

5-4-2013

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Recommended Citation

Watson, James (2013) "The Wretched of the Earth and Black Skin, White Masks: A Sociological Analysis Social Control, Social Order and Social Change in the Colonial Context," *Sociological Imagination: Western's Undergraduate Sociology Student Journal*: Vol. 2: Iss. 2, Article 3.

Available at: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/si/vol2/iss2/3>

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**The Wretched of the Earth and Black Skin, White Masks: A Sociological Analysis Social
Control, Social Order and Social Change in the Colonial Context**

James Watson

This paper will posit that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Marx and Engels, 1848), taken from the first lines of the Communist Manifesto. The point which I intend to flesh out is that in his books *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*, the author Frantz Fanon at times “stretches” (Fanon, 1963: 5) his Marxist-style analysis, which causes him to not fully account for deeper, class rooted causes in the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Fanon, in opposition to Marx, states that “it is clear that what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to” (ibid), taking race, and not class as the cause of colonial struggles. There is no doubt that there is a massive racial component to the colonial enterprise, but this component can be explained, as I will attempt to do, in class terms. To make it clear, I am not reducing the colonial conflict to one *solely* determined by class, but rather, that colonial conflict is best explained in terms of class, and not race. Stuart Hall helps to explain this position: “Race is the modality in which class is lived. It is also the relation in which class relations are experienced” (1978: 394). In simple terms, a class in the Marxist tradition is a group of individuals united by common economic interest. For the proletariat this interest is progress towards unexploited and unalienated labour. For the bourgeoisie, this interest is the progression towards the maximization of profit and accumulation of capital through exploiting a cheap and pliable labour force. Race – which is much more difficult to define – in this paper will be understood as a human classification system based on visible physical characteristics, specifically of “hair, skin [colour] and bone” (Dubois, 1903).¹

¹ Taken from Stuart Hall’s lecture: Race, the Floating Signifier. In this lecture, Hall explains that race is a discursive construct, which has its meaning derived from the socio-historical context which it finds itself in. To examine race in this manner, for this purposes of this paper would be too lengthy, so a simpler definition has been used.

My argument will therefore be that the relationship between the colonizers and colonized is first and foremost, a class conflict, which is *reinforced* by racial conflict. This will be illustrated by the discussion on language and education in the Social Control/Social Order section. I will continue in the Social Change section to argue that the emancipation of the colonized requires a national consciousness that is very aware of the conflicting interests of the bourgeois and the proletariat. In order to establish socialism (which Fanon is supportive of as a part of emancipation²) the most important type of nationalism to establish is a civic, class-informed nationalism.

Social Control and Social Order

Social control is a necessary prerequisite to any social order. In the colonial setting, social control is accomplished by two forces. The first, and most obvious force due to its visibility, is the physical one: violence. As the French sociologist Michael Foucault has theorized, power is not something that is “held, seized or shared”, but rather is a relationship (Foucault, 94). This relationship in the colonial situation was between the colonists (dominators) and the colonized (dominated). In order for a colonized people to become inferior the colonizers had to establish themselves as superior. Violence was the initial tool used to do this. As Fanon asserts early, the exploitation of the colonized at the hands of the colonizer is “continued at the point of the bayonet and under cannon fire” (Fanon, 1963: 2). He then goes on to claim that the legitimate spokesperson for the colonial regime is the police officer or the soldier (Fanon, 1963: 3). This violence takes place in plain view with police brutality, military parades, fly-bys and most

² Fanon writes “We know, of course, that the capitalist way of life is incapable of allowing us to achieve our national and universal project. Capitalist exploitation, cartels and monopolies are the enemies of the underdeveloped countries... A socialist regime entirely devoted to the people based on the principle that man is the most precious asset, will allow us to progress faster in greater harmony...ruling out a caricature of society where a privileged few hold the reins of political and economic power without a thought for the nation as a whole” (Wretched of the Earth, 56).

importantly the massacre of indigenous populations by the colonist upon arrival to the colonial country. This initial violence perpetrated against the indigenous population is used to “destroy [the] social fabric, and demolish...the country’s economy, lifestyle, and dress” (Fanon, 1963: 6). Once this demolition is complete, the colonial regime utilizes its military and police force to control the population, built around mechanisms of fear and punishment. If the colonized opt for counterviolence, they are met with quick and decisive responses where the industrial military might of the colonial power is fully exhibited, in an attempt to ensure the colonized are kept in a state of fear and passivity (Fanon, 1963: 32). However, this physical domination is not the point of major interest in Fanon’s work. Instead, his interest is in the psychological and ideological³ domination that becomes hegemonic, and comes to dominate the colonized as much as any physical force.

This domination in the colonial setting requires a dialectical relationship between the colonizers and colonized. In order to legitimize their dominance, the colonizers must assert themselves as superior, and the colonized must in some form, internalize a sense of inferiority. Superiority cannot be recognized without inferiority. The main instrument with which the colonizers asserted their perceived superiority was race, through which they “otherized” the indigenous populations. There is no sufficient evidence to prove that natural (biological) racial differences exist, but, following W.I. Thomas’ quote, “What men define as real, is real in its consequences” (1928: 571-572). Thus, when racial differences were defined as real biological characteristics and associated to relations of superiority and inferiority, it had grim consequences. The phrase “epidermalization of inferiority” means that a view of oneself as inferior is tied to the notion of race (i.e. their skin colour). In the colonial context, this

³ Ideology understood as a shared belief within a group which mediates between belief (for which there is no substantial empirical evidence) on the one hand, and social reality on the other (Allahar, lecture).

assumption meant that the darker one's skin is, the more inferior. The closer to "white" the colonized subject is (the colour of the colonial dominators), the more superior they become. These "superior beings" (the white colonist) would surely never be subjected to the labour of "inferior beings", and so the colonists were able to utilize the inferiority complex of the colonized to cheapen, and exploit labour. Ordering peoples according to "lightness" or "darkness" assumed a "natural" order. If things are perceived as being "natural" then there is no point in attempting to change them, it is simply the way things are. Instead, the solution is for individuals to look inwards and change themselves to conform to the natural order.

This differentiation between superior and inferior beings is necessary in the capitalist system. The capitalist system is based on competition for an exploitable labour force, raw materials, and access to markets in order to function efficiently for maximizing profit (Allahar, 2011: 2). Capital will exploit whoever it can, whenever it can, however it can (Allahar Lecture, 2012). The indigenous populations were exploited not necessarily because they were coloured, but because they were the cheapest labour force (Williams, 1966:19). Race was used as the hegemonic justification factor to control and order the colonial population, with the colonists often claiming that the natives were not "civilized" enough to govern themselves.⁴ The colonial enterprise was an imperialist enterprise, in that it used labour exploitation across national boundaries to gain its profit.⁵

According to the Italian Marxist Gramsci, control of a population requires both a coercive and consensual element. In the colonial situation, the coercive element manifests itself,

⁴ Before the slave trade and imperial colonialism, the Scottish, Irish and Welsh were the exploited labour force of the English because they were the cheapest labour force available.

⁵ Understood in this way, the term colonist, imperialist, and capitalist are in most situations, interchangeable. Fanon writes: "The colonist derives his validity, i.e. his wealth from the colonial system" (*Wretched*,2).

as discussed in the previous section, through physical force, with its primary agents being the police and military. To truly control a population though, Gramsci asserts that there must be control through consent. This consent involves the distribution and internalization of the values of the dominant group, which aims to convey these values as common sense (Litowitz, 2000: 519). These values are placed in an institutional setting such as the education system, the church, the media and popular culture established by the colonizers (ibid). The non-institutional settings which also colonize the individuals mind are ideology and socialization. Language and education will be the analytical points examined in this paper, as tools of the colonizers to rule in a hegemonic manner.

Language and Education

The first institution, the educational system is of the utmost importance in Fanon's work. To gain an upper hand in the colonial regime, the colonized individual must "assimilate the way the colonist bourgeoisie thinks" (Fanon, 1963: 13) and they must accept the educational system as a means of social mobility. The educational system (being controlled by the church of the colonists in most cases) is in the language of the colonizer, which is viewed as superior to the native language. As Fanon states: "to speak a language is to appropriate its world and culture" (Fanon, 1952: 21). Among the cultural values promoted in the colonial (capitalist) system is that of individuality. According to Fanon, "the colonized intellectual learned from his masters that the individual must assert *himself*" (Fanon, 1963: 11 [my emphasis]). So, in order for the colonized individual to learn, and get ahead, they must inherit the colonist's language.

What Fanon does not discuss in depth however, is whom specifically this opportunity to learn the language is offered to. The individual with this opportunity must possess sufficient

cultural capital⁶ in order to learn the language. Those “under the compulsion of the whip of hunger”⁷ (the proletariat and the lumpenproletariat) are not afforded the opportunity (to the same degree as the bourgeois individual) to learn the colonial language, and are therefore not in the same position to enter the educational system. Furthermore, the best and brightest of the colonial regime have the opportunity to be sent to the colonizers homeland, in order to gain a formal education at a “reputable” institution. The worker or peasant that must work in order to support their family is not offered the same opportunity. It is in this educational institution that the colonized bourgeois internalizes the colonial values. Fanon writes “the black man who returns home [from the colonial homeland] gives the impression of having completed a cycle, of having added something to himself” (Fanon, 1963: 3). This “having added something” is the internalization of colonial bourgeois values. Fanon even distinguishes between this returning individual from the “native islander who has never left his hole” and describes him as a “country bumpkin” (ibid). This is an important distinction. For it is not the “black” individual who returns home full of colonial values, but the black *bourgeois* individual. This colonized bourgeois is the one who becomes most disillusioned (and therefore falsely conscious) due their internalization of colonial (capitalist) values. This disillusionment causes the bourgeois individual to become alienated from their own substantive culture (their values, beliefs and language) and in turn causes the colonized bourgeois individual⁸ to separate themselves from the colonized proletariat by adopting the values and interests of the colonial masters. Maximizing the profits for the colonial regime is beneficial to the colonial bourgeois and the colonized bourgeois alike, regardless of race.

⁶ Understood as a total concept, cultural capital can be understood as nonmaterial goods such as educational credentials, types of expertise, verbal skills and aesthetic preferences that a social actor can convert into economic capital (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008: 688).

⁷ A phrase used by Max Weber.

⁸ What Fanon terms the “national bourgeois”

Due to the creation of a superior-inferior system based on race, although the colonized may speak the colonial language perfectly, may espouse all the colonial values and may have an intellect superior to that of the colonist, the epidermalization of inferiority reigns supreme due to its definition as a real trait. Fanon argues that “in order to put himself on relatively equal footing as the white man, the black man must become a replica of the white man” (Fanon, 1963: 19). However, it is not the replication of the white man’s whiteness that allows the black man to get ahead, but rather the replication of the white man’s bourgeois mentality.

This entails race as a floating signifier. The concept of race is not fixed; it changes meanings depending on the social context. In the context of colonialism, race takes the form of separating the capitalists from the labour force. The phrase “money whitens” (Lewis, 1983: 10) refers to the concept that although an individual may have a dark skin colour, their economic and cultural capital is externalized in the individual’s tastes, language and values. The colonized individual who has been “whitened” returns home from the colonial homeland “assumes a critical attitude toward his fellow islanders” (Fanon, 1963: 7), and views them through his newly created bourgeois mentality. However, the concept of money “whitening” cannot fully make an individual *white*. The racial component remains. This definition of inferiority due to race serves to subjugate the colonized individual, and sends the message: “you stay where you are” (Fanon, 1963, 17). Therefore, the colonized bourgeois is offered the opportunity to quantitatively improve their standing *within* their class (they may have more material goods and a better education), but their mobility *between* classes (they do not have control over working conditions, setting fair labour prices etc.) is still restricted. This differentiation of opportunities (based on

cultural, and therefore economic capital, which are dialectically entwined) to partially assimilate⁹ into the colonial regime, creates a hierarchical structure based on both material and racial guidelines. The qualitative control of the colony is reserved for the colonial master alone, until such a time that the colonial enterprise becomes too costly to the homeland.¹⁰ Only the white colonial master can control the means, and relations of production in the colonial setting.

The colonized subject is thus assessed (by the colonizer) with regard to their degree of assimilation (Fanon, 1963: 19). At the top of this hierarchy is the white, male, colonial capitalist. Second, is the bourgeois colonized subject who has attempted to assimilate themselves into the colonial culture. Lastly, is the colonized subject who has made no attempt (or, more aptly, not had the opportunity) to assimilate to the colonial culture. These three categories can be socially ordered into the bourgeois (the colonizers/owners of the means of production), the petty-bourgeois, or managerial class (the attempting-to-assimilate colonized bourgeois)¹¹, and the proletariat/lumpenproletariat (the working class of exploited colonized individuals).

From the perspective of the colonist, their feeling of necessity to assimilate the native relates back to the Allaharian hypothesis of the Insecurity-curiosity Continuum. Allahar builds from the fact that in order to survive, humans have to become interdependent and that this interdependence expands during one's life. Following Freud, the first sense of satisfaction is the self, then the mother and father, then siblings, and onward. As this comfort zone expands,

⁹ Assimilation understood as an individual's attempt to become an indistinguishable member of the mainstream through a process of social, cultural, political and in some cases biological blending (Allahar, 2011: 21). This biological blending is addressed in Chapters 2 and 3 of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*.

¹⁰ At this point, the colony becomes independent, with the colonist's hope that they have established such hegemonic control over the colonized bourgeoisie that they will continue to operate the country much in the same manner as the colonial capitalists did.

¹¹ There may of course be native bourgeois who reject assimilation to the colonial regime. These petty-bourgeois, although disadvantaged in comparison to the colonized petty-bourgeois, hold a specific place in the national liberation movement. These native, rejectionist bourgeois are ideally situated to form the vanguard party, which will be discussed later on.

humans develop a tension between security and insecurity. Allahaar posits that since humans attempt to predict outcomes, a sense of familiarity leads to a sense of comfort, and therefore humans who are insecure will not want to leave their comfort zone (what is familiar to them). Along with this security, is the concept of curiosity (and therefore uncuriosity), which relates to the willingness of an individual to leave their comfort zone. Allahaar's hypothesis is that the more secure an individual is, the more curious the individual will be. The insecure individual is anxious and fearful of change, therefore does not seek it, and is contained to their conservatism.

The point which I am attempting to make by using the Security-curiosity Continuum is that the colonial settlers were extremely insecure. Upon arrival in their colonies, the colonists were insecure in their new surroundings. They had never been exposed to the culture or appearance of the native populations, and these radical differences caused a profound sense of insecurity. At a time in history when distance magnified difference (Allahaar, 1993) the colonists truly were, and felt, a long way from home. As a coping mechanism for this feeling of insecurity, the colonists became protective of their culture, which denied them any curiosity. They did not attempt to learn from the culture of the native populations, instead they attempted to Europeanize the natives by teaching them colonial values and the language of the colonial homeland. By making the colonial populations similar to themselves, the colonists would be able to feel a greater sense of security. So, a sense of similarity leads to a sense of familiarity, which leads to a sense of comfort.¹² The colonist projected¹³ their insecurities upon the natives, terming them "savage" and "backwards" (perhaps it was the colonist who was feeling backwards in this new territory) in order to cope with their new and unfamiliar surroundings. The social control and

¹² This familiarity also manifested itself in the colonial replication of architecture and buildings in the colonial cities. By creating a city with the street names, the building styles, etc. as the homeland, the colonist was made to feel at ease by feeling as though they were in a familiar location (home).

¹³ As in the Freudian defensive mechanism of projection

subsequent social ordering (through assimilation) of the colonial population allowed the colonist a sense of security. This feeling of security is shaken however, when the colonized individuals awaken their desire for a national liberation movement.¹⁴

Social Change

Social disorder and social change in the colonial context come about most profoundly through the process of decolonization. Decolonization for Fanon is “the substitution of one ‘species’ of mankind by another” (Fanon, 1963, 1), which is always a violent event. Decolonization also requires that the masses demand not the status of the colonist, but his place (Fanon, 1963: 23). However, the colonist’s place is also the place of the capitalist. If the colonized take both the physical and ideological place of the colonist, then the colonized bourgeois will simply take the place of the colonist, reinforcing colonial values, and the capitalist system. If decolonization is the substitution of one species of man for another, the capitalist species must be replaced by the socialist species (which Fanon alludes to, see Footnote 1). The violence used in the liberation struggle cannot stop after independence, but must be used to also overthrow the framework of colonial capitalism to establish socialism (Fanon, 1963: 35). The colonized must attempt to take the colonizer’s physical place, as the owners of the means of production, not the ideological place. Emancipation within colonialism has two components. The first requires the physical removal of the colonist (and thus the coercive element of hegemony), and the second requires the removal of the colonizing effects of capital, and the ideology of the colonizer (the consensual element).¹⁵

¹⁴ This analysis should not be taken as an attempt to justify the colonist’s actions. Insecurity is no justification.

¹⁵ Fanon writes: “During the colonial period the people were called upon to fight against oppression. Following national liberation they are urged to fight against poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment” (*Wretched*, 51).

In order to achieve this emancipation, and develop a collective consciousness oriented towards establishing both national sovereignty and socialism, the colonized population must rid themselves of the varying factors contributing to their false consciousness. False consciousness describes a situation “in which individuals who share a common class situation are not aware of the fact, and as a consequence are not able to conceive of acting in concert to pursue their interests” (Allahar 2011: 6). The colonized must orient themselves with a civic nationalism that is highly aware of the conflicting interests between the bourgeois and the proletariat.¹⁶ This civic nationalism is a concept that places an emphasis on a shared territory, economy, identical legal rights and duties for everyone, and a public, mass education system (Smith, 1988: 9). The other form of nationalism that is typical in the modern state is ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism claims territorial self-determination based on a common ancestry, a shared language, common customs and a common native history (ibid).¹⁷ The problem with appealing for an ethnic nationalism in the colonial context is the multi-ethnic, and multi-racial situations that were (and are) prevalent in the colonies. When the colonists came and decimated the native population to assert their coercive control, they also destroyed a large portion of their labour force, for it was usually the men resisting this coercion with counterviolence, and the men who were the primary labourers. As a result the colonial regime had to import either slaves or indentured workers to replace this cheap workforce.¹⁸ This practice was prevalent in the Caribbean context especially. Only by assuming ethnic homogeneity can one appeal for a truly ethnic nationalism. Of course, most civic nationalisms are informed by ethnic undercurrents, but my point in this is that civic nationalism must take precedence for the establishment of socialism. Ethnic nationalism can

¹⁶ This includes the petty-bourgeois, the lumpenproletariat, etc.

¹⁷ The concept of ethnicity is built on a common ancestry, shared language etc., and is the basis for ethnic nationalism.

¹⁸ See: *Unity and Diversity in Caribbean Ethnicity and Culture*, Anton L. Allahar, 1993.

divide the different ethnicities of a colonial regime, and act as a false consciousness by creating competition over resources between ethnically defined groups (i.e. split labour markets), instead of between the dominators (colonists) and the dominated (colonized¹⁹).

In relating this back to Fanon, he claims that when the leaders “name” the nation the demands of the colonized are formulated (Fanon, 1963: 29). He goes on to state that these national leaders use ethnic language by declaring: “We blacks, we Arabs” (ibid). By formulating a national consciousness in this way, Fanon is appealing to an ethnic nationalism that assumes (incorrectly) that the colonized will fall under the blanket category of “black or Arab”. Fanon declares that “the notion of common cause, national destiny, and *collective history* arises during a war of liberation” (Fanon, 1963: 51 [my emphasis]). This has the potential to threaten those ethnicities (likely minorities) who do not fall under the dominant ethnic category, and cause them to be at the mercy and the control of the larger, ethnically conscious nationalist party. Therefore, a civic nationalism with a class-aware population and equal protections for all ethnicities will yield the best results in establishing national liberation and socialism.

Fanon claims that “the slogan ‘power to the proletariat’ should be secondary to slogans of national liberation. My claim is that these slogans should be intertwined. Simply appealing for a national liberation, without appeal to class divisions, would result in a nation of individually liberated subjects who would be freed from colonial domination, but not the domination of capital.

The next question of social change in the war of liberation is who the leaders will be. For Fanon, the lumpenproletariat alone constitute the revolutionary force in the colonial setting. The

¹⁹ The ethnicities that are colonized are dominated.

lumpenproletariat²⁰ have “nothing to lose and everything to gain” (Fanon, 1963: 23), and these exploited, “underprivileged and starving” peasants are the first to realize that violence is the only means (ibid). This differs from Marx and Engels position, who viewed the proletariat as the only revolutionary force against capitalism. The proletariat individual, endowed with the values of punctuality, division of labour and a regimented lifestyle (as a result of working in a factory), already contains the necessary values to become a cadre²¹. According to Marx, the proletariat are also the mostly likely to form a class consciousness, due to their close proximity to the capitalist system which exploits and alienates them. Fanon differs from this position by claiming that the proletariat benefit from capitalism. According to Fanon, the proletariat, much like the colonized bourgeois (but to a lesser extent²²) has an ability to improve their standing in life quantitatively through capitalism. The opposition between the lumpenproletariat and the proletariat arises from the opposition between the colonized excluded from the benefits of colonialism and their counterparts who attempt to turn the colonial system to their advantage (Fanon, 1963: 67). These classes must dissolve this false-opposition, and turn their energies towards the colonial capitalist bourgeoisie. What is necessary in establishing socialism then is the alteration of the mode of production (combining qualitative control over the relations of production and the means of production), which in the colonial setting, is determined by the capitalist.

The lumpenproletariat according to Fanon, represent the element of discipline whose social structure remains community minded (Fanon, 1963: 67). The lumpenproletariat live in a traditional environment whose structures have remained intact, whereas in the metropolis areas these traditional have been splintered by industrialization. This community mindset, and the fact

²⁰ Or revolutionary peasantry as Fanon terms them at times.

²¹ Cadre - a professional revolutionary.

²² The goal of the bourgeois nationalist is to negotiate for more power *within* the colonial regime (*Wretched*, 22 [my emphasis]).

that the lumpenproletariat have retained their traditional culture more-so than the other classes, are important factors in establishing nationalism and socialism. However, this traditional environment means that the lumpenproletariat are not as likely to be able to form a class consciousness based on the fact that they have not been exposed to the exploitive and alienating factors of industrial capitalism. Therefore, the lumpenproletariat need to be educated in terms of opposing class struggles, in order to orient a war of liberation directed against oppression from colonialism *and* capitalism.²³ This education falls to the vanguard party.

The vanguard party is a Marxist-Leninist concept that advocates for the political and class education of the proletariat (and in this case lumpenproletariat) to form them into a professional revolutionary force (composed of cadres). The vanguard party in the colonial situation must be comprised of the colonial rejectionist bourgeois²⁴, and the most class-conscious members of the proletariat. The rejectionist bourgeois are necessary for a number of reasons. First, they are ideally situated, with their capital (and therefore free time) to travel, educate and organize en masse the proletariat and lumpenproletariat populations. Secondly, by rejecting assimilation, they have pointedly rejected the direct internalization of colonist bourgeois (capitalist) values, and are more capable of developing a class-conscious relationship with the proletariat and lumpenproletariat.²⁵ The proletariat are also in a position of entering the vanguard party provided that they are not falsely conscious. The proletariat's experience with the exploitive and alienating aspects of capitalism allows them to transmit this knowledge, along with the revolutionary necessary values of punctuality, division of labour and a regimented

²³ Fanon writes: the leaders of the insurrection realize that any peasant revolt... needs control and guidance. They, therefore, must transform the peasant revolt into a revolutionary struggle" (*Wretched*,86).

²⁴ Those native bourgeois who have had the opportunity to assimilate, but refused in order to pursue nationalism.

²⁵ A contemporary example of a rejectionist bourgeois (although he was a member of the vanguard party in a global sense) is Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

lifestyle. The vanguard party must not assert definitive leaders, but must learn from each other in a mutual exchange, with the end goal of establishing national socialism.

Conclusion

The nature of conflict between the colonizers and the colonized is analogous to the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The colonized subject is the exploited, the colonist; the exploiter. The discovery of the New World opened up new raw materials, a new labour force, and a new market in which the European countries could establish themselves. In order to be exploited, these native subjects had to first be dominated, which takes two separate forms. The obvious is the violence, which aims to subject the native's body. The second, far more insidious method is used to subject the native's mind. The native's language, culture and way of life are altered in this process, and only the assimilated native has a chance of social mobility. Specifically it is the native bourgeois who internalizes and attempts to assimilate to the colonial way of life. The proletariat worker in the factory and the lumpenproletariat peasant in his fields is not offered this opportunity for they are too busy being exploited under the compulsion of the whip of hunger.

Social control became all-encompassing, controlling the minds and the bodies of the colonized as the imperialism of Europe raped the plundered without constraint or accountability. But, as the second principle of Newtonian physics suggests, for every action there is an equal and opposing reaction. This reaction to the violence of colonization takes the form of violence in decolonization. For as Fanon asserts: "the violence of the colonial regime and the counterviolence of the colonized balance each other out and respond to each other in an extraordinary homogeneity" (Fanon, 1963, 46). Eventually the weight and scope of the violence

imposed by the colonial regime shatters the consensual control and the national spirit awakens in the colonized (ibid). They take it upon themselves to forcefully remove this colonial power and thus begins the war of liberation.

This war of liberation can be drawn along every dividing line possible including race, ethnicity, political ideology and religion. Fanon, by addressing this conflict along racially-prioritized lines, at points misses the deeper, class-rooted conflicts that appear in the colonial situation. I am not contesting that what divided the colonial populations was race, for that is undeniable. Rather, my position has been, and remains, that if the “wretched of the earth” are to truly emancipate themselves from the colonial situation *and* establish social emancipation, that their racial situation needs to be situated in class terms.

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