confident of its chances of success. He summarises his view in the following passage:

> All the colonial countries that are waging the struggle today must know that the political independence that they will wring from the enemy in exchange for the maintenance of an economic dependency is only a snare and a delusion, that the second phase of total liberation is necessary because required by the popular masses, that this second phase, because it is a capital one, is bound to be hard and waged with iron determination. (*Revolution*, p. 135)

Although concluding that the hope for an independent Africa lies in the solidarity of the entire Third World against the presence of imperialism everywhere (*Revolution*, p. 136), Fanon ignores the question of the alignment of class forces and the role of the metropolitan ruling class in this revolutionary struggle.

In his final work Fanon's only reference to the possibility of a second revolution occurs in his discussion of the 'relentless dialectic'. The threat of economic collapse leaves western capital with no choice but to undertake progressive and creative investment in the Third World. Therefore, far from being in a position of weakness, the new states can in fact control the fate of the imperialist powers.

But the optimistic promise of this dialectic does not alter the essentially pessimistic conclusion to which Fanon's analysis points. Fanon does not attempt to relate the operation of the relentless dialectic either to the factors favouring the survival of an ascendant bourgeoisie or to a scenario for the overthrow of that class. These two aspects of his work, the notion of collective autarchy and his strictures against the new ruling class, are quite divorced within his theory at large. Because of this fragmentation, Fanon's analysis of the post-colonial state is quite self-contradictory. Either the emergence of national bourgeois regimes brings about certain changes in

terms of the political relationship between the new states and the metropoles, the structuring of trade arrangements and the distribution of wealth between urban and rural sectors, or else the neo-colonial phase is not present. If this is so, then how can the new social formations and class antagonisms which arise with the neo-colonialist state be resolved and by what agencies?

The analysis in *The Wretched* of the decay of the national bourgeoisie and the possibilities for genuine decolonisation pose three major questions to which Fanon provides no convincing answer. First, Fanon gives little weight to the *role of economic dependence* as a determining factor in the decline of the national bourgeoisie and its evolution from a bourgeoisie of the civil service to a straw man in the hands of the army. One would expect Fanon to attribute some importance to the external domination of the national economy, yet he makes no attempt to discuss the linkages between external economic control and internal political institutions that underpin the entire neo-colonialist position. Fanon simply omits to mention the *possible role of the metropole in shoring up a declining national bourgeoisie* in the face of an assault from peasants led by radical intellectuals. In the solution he offers for the avoidance of the national bourgeois phase, the same indifference to the impact of economic subordination is present (*The Wretched*, pp. 142–9). This omission is all the more paradoxical when viewed in relation to Fanon's twin concepts of collective autarchy and the relentless dialectic. In these concepts Fanon attaches such significance to the nature of the economic relationships which exist between the First and Third Worlds, that he predicates the possibility for genuine decolonisation upon them. Second, Fanon makes sparse references to *the role of class interest* as a determinant of the behaviour of the national bourgeoisie in its dealings with metropolitan capital. At times, he remarks that the national bourgeoisie has a clear understanding of what its interests are and that it will be merciless in the pursuit of them. At others, he leaves the impression that the national bourgeoisie does not in fact constitute a class, since it has no coherent sense of its interests as a class. While this line of argument emphasises the inadequacy of Marxist theories, favouring support for national bourgeois regimes (as perhaps it was intended to do), it runs counter to the whole tenor of Fanon's critique of petty-bourgeois nationalism.

Third, the nature of the *relationship between the national bourgeoisie and the indigenous proletariat* is quite obscure. Fanon gives little detail on the nature of the mutual accommodation that is

achieved between these two classes, either during the period of nationalist struggle or post-independence. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, one can only conclude Fanon assumed there to be a *tacit collusion* between these classes. During the period of nationalist agitation their mutual interests would coincide. Yet countervailing this post-independence there is likely to be conflict between the trade unions seeking an expansion of their role and bargaining for the economic advancement of their members, and the national bourgeoisie who intend to corner the spoils of independence for itself (pp. 97–8). The conflict may even reach the stage where the trade unions come into direct contest for 'governmental power' (p. 97). Ultimately, this relationship must have some impact upon the velocity at which national bourgeois regimes harden into military dictatorships.

Fanon's analysis of the emergence of the national bourgeoisie implies the existence of three stages in the development of that class. Each of these stages can be seen as a further step in a process of generation. During the first stage an indigenous petty bourgeoisie comes into being as members of the native community enter the lower rungs of the colonial bureaucracy. The second stage is where the petty bourgeoisie agitates for a greater say in the management of the national economy, a demand which it frames in terms of a claim for national independence. The final stage occurs during the post-independence period when the indigenous petty bourgeoisie has, through its strategic position within the national economy, transformed itself into a pseudo- or national bourgeoisie. It is then that the new middle class discovers that it can rule neither alone nor in contradiction of the dictates of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Caught between popular demands for social renovation, the increasing pressures from metropolitan capital for higher returns, and its own desire to acquire wealth, the new nationalist regime becomes authoritarian.

This typology leads directly to the question of the differences in economic and social formation between the colonial and neo-colonial periods, especially in regard to class structure and alignment. It also raises the question of the possibility of the revolutionary transformation of neo-colonial states. In fact the success of *The Wretched* as a revolutionary theory rests ostensibly upon Fanon's analysis of the post-colonial state in terms of these two problems. Fanon's theory is extremely strong on the history and effects of the colonial relationship, but this relationship involves a quite different set of problems from that encountered in analysis of the post-colonial

period. The almost universal failure of Fanon's critics to distinguish between these two phases has led to a misevaluation of the significance and status of Fanon's theory.

There have been several important studies on the nature of class conflict and the development of class alliances during the post-independence era. The works of Issa Shivji, Hamza Alavi and Colin Leys[4] are particularly relevant, since these authors are in a sense pursuing an analysis congruent with Fanon's own theory. Like Fanon, Shivji, Leys, and Alavi are concerned to discover the factors leading to either the degeneration or survival of nationalist regimes. The weaknesses of their analyses also serve to place Fanon's own omissions in this area into some kind of theoretical and historical context.

While their methods of approach are rather different, all three writers attempt to resolve the same cluster of questions. These questions include the following major problems: What degree of autonomy or independence is characteristic of indigenous ruling classes? Are they entirely dependent upon the support of the metropolitan bourgeoisie for their political rise and survival, or do they enjoy a certain freedom of movement to act independently? Is it possible for this class to pursue its own economic interests, even in opposition to those of the metropolitan bourgeoisie? The difficulties involved in such an analysis are indicated by the plethora of terminologies found in the relevant literature. For instance, the new African middle class is variously described as a petty bourgeoisie, pseudo-bourgeoisie, the auxiliary bourgeoisie, comprador bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, the intendent class, and the bureaucratic class. This terminological glut exposes the difficulty of inventing sufficiently accurate categories to describe the social entities involved. It also indicates a basic problem in delineating the class formations and lines of probable cleavage in post-colonial states.

These three authors reach conclusions which are far from similar; but in terms of the present discussion that does not invalidate their consanguinity.[5]

Shivji[6] distinguishes between three forms of neo-colonialism, which he terms 'neo-colonialism par excellence', 'bureaucratic capitalism', and 'state capitalism'. These forms vary in the composition of their class structures and the nature of the contradictions within those formations. All three forms share the fact of external economic control of the productive forces.

'Neo-colonialism par excellence' displays all the characteristics

usually associated with the economic and political dependence of client states. In such states the indigenous petty bourgeoisie acts as agents for the metropolitan economic interests which own the means of production outright. The only economic development that does occur will be lopsided, reflecting the dominance of the interests of the external ruling class. The petty bourgeoisie is left to glean the benefits of 'small deals', since it has no share in the ownership or control of the national economic enterprises. The local bureaucracy will fulfil a purely administrative function.

The changes in a class composition in the *post-independence* period are confined to the growth of a service class, a petty bourgeoisie consisting of taxi drivers, shop-keepers, chefs, etc., and a small labour aristocracy which aligns itself with this class. Each of these classes is small and confined to 'service activities' from which they enjoy a comparatively high standard of living (p. 10). The pattern of economic development will be ruinous. There will be no heavy industry, while the costs of the infrastructure will now be supported by the new nation. In this way neo-colonialism represents a further rationalisation of imperialist domination. The most likely direction of development of such states is the ascendancy of the military or perhaps the evolution into the bureaucratic capitalist form.

The second form, 'bureaucratic capitalism', is distinguished by the public ownership of a substantial section of the national economy. While nationalisation is important in its impact upon the internal class structure, it does not end the neo-colonial status of the satellite state. In this phase there is a rapid expansion of the administrative bureaucracy and the creation of what Shivji terms the 'economic bureaucracy'. This latter organisation has its roots in the economic base of society and, although it is not directly involved in running the productive forces, it has strong interests in the maintenance of the *status quo*. Shivji does not make a clear distinction between the economic and administrative bureaucracies, except to comment that the latter belongs among the superstructural elements and the former to the infrastructure. How or why this should be and what such a position connotes remains unexplained. We are told that both bureaucracies are parasitic and unproductive structures which depend upon the same basis of support. Shivji writes: 'It is important to note at this point that the bureaucracy (economic and administrative) we have been talking about so far has its social base – a class base – in the international bourgeoisie' (p. 13). The primary political function of the economic bureaucracy is to domes-

ticate the forces of opposition among the newly educated, absorbing them into its institutions, and thereby depriving opposition factions of potential leadership.

In the 'bureaucratic capitalist' form there is an expansion of the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat classes only where the economic bureaucracy has ascendancy over the administrative bureaucracy. The swelling of the ranks of these classes corresponds to the spillovers from the growth of the state bureaucracies and the increasing economic stagnation that accompanies it. The minimal economic development that does take place centres around such ephemeral enterprises as tourism and import substitutions. The dominance of what Shivji terms 'commercial capital' precludes the possibility of any genuine industrial development. Shivji is somewhat ambiguous in his assessment of the bureaucratic capitalism stage, hinting that the evolution of an economic bureaucracy promises some degree of economic and political leverage for the indigenous commercial classes. In fact he notes the emergence of capitalist strata during this phase. He intimates that these commercial groups are committed to an instrumental or scientific view of economic management and are far more dedicated to the pursuit of comprehensible economic programmes than is the erratic administrative bureaucracy out of which they grow. How this affects their political behaviour and outlook is not made clear. Shivji merely comments, rather obtusely, that the bureaucratic capitalist phase is one of latent class struggle.

The third phase is that of 'state capitalism' in which the nationalisation of the economy has led finally to the emergence of a genuine national bourgeoisie. Although the principal class contradiction is still with international capital, there will be some development of local productive forces and the creation of a small, but authentic, working class. Beyond these changes, the state-capitalism phase sees the polarisation of all social classes with the national bourgeoisie pursuing a very repressive and exploitative programme. The state capitalism phase is the highest of the three, since the existence of a genuine national bourgeoisie and the polarisation of all classes are pre-conditions for the socialist revolution that was aborted at independence. Unfortunately this phase is almost unknown in contemporary Africa outside a few enclaves.

Concerning the possible transcendence of any of these three modes of neo-colonial dependence, Shivji's conclusions are pessimistic. In each case the interests of international capital are represented by an indigenous class – in classic neo-colonialism by the petty bourgeoi-

sie, in bureaucratic capitalism by the economic bureaucracy, and in state capitalism by the national bourgeoisie (p. 33). All three classes have clearly defined vested interests in the maintenance of the *status quo* (p. 34). In the first two cases the petty bourgeoisie is completely dependent for its economic and political authority upon the metropolitan bourgeoisie, as it lacks any substantial social base of its own. Shivji believes that the petty bourgeoisie could play a revolutionary role during the national independence struggle or in the post-independence period when power has been won by a socialist revolution thereby cutting the ties of this class with international capital (pp. 34–5). In brief, the petty bourgeoisie cannot be a revolutionary class in a neo-colonial context.

Shivji's solution to the neo-colonial impasse is the assumption of power by the working class coming about through the actions of a revolutionary vanguard based in that class. Consequently, local industrialisation and a socialist revolution are Shivji's unstated prerequisites for genuine national liberation. But by Shivji's own reckoning a genuine indigenous working class only exists in the third and highest stage, state capitalism. Therefore, he presumes that only where there has been an evolution from bureaucratic to state capitalism is it possible for African states to break free of the neo-colonial mire.

In each of Shivji's three phases the primary contradiction and focus of the class struggle is between the indigenous African classes and the international bourgeoisie. Thus a class analysis must, in his view, look beyond the national boundaries to incorporate the notion of an external state as the dominant element framing internal social cleavage.

Despite the sophistication of his analysis, Shivji leaves unanswered the question of the degree of manoeuvrability that indigenous elites can exercise in their relations with the external bourgeoisie. All he gives the reader is an unsubstantiated belief in the middle class's revolutionary potential.

Colin Leys' analysis of the political economy of post-independence Kenya follows closely upon the lines of argument first suggested by Fanon. Like Shivji, Leys' primary concern is to delineate, in terms of class theory, an analysis of a post-colonial African state and, hopefully, to arrive at some understanding of the possibility for its transformation. Also like Shivji, Leys' conclusions are essentially pessimistic, even though he retains some calculated enthusiasm for the likelihood of change.

Leys argues that the neo-colonial phase in Kenya will in its pres-

ent form be only brief. This brevity is due to two overriding influences. First, neo-colonialism extends underdevelopment, thereby creating new class struggles as the practice of exploitation becomes more and more crude. Second, neo-colonialism modifies the relationship between the domestic and foreign bourgeoisies. Over time, this leads to a relationship that resembles less and less the original colonial form (p. 27). Leys is hopeful that developments will help facilitate the destruction of neo-colonial domination, although he provides little evidence as to why this should happen.

Leys' conclusions are rather paradoxical in that he is both optimistic on the possible long-term chances for transformation of Kenyan society and pessimistic of the possibility for the development of a socialist state. His view is best summarised where he writes: 'Neo-colonialism is a structure of contradictions which elsewhere have progressively transformed relatively indirect and subtle forms of control into more and more direct forms, accompanied by more and more acute political polarization, leading both to military repression and to various forms of armed struggle' (p. 258). Therefore in the long term, however that is to be defined, the neo-colonial phase cannot contain the contradictions it generates – between internal economic and political monopolies and popular demands for liberalisation.[7] The indigenous or auxiliary bourgeoisie's desire for the extension of its influence and advantages will be finally defeated through the agency of popular discontent.

Leys is critical of underdevelopment theorists in general for their failure to explore how underdevelopment may be ended (pp. 20–1). He is also critical of Fanon in particular whom he holds responsible for the lack of worthwhile analysis of class alliance and class conflict in neo-colonial Africa (p. 209). Yet Leys' own conclusion that neo-colonialism is a more sophisticated form of imperialism, which generates its own set of contradictions foreshadowing its end, is not really a great advance upon Fanon's abstract formulations.

The most crude presentation of the theory of underdevelopment supposes that the neo-colonial stranglehold over captive economies is so complete that the indigenous ruling groups lack any semblance of economic or political autonomy. Alavi, like Shivji and Leys, avoids this pitfall in discussion of the post-colonial state. Alavi addresses himself to the role of the state, or more specifically the role of the state apparatus, embodied in the military and civilian bureaucracies and its relations with indigenous elites and the external ruling bourgeoisie. It is Alavi's intention to refute what has been a fundamental tenet of Marxist theory – that there is an inevitable class conflict

between a national bourgeoisie and the imperialist bourgeoisie for economic resources and control of the state. Although Alavi's position is argued from the experience of Pakistan and Bangladesh, he believes this conclusion holds for most post-colonial states.

At independence, the under-developed bourgeoisie that is typical of new states will be incapable of subordinating the apparatus of the state to its own ends. Competition for hegemony will ensue between the weak national bourgeoisie, the metropolitan bourgeoisie, and the indigenous landed classes. Although the relationship among these three groups is competitive rather than complementary, Alavi believes that, because they share broad general interests, they do not stand in contradiction to one another.

Alavi argues that the 'colonial bourgeois revolution', that is, the foundation of the 'bourgeois' state, does not occur with political independence but with the establishment of colonial rule. This state is unique in that, because it was constituted as an instrument of the external bourgeoisie, it was designed specifically to dominate all indigenous classes. At independence the state is not subordinate to the local bourgeoisie, but neither is it dominated entirely by the neo-colonial bourgeoisie. Thus the neo-colonial state is relatively autonomous.[8] To this point, Alavi's model is parallel to Shivji's economic bureaucracy and Cohen's notion of an intendent class, although neither of these writers develops their argument further.

The military bureaucratic oligarchy, because of its size and the failure of the three competing classes to gain control over its operation, comes increasingly to exercise direction over the economy. Thus there is a natural tendency for new states to become, in Shivji's terminology, 'bureaucratic capitalist'. Because of this process of bureaucratic ascendance the atrophy of political parties is almost inevitable. Alavi comments: 'We have yet to see a clear case of unambiguous control of state power by a political party in a capitalist post-colonial state' (p. 63). The competition between the military bureaucratic oligarchy and the national bourgeoisie will usually be settled in favour of the former. The decline of political parties and the drift of the military into government is proof of this trend.

Arguing from the case of Pakistan, Alavi claims that the neo-colonial bourgeoisie will not be able to gain clear control of the state in its competition with the national and landed bourgeoisie. In fact none of these three classes can ensure its own ascendancy over the others, *vis-à-vis* the state. The relative autonomy of the military bureaucratic oligarchy is advantageous to the international bourgeoisie, helping to lubricate economic operations, technical plan-

ning, and aid arrangements. The technocratic bureaucracy is conducive to capitalist penetration.

What degree of autonomy does Alavi's post-colonial state have? Alavi cites two reasons favouring its autonomy: first, at political independence the hand of the metropole is lifted, thereby freeing the military bureaucratic oligarchy from the role for which it was created; second, the expansion of state enterprise adds to its size and economic significance as it appropriates and disposes of a growing proportion of the national economic surplus. But this tells us nothing of the capacity for independent action of the military bureaucratic oligarchy, nor of the likely behaviour of the national bourgeoisie which competes for control of the state.

Alavi's final answer to this problem lies in a refutation of the classic Marxist proposition that assumes the national bourgeoisie will adopt an anti-imperialist stance and be antagonistic toward the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Up until independence the national bourgeoisie will be antagonistic towards the metropolitan bourgeoisie, but post-independence the position will be reversed. As the national bourgeoisie seeks the expansion of its role, its need for investment and technical assistance will make it increasingly dependent upon its metropolitan counterparts. Yet the interests of the national bourgeoisie remain quite distinct from those of the international bourgeoisie, and Alavi is adamant that it is a fallacy to consider these two groups as acting as a single class. This very conflict allows the military bureaucratic oligarchy to play a mediatory role over specific issues, and at a broader level to absorb the new educated elites which seek to promote their own political interests. Thus military bureaucratic oligarchy is the organ for distributing economic advantage and the venue for political bargaining in systems bereft of political parties.

The post-colonial ruling elites display a degree of autonomy in their dealings with metropolitan capital against which they compete, albeit on unequal terms. Alavi's proof for this is the failure of the international bourgeoisie to gain effective control over the new state's bureaucracy, a goal which also escapes the national middle class. Therefore, the national bourgeoisie is paradoxically dependent, yet autonomous. Alavi's basic explanation for this process is as follows: 'If a colony has a weak and under-developed bourgeoisie, it will be unable at the moment of independence to subordinate the relatively highly developed colonial state apparatus through which the metropolitan power had exercised domination over it' (p. 60).

That such is the situation in post-colonial Africa is one of the most original conclusions Fanon makes in *The Wretched.*

In terms of the immediate present it is economically dependent. It has such shallow roots within the national economy that any hope for deepening those roots depends upon investment, aid and technology which can come only from the metropolitan bourgeoisie. In political terms its bases of support are equally narrow due to its antagonistic relationship to the peasantry and the urban working class. Yet it has its own economic and political ambitions and interests which throw it into conflict with the neo-colonial bourgeoisie. This antagonism is widened by the exotic character of the state which, in part, provides the stage on which this conflict is fought. The balance of these political and economic factors indicates that the national bourgeoisie is unlikely either to realise its interests in opposition to the neo-colonial bourgeoisie or to maintain its own meagre gains, made at independence, without the support of the external ruling class. Thus the conclusion to be drawn from Alavi's analysis of the state is to emphasise the chronic limitations of the national middle class even more so than Shivji or Leys.

The work of Shivji, Leys, and Alavi helps to explain a number of features common to post-colonial Africa which Fanon had foreshadowed in *The Wretched.* Their analyses explain the trend towards military regimes, the decay of political parties, the rapid growth of state enterprises, and the failure of national bourgeois regimes to achieve an authentic independence. Shivji, Leys, and Alavi also provide insight into the nature of the decay that has haunted independent Africa – the ascendancy of military and bureaucratic elites, and the atrophy of development programmes. Writing in the previous decade, Fanon had been the first and most eloquent voice to warn of this possibility.

What is most significant about the studies by Leys, Alavi and Shivji is that their work displays much of the same timidity that is found in *The Wretched.* That neither Fanon nor latter-day critics of national bourgeois regimes are sure of the appropriate means for dismantling the neo-colonial state serves to indicate that in some sense the problems of transformation are intractable. Shivji and Leys both wish to see the construction of authentic socialist states, but like Fanon they cannot really envisage the end of the process of change set off by the achievement of formal independence. Their conclusions adhere to the shibboleth common to both class and elite-theory analysis – namely that the African social landscape is in such a state of flux

that it is only possible to formulate the most tentative and vague lines of theory.

Much of the difficulty experienced by Shivji and Leys arises from the fact that collusion between a national bourgeoisie and the metropolitan ruling class runs against the grain. In the absence of this contradiction one would expect there to be a greater emphasis placed upon the role of the trade unions and voluntary working-class action. Yet, because of the influence of Fanon's own theory, there is a basic mistrust of the indigenous proletariat as a labour aristocracy. In this context, once the national bourgeoisie has been identified as a parasitic class, then the possibility for radical change is virtually excluded.

In contrasting Fanon's theory with works such as Shivji's, it is unrealistic to damn Fanon out of hand for being too abstract in his analysis of the internal structure of national-bourgeoisie regimes. Since *The Wretched* was written to encompass the entire continent, rather than a single state, it is inevitable that the subtleties of a specific social context should escape Fanon's view. But a comparison between Fanon's work and those writing on the same subject after his death does reveal a major weakness in his analysis of the post-colonial state. It is apparent that Fanon's account of the relationship between the national bourgeoisie and metropolitan ruling class is mechanistic and self-contradictory. He defines the national bourgeoisie as a comprador class which is completely subordinate to the metropolitan bourgeoisie and/or the whims of international capital.

But, unlike Shivji and Leys, he does not explain the great social and economic changes which accompany the rise of the national bourgeoisie. In *The Wretched* we are told that under the neo-colonial state the peasant class is thrown into a more severe poverty, thereby swelling the ranks of the lumpen-proletariat; that the growth of the trade unions is accompanied by an increase in the benefits enjoyed by the small and already privileged working class; and that the petty bourgeoisie is divided into various factions competing for the spoils of the new state and is further fragmented into radical and reformist cliques. But in his theory Fanon does not attempt to match these changes with the emergence of class contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and the metropolitan ruling class, the national bourgeoisie and the indigenous working class or between the proletariat and the peasantry. In each instance the only comment Fanon makes is to bemoan the fact that the more things change the more they remain the same.

Fanon's political imagination was very much constrained by the period in which he was writing. He did not live long enough to witness the maturation of the process he feared had already begun. His major theoretical achievement was as the critic of an effete colonialism, and not as the theorist of the neo-colonial revolution. His interest in pre-colonial culture and the influence of the African personality helped him to an intuitive understanding of the emergence of national-bourgeoisie dictatorships and to describe accurately the probable characteristic of such regimes in operation. But, by placing such emphasis upon culture and personality, Fanon precluded from his work an analysis of the economic and political foundations of neo-colonialism.

Many of Fanon's finest accomplishments, and certainly his greatest weakness, are found in his account of the neo-colonial state. *The Wretched* presents a tragically accurate projection of the fate of African nationalism and the rise of the new bourgeoisie. But *The Wretched* contains no clue on how to neutralise or dismantle neo-colonial governments. Although Fanon's work contains the ethos for a second revolution directed against entrenched national bourgeois or military dictatorships, his theory does not furnish the methodology for that revolution.

Chapter 9

Towards a critique of Fanon's class analysis

The various shifts in Fanon's thinking on the subject of class theory are exposed by his choice of terminology at the three major points of his intellectual career. In *Masks* the dominant term is the Negro people, with no explicit reference being made to class; in *Colonialism* this racial category gives way to the more radical political polarities, the coloniser and the colonised; in *The Wretched* the colonised are differentiated into various social strata. In order to come to terms with Fanon's theory of class struggle it is important to examine the texts such as *Masks* and *Colonialism* even though it is only in the final work that Fanon achieves anything like a systematic perspective on the subject.

The success of Fanon's work is best gauged by the extent to which he managed to resolve the major problems confronting the contemporary theories of class conflict. These problems fall into three principal areas: the unsuitability of western categories of social class in the colonial context; the embryonic character of the African social landscape; and finally the factor of the influence of the metropolitan class system on the development of post-colonial society.

In *Masks* there is no class analysis of Antillean society. Accordingly, Fanon presents a study of the alienation experienced by the minuscule middle class as representative of the condition of all Antilleans. Fanon shows preference for the terms Negro and white to the more discreet categories of social class and only rarely does he make reference to the West Indian as a colonial subject.

In the collected essays, *Revolution*, written between 1952 and 1960, there is no evidence that Fanon had undertaken a *systematic* analysis of class. He usually prefers the opposition of the coloniser and colonised rather than the class categories, metropolitan bourgeoisie and colonial peasantry. In the one essay, 'West Indians' writ-

ten less than two years after *Masks*, Fanon for the first time gives precedence to the terminology of class over that of race. But in doing so he establishes a gulf within the borders of his own work; this gulf represents the separation between his account of the colonial situation in essential subjectivist terms (*Masks*) and his analysis of colonialism employing socio-economic categories ('West Indians'). The uncertainty in Fanon's thinking on class during these years is evident also in his erratic attitude toward the metropolitan working class.

This failure to achieve a systematic perspective before 1961 is the more extraordinary given Fanon's early essays, 'Sociotherapy' (1954) and 'West Indians' (1954), in which his analysis is reliant upon class theory. Fanon's refusal, prior to *The Wretched*, to commit himself to a theory of class conflict cannot be explained on the grounds that he was unsympathetic to such an approach. In many respects the essay 'Racism' published in 1956 contains his most radical statement on class conflict.

A Dying Colonialism, written in 1959, is devoid of a class perspective, with Fanon again preferring the categories coloniser and colonised. The only innovation in that work, in terms of social stratification, is the introduction of a dichotomy between the First and Third Worlds. Where emphasising the importance of this principal contradiction, Fanon describes the class divisions within both blocks – the presence of a democratic left within the settler community (and the metropole) and working-class and petty-bourgeoisie factions within the indigenous community. But these divisions are presented essentially as descriptive categories and Fanon makes no effort to explore the contradictions that divide factions into antagonistic classes.

In *The Wretched* Fanon is intent on demonstrating that European socialism and its models of class analysis are irrelevant in the context of Africa. Similarly, in *Masks* his intention had been to argue that the discoveries of European psychology, embodied in the work of Jung, Freud, and Adler, could not be transposed to the study of the Negro. Fanon attempts to escape from the confines of a Eurocentric class model by retaining the principal categories of classification yet ascribing quite distinct qualities and characteristics to those classes. The African working class and peasantry differ from their metropolitan counterparts because each stands at the *opposite end* of the colonial relationship and because each had evolved according to a vastly different historical experience. The differences between

these classes are increased within the boundaries of Fanon's analysis as he gradually extends Lenin's concept of a labour aristocracy to include the whole of the metropolitan working class.

In his analysis of the major classes Fanon is careful in describing the extent to which the contemporary African class structure varies from that found in Western Europe. The social formations that are identified as the proletariat, peasantry and bourgeoisie are not the same in the two environments. Fanon attributes this asymmetry to the colonial relationship and the influence of national culture upon African societies. Yet he still retains the opposition of coloniser and colonised; the colonising community is essentially homogeneous with regard to imperialist practice while the subordinate nation is divided between antagonistic classes.

Fanon ignores the question of the size of the indigenous ruling elites as a barrier to class formation. He prefers to emphasise the factors of economic inequality, cultural preference and moral weakness in dividing the petty bourgeoisie from the peasantry. Paradoxically Fanon is loath to concede that the petty bourgeoisie and its successor, the national bourgeoisie, are capable of synthesising any kind of coherent interest. Superficially, the retardation of the political consciousness of the bourgeoisie as a bourgeois class relates more to the economic marginality of the petty and national bourgeoisie than to any other single factor. In fact, in Fanon's analysis, it is the conflict of choosing between fundamentally irreconcilable cultures that is used to explain the degeneration of this class.

Like all African socialists Fanon explains Africa's underdevelopment exclusively in relation to the effects of imperialism. All black African states were retarded in their natural evolution first by the ravages of the slave trade and latterly by the means of neocolonialism. But this type of argument immediately raises the question as to the relationship between social class and imperialism. How is the class system moulded by the play of imperialist economics and to what extent is it the product of pre-colonial factors? Can the weaknesses of the national bourgeoisie be traced solely to the influence of the colonial presence? In both instances these questions concern the very reasons for the emergence of national bourgeois regimes. Fanon's analysis is quite unclear when it comes to explaining whether this class is chosen for the role of caretaker of the neocolonial state or whether it arises reflexively in response to market and social forces and against the designs of imperialist policy. The reason why Fanon cannot accommodate such questions within his theory is because he always subordinates the role of imperialist eco-

nomics to the more obvious features of the European presence, namely territorial control. Fanon believed that colonial occupation moulds the entire social system to its own ends but he is unable, as in the case of the national bourgeoisie, to explain the existence of a social class in relation to imperialist influence. Because of this, the neo-colonial phase appears in Fanon's work as an historical accident.

A second major problem arises from Fanon's typing of the peasant class as revolutionary and the proletariat as politically reactionary, because of the existence of a faction of the peasantry which periodically engages in wage labour. Unfortunately Fanon omits all reference to the impact of migratory wage labour that is such a prominent feature of the economic system of southern Africa. The existence of a large transient work force engaged in wage labour is incompatible with Fanon's antagonism toward the proletariat and his conviction that the experience of wage labour is a barrier to the development of a revolutionary consciousness. Fanon simply supposed that the peasant class does not engage in market transactions which extend beyond the boundaries of the village. The culture of traditional Africa sustains village life where eternally recurring patterns of material production remain fixed by finite human need. The Fanonian peasant lives against a background of economic and social stasis. Wage labour, the antithesis of peasant existence, promotes a life in which wants are constantly expanded according to the dictates of industrial civilisation even if the benefits of that civilisation are presented at a discount.

Fanon is silent on the question of the communal ownership of land and the importance this holds for a class analysis of the peasantry. Fanon's peasantry is an undifferentiated mass which shares a common relationship to the means of production (the land) and to the occupying colonial power. He distinguishes between the African and the European peasantries on the basis of the colonial experience but he makes no allowance for internal distinctions within the African rural population. The African peasant is a nationalist before all else and he possesses certain qualities that are not found among his European counterparts. But Fanon makes no comment upon the economic situation of the rural sector. He argues that the peasant is the victim of land alienation and suffers the force of the most exploitative face of imperialism. But we are told nothing of the means by which the peasant is exploited or of the position of the peasantry in regard to wider market forces.

Since the lumpen-proletariat is made up of failed peasants who

have been forced toward the urban slums, the existence of a lumpen-proletariat presupposes some division within the peasant class between upper and lower strata. But, as with the problem of migratory wage labour, Fanon prefers to stress a pure contradiction between a culturally and economically homogeneous peasantry and the imperialist forces. His preference for this contradiction is again found in his attitude toward tribalism and its role as a barrier to the development of a revolutionary consciousness. Fanon attributes the fact of tribalism to the European influence and interprets tribal conflict as essentially a fabrication of colonial administrators. He simply ignores the importance of ethnicity in generating and focussing discontent and privilege because he believes traditional societies to be essentially homogeneous.

Fanon's national bourgeoisie is a bourgeoisie in taste alone. It is neither nationalist nor bourgeois in any other sense. In his analysis of the national bourgeoisie Fanon chose to disregard the role played by the instruments of the colonial state, in particular the army and the bureaucracy, simply because he assumed the psychology of the national bourgeoisie to be the primary indigenous force moulding neo-colonial society. The national middle class is a caste which behaves as a collectivity of greedy and rapacious individuals. Its period of rule is a dead end; an historical abortion which, because of the shallowness of its roots as a class, should end soon after its birth. But this has not proven the case and Fanon's scenario foreshadowing the emergence of military regimes indicates that this class possesses a far greater claim to durability than he is willing to admit.

The alienation experienced by the national bourgeoisie takes the form of the alienation described in *Masks;* its hallmarks are a deference before the culture of Europe, a psychic expulsion of the self, and an intellectualised self-hatred. The middle class voluntarily relinquishes its own history, language and culture and replaces this loss with a borrowed mentality; a mentality in which its individuals, as national types, are always inferior. Fanon's national bourgeoisie is a psychic brotherhood of racial cripples. As individuals and as a class they are essentially the residue of the clash between European and African cultures rather than an outgrowth of the workings of contemporary capitalism. The peasantry is, by contrast, immune to this new culture and thereby retains the virtues of the noble savage so familiar in the literature of negritude. By this means Fanon's theory of class conflict is held captive from within by his psychopathology of the *évolué.* The peasant as the noble savage is Fanon's vision of liberation.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Because Fanon's work is polemical he has often been dismissed as a writer of little consequence. Conversely Fanon's admirers have cited this characteristic of his work in order to excuse even those glaring faults that abound in his most popular writings. In either case disinterest is assumed to be the virtue fundamental to serious political enquiry. Unfortunately Fanon's style has encouraged a preoccupation with his biography and with specific aspects of his theory, to the detriment of a recognition of his major intellectual achievements. All too often Fanon has been attacked for his advocacy of violence yet rarely has he been criticised for the inadequacy of the psychological economy with which he is supposed to justify its use.

So much of Fanon's appeal in the years immediately following his death was due to his personality rather than to the substance of his writings and to the mood which his tragically short life evoked. Fanon became an emblematic figure for Africa's first decade of revolution who seemed to embody something of the spirit of the age, and yet Fanon was not a significant political actor. His role in the Algerian revolution was modest and appears far larger to western eyes than it does to Algerians. He was the servant of an epoch which, from the distance of twenty years, appears to have made only modest gains. The world which Fanon knew has changed, but almost without exception it has changed for the worse. The dictatorships of Africa are everywhere, and the islands of the Caribbean are still under French colonial rule. But Fanon's legacy is not to be found in the success or failure of the African revolution but in the political theory he left behind. Fanon was the first man to raise seriously the problems of class and revolution in the African context and, although he may not have always been successful in his project of inventing a theory of class struggle for Africa, he made it possible for subsequent theorists to achieve that end. There is no serious work on the

subject of class analysis written since *The Wretched* which is not in one way or another indebted to Fanon.

It is now obvious, with hindsight, that Fanon's theory of revolutionary struggle is flawed by numerous errors, particularly in regard to the question of revolutionary strategy. And yet those critics who have attacked Fanon for these faults are all too ready to forget the context in which Fanon was writing. *The Wretched* was written at a time when socialist theory in the African context was timid and often pitiful. On one side of the leftist debate stood Soviet Marxism which had little of significance to say about Africa but merely succeeded in exposing the poverty of Soviet philosophy. On the other side stood the modernisation theorists who have since proven themselves sufficiently insensitive to have maintained their stance on the issue of development even in the face of the ever worsening life conditions under which most African peoples are forced to live.

Fanon's refusal to conform to the presuppositions of either bourgeois or Marxist science is indicative of his unique place among postwar intellectuals. His writing is difficult principally because of its originality. *Masks* is ostensibly a study of the psychology of racism in the Antilles but it is also much more than that; Fanon explores the psychology of the colonial relationship, the impact of racism upon sexual encounters, the ideological function on ethnopsychiatry, the relationship between cultural formations and emotional illness, and the contribution of negritude to the liberation of the Negro. Fanon's first work also contains the rudiments of a metapsychology describing the collision of European civilisation with non-western societies. Similarly, *The Wretched* is a polemic directed against colonial rule in Africa; it is also a scientific study of the impact of the colonial relationship upon personality, it contains an alternative to the Marxist theory of class conflict, a critique of negritude, a scenario for the building of a socialist Africa, and a psychology of political liberation.

All of Fanon's works fall into that territory where the sciences of personality and the sciences of society converge. Within the borders of *Masks* and *The Wretched* the history of contemporary political theory is best seen as a conflict between Freudianism and Marxism as the two dominant and irreconcilable interpretations of social reality. Fanon's solution to the tensions generated by the proximity of these opposed ideologies was woven against a background provided by negritude and the shibboleths of what was to become known as African socialism. It is extremely difficult to traverse the distance between an analysis of the consciousness of the individual and the

analysis of social institutions. Nowhere is this more true than where the investigator's starting point is clinical psychology.

Since 1945 there has been a growing reliance upon the sciences of personality to discover solutions to what had hitherto been thought of as problems belonging to the political arena. In the clinical sphere the popularity of this approach has encouraged the quest for a sociology of mental illness. The widespread emotional malaise of peoples living in industrial societies has led to the discovery of a new genus of emotional disorders, termed noological illness. Such illness is not called neurosis since it differs quite markedly from psychogenic illness and originates in a quite separate dimension of the personality. According to such writers as Frankl, Rogers and Binswanger, noological disorders are rooted in the collision of different value systems in the context of modern man's anxious quest for meaning. Yet noological disorders, like the psychogenic illness of Freudian psychoanalysis, are treated as being essentially endogenous in the sense that the influence of the social order in stimulating noological breakdown is never taken to be anything more than a vague presence. Society is not responsible for individuals becoming debilitated, and noological disorders are not instances of mental illness.

The rise to fashion of psychoanalysis has been paralleled in social theory by a tendency to psychologise the concept of alienation when describing the atmosphere of mass society. This type of analysis ignores the role of the labour process and of the ownership of productive wealth on individual and communal behaviour. Alienation has become a psychological problem with only the most obscure economic roots. The meeting of modern depth psychology and political enquiry has encouraged the growth of a depoliticised psychology and the birth of a depersonalised political theory.

In *Masks* and *The Wretched* the unlikely meeting of psychoanalysis and political theory takes place over the problem of racism and the question as to the identity of the agencies which disseminate racial hatreds. In his study of the Antilles, Fanon argues that the European Collective Unconscious plays a primary role in the process of scapegoating the Negro, that is, a socio-economic function connected with property ownership and political control, and an equally important part in the sublimation of sexual and aggressive drives, particularly in the female. Fanon is quite self-contradictory as he wavers between the claims that the immediate social environment is dominant in determining attitudes on race, and that the European's hatred of the Negro is essentially pre-Oedipal, that is,

pre-social in origin. Illness in the Antillean is therefore the result of a generic element in the personality of the European which is accidentally transmitted to the Negro and simultaneously the product of the play of specific socioeconomic forces upon personality. This type of confusion is common to psychological interpretations of the causes of racism.

In social theory, the integration of depth psychology and critical theory came about through the absence of a socialist revolution in the advanced states, and the degeneration of the revolutions in China and the Soviet Union. The search for a Marxist psychology began with Reich and the rise of Fascism and gained momentum with the obvious improvement in material conditions in the west. Such writers as Marcuse and Fromm have presented critiques of later capitalism at the very point of its greatest strength, that is, in the area of the satisfaction of material and libidinal needs. Such increased satisfactions are seen as accompanying heightened repression of a covert and personal nature. In order to understand the capitalist system it is thought necessary to shift the focus of analysis from concern with labour, social class and capital to an analysis of the ideological and psychological mechanisms of oppression. The inability of European and North American capitalism to solve such basic problems as poverty and unemployment are ignored. Far more importance is attached to that contradiction between material abundance and spiritual malaise which Fromm terms mass neurosis and Reich the emotional plague. Contemporary capitalism is treated as a pathogenic system in which the isolated and powerless individual is controlled by obscure and absolute forces.

From the left, the Freudian schema has come under attack for its failure to locate the psychological dramas within the family in that wider social context which historically precedes familial relations. This failure is believed to have led to the acceptance of historically specific psychological formations, such as the Oedipal drama, as universally recurrent. As Reich has shown, the role of the family in Europe has itself changed over time from having a primary function as an economic unit in the relations of production to assuming a political function as the basic unit of socialisation.

The major attempts to rehabilitate Freud have been directed to his theory of instincts. Marcuse in particular has sought somehow to reconcile Freud with Marx by demonstrating that, in his concepts of the reality principle, repression, and sublimation, Freud mistook those features peculiar to later capitalism as the immutable and universal fate of mankind. This Marcuse does against the entire drift of

Freud's clinical and metapsychological writings in which his view of western man is essentially tragic. Freudian psychology and Marxist theory are not reconcilable.

Marcuse's argument is based upon the perception that labour is now no longer necessary and the work of repression and hence of sublimation has been completed. Because of this, Marcuse and Fromm and Reich define alienation not in relation to the labour process and the expropriation of the product, but rather in terms of the expropriating activity of consumption. Modern man's ghost-like existence has come about through his devotion to the satisfaction of fraudulent needs.

Despite the work of Reich, Fromm and Marcuse, there is still no convincing Marxist psychology. Most of the conclusions of Reich and Fromm in particular are no more historically specific than the Freudian and neo-Freudian theories they were intended to demolish. When Fanon came to write *Masks* he ignored Marx largely because he believed that the colonial situation was inexplicable without an adequate social psychology, a psychology which Marxism could not supply. His years in Algeria further convinced Fanon that a Marxist class analysis was inappropriate in the colonial situation both historically and contemporaneously. The work of Reich, Marcuse and Fromm would always be irrelevant in societies where the level of the productive forces is so low and the distribution of wealth so uneven that the question of a human minimum was still the most fundamental one.

Fanon's work began with his study of emotional disorders in the Antilles. In Martinique he found no evidence of Oedipal neurosis. The only apparent mental illness was due specifically to the social and cultural environment of French colonialism. This early discovery was to influence all of Fanon's subsequent research. It impressed upon him the possibility, in contradiction of the homostatic theories of personality drawn in various guises from Freud, that mental illness could be a truly social disease. Fanon's search for a sociology of mental illness was further reinforced by the ruptures taking place within clinical practice at the time. Even so, Fanon's work still contains the vestiges of the legacy of Freudism with its shibboleths upon the irrationality of illness and the organism's propensity for disintegration.

In Fanon's theory there are in fact two models of mental illness. The first corresponds to traditional interpretations of psychogenic and psychosomatic disorders. The second concerns a range of illnesses which are due specifically to the social and cultural situation

found only under colonial conditions. Confusion arises because, in his popular writings, Fanon cites no instances of mundane disorders, that is, of illness occurring outside the colonial context. In both *Masks* and *The Wretched* he conveys the *impression* that mundane mental illness is confined to European populations and that no evidence for the existence of psychogenic neurosis is to be found among Negroid peoples outside those disorders attributable to the colonial experience. And yet we know from the clinical essays that, during his years at Blida and Manouba, Fanon encountered the usual range of mental disorders presented to public hospitals. This ambiguity in the presentation of Fanon's theory is expressive of the difficulties he experienced in defining the relationship between social experience under colonial conditions and the propensity toward emotional disturbance. This in turn raises the question whether the colonial personality is a form of neurosis. Within the then current schools of depth psychology, toward which Fanon was attracted, there was an insensitivity toward the play of social experience and historical forces in the incidence of mental illness. Any disorder which would appear to be due to the play of social institutions or popular beliefs upon an adult personality would be dismissed as a pseudo-malady or else linked to distant roots in the patient's childhood. After his early researches into hysteria Freud had abandoned the belief that behind every illness lay an actual trauma. From this came the assumption that illness in adults always has its roots in childhood experience and most especially in childhood phantasy. Adults simply do not become ill because of their experience as adults. Fanon was never entirely successful in relinquishing this belief.

The principal weakness in Fanon's work occurs at the meeting point of his radical psychology and his theory of class struggle. Most specifically this happens over the question whether colonial alienation is or is not a form of mental illness. Only in *Masks* are we presented with anything approaching a model of personality relating individual character traits to particular social and historical conditions. In *The Wretched* there are scattered references to incidences of mental illness which are and are not due to the colonial presence. In *Colonialism* there is a discussion of what Fanon terms cultural sclerosis and its connection with the pre-eminence of colonial deficiency; but Fanon provides no clear model explaining how cultural oppression leads to distortion of personality. The reader can only turn back to the portrait of colonial man found in *Masks*. In *Colonialism* and *The Wretched*, colonial occupation is supposed to explain the existence of certain pathological traits arising directly

from the effect of occupation upon indigenous culture. But Fanon's view of culture is drawn from the literature of negritude which supplies only a most idealised version of African society. In his clinical writings, where Fanon has the opportunity to show how social institutions cause mental illness or alienation, he ignores all reference to his previous study of Martinique and largely confines himself to a study of the hospital as a social institution.

The only concepts which mesh Fanon's social theory with his radical psychology are colonial deficiency and the colonial personality. The first appears in *Colonialism* and the latter in *Masks*. But since *Masks* is essentially a study of the petty bourgeoisie of the Antilles and the most relevant parts of *Colonialism* are devoted to the Algerian peasantry this in turn raises a further problem about the relationship between personality and class. If illness is wholly or even in part a function of social experience, then there must be variations in the incidence and even perhaps in the forms of mental disorders occurring among different social strata. In fact *Masks* is devoted to the thesis that categories of emotional disorders drawn from European experience do not fit the incidence of illness among Negro peoples. But the foundations of Fanon's theory of class conflict, like the foundations of his radical psychology, are located in the social and cultural experience of a single class, the petty bourgeoisie. The only ballast his psychology gives to Fanon's political theory is drawn from the mentality of a class Fanon himself condemns as effete and reactionary.

In *Masks* we have the psychology of a specific class, the urban petty bourgeoisie, presented as the experience of all Antilleans. The petty bourgeoisie are the universal class of Fanon's first work. In *Colonialism* the dominant class are the peasants of Algeria. They exhibit a specific mentality both as national types and as colonial subjects. But Fanon does not define class with any precision and the categories of nationality and race are given precedence.

In *The Wretched* Fanon employs the concept of class in defining the divisions within the indigenous community. The concept is also used to explore the historical origins of colonial society. Fanon relies, at least nominally, upon the relation to the ownership of the means of production as the principal element in defining class membership. But the colonial personality and the direction of cultural attachment are the most important factors in determining class consciousness. The revolutionary capacity of the peasantry, the lumpenproletariat, and the petty bourgeoisie is determined more by the effect of the colonial personality than by any other single factor. Aliena-

tion in Fanon's theory is not defined in relation to the labour process or to ownership of the instrument of production. Alienation is essentially an estrangement from that spiritual essence which lies at the heart of negritude. The land is not an instrument of production but the symbolic locus of personality.

The analysis of class relationships and class conflict is the traditional left-wing way of interpreting social reality. But, for Fanon, established Marxist theories of class conflict were not adequate in the context of colonial Africa. It was from this point that Fanon finally severed his association with conventional political theory. He did so under the influence of the prejudices transmitted to him by his psychiatric training and by his interest in the cultural renaissance movements of Africa and the Caribbean. Like Césaire, and Senghor, Fanon came to believe that the colonial relationship was only one part of the confrontation of two fundamentally opposed cultures; a confrontation in which the humanist culture of Africa was temporarily swamped by the barbarism of a materialistic civilisation.

Following in the footsteps of E. W. Blyden, Fanon was able to envisage liberation only in terms of a personal experience rather than as a collective one. Through the concept of cultural withdrawal, and even within his theory of the colonial personality, Fanon remained faithful to that idealised portrait of African culture that the grandchildren of the diaspora had bequeathed African socialism. It is for this reason that as social theory Fanon's work is essentially pessimistic. Although his analysis of the characteristics of the neo-colonial state is Fanon's most important achievement, he gives no indication how, once such regimes are established, they can be dismantled. At the time of his death his scenario for revolutionary decolonisation through the means of armed struggle was irrelevant to the rising galaxy of neo-colonial states of East and West Africa. It is a mistake to seek among the pages of *The Wretched* or *Colonialism* for the handbook for African socialism. Frantz Fanon is the Jeremiah rather than the Marx of the African revolution.

The more obvious flaws in *The Wretched* and *Masks* highlight the fact that Fanon's life's work was left incomplete. As it stands his theory is essentially a series of giant fragments which remain as the residue of an immensely productive life. If he had lived, Fanon's next work written from the vantage point of hindsight would have been more extraordinary than the works he has left us. Perhaps it would have been the handbook for the African revolution that *The Wretched* is so often mistaken to be.

Appendix I

Fanon and Mannoni: conflicting psychologies of colonialism

Fanon's critique of Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban* found in his first work, *Masks,* is important to an understanding of Fanon's theory of decolonisation. This relevance is suggested by the proximity of the two works in terms of both subject matter and methodology. In fact the purposes of *Masks* and *Prospero* are strikingly similar: each represents an attempt to provide a psychology of colonialism dealing with both parties to the colonial experience; to explain how colonial rule is both possible and necessary; and finally, to uncover the psychological, and by implication the political, preconditions for the development of an independent personality. Although Fanon and Mannoni deal essentially with what are individual cases, Fanon with the Antilles and Mannoni with Madagascar, both are willing to claim that the results of their research are applicable to the situation of all colonised peoples.[1]

The bitterness of Fanon's attack upon *Prospero,* and the repeated asides directed against Mannoni which appear in all of Fanon's major works, cannot be adequately explained in terms of an ideological conflict over nationalism. Fanon's antipathy toward Mannoni was part of the contempt for what he believed to be the covert project of most social science in the colonial world. However, Mannoni represented a far more formidable opponent for Fanon than either his predecessors, such as Porot, or his contemporaries, such as Carothers. The work of such men was an exotic outgrowth of European medicine which said very little about the retardation of colonial societies but was exceedingly eloquent on the subject of the backwardness of European science.

The critique of *Prospero* is the beginning of Fanon's attempt to invent a revolutionary psychology. Although it is only in his first book that we find a lengthy attack upon Mannoni, the shadow of *Prospero* falls across all of Fanon's writings. It was Mannoni who,

more than any other single figure, set for Fanon the boundaries of his life's work. There is nothing in Fanon's theory of colonial man which was not first suggested to him, in his encounter with *Prospero*.[2]

1. Fanon's critique of Mannoni

At the heart of Fanon's critique of *Prospero* is the belief that Mannoni's analysis was ostensibly an apologia for colonialism. This conviction sustained Fanon's hatred of Mannoni's work throughout his entire life. But what is curious about Fanon's critique is his apparent failure to come to terms with the drift of Mannoni's thesis, and the extent to which he is in fact in agreement with Mannoni's conclusions. Fanon readily accepts Mannoni's account of the Prospero Complex as correct; like Mannoni he believes that there is an intimate connection between colonial racism and sexual guilt, and his account of the psychopathology of colonial violence presented in *Colonialism* and *The Wretched* is similar to that found in *Prospero*. There is in fact a far greater area of common ground between *Masks* and *Prospero* than Fanon is either aware of or willing to admit.

Fanon concedes that Mannoni had made a positive contribution to the study of colonialism in analysing two vital elements of the colonial relationship that had been hitherto ignored. He had shown the importance of subjective phenomena in facilitating and sustaining colonialism, and he had exposed the pathological nature of the relationship between the native and the colonialist (p. 84). These are the only points of concession Fanon ever makes to the author of *Prospero*.

There are three areas in which Fanon takes dispute with Mannoni's analysis. These are: the question of racism, its origins, its manner of expression and the role played in it by economic factors; the concepts of inferiority and dependence, and finally, the question of the acculturation process brought about by colonial occupation.

i Fanon, Mannoni and racism

The first major criticism of *Prospero* concerns Mannoni's judgement that colonial racism is quite unique and must be distinguished from all other forms of political subordination. Fanon's response is that all modes of oppression, including all modes of racism, are the same because in each instance the object of oppression is the same (p. 88). Accordingly some societies are racist while others are not, and there

is really no substantial difference between anti-Semitism and negrophobia. Both are instruments for the oppression of a racial group. Fanon concludes that Mannoni's failure to see this fact constitutes a major flaw in his analysis.

Yet Mannoni had not asserted that colonial exploitation is different in economic or ethical terms from other forms of exploitation. Rather he was attempting to explain that in the *psychoanalytic sense* the colonial situation generates a unique set of social relationships. Ironically, this view is not only consistent with Fanon's own position but in fact represents the central theses of both *Masks* and *The Wretched.* Fanon's analysis in *Masks* is based upon the presupposition that the situation of the Negro is, in the existential sense, quite unique. Fanon is unequivocal in his claim that anti-Semitism is not analogous to colonial racism, since the Jew is conceded the possession of both a culture and history, possessions denied the Negro by the colonial racist.[3] Still he persists in taking issue with what he believes to be Mannoni's insensitivity in presuming to distinguish between the suffering of the Negro and the sufferings of other peoples.

Fanon's next point of dispute is to launch a scathing attack upon Mannoni's 'apolitical' account of colonial racism. Against Mannoni's claim that there is no comprehensive explanation provided by purely economic factors, Fanon uses the South African case, cited in *Prospero,* to condemn Mannoni. Mannoni had argued that the contempt of the poor whites for the South African Negro was unrelated to economic factors. To this Fanon replies: 'that the displacement of the white proletariat's aggression on to the black proletariat is fundamentally a result of the economic structure of South Africa' (*Masks,* p. 87).

Supposedly, Mannoni would deny, in an absolute sense, the presence of any economic factors promoting or sustaining racism. Fanon, on the contrary, supports a belief in the universality of the economic motive by reference to Sartre's work on anti-Semitism.[4] The crux of Fanon's argument is that all racism serves essentially the same political-economic purpose; racism acts as a soporific for diverting social discontent away from the original source of conflict, namely the inevitable contradictions within class society, on to purely symbolic targets, thereby ensuring the survival of existing privilege.

While Mannoni claims that racism is the product of the poorest representatives of European civilisation[5] (p. 24), Fanon sees an intimate connection between the cultural life of Europe and that aspect of colonialism. He argues that Europe's best representative, presum-

ably the metropolitan bourgeoisie, is responsible for colonial racism (p. 90). The bourgeoisie promotes racism because it stands to profit from the economic system racism justifies. Racism in the colonial world, far from being an aberration of the capitalist system, is an integral part of it. Thus, in contrast to Mannoni, Fanon explains that the eruption of racial hatred derives not from the play of individual neurosis, but from the operation of the economic and social systems associated with colonialism. This line of argument suggests that Fanon had himself arrived at a clear understanding of the relationship between economic formations and personality type. Having implied that it is in this area that the locus of racism lies, what evidence does Fanon produce to show the connection between economic institutions and racism? He explains that Europe has a racist social structure and that France is a racist country, because in France the myth of the 'bad nigger' is part of the collective unconscious (p. 92). He does not argue that the French state is racist because it controls a colonial empire. It is racist because of the presence of a particular personality trait in the national character. Obviously Fanon's interpretation of racism is as much grounded in the psychoanalytic imagination as is Mannoni's. Fanon continually shifts his line of attack against Mannoni from the interpretation of colonialism as an economic system to an analysis of the personality which that system engenders, without ever explaining what he understands as the relationship between these two spheres.

On occasion Fanon is guilty of blatantly misrepresenting Mannoni: for instance he attributes to Mannoni the belief that France is the least racist of all the European powers (*Masks*, p. 92). Yet Mannoni is adamant that, although officially France is a non-racist country, the French have developed a 'marked racialist attitude' (*Prospero*, p. 110). This is not the only occasion on which Fanon's unreasoned antagonism led him to misread Mannoni completely.

One of the few areas in which Fanon is in accord with Mannoni is over the place of sexual guilt in the aetiology of racism. As an inferior species the colonised serves as a scapegoat on whom all evil intentions may be projected thereby safeguarding the colonialist from feelings of self-recrimination. Where Mannoni had written that all the felt sins of the European are projected on to the figure of the Negro and that 'the Negro is the white man's fear of himself', he was proposing an argument, since associated with Fanon's *Masks*. Fanon's failure to recognise his agreement with Mannoni in this area is more significant when it is remembered that the delineation of a

psychopathology of colonialism is the central achievement of Fanon's own work.

ii The Occidental and Oriental personalities and the question of inferiority

The second major area of dispute arises over Mannoni's use of the Adlerian concepts of personality, inferiority, and dependence, as the corner-stone of his analysis of the Malagasy. Fanon completely misinterprets Mannoni's usage of the concept of 'inferiority', a term which he too readily confuses with his own concept, 'colonial inferiority'. Mannoni's usage is strictly Adlerian, referring to a specific personality type. The inferior type, in contrast to the dependent individual, will gear his behaviour toward establishing protective qualities in order to assuage a pervasive sense of worthlessness. In this context inferiority has nothing to do with individuals having been inferiorised, that is, been made to feel bereft of positive attributes, as is the case with the victims of racism.

In Fanon's theory, inferiority is synonymous with racial denigration and as such is an impediment to future development; for Mannoni, it is the first step in the progression from dependence to a higher mode of personality structure. Fanon associates it with the crude and total domination of one race by another, while Mannoni employs the term to describe a type of personality typifying the European. In Mannoni's theory the movement from dependence to inferiority traces the tragic rise of mankind and identifies the limits of his struggle against nature and himself. Because of this divergence of meaning, Fanon's critique is often tangential to Mannoni's thesis. Fanon argues that the dependence complex, which Mannoni claims represents the basic personality structure of the Malagasy, originates with the arrival of the European and does not precede or precondition colonisation (pp. 97–8).[6]

Therefore he does not deny the accuracy of the portrait of Caliban proposed in *Prospero*; what he disputes is the explanation of Malagasy dependence. He accepts Mannoni's thesis so far as to concede that dependence and inferiority typify the personality types of the Malagasy and the French. What Fanon proposes is an inversion of Mannoni's analysis by substituting what Mannoni had posited as the cause of colonialism (dependence) for the consequence. Thus the Malagasy developed the personality type described in *Prospero* as a result of their colonial experience and not as a pre-condition for

French occupation.[7] At no stage does Fanon really take issue with Mannoni's psychopathology as a descriptive account of the colonial situation; he accepts the prototype of Prospero, while the very title of *Masks* suggests the proximity of his thesis to Mannoni's portrait of Caliban as essentially imitative and dependent.

In *Masks* Fanon substitutes his own terms in place of Mannoni's Prospero and Caliban complexes; to define the hypersensitivity of the colonised black and the emotional withdrawal of the desensitised white. Both are the products of colonialism, and represent the psychological residue from the cultural and economic subordination of the West Indian and African to European authority. In both works it is assumed that colonialism is the source of a psycho-social retardation of European man. Mannoni's Prospero is symbolic of the corrosive influence that colonialism can have, while Fanon goes even further in claiming that all Europeans, not just the colonisers, are emotionally damaged by the colonial experience.

iii Colonialism: deculturation and acculturation

Fanon's third major criticism concerns the impact of the colonial presence upon indigenous culture. Fanon would explain this divergence by reference to the difference between his own sociological approach to psychiatry and Mannoni's classical psychoanalytical methodology which excludes meaningful reference to social reality. According to Fanon, the reaction of the Malagasy toward the French arrival was not a matter of minor changes being forced upon a pre-existing national character: 'There was no addition to the earlier psychic whole' (*Masks*, p. 95). On the contrary, colonialism completely obliterated the Malagasy personality, as it then stood. There were no common interests or values which could have served as a meeting ground between the European and Malagasy worlds; the intrusion of the first necessitated the elimination of the second.

With the arrival of the French, Malagasy society was torn asunder and the horizons of the Malagasy people permanently shattered. All basic psychological mechanisms sustaining individual and community life were destroyed. Colonial occupation introduced a new set of relationships which, unlike all that had gone before, could not have been anticipated by the magical-totemic patterns of the past. The disruption had no precedent in the social and psychological experience of the Malagasy and neither was there any means available to synthesise the past with the colonial present. Fanon's complete rebuttal of any possibility of colonial acculturation as a slow

additive process reverberates throughout his later writings. The cultural and psychological shock of colonisation 'inferiorised' the Malagasy, producing the dependent personality which Mannoni refers to as the Caliban type.

In *The Wretched, Colonialism* and 'Racism' this process is explained as an inevitable corollary to colonial occupation, a fact which distinguishes colonialism from all other forms of class rule. But in *Masks* Fanon leaves unclear whether it is the mode of contact (colonialism), the character of European culture, or some other factor which explains this process of cultural eradication.

On the plane of methodology, Fanon concludes that Mannoni had employed a 'unilateral analysis', confusing historical with psychological phenomena, then applying the conclusions to a multilateral totality – the social, psychological, historical and cultural life of the Malagasy (*Masks,* p. 94). His initial error had been to ignore the relevance of immediate social and economic realities and to integrate these factors into his analysis.

Underlying each of Fanon's criticisms of *Prospero* is the conviction that Mannoni's analysis is ethnocentric and belongs to that arsenal of intellectual justifications, broadly termed ethnopsychiatry, that covertly serve to validate colonialism. Fanon also believes that the few overtly political recommendations that appear in *Prospero* provide direct justification for continued colonial rule, and were intended as such. Mannoni is in fact sensitive to such possible criticism and is careful to point out the severe limitations of a psychological analysis in offering solutions to political problems. Nevertheless *Prospero* does contain a number of statements of what Mannoni views as the insurmountable barriers preventing the admission of the Malagasy to political independence.

But Fanon is wrong in leaving the reader with the impression that *Prospero* was written in direct support of French colonialism. Mannoni was not an apologist for colonialism, as is demonstrated where he argues that the French policy of assimilation could only work at the level of 'crude charity and blind pedantry. Assimilation can succeed if the personality of the native is first destroyed through uprooting, enslavement, and the collapse of the social structure and this is in fact what happened – with debatable success, however – in the "older" colonies' (*Prospero,* p. 27). Mannoni's anguish at the cultural oppression in the older colonies such as the Antilles is very much akin to Fanon's. Furthermore, Mannoni is just as keenly aware as Fanon of the psychological and identity changes involved in Europeanising a small native elite.[8]

He views the need for a gradual evolution of the individual personality towards autonomy as the necessary precondition to the achievement of political independence.

In his critique, Fanon oscillates between what he sees as Mannoni's omission to take note of the play of economic forces on personality and a general dissatisfaction with Mannoni's rendering of the ahistorical model of psychopathology fashionable among the descendants of Freud and Adler. Many of his criticisms of *Prospero* concern Mannoni's failure to give credence to economic factors as a cause of racism, yet Mannoni gives at least as much weight to their influence as Fanon. Apart from this inaccuracy, the general weakness of his attack upon Mannoni results from his own uncertainty on two issues: first, the nature of the relationship between political-economic conditions and psychological disorders; second, the nature of the political and economic system he would favour for the Antilles.

At the time of writing *Masks* Fanon was committed against the French presence in the Antilles yet there is no hint whatsoever that he supported political independence for Martinique. While critical of Mannoni's political quiescence, Fanon gives no indication either of having resolved his own ideological confusion or of having comprehended the political conclusions that his psychological analysis implied.[9] This uncertainty is most marked in *Masks*, while the confusions arising from Fanon's attempt to integrate a psychopathology of colonialism with a political sociology is characteristic of all his later writings.

The one area in which Fanon and Mannoni do differ markedly is over the importance of historical factors in the formation of a colonial mentality. Fanon believes that by linking colonialism with certain qualities supposedly latent within the psyche of the Malagasy, Mannoni had played down the role of environmental factors in the development of the colonial personality (*Masks*, p. 85). Fanon does not deny the dependence of the colonised, a fact that has generally escaped the attention of Fanon's critics. In *Masks* and in *The Wretched* Fanon concedes that colonised man is riddled with social and psychological disorders, the hallmarks of the colonial personality. His dispute with Mannoni is over the question of the origin of these flaws. Mannoni implies that the French presence is essential if there were to be any prospect of the Malagasy developing either socially or psychologically. Like Weber and Marx he assumed that, if left to their own devices, such societies were doomed to repeat eternally a stagnant history. It is this implication that is at the core of Fanon's objection to Mannoni's fatalist science.

Fanon's dismissal of Mannoni as a colonialist scientist was unfair, for in *Masks* he never really came to terms with the substance of Mannoni's theory. Fanon's claim that Mannoni was committed to the French empire was simply not correct and grossly simplified Mannoni's argument. In the light of this, it is ironic that the kind of cultural synthesis Fanon advocates in his most radical work, *The Wretched,* is very close to that proposed in *Prospero;* namely establishing a linkage between modern social institutions and traditional culture as the prerequisite for achieving national independence.[10]

Fanon's critique of Mannoni is valuable for what it reveals about the context and evolution of Fanon's own thought. Fanon's failure to provide a satisfactory critique of *Prospero* exposes a weakness in his own psychopathology of colonialism. Fanon is unsure of both the geographical and the sociological relevance of his analysis. He is also unsure of the extent to which 'mere understanding', as in psychotherapeutics, can cure colonialism. Fanon's reluctance to explore in detail the problems associated with a materialist psychology is carried over to his later works. The political psychology which underpins the theory of revolutionary decolonisation in *The Wretched* would be more subtle and more convincing if, in *Masks,* Fanon had arrived at a clearer understanding of the relationship between social structure and personality. Fanon first encountered this problem in his encounter with Mannoni.

In *Masks* there is a major contradiction which reflects this uncertainty; Fanon argues both that colonialism is a system deliberately erected by European states for their economic advantage, and that colonial racism is the result of a tragic accident. That accident involves the prevalence of a dominant white world view in which the figure of the Negro is depicted as a malevolent force. Fanon explains that this tragic accident arose from the internalisation, at the level of the unconscious, of the economic and social inequalities which exist between the races.

In his critique of Mannoni, Fanon identifies the origins of racism as lying in the dominant social institutions. Therefore the responsibility for racism must rest with those who control and profit from such institutions. He is severely critical of Mannoni's analysis because it ignores this political reality. In *Masks* he must establish a connection between the incidence of negrophobia and the play of economic interests which satisfies his own criteria for attacking Mannoni. Failing to do this Fanon would have ignored the substance of his own critique of *Prospero* and left *Masks* open to those very criticisms he so freely directs against Mannoni.

Appendix II

Mental health in Algeria

As superintendent at the largest psychiatric hospital in Algeria, Blida-Joinville, Fanon was concerned with the problems of administration that hampered the running of the service. In the article 'Aspects of Mental Health in Algeria', he evaluates the then current provision of psychiatric care. The tone of the article is restrained, as one would expect, given Fanon's position at the time and the group authorship of the piece. Even so, it contains a number of weighty recommendations for changes to existing services.

'Mental Health' deals with the organisation of the existing service with its massive shortcomings and with those problems found at Blida-Joinville which were peculiar to the Algerian context. The object of the article was to show the ways in which the service needed to change in order to provide efficient assistance. Ironically the article contains complimentary references to Professor Porot, Head of the School of Psychiatry at the University of Algiers, and Dr Sutter. Porot had been the first to demand and secure the recruitment of medical officers from metropolitan France, thereby creating the first effective psychiatric service. Porot also achieved the provision of more beds and instituted the establishment of psychiatric hospitals at Oran and Constantine.

When the contemporary system was analysed in terms of the arrival, treatment, and departure of patients, the limitations of the administration were obvious. Admissions occurred only when beds became vacant. Overcrowding was exacerbated by the fact that Blida received those patients who had failed to respond to therapy at the other centres. Consequently the hospital was trapped between the problems of too many patients and too few beds on the one hand, and the long-term character of the chronic patients it received on the other. In a country of ten million people there were only eight psychiatrists, and only one bed for every four thousand inhabitants.

The delays in admitting new patients often had catastrophic effect,

especially with those who required urgent treatment. In a few cases the untreated ill had protested at the gates of the hospital demanding admission while a number of the criminally insane had been placed in prison. These problems of delays in admission had become more chronic over time.

Besides the difficulties arising from the shortage of beds, the admission of new patients was further hampered by inefficient administration. As a consequence, very often a person seeking psychiatric assistance either would be self-cured by the time he could be admitted, or else the original condition would be so far advanced that treatment had become impossible.

For the fortunate few who gained admission the chances of receiving effective therapy were most often negligible. Because of overcrowding all available facilities within the hospital were over-taxed – the hospital chapel serving as a workshop and therapy room while, during daylight hours, the patients would be placed in an open courtyard. The electrical and service equipment in the hospital was subject to constant breakdown, again due to the excessive demands placed upon it. The only satisfactory aspects of the hospital organisation were the ample supply of medical materials and the enthusiasm of the locally trained attendants.

The achievements initiated under the direction of Fanon included the publication of a weekly newspaper, the performance by patients of plays and concerts, the introduction of a Moorish café, and regular excursions for the inmates. But when one considers that the subject at hand is psychiatric assistance in the whole of Algeria, references to seaside excursions and a staff-authored newspaper at Blida appear slight. In general the tone of 'Mental Health' reflects this gloom.

At departure there existed no agencies for following up the progress of patients or of providing post-care treatment. Once discharged, a patient would, if he requested further treatment, be placed at the bottom of the waiting list. Apart from the obvious burden on the patient arising from the uncertainty of achieving a once and for all cure, this situation hampered the staff in assessing the effectiveness of treatment. Psychiatric annexes did exist at Aimalé and Orléansville, but this service was itself beset with the familiar problems of staff shortage and overcrowding.

Psychiatric servicing in Algeria was also prone to problems peculiar to the region. Unlike patients in the metropolitan setting where none would need to travel great distances, the Muslim patients in Algeria had often to travel hundreds of kilometres to the nearest hospital. Therefore, upon admission and discharge, the patient would

often be faced with the sight of foreign surroundings, sufficient in itself to create problems of adaptation quite apart from the financial burden of long-distance travel. While under treatment, contact with family and friends would be completely severed, thereby increasing the sense of abandonment so characteristic of the mentally ill. In the wards of Oran and Constantine there were no post-care facilities whatsoever, so that further treatment was out of the question.

The Muslim woman was particularly vulnerable if she should become ill for, once hospitalised, she faced the threat of abandonment. Under Muslim law a man has a right to instantaneous divorce. Without any home to which to return these women would choose to remain in hospital as long as possible, thereby adding to the problem of overcrowding.

The recommendations made by Fanon and his colleagues endorse those put forward by Sutter and Gaubert in 1940. Sutter had called for an overhaul of the admissions process, with the creation of welfare centres and prophylactic out-patients' departments to be attached to the major hospitals. This, added to the provision of social services and assistance for the patient post-care, would end the severance of contact at the point of discharge. Fanon's paper adds to this a number of suggestions that are in conformity with those made originally by Porot. Specifically they are: the need for the construction of psychiatric hospitals at Oran and Constantine to reduce the overcrowding at Blida and thereby overcome the problems of removing patients from their home environment; the provision of out-patients' departments and proper post-care facilities to reduce congestion; and finally, some minor administrative changes, such as giving to the Director of Psychiatric Health the same status as his metropolitan counterparts. In summary, the recommendations of the paper are to make the conditions and treatment at Blida equivalent to the conditions found in metropolitan hospitals.

'Mental Health' bears the stamp of Fanon as an administrator in its assessment of psychiatric servicing and the low-keyed nature of the recommendations made. There is no suggestion in the article that the problems of overcrowding and the shortage of finance and qualified personnel are in any way connected to the colonial relationship. Also there is no indication of any sensitivity towards the cultural problems associated with applying western medical technique in the Algerian context. In the article 'Sociotherapy', published one year earlier, Fanon showed himself to be acutely aware of the need for an approach which took account of cultural peculiarities and of the costs in failing to use such an approach at Blida.

Notes

Chapter 1 The three paradigms: negritude, ethnopsychiatry and African socialism

1 See E. W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, and *Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of E. W. Blyden.*
2 R. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought – Its Development in West Africa during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 465.
3 See *Masks*, pp. 133–5, 138–9.
4 See Lilyan Kesteloot, *Les Ecrivains noirs de langue française* and *Intellectual Origins of the African Revolution* (Washington: Black Orpheus Press, 1972); Abiola Irele, 'Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism', 'Negritude: Literature and Ideology', and also 'Negritude Revisited'; Claude Wauthier, *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa.*
5 See J. Jahn, *A History of Neo-African Literature*, esp. pp. 244, 269.
6 W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London: Macmillan, 1906).
7 Stanley Porteus, *The Psychology of Primitive People* (New York: Arno, 1931).
8 Wulf Sachs, *Black Hamlet* (London: G. Bles, 1937).
9 See J. C. Carothers, *The African Mind in Health and Disease: A Study in Ethnopsychiatry*, and *The Psychology of Mau-Mau.*
10 A summary of part of this article is found in *The Wretched*, pp. 239–41.
11 The question of the existence of depressive illness among African peoples has aroused much controversy. Carothers in *The African Mind in Health and Disease*, pp. 147–8, arrives at conclusions similar to Porot's; Carothers argues that the virtual absence of depressive illness is related to the absence or diminution of free will and a felt sense of personal responsibility. As responsibility usually rests with the community, rather than with the individual, there is little opportunity for the African to feel self-reproach. Conversely, the belief that depressive illness is rare is strongly disputed by M. J. Field, *Search for Security: An Ethno-psychiatric Study of Rural Ghana*, especially pp. 149–200, and Paul Bohannan (ed.), *African Homicide and Suicide.* Field argues that in Africa depressed persons are rarely seen by medical officers since they are of no danger to relatives or friends. Because of this failure to notify such illness, a myth has grown up supposing the absence of depression among Africans. Bohannan, drawing upon evidence from both East and West Africa,

emphasises the problems of constructing an appropriate theoretical framework in the study of suicide and, by implication, depressive illness. For instance, in the case of suicide there is no uniformity between what the African believes is wrong, what British laws say is wrong, and what the African thinks of British law (p. 21). With suicide it is extremely difficult to establish the motive for the act, because of the variations between European expectations and African behaviour. Bohannan's work is very much at odds with the earlier studies by Porot and Carothers; in his essays, 'Theories of Homicide and Suicide', pp. 3–29, and 'Patterns of Murder and Suicide' he concludes that in the absence of proper records very little is known about homicide and suicide in Africa and that there is at present no satisfactory theoretical framework to overcome the problems of cross-cultural analysis.

12 See *The Wretched*, p. 243, where Fanon refers to this aspect of Porot's work.

13 In both *The Wretched* and 'Ethnopsychiatry' Fanon cites the French edition of Carother's monograph, *Psychologie normale et pathologie de l'African: études ethno-psychiatriques* (ed. Masson). For the original, see J. C. Carothers, *The African Mind in Health and Disease.*

14 Carothers also recommends a villagisation programme reminiscent of the strategic hamlet formula employed by the British in Malaya, and later by the Americans in Vietnam, and the minority regime in Zimbabwe (p. 22).

15 For a critique of Mannoni's use of this model see P. Mason's foreword to *Prospero and Caliban*, pp. 9–15, and G. Jahoda, *White Man* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 108–22.

16 See G. Kitching, 'The Concept of Class and the Study of Africa'; R. Cohen, 'Class in Africa: Analytical Problems and Perspectives'; A. Cabral, 'Brief Analysis of the Social Structure in Guinea', in *Revolution in Guinea*, pp. 56–75.

17 For further details on Lloyd's position, see *Africa in Social Change*, especially pp. 115–53, 157–70, 267–87, 304–17; P. C. Lloyd (ed.), *The New Elites of Tropical Africa*, and *Classes, Crises and Coups* (London: Paladin, 1973), especially pp. 11–25, 128–62. See also R. Miller, 'Elite Formation in Africa: Class, Culture and Coherence'.

18 See, for instance, the account of the role played by trade unions in the development of post-war nationalism in J. Woddis, *Africa: The Lion Awakes.*

19 See P. Hill, 'The Myth of the Amorphous Peasantry'; G. Arrighi and J. Saul, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*; V. L. Allen, 'The Meaning of the Working Class in Africa'; J. Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), pp. 66–79. Finally the work of E. Wolf has been particularly influential in highlighting the divisions between upper, middle and lower peasant strata. See E. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, esp. pp. 211–47, for a discussion of the Algerian revolution, and pp. 276–302; see also 'Peasant Rebellion and Revolution', in N. Miller and R. Ayer (eds.), *National Liberation* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), pp. 48–67.

20 V. L. Allen, 'The Meaning', pp. 169–89.

21 A. Cabral, 'Towards Final Victory', in *Revolution in Guinea*, pp. 156–64.
22 R. Cohen, 'Class in Africa: Analytical Problems and Perspectives'.
23 G. Kitching, 'The Concept of Class', p. 347.
24 Cabral argues that prior to European penetration the tribal structures of Africa were already in a state of disintegration. All that remained were the remnants of a tribal mentality. The only tribalists in contemporary Africa are the political opportunists who have attended European universities. A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, pp. 144–5.
25 J. Nyerere, in A. Luthuli, *et al.*, *Africa's Freedom* (London: Unwin Books, 1964), p. 70. Although Nyerere has maintained this belief, in his later writings he has conceded the impossibility of a return to such a mode of economic organisation as a basis for Tanzanian socialism. See 'The Varied Paths to Socialism', in *Uhuru Na Ujamaa: Freedom and Socialism*, pp. 301–10.
26 T. Mboya, 'African Socialism', in A. Luthuli, *et al.*, *Africa's Freedom*, p. 80.
27 See esp. 'The Purpose is Man', in *Uhuru Na Ujamaa*, pp. 315–26.
28 M. Dia, quoted in M. Minogue and J. Molloy (eds.), *African Aims and Attitudes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 170.
29 A. Cabral, 'The Weapon of Theory', in *Revolution in Guinea*, pp. 90–111.

Chapter 2 Negritude

1 This term appears in the chapter 'On National Culture' which was first presented as a paper at the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers, Rome, 1959. As this Congress was sponsored by the Présence Africaine group, Fanon's hesitation in using the term negritude is understandable.
2 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Orphée noir'.
3 See D. Caute, *Fanon*, pp. 25–6.
4 See I. Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon*, pp. 44, 225, 228.
5 See J. Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture*, who argues a somewhat parallel case in his study of the resilience of African forms in the spheres of music, the dance and literature in the Caribbean.
6 In *Revolution*, pp. 27–37.
7 See *The Wretched*, pp. 178–9.
8 Fanon believes that this phase is characterised by the exterior nature of the relationship of the artist and intellectual to his people. He notes that 'old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and of a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies' (*The Wretched*, p. 179).
9 See *Masks*, p. 13, 226.
10 See Ezekiel Mphahlele, *The African Image* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), and 'The Fabric of African Cultures'; for a more subdued assessment of the movement's importance see Wole Soyinka, 'The Writer in an African State'. Mamadi Keita, 'Culture, History and Ideology', in Joseph Okpaku (ed.), *New African Literature*, Vol. III (New York: The Third Press, 1973), pp. 9–32. Amilcar Cabral, 'Identity and Dignity in

the Context of the National Liberation Struggle', in *Return to the Source*, pp. 57–69.
11 M. Keita, 'Culture, History and Ideology', p. 19.
12 I. L. Markovitz, *L. S. Senghor and the Politics of Negritude* (New York: Athanaeum, 1969).
13 A. Cabral, 'Identity and Dignity', p. 61.

Chapter 3 Ethnopsychiatry and the psychopathology of colonialism

1 At one point Fanon employs the term *Manicheanism delirium* to describe this perverse view of the world. See *Masks*, p. 183.
2 Fanon's account of this fear of correspondence has been drawn from J.-P. Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive*, pp. 115ff. Sartre claims that the overriding fear of the inauthentic Jew is that he may 'behave like a Jew' and thereby conform to the portrait drawn for him by the anti-Semite.
3 See 'The North African Syndrome' in *Revolution*, pp. 13–26. This article was originally published in *L'Esprit* in 1952.
4 C. Legman, 'Psychopathologie des comics', trans. H. Robillot, *Les Temps modernes*, May 1949, quoted in *Masks*, pp. 146–7.
5 Seven years later, in his study of the veil, Fanon once again observed the same process of projection and identification. He comments that the attitude of the European male toward the Muslim woman was typically one of brutal sexual attraction. The dream material from European men involving Algerian women was particularly violent. Fanon writes: 'The act assumes a para-neurotic brutality and sadism, even in the normal European' (*Colonialism*, p. 31). Conversely, the Europeans viewed the social timidity of these women as proof of their sexual prodigality in what Fanon interprets as a paradigm of the psychopathology of the colonial relationship. See *Colonialism*, pp. 30–1, cf. J.-P. Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive*, esp. pp. 54–6.
6 Extrapolating from the work of Helene Deutsch, Fanon argues that the desexualisation of aggression is less complete in women than in men and that the Negro, as a symbolic figure, offers a convenient solution to the problem of psychic equilibrium. The need for a social acceptable outlet is achieved as 'the Negro becomes the predestined depository of this aggression' (*Masks*, p. 179).
7 See *Masks*, p. 13 and pp. 223–4.
8 Fanon's timidity is further exposed when a comparison is made between the text of *Masks* and Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme*. Although Césaire's study was an important influence on *Masks*, Fanon failed to produce a work that is as passionate or violent in its condemnation of European imperialism. Césaire's thesis is quite simple: as colonialism and civilisation are opposites, the effect of colonialism upon Europe has been to barbarise European civilisation (*Discours*, pp. 14–18). Césaire concluded that the only hope for Europe and the Third World lies in a proletarian revolution and the invention of a classless society. Only such a revolution could rescue the colonised from the European bourgeoisie and from the even more frightful prospect of domination by the United States. Césaire's conclusion is more concrete than Fanon's,

simply because he is more certain that colonialism and racism are the products of bourgeois capitalism. See Césaire, especially pp. 14–20, 70–2.

9 J.-P. Sartre, *La Question juive*, p. 184.

10 Fanon makes numerous references to Sartre's study and quotes directly from it at some length. See *Masks*, pp. 86–8, 93, 115–16, 118–19, 122, 160–2, 181–2. See also *Colonialism*, p. 31.

Chapter 4 From psychiatric practice to political theory

1 I have chosen to ignore the important question of the relationship between Fanon's psychology and the work of Dr François Tosquelles under whom Fanon trained at Saint Alban. The reasons for this are two-fold; first, I am unconcerned with an analysis of Fanon's theory in regard to the purely clinical or technical influences that played a part in its formation. Therefore, the *ergotherapie* (ergo-therapy) philosophy and technique of Tosquelles and the way in which Fanon's practice adheres or diverges from it lie outside the confines of the present study. Second, where it can be demonstrated that the influence of Tosquelles or any other clinician has a discernible effect upon Fanon's work, I believe such a discovery is worthy of a separate study.

Fanon wrote three articles in joint authorship with Tosquelles, these are: 'Sur quelques cas traités par la méthode de Bini', pp. 539–44; 'Sur un essai de réadaptation chez une malade avec épilepsie morphéique et troubles de caractère graves', pp. 363–8, and 'Indications de thérapeutique de Bini dans le cadre des thérapeutiques institutionnelles'. The first two articles in particular deal with the theme of the relationship between the treatment of mental illness and the environment of the hospital as a social milieu, which plays such a prominent part in certain of Fanon's later works. For further information, see François Tosquelles, *Le Travail thérapeutique à l'hôpital psychiatrique* (Paris: Editions du Scarabée, 1967), and I. Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon*, pp. 63–71, 72–88, and P. Geismar, *Fanon*, pp. 84–7, 134–8.

2 See D. Caute, *Fanon*, pp. 32–40, and P. Nursey-Bray, 'Marxism and Existentialism in the Thought of Frantz Fanon', *Political Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June 1972), pp. 152–68.

3 'The North African Syndrome', *Revolution*; 'Day Care' was published under the title 'L'Hospitalisation de jour en psychiatrie, valeurs et limites; considérations doctrinales'. *La Tunisie médicale*, Vol. 38, No. 10 (1959), pp. 713–32. 'Aspects of Mental Health in Algeria' was published under the title 'Aspects actuels de l'assistance mentale en Algérie'.

4 'Ethnopsychiatric Considerations' was published under the title 'Réflexions sur l'ethnopsychiatrie'; 'Confessional Behaviour in the North African' was published under the title 'Conduites d'aveux en Afrique du Nord'.

5 An explication of this article is to be found in Appendix II.

6 It had long been established, at the time of Fanon's days as an undergraduate medical student, that delirious states are accompanied by changes in electrical activity in the brain. The reason why Fanon should create the opposite impression is difficult to fathom.

7 The only major psychiatric practitioner and theorist who has reviewed Fanon's theory of violence is extremely sympathetic. Rollo May, *Power and Innocence*, pp. 192–5 supports Fanon because he believes that Fanon is advocating violence as liberative only where it helps to bestow power (that is, a capacity for independent and socially responsible action) upon the colonised.

8 See also *Revolution*, p. 62, where in his letter of resignation from his post at Blida Fanon defines psychiatry as a tool for promoting liberty.

9 Four years later in *Colonialism* Fanon observes that the colonised will never voluntarily tell the truth before a member of the ruling community. He explains that this attitude is a form of self-defence against a hostile power. See *Colonialism*, pp. 107–11.

10 Of 220 patients, 148 were Arabs, 66 Kabyles, 6 Chavois and Mozambites (p. 357).

11 In 'Sociotherapy' Fanon and Azoulay provide the following figures on the socioeconomic origins of their patients at Blida: 'To give an example we have studied the social composition of Muslim patients; out of 220 patients we found: 35 fellahs who owned some land which they cultivated themselves, 76 agricultural workers or day labourers, 78 workers or craftsmen consisting of bakers, painters, etc.; 5 intellectuals and 26 without work. But these figures need to be interpreted. For instance, one might think that there is a relatively high proportion of workers, 78 out of a total of 220. In reality this group represents an element uprooted from the countryside who have managed to find manual labour of some kind in the towns. Out of the 78 workers only about 20 have any specialized skills at all. With regard to the 5 intellectuals, they were native school teachers who had achieved the level of lower certificat' (p. 358).

12 Fanon and Azoulay list the titles of films specially selected to stimulate the patients' interest; the titles of films included 'King Solomon's Mines', 'A Case of Conscience' and 'Rio Grande'. The patients failed to respond because they could not identify with the reactions and behaviour of western characters. In explaining the reason for this incomprehension the authors make reference to a film by a French surrealist. 'The example of the film by Jean Cocteau, "The Wedding of Sand" is in this regard particularly eloquent. The film related the adventures of an Arab prince who goes to look for his fiancé among the nomads of the Sahara. Although the costumes and decor were in principle proper to North Africa, the psychological plot remained western. It did not interest the Muslims because they were not able to participate fully in the action – that is, to identify with the characters' (p. 360).

Chapter 5 Culture and personality

1 This article was originally presented as a paper before the First Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris, September 1956 and first published in the special issue of *Présence Africaine* (June/Nov 1956). It is reprinted in *Revolution*, pp. 41–54.

2 See G. Bateson, *Naven*, and the essays 'Culture Contact and Schismogenesis', 'Bali: The Value System of a Steady State', 'Towards a Theory

of Schizophrenia' and 'Double Bind', all found in his collected essays, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind.*

3 See *The Wretched*, pp. 236–45.

4 Paraphrasing Porot, Fanon writes: 'The Algerian does not see the whole of a question. The questions he asks himself always concern the details and exclude all synthesis. He is a pointillist, clinging to objects, lost in details, insensible to ideas and impervious to concepts' (*The Wretched*, p. 242).

5 See Appendix I.

6 See *Revolution*, p. 62.

Chapter 6 Class conflict and the liberation of Africa

1 This phase should not be confused with Karl Kautsky's term, ultra-imperialism, which has absolutely nothing in common with Fanon's typology. See *The Wretched*, p. 51, *Revolution*, pp. 42–5, 130–4, and 170.

2 See especially H. Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press 1969), pp. 27–67.

3 This article was originally published in *L'Esprit* in February 1955, and is reprinted in *Revolution*, pp. 27–37.

4 This article originally appeared in *El Moudjahid* in three parts (1, 15 and 30 December 1957), and is reprinted in *Revolution*, pp. 86–101.

5 See J. Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution* (New York: International Publishers 1972), p. 398.

6 I. Clegg, *Workers' Self-Management in Algeria* (New York: Monthly Review Press 1971), p. 100.

7 Debray and Fanon concur on two specific areas: first, where writing of the problem of the unassailability of government forces and peasant fear of ruling authorities, Debray echoes the theme of psychological dominance so important in Fanon's work (p. 51). Second, Debray, like Fanon, believes that the cities are the incubators of bourgeois attitudes and politics (p. 75). The only point on which Guevara and Fanon agree is over the possibility of a creative dialogue between the guerrilla forces and the peasants (p. 47). But in Guevara's theory this dialogue is unrelated to the positive aspects of peasant culture.

The differences between Fanon and Debray and Guevara include the geo-historical contexts of their theories, Debray and Guevara's far greater familiarity with Marxist-Leninist practice, the role of the peasantry, the function of leadership, and the tactical concerns that motivate the Latin American theorists. The basic element in foco theory, that the guerrilla force should be independent of the civilian population, is completely at odds with the whole tenor of Fanon's work. See R. Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution*, trans. B. Ortiz (London: Penguin Books, 1972), and *Strategy for Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1975), especially pp. 275–86. C. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), and *Venceremos, The Speeches and Writings of Che Guevara*, ed. J. Gerassi (London: Panther Books, Granada Publishing Company, 1969), especially 'Guerrilla Warfare', pp. 374–92, and 'Message to the Tricontinental', pp. 569–84.

8 This article was originally published in *El Moudjahid*, No. 10 (Sept. 1957), and is reprinted in *Revolution*, pp. 74–92.
9 This article was originally published in *El Moudjahid*, No. 31 (1 Nov. 1958), and is reprinted in *Revolution*, pp. 154–9.
10 In *Masks*, p. 31, Fanon notes that the racist European collective unconscious is found among all social strata and is not confined to any particular class.

Chapter 8 The neo-colonial state

1 On this point Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul, 'Nationalism and Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa', in *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*, pp. 44–102, provide some valuable comment. Arrighi and Saul argue that, in the southern half of the continent, the peasantry's desire to participate more fully in the market economy is being frustrated in part by population pressure on available land and the absence of wage-labour opportunities in the urban setting. They go on to argue that Fanon places great hope for a revolution on the peasants' outrage at the gap in living standards between themselves and the new middle class. But they question Fanon's assumption of significant land shortage as a factor in the growing political radicalisation and pauperisation of the rural mass and add that the largely intact rural economic systems (intact in terms of traditional habits governing the distributing of goods) cushion the impact of economic regression. They conclude: 'Thus in the absence of immediate and widespread exploitation at the level of the mode of production (which has, however, begun to emerge in some areas, as mentioned earlier) politically relevant consciousness of the gap separating the peasantry from the labour aristocracy tends to be truncated and may merely lead to apathy and parochialism' (p. 82). This adds further doubt to Fanon's already equivocal pronouncements on the likelihood of the post-colonial revolution.
2 J. Woddis, *Africa: The Lion Awakes*, published in the same year as *The Wretched*, presents a similarly optimistic view of the possibility for the transcendence of the neo-colonial phase. Woddis' reasons for believing the neo-colonial state to be ephemeral include the revolutionary capacity of the African working class, the influence and support of the socialist bloc for liberation movements, and the Third World solidarity for revolutions dating from Bandung (pp. 251–7). Woddis develops a rather different and more subdued argument in his later study *Introduction to Neo-Colonialism*, esp. pp. 111–26. The major reason for Woddis' optimism, the revolutionary capacity of the African working class, represents further cause for the air of gloom in Fanon's account. Conversely, the hopes of both that the neo-colonial phase will be brief, appear (especially in *Africa: The Lion Awakes* and *The Wretched*) to derive from much the same source, the euphoria of the early 1960s. (Compare Woddis with Arrighi and Saul, who are extremely pessimistic on the chances for a second revolution, primarily because of what they see as impediments to the development of a revolutionary consciousness among the peasantry. See esp. pp. 80–92.)
3 *Revolution*, 'First Truths of the Colonial Problem', pp. 130–6.

4 Issa Shivji *et al.*, *The Silent Class Struggle*, and *Class Struggles in Tanzania*; Hamza Alavi, 'The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh'; Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*. See also John Saul, 'Class and Penetration in Tanzania'. Saul's article is the forerunner to the work of Shivji and proposes most of the major problems framed in *The Silent Class Struggle*. Saul examines the issue of government policy penetration into the rural sector and identifies barriers at two specific points: first, in the emergence of a kulak class and second, in the vested interests crystallising among the ranks of state bureaucrats. Saul concedes that Fanon was among the very first to warn of the range of problems caused by an urban–rural gap that is at the heart of the difficulties faced by Tanzanian socialism.
5 In an earlier article, C. Leys, 'The Over-developed Post-Colonial State: A Re-evaluation', reviews the work of Shivji and Saul. Leys is very critical of both for what he believes is a distorted account of the *significance* of the post-colonial state and the relations of the new bourgeoisie to state institutions. See also the editorial in the same issue of *Review of African Political Economy* for a discussion of the general debate on class and state.
6 The following account of Shivji's theory is drawn from *The Silent Class Struggle*.
7 See Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*, pp. 221–5, for a discussion of the contradictions of the neo-colonial phase in Kenya.
8 Leys gives some support to Alavi's belief in the semi-autonomy of the post-colonial state (p. 211), although he is adamant that this should not be taken as a denial that the state still serves class interests. For a sophisticated discussion of Alavi's thesis and John Saul's adaptation of it to the Tanzanian case, see Leys' 'The Over-developed Post-Colonial State'. Leys is also generally pessimistic about the prospects for transformation and begs the question of the most probable avenue for liberation. Also see J. Saul's 'The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Tanzania'.

Appendix I

1 In *Masks* Fanon vacillates between limiting the relevance of his conclusions to the Antilles alone (p. 16) and claiming that his insights apply to all colonial situations (pp. 172–3). Mannoni, on the other hand, is quite definite as to the applicability of his analysis: 'My direct knowledge of the colonial peoples leads me to believe that some of my conclusions are of general applicability' (*Prospero*, pp. 30–1). See also p. 44, where Mannoni indicates that his analysis holds for all non-western societies.
2 See *Colonialism*, pp. 50, 63–4, 84, 108, 111, 115; *Revolution*, pp. 42, 43, 47, 49, 91, 175–6; *The Wretched*, pp. 32, 43, 91, 111–12, 152, 201–2.
3 While conceding that negrophobia and anti-Semitism derive from the same psychodynamic mechanism, Fanon is keen to emphasise that the Negro is oppressed far more severely than any other racial grouping; see *Masks*, pp. 165–6.
4 See J.-P. Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive*.
5 See Mannoni, *Prospero*, p. 39.
6 Fanon's reticence is even more obvious if a comparison is made between

his attack upon Mannoni in *Masks* and Aimé Césaire's comments on *Prospero* in his essay, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, pp. 45–50. Césaire is quite vitriolic in his denouncement of Mannoni. For a further parallel, see A. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, pp. 79–89, who is, if anything, more restrained than Fanon.

7 Compare *Prospero*, pp. 175–95, and 'On National Culture', *The Wretched*, esp. pp. 175–82.

8 See Mannoni, pp. 56–65.

9 See Mannoni, pp. 74–80.

10 See Mannoni, pp. 130–50.

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