Peau noire, masques blancs, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, no date). Referred to as *Black Skin, White Masks* or BW.

Pour la revolution africaine, Ecrits politiques (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1969). Referred to as *Towards the African Revolution* or AR.

Sociologie d'une revolution, (ran V de la revolution algerienne) (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1968). Referred to as *Sociology of a Revolution* or SR.

Las damnes de la terre (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1968). First published in 1961. Referred to as *The Wretched of the Earth* or WE.

Frantz Fanon lived a short but intense life. Cut down by disease in his mid-thirties, he had accomplished more at that young age than many fortunate enough to live twice as long. Author of three books and of several articles in literary and psychiatric journals as well as in the famous organ of the Algerian revolution, *El Moudjahid,* Fanon had also served *as* a psychiatrist and as a revolutionary diplomat before his life so abruptly ended. All of these different activities-author, physician, and statesman-were part of his conscious attempt to purge the world of the evils of colonialism. His first book, *Black Skin, White Masks,* consists of a poignant analysis of the racism inherent in colonialism and of its debilitating effects on the hapless victims of colonialism. According to Fanon, his analysis was primarily psychological or psychoanalytic in character.[1] His last book, *The Wretched of the Earth,* opens with a prescription of violence as the appropriate medicine for colonialism's victims and concludes with a series of tragic case studies about individuals afflicted by mental disorders as a result of colonial governance or revolt against it. (See 5-7, 17-9, 23, 51-2, 177-214).

Fanon s passionate prose and uncompromising stance inspired others both during his lifetime and afterwards. In addition to the

1. This work was first published in 1952, when Fanon was twenty-seven years old. In the introduction he explains that his method combines psychoanalytic or psychological analysis with socio-economic criticism. Differently stated, he seeks to present and to interpret his own experience as it has become clear to him in the light of certain theories about the soul and about human alienation (pp. 27-28; see also pp. 29-30, 44-45, 88, and 84).

countless liberation fighters encouraged by his speech and deed, note must be taken of the numerous scholars who have also been caught up by what Fanon said and did. Indeed, since his death at least nine books and more than four times as many articles have been published about various facets of his life and thought.

Despite such a vast amount of research and writing, however, a genuine analysis of his thought has yet to appear. In general, this literature consists of more or less detailed accounts of Fanon's life, attempts to explain the surface of his thought in terms of his historical setting and origins, or assessments of the practical merit of particular features of his larger argument-e.g., his praise of the rural masses as the vanguard of the revolution or his denunciation of the national bourgeoisie as a post-independence political force. Fanon's castigation of colonialism and his attempt to undermine the racism he considered to be its inseparable companion as well as his tendency to glorify the populace and its sometimes destructive will are taken either as self-evident and in need of nothing more than a passing acknowledgement or as attitudes that can best be explained in terms of his life and times. And even though the difficulty of his prose and of his arguments is generally conceded, no one has embarked upon an explanation of his thought simply as thought.

The present essay seeks to fill that gap by means of a two-step analysis. First of all, Fanon's writings will be considered in chronological order so as to set forth the basic elements of his argument and his reasons for holding such opinions. Then his argument will be considered a second time in order to explain, synthetically as it were, the three themes central to his political teaching: human dignity and violence, national liberation, and national culture. Once this has been achieved, it will be possible to evaluate Fanon's teaching and, hopefully, to arrive, at a better appreciation of the conditions under which a quest for human dignity justifies violence. When the procedure is stated in such terms, the significance of this essay becomes immediately apparent: however much the world has changed in the nearly two decades since Fanon's death, the problem of justifying political violence while prizing human dignity remains paramount. It demands the urgent attention of all who contend that political well-being and justice can be brought into harmony.

I

Fanon's first book, *Black Skin, White Masks,* praises man and

damns colonialism as the source of evil in the world, of misery and dejection. Borrowing a fiery phrase from Aime Cesaire, Fanon identifies the subject of the book at the very outset:

> I speak about the millions of men who have been cleverly inculcated with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, abasement, despair, servility.'

The clever teacher of such character traits is the colonialist, and his docile pupil has learned these lessons only too well. Those who still need to be convinced that "there are too many imbeciles on this earth," that as things now stand "the black is not a man," are the addressees of the book. Fanon seeks to free the black man and the white man from the numerous mutual misunderstandings built up over the centuries, thereby permitting each to become complete human beings.[3]

His goal is illuminated by the order of the book. The first three chapters depict the black in the white world and show his grotesque attempts to assimilate, to cast off his black identity. In the first chapter, the white imbeciles who can never see the human being behind the color of the skin are also portrayed. In their eyes, every black person has an arrested mental development and needs to be addressed in "bush-talk" or "petit-negre." The second and third chapters explore the mental attitudes that lead black people to choose white sexual partners as a means of denying their blackness. In the fourth chapter, Fanon turns to an examination of what might be called the learned opinions standing behind the ideas many white people have of black people and demonstrates the fundamental errors in these opinions. By this point, then, he has indicated the fallacies in the preconceptions held by blacks about themselves or by whites about blacks. Yet despite the error in these preconceptions, blacks continue to have neuroses. So in the last three chapters of the book, Fanon seeks for a complete examination of the causes of these neuroses. He moves first to the very core of the black dilemma, the

2. All page references in this section are to *Black Skin , White Masks.* 25. All quotations from Fanon's writings are my own translations. The existing translations, in addition to being inconsistent and in conflict one with another, are frequently erroneous. Moreover, it seemed appropriate to refer to the original French in a number of instances in order to draw attention to particular nuances in Fanon's language.

3. BW, 30. "I truly want to lead my brother, black or white, to shake off as vigorously as possible the pitiful livery he has built up over centuries of incomprehension." See also, 25 and 26.

attempt to find some value or some characteristic by which the importance of blackness can be affirmed, and does so by recounting his own quest for such a value. Then, having struggled through that terrible experience, he can explore what he calls the psychopathological and philosophical being of the black man. His personal narration is set forth in Chapter Five and his deeper probing into the hidden recesses of the soul of the black man in the sixth and seventh chapters.

Fanon begins his analysis with the phenomenon of language because people use language to present themselves to others. To understand the way the black man uses language is to understand what he wants others to see in him. The colonized black man wants to lose his blackness, to cross over into the white world, and the best way for him to do this is to prove his ability to speak the language of the colonialist. For example, if he can speak French as fluently as a native Frenchman, he might be able to escape the presupposition that he is a child intellectually and culturally, that he has no past worthy of pride. That at any rate is the dream. Reality lies elsewhere. Using real life examples, Fanon shows that no matter how hard the colonized black man tries, no matter how well he succeeds, he can never escape the negative features of his blackness. The colonialist firmly believes that he has civilized the black man, that the black man's dialect precedes civilization. Anyone else can speak French badly and not be thought intellectually inferior, but the colonized black who cannot speak French correctly is considered stupid. The colonialist refuses to accept the validity of the black man's original culture. Nor is that the worst of it. Even more frustrating is the refusal of most colonialists to recognize true accomplishment by the colonized. They cannot recognize such accomplishment. They refuse to recognize such accomplishment, because such recognition would call their domination into question. Thus, whatever his accomplishments, the colonized black will always be something of the savage from the bush in the eyes of the colonialist. (40-1, 42, 44, 47 and 48, note 9).

A similar dilemma can be found in the sexual relationships of many black people. Some black women seek white sexual partners in order to move closer toward whiteness. Similarly, some black men desire white sexual partners so as to overcome the insults and frustrations caused them by the white world. In considering such twisted relationships, Fanon hopes to make two points. First, in pointing out the pathological and abnormal character of these erotic

expressions, he counters the argument that the existence of such twisted desires proves the natural inferiority complex of the black person. He denies that they point to the black man's natural awareness of his skin color being a blemish of some kind. Such expressions show instead a morbidity that requires treatment. Secondly, Fanon seeks to prove that this kind of psychic disorder, like every other kind of psychic disorder, cannot be traced to psychic structure alone. The social environment must also be taken into account when explaining a psychic disorder, especially when the social environment includes colonialism. His diagnosis is that people with such sexual desires suffer from an acutely alienated consciousness and that such alienation can usually be traced to the racism perpetrated by colonialism. (84-5, 86 and 98).

The material on which Fanon bases these arguments is admittedly subjective. He frequently refers to experiences of his own or of his friends and just as frequently cites anecdotes. But this personal involvement has its own rationale. Greater sympathy is evoked by an analysis grounded in personal experience. Moreover, he never doubts that his intuitive appreciation of what these experiences mean to the individuals involved can be expressed to others, especially to the white man. As he puts it:

> I sincerely believe that a subjective experience can be understood by another person; it gives me no satisfaction to come and say "the black problem is my problem, only mine," and then to set about studying it. But it seems to me that Mr. Mannoni has not tried to feel, from within, the colored man's despair in the presence of the white man. In this study I have sought to feel the misery of the black-to feel it by touch and emotion. I have not wanted to be objective. That's wrong: it has not been possible for me to be objective. (89-90).

Nor does he think his subjective, emotional communication of this misery affects the validity of the analysis. By claiming that he does not want to be objective, that he cannot be objective, Fanon means only that he is not scientifically detached from the subject matter. And he alludes to the reasons for this aspect of his procedure at the end of the book:

> As has already been noticed, the situation I have studied is not classic. Scientific objectivity was forbidden me, for the alienated person, the neurotic, was my brother, my sister, my father. I have constantly tried to reveal to the black man that in a sense he is becoming abnormal, and to the white man that he is at the same time alienator and alienated.'

4. BW, 202. On the basis of the argument made at 43, the words "alienator" and "alienated" have been used to translate the French *mystificateur* and *mystifie.* According to the same argument, to be *mystifie* or *aliene* is ultimately to become inauthentic.

Yet simply to identify these instances of psychological aberration is not sufficient. Because Fanon holds them to be symptomatic of a disease that engulfs any colonized society and claims that they find their origin in the evils of colonialism, he must go further and refute alternative explanations. One of the best psychological studies of colonial culture is Mannoni's *Psychology of Colonialism*[5], and Fanon devotes the fourth chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* to a critique of Mannoni's argument.

Mannoni holds that the inferiority complex of the colonized person exists prior to the colonial period and breaks out only after the onset of colonialism. While he admits that the white colonialist is prompted by some sort of psychological dissatisfaction, by a sort of Adlerian desire to overcompensate, Mannoni also insists that a seed of inferiority exists in the colonized individual from the period of childhood. Fanon retorts that Mannoni is blind to what he seeks to describe: the colonial experience brings an entirely new set of factors into play, above all the racism which calls the human existence of the colonized person into question.

> Of course it is evident that the Malagasy can bear up very well with not being a white man. A Malagasy is a Malagasy; well, actually, no, a Malagasy is not a Malagasy: he absolutely *exists* his "Malagasyness." If he is a Malagasy, it is because the white man has come; if, at a certain time in his history, he has been brought to the point of asking himself whether he is a man or not, it is because someone has questioned this reality of man-ness. Stated differently, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the extent that the white man burdens me with discrimination, makes a colonized person of me, wrests all value and originality from me, tells me that I am a parasite on the world, that I had better get in step with the white world as quickly as possible, "that I am a stupid beast, that my people and I are an ambulatory dung-heap, disgustingly offering sweet cane and silky cotton." Then I will simply try to make myself white, that is to say, I will force the white man to recognize my humanity. (99, See also 88-9, 96, 97 and 98).

In other words, he insists that the effect of this racism be understood, for only by understanding its pernicious effect on the colonized victim's psyche is there any hope of curing him.

Mannoni fails to recognize this pathological aspect of colonialism because he has no idea of what constitutes racism. Proof of this is his futile attempt to distinguish between different kinds of racism. For

5. Cf. O. Mannoni, *Psychologie de la colonisation* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1950). This book has been published in English as *Prospero and Caliban,* trans. by P. Powesland (New York: Praeger, 1964).

Fanon, a country is racist or not racist; there are no degrees or kinds of racism, no more tolerable or less tolerable racism. Racism, in whatever form it exists, is simply destructive of human well-being. (100-1, 89-91). Mannoni is equally ignorant of the real meaning of exploitation and of its essential element: making an *object* of another human being. Here, too, Fanon denies the possibility of fine distinctions. There is no hierarchy among these different forms of exploitations; all exploitation is simply wrong:

> All forms of exploitation resemble one another. They all justify their necessity by some kind of biblical decree. All forms of exploitation are identical, for they all refer to the same `object': man. By wishing to think abstractly about the structure of one kind of exploitation or another, we blind ourselves to the major and fundamental problem-namely, putting man back in his place. (91, See also 92-4).

Failing to recognize racism and exploitation for what they are, Mannoni fails to recognize the real basis of the inferiority complex among colonized peoples, namely, the racism to which colonial exploitation leads. "Let us be courageous enough to say it: *the racist creates the person who suffers from an inferiority complex."* (95, his emphasis). For Fanon, then, colonialism is evil because it is always racist. It must always be racist because it must always exploit the colonized people, and that exploitation is furthered by racism. The racism and exploitation fostered by colonialism create a new psychic structure in the colonized people and thus bring about their psychological problems.

But why should the colonized man heed the way the colonialist treats him? What prevents him from knowing his own worth and from believing in it. regardless of the way others treat him? Clearly, nothing does. Aime Cesaire stands out as a notable example of a colonized person who refused to accept the white man's evaluation of his own worth. Nonetheless, such self confidence must be based on something, and the quest for that something constitutes the subject of Chapter Five. Fanon can turn to that issue now because he has proven that alternatives to his explanation of why colonized people suffer from the problems identified in the first three chapters are inadequate.

Here Fanon goes to the heart of the problem facing him as a black man, the white world's denial of anything he might claim as his own insofar as he is a black man. Though he casts the argument in terms of his own experiences, he insists that they are common to all blacks.

Because his blackness is the cause of his personal worth being questioned, his quest for something in himself of value to help him resist the critical judgment of the white colonialist is necessarily a quest for something of value in his blackness. Yet he must do more than persuade himself of his own worth. Since recognition from the white world of his personal merit as a black man is his ultimate goal, he must bring the white world to accept what he identifies as the importance of his blackness. He must impose himself on the white world. (108, 110, 112-3).

If he can identify what sets black people apart as a race and show the superiority of that distinguishing feature, Fanon can succeed. According to the strongest voices among the black peoples, rhythm or passion and mysticism or irrationality are the essential features of blackness. A black is nothing if not rhythmical. The beat of the torn-tom and blackness are virtually synonymous. Dancing, singing, and blackness always go together. The deep urgings of the soul, the closeness to what resembles the animal, all the features of passion are traditionally associated with the black man. Similarly, the mysteries of voodoo cults, rites of initiation, all the intricacies of the irrational devotion to divinities are readily given over as part of black culture. Heretofore, the black man has tried to live down this past. But that is perhaps an error. The source of his future pride could be these things, if only he can vaunt them adequately.

For a brief moment, Fanon-or the black man personified-entertains that notion. (118-9 and 121-4). But the counter-argument of white culture prevails in the end. The white man is not impressed by seeing black people take pride in these things. After all, such qualities belong to a past age. The white man once lived according to the same dominant forces of the soul, but then moved on to another stage of human development. Moreover, the emotionalism claimed by the black man is only partial; it represents only a partial form of the human emotionalism already experienced by the white man. But the major argument against pride in emotionalism is the proof of rationalism's superiority. Considered in the brilliant light of rationalism, all emotionalism pales. (124).

Fanon accepts this counter-argument as valid, but is not pessimistic about the possibility of finding something distinctive of black people-something in which he and all other blacks can take pride and which white men will have to recognize. He recalls the cultural past of black people and is impressed by its richness, hoping it might answer his needs. Extensive civilizations once flourished in

parts of what is now known as West Africa. Learned men of black descent held high positions of respect as Quranic scholars. Centuries ago, it was the black man who passed culture on to others. (125-6).

Again, however, the white man refuses to be impressed. While he admits that such accomplishments may once have been of value, he claims that they matter little today. In his eyes, cultural achievement is of scant significance for a world that marches to an industrial tune. Today the most important mental acquisition can only be wisdom useful for industrial advancement: technology or applied science. Whatever cultural refinements were attained by black people in past ages, there are no black people on a par with the white man's industrial competence in the present, machine-dominated era. (126-7).

Fanon has reached an impasse. There appears to be no possibility of securing terrain from which the black man might resist the assaults of white exploiters upon his dignity. If he exults in his passionateness or emotionalism, the white man rebukes him by evoking the superiority of reason. When he hearkens back from this rebuke to vaunt the former achievements of black people in cultural endeavors, the white man narrows the meaning of rationalism. In sum, he can do nothing to bring the white man to accept anything worthwhile in the black experience.

More discouraging yet are those voices which dissuade the black man from seeking dignity by claiming something distinctive of black people. According to former allies like Sartre, not blackness, but capital is the issue. The attempt to find something of value in blackness, the infatuation with *negritude,* must pass away so that the real problem of the proletariat can be discerned. For Sartre, black people are in no worse a situation than the proletariat everywhere. (127-8). Thus he urges black people to join forces with socialists and thereby hasten the advent of a just socialist regime.

Although Fanon will subsequently acknowledge the validity of Sartre's contention, he is unable to do so now. (179-180, See also WE, 7-8, 56). He insists on searching for something uniquely black, for something that will provide impetus to black awareness. Even though he knows that his quest can easily be misconstrued and give birth to the kind of pointless enthusiasm he condemns at the beginning of the book, Fanon persists. (129 with 27). He persists because he is persuaded that the black man's difference from the white man reaches so far that "the black man suffers in his body differently from the white man" and must therefore identify with something

characteristic of his blackness. (132). Yet Fanon is not able to discover that unique characteristic. All he can do is to evoke his feeling and bear witness to the fact that other black people share that feeling.

In other words, Fanon's rejection of Sartre here is nothing but a stratagem. It is one based on an understanding that awareness, especially black awareness, can be developed only to the extent that it is taken as an absolute without regard for its rational soundness. Even if a broader view reveals the whole process to be dialectical, the thesis and antithesis must be perceived as absolutely true as they appear for them to function properly. (128). This means that far from dismissing revolution as unnecessary, Fanon is simply saying that the black man is not yet ready for it. First he must live his blackness in all its glory. Yet because this is no more than a stratagem, Fanon must pursue his analysis of racism. In returning to that objective now, he tries to go deeper into the souls of colonized black people and to bring to light their hidden recesses.

Chapter Six is the longest and most important chapter in the book. It contains the most extensive psychoanalytic investigation of the problem posed by colonial racism and explores the social setting that fosters colonial racism. However, while there is constant interplay between the social setting and the psychic structure of the individual, there is no exhaustive analysis of the role played by either. Fanon apparently believes their relationship to be so entwined that he sees no way to separate them and pursue such an analysis. He recognizes that each individual suffers because of his self-image and diagnoses that as an individual problem. And he has discovered that this image is not a fanciful construct conjured up by the individual, but something imposed upon him by the larger, colonial society. Still it is not accurate to accuse the larger, colonial society of having willfully constructed this destructive image, in order to harm black people. It has come to hold this destructive to be negrophobic, because of earlier, unsuccessful attempts by individuals to solve their own libidinal problems.

Fanon begins his analysis with the family. It is the psychoanalytic given, because all neuroses can be traced back to the family. To understand the way family life contributes to the psychological problems of the colonized black person, one must recognize that his family has a different relationship to the larger, colonial society than does the family of the European colonialist or of the non-colonized person. With the latter two kinds of family, the characteristics of the family environment-especially authority-are projected into the

social environment. The child's growth from family into society is thereby facilitated. (135-7). The family of the colonized black person does not, however, prepare him for this transition.

Because his family life does not prepare him for contact with the white world, a colonized black child becomes abnormal the minute he comes into contact with a white person. He recoils before any manifestation of authority in the social environment and appears to be confused about his own identity. A major source of his identity confusion is his acceptance of the suffocating collective unconscious of the larger society, the set of opinions that depict the black man as the embodiment of evil and the white man as the embodiment of good. Often these opinions are acquired in the family as the colonized black child sees parents and siblings striving to imitate the ways of the white man or as he hears them passing on the racial slurs common to the white world. Even when he does not acquire the opinions belonging to this collective unconscious through his family, he acquires them through comic books or movies. In the fantasy world proper to comic books and movies, the colonized black child tends to think of himself as white, as a hero, not a villain. When he meets a real white man, however, he is forced to face his own blackness and thereby to see in himself all the evil traits portrayed in the fantasy world of comic books and movies (137-41). The tensions created by these unconscious sets of opinions leave the colonized black child unprepared for life in society. He must choose between what he is and what others want him to be, between his own sense of respect and the disrespect the larger society has for him and his people, between the family with which he identifies-however much or little it reinforces his own self-image-and the society he perceives as threatening. For these reasons, a young black child and a young white child have different goals as they strive to be socialized. Pursuit of those different goals and continued residence in entirely different worlds lead to problems of adjustment.

At this point the entwinement of the individual and the social levels or of the psychological and the socio-economic modes of analysis becomes most apparent. Taking the psychoanalytic emphasis on the family as a starting point, Fanon has been able to identify the earliest aspects of the black person's eventual alienation and to show how they inevitably lead to problems of adjustment as the individual takes his place in society. One way to get to the roots of those adjustment problems is to conduct a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black myth and of the life experience of the black

man. However, while he concedes the value of such an approach for that goal, Fanon eschews it here as ultimately misleading. A psychoanalytic interpretation of either necessarily gives the impression that adjustment problems are no more than psychological problems of black individuals. That is precisely the impression Fanon wishes to avoid, for he considers these problems to be infinitely more complex. According to Fanon, an accurate analysis of these problems requires tracing them back to the social setting. As long as the black man grows up in a colonial setting, Fanon thinks it ridiculous to try to explain adjustment problems in terms of the black man's satisfactory or unsatisfactory resolution of the Oedipus complex.

> Apart from a few incidents occurring in a protected environment, we can say that every neurosis, every kind of abnormal behavior, every emotional irritation suffered by a West Indian is the result of the cultural setting. (144. See also 143-4).

The attempt to explain the black man's problems of adjustment to the larger, colonial society in psychoanalytic terms is misleading for yet another reason. Quite often the issue is not whether the black man can adapt to the white world, but whether the white world will permit him to adapt. The main reason the white world prevents the black man from adapting is that it suffers from the previously mentioned phobia of negroes. At its core, negrophobia is sexual and derives from an unsatisfactory resolution of libidinal drives. It is based on the physical being of the black person, on the social fiction that the black person freely indulges in the libidinal urges whose satisfaction white culture denies to the white person.°

Clearly there is something false about this fiction or image. But Fanon is.less interested in explaining that the image has no basis in reality than in showing the effect of belief in it. As long as the white man accepts it as valid, it distorts his perception of the black man: it leads him to perceive the black man as his opponent in every aspect of existence. At first, belief in this image leads the white man to be ambivalent toward the black person. The image shows the black person to be doing things the white person wants and does not want to do. He is thus led to love and to hate the black person. But there is

6. BW, 145, 147, 150, 152-153, 153-154, and 156. See especially p. 151, n. 25 and Fanon's illustration of the way negrophobia leads colonized blacks to think of themselves as white people.

a deeper psychological past beyond the merely libidinal urgings-the whole area of evil and ugliness. For some reason, blackness comes to be identified with that dreaded area, or at least blackness takes on that association in the white cultural setting. When that happens, the negrophobic image acquires the intensity we perceive in it today.

Generally, this phenomenon is explained in terms of the collective unconscious: all human beings have always made this kind of equation between blackness and dreadful things. (157-8, 163, 165). According to Fanon, however, it is not correct to claim that the identification of blackness with the evil and the ugly stems from the collective unconscious of the human race. One can only say that it stems from a particular form of the collective unconscious. There is no collective unconscious for the whole human race because the collective unconscious is shaped by the different social settings in which human groups live. His reasoning on this point is not explicit, but the central proposition seems to be that the same human problems receive different solutions according to the variations in the environment in which each human group finds itself. Thus, the culture of the social setting shapes the opinions of the group, and these opinions are eventually transmitted as unconscious impressions. These unconscious impressions ultimately find expression as indicators of negrophobia. (175-6, 176-7. See also 171-2, 172-3, 174).

The significance of this deterministic explanation is that it can show the colonized black man the path to disalienation: culture. If the colonized black man comes to his present status because of unconscious impressions forced on him by the dominant white society, he has only to create the kind of opinions which will refute those now in vogue. Differently stated, disalienation depends upon the discovery of a culture in which the colonized black man can take pride. (168). Here, however, Fanon introduces a chilling reminder of the limits imposed by political reality. There can be no culture worthy of the name without a society that goes beyond the level of bare subsistence. Now, a genuine black culture is impossible.

> We maintain that a genuine culture cannot arise in the present circumstances. Black genius will be spoken of when man once again occupies his true place. (BW, 171. See also, 169-70).

In other words, a viable solution is impossible as things now stand.

In principle, this line of thought ought to lead to an argument in favor of decolonization at any price, an argument like the one which

occurs in *The Wretched of the Earth.* Here, however, Fanon avoids such a conclusion. To be sure, he does return to Sartre's argument about the plight of the black man being the same as that of the down-trodden everywhere.' He can make that concession to Sartre now because he recognizes what is at the heart of racism and because he understands his blackness for what it is rather than as it is represented to him by white people. He sees himself as he is or succeeds in breaking away from the cultural image others hold of him insofar as he can destroy the root of the white man within himself. Though individual and internal, Fanon lets such an act of liberation stand as an alternative to the political action he would otherwise have to endorse. (180-3, 183-4).

However, this alternative is asserted rather than proven, for Fanon has not yet explained what he understands his blackness to be. All he has really done is to appropriate an intriguing literary image of Aime Cesaire's as a putative example of what the black man must do. In this sense, he uses Cesaire's prose in the same way that he used black awareness in the last chapter: as a strategic device to help him resist embracing the compelling logic of his argument. Profiting from such a respite, Fanon resumes his analytic quest and turns to psychoanalytic theory. In the first part of Chapter Seven, he examines his problem from the perspective of Adlerian therapy. According to Adler, it is necessary to identify the goal toward which all the neurotic symptoms tend and to treat the goal as a cause of the symptoms. However, Adler's theory is too limited. It can explain only individual neuroses, and Fanon has already demonstrated that the problem of the colonized black is social. Not the individual, but the larger society is neurotic. Dominating all comparisons between individuals is the white colonizer. Even though the black person never compares himself directly to a given white man, the white man remains in the background as a reference figure. In this sense, the reference is really social (190, 192, 194, 195).

The logic of this argument should lead Fanon to see that just as the cause of the colonized black person's problem is social, so the cure must be social. Yet despite the clear implication that the society which gives rise to this kind of neurosis must be destroyed, he carefully avoids drawing such a conclusion in his own name. He turns instead to Hegel's argument that self-awareness depends on the mutual recognition two people accord one another. For Hegel, each individual must expose himself and

7. See above, p. 265

fight to gain recognition from the other. Aggression is warranted because each individual must work through fear to a perception of his own being. And precisely because Hegel characterizes this struggle as one between a master and a bondsman, as a struggle which culminates in the bondsman recognizing that his alienation comes from his understanding of his work and not from the master, the account promises to provide a most satisfactory solution to the problem of colonial racism. But Fanon notes bitterly that in fact it does not apply at all. By unilaterally deciding to liberate the black man, the white man has prevented the black man from fighting him the way the bondsman must fight the master for recognition and he has effectively blocked the black man from going beyond this struggle to liberate himself by means of his work.[8] In other words, Hegel's analysis is no more helpful than those set forth by Mannoni, Sartre, or Adler.

As he acknowledges in the conclusion, the book is vague-purposely vague. Fanon attributes its vagueness to his desire to propose different solutions appropriate for the different kinds of people who suffer from racism. Basically, he is thinking of the different needs of exploited and starving workers as contrasted to intellectuals. Because some conditions cannot be changed by reason and because the plight of such workers is not bearable, they may find force or revolt to be necessary. Yet while he readily admits the presence of social factors among the forces leading to the intellectual's alienation, he studiously avoids the conclusion that revolt against society is thereby equally necessary for the intellectual. Instead he seeks refuge in the claim that liberty is possible as long as the intellectual refuses to accept the restrictions of history. This claim entails a vindication of what is simply human and a refusal to view the past solely in terms of the relative accomplishments of one people or another. Fanon praises man as he is and believes his only duty to be that of acting so that his choices never force him to renounce his own freedom. In keeping with that duty, he claims as his sole right that of insisting that others bear themselves humanely.

> I, a colored man, have no right to seek in what way my race is superior or inferior to another race.
>
> I, a colored man, have no right to wish that the white man become mired in guilt about the past history of my race.

8. BW, 195-6, 196-7, 198, 199 and note 9, and 200; also G.W.F. Hegel *Phaenomenologie des Geistes,* IV.A, end.

I, a colored man, have no right to concern myself with ways of trampling upon the proudness of the former master.

I have neither the right nor the duty to demand compensation for the servitude of my ancestors.

There is no Negro mission; there is no white burden.

I find myself one day to be in a world in which things are going badly; a world in which people ask me to fight; a world in which annihilation or victory is always at issue.

I, a man, find myself to be in a world in which words are fringed with silence; a world in which the other incessantly becomes hardened.

No, I have no right to come and scream my hatred at the white man. I have no duty to murmur my gratitude to the white man.

My life is held in the lasso of existence, My freedom sends me back to myself. No, I have no right to be a black man.

I have no duty to be this or that...

If the white man calls my humanity into question, I will show him, all the while making my whole manly weight press upon his life, that I am not this "Sho is good 'nun" " he persists in calling up.

I find myself one day to be in the world and I claim a single right for myself: to demand a human conduct from the other.

A single duty. Not to renounce my freedom through my choices.

I do not want to be the victim of a black world's *Trick*.

My life ought not to be dedicated to drawing up the ledger of Negro values.

There is no white world, there is no white morality, no more than there is white intelligence.

Here and there in the world are men who seek.[9]

Because he has not shown how one might enjoy that right or heed that duty and has poignantly depicted the numerous obstacles to doing either, Fanon's proclamation sounds discordant here. All the evidence suggests that the root of colonialist racism is socio-economic and that none of the alternative explanations has withstood his steady probing.

9. BW, 105-6. In the sixth paragraph of this citation, the French phrase *les choses font mal* ("things are hurting") seems to contain a typographical error. It has been emended to read *les choses vont mal* ("things are going badly"). The punctuation in the tenth and fourteenth paragraphs is Fanon's.

Still, rather than argue that a sudden change in the socio-economic structure would be appropriate, Fanon praises humanity. Although his arguments show the need for violence, he speaks only of preserving human dignity.

II

Between the time he wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* and his next book *Sociology of a Revolution,* Fanon published some articles for a sophisticated political journal and for a magazine devoted to the propagation of the culture of black people. He also committed himself to the struggle for the liberation of Algeria and joined the staff of *El Moudjahid* in order to further that cause by means of his pen. Shortly after his death, the journal and magazine articles plus several of his *El Moudjahid* articles were brought together and published under the title *Towards the African Revolution.* The tone of these articles is strident. With the exception of the first, which appeared at about the same time as *Black Skin, White Masks,* they portray a Fanon who abandons his earlier investigative stance in favor of one permitting him to show how blacks and other colonized peoples have moved beyond the total alienation described in the earlier volume and come closer to a sense of well-being. Here, the right to self-determination is taken as a given. Persuaded that colonialism is always racist and exploitative, that events have proven the impossibility of persuading colonialists by speech alone to change their ways or to leave, he now endorses armed force as the sole means to remove them.

In the first of these articles, "The `North-African Syndrome,' " Fanon explores an instance of man's inhumanity to man in a setting where one would least expect to find it. Starting from the manner in which French medical personnel react to and prejudge North African patients, he argues that the socio-economic system is ultimately to blame. Although he can explain why North Africans have behavioral responses to sickness and suffering different from those French physicians and nurses usually encounter, that explanation does not reach to the fact that North Africans are forced to seek work in France under simply intolerable conditions. The penury they face at home, the wretched neighborhoods and miserable lodgings in which they must live once in France exist only because of an inequitable distribution of wealth. Addressing the Frenchman with the same condescension the latter normally reserves for the North African, Fanon concludes by asserting that the Frenchman is

ultimately responsible for the poverty the North African faces at home and the squalor in which he lives in France.

> Don't push me too far. Don't force me to tell you what you ought to know, sir. If YOU do not recognize the man who is facing you, how can you expect me to suppose that you recognize the man within you?
>
> If YOU do not want the man facing you, how will I believe in the man who is perhaps within you?
>
> If YOU do not demand man, if YOU do not sacrifice the man within you so that man on this earth will be more than a body, more than a Muhammad, what sleight of hand will bring me to the certainty that you are also worthy of my love?[10]

He reaches this conclusion after having considered the suffering of the North African from three different perspectives. He first takes note of the reasons for the behavior of the North African with respect to sickness evoking skepticism among French doctors and nurses: above all, his inability to say exactly where he hurts or when he hurts most, but also his failure to follow medical prescriptions and tendency to forsake one physician in order to consult another. Fanon explains that the North African suffers generally, not specifically, and thus is unable to give a precise account of his pain. He notes, moreover, that the way one suffers and explains suffering is a cultural rather than a natural phenomenon. And he insists that the North African, having no experience of European medical treatment or procedure, expects an immediate cure. When it is not forthcoming, he either stops taking the medication or goes elsewhere. Were it not for the preconceptions among the French medical personnel to the effect that North Africans are lazy and thus seek medical care in order to avoid working, they might have questioned these different patterns of behavior and sought to understand their origin. They might also have paid closer attention to the problem of communication and noted either that the patient was being stymied by his own linguistic inabilities or being terribly ill-served by his in-

10. AR, 21; see also 9-10. The emphasis is Fanon's. Note that beginning with the third sentence of this passage, all references to the second person are cast in the second person singular-a form usually used to address children, animals, or people of inferior status. Here, then, such a phrasing is insulting. The insult is especially apt, because it perfectly imitates the way the colonialist usually addresses the colonized individual.

terpreter. Ipstead, persuaded that the North African is really malingering, the French physician considers each North African patient as *a malade imaginaire* and acts accordingly. (AR, 10-13, 13-15).

To overcome this problem, it would be necessary to bring the social context to bear on the medical diagnosis. However, as Fanon pursues the steps of such a "situational diagnosis," both the utter misery of the North African and the total incomprehension of the French physician become painfully apparent. North Africans are treated differently than Europeans; they are thought to deserve to be treated differently than other human beings, to be unworthy of being considered as fellow humans. Because their primary task is to provide inexpensive labor, they are forced into dirty and infested dwellings only to be blamed subsequently for personal uncleanliness. Although their families are not permitted to accompany them, no European thinks it amiss to criticize them for frequenting prostitutes or spending time in bars. (AR, 15-20). In other words, the core of the problem is the social order that permits such inhumanity. If the plight of the North African is really to be remedied, that social order must be altered.

The next article, "West Indians and Africans," also explores a problem whose ultimate resolution is political, and like this one it stops barely short of making an explicit plea for a political move. Fanon presents the essay as a continuation of a theme first developed in *Black Skin, White Masks,* namely, the contention that the black man will never be able to escape his blackness because the white man will never let him forget that he is black. Fanon felt obliged to make such an obvious truth patent because so many West Indians had not yet recognized it. And the argument forced him to ask not only why the white man was racist, but also how the black man might escape or withstand that racism. He was concerned there with the black man in the white world, the black man who lived as though he were a white man and tried to induce others to forget his skin color. Such concerns led the West Indian to set himself apart from the African. Fanon tried to counter these tendencies by praising the *negritude* movement and by urging all black people to see the white colonialist as their implacable, common enemy. Nonetheless, at one point he was obliged to acknowledge that such tactics offered only a partial solution.

In this article, Fanon returns to the problem of the way black people relate to one another and to the positive features of the *negritude* movement. But now he attempts to explain how a particular group

of black people came to recognize the merits of that movement. Here, too, he acknowledges the shortcomings of the movement and hints at the need for a political rather than a psychological solution. (AR, 22-25, 29-30. See also 24, note 5). Yet his interest here in black people as such is emphatically not based on the assumption that there is only one black people or that all blacks are the same insofar as they are black.

> What they are looking for by bringing all Negroes together under the term "black people" is to strip them of any possible individual expression. What they are looking for, then, is to force them to respond to the idea they make of them. What would the "white people" be? Don't they see that there can only be a white race? Must I therefore explain the difference which exists between nation, people, fatherland, community? When they say "black people," they systematically suppose that all blacks agree about certain things, that there is a principle of communion among them. In truth there is nothing, *a priori,* which would allow the existence of a black people to be suspected. That there is an African people, I believe; that there is a West Indian people, I believe. But when they speak to me about "this black people," I try to understand. Then, unfortunately, I understand that therein lies a source of conflict. Then I try to destroy this source."

Attracted as he is to the *negritude* movement and to the discovery of a particular quality in blackness, he nonetheless insists on the existence of abiding differences between Brazilians and Spaniards. (AR, 22 and 23 note 3).

For Fanon, three decisive events between the years 1939 and 1945 brought West Indians to an awareness of their blackness or to a positive appreciation of the *negritude* movement. First, there was the advent of Aime Cesaire-a high school teacher and recognized poet, that is, an otherwise respectable man-with his audacious praise of blackness. Though his daring originally caused some Martinicans to mock him, the events arising from the French defeat in World War II soon led them to reconsider. The influx of almost eight thousand white Europeans, about four times as many as had previously lived in Martinique, led to a major economic and housing

11. AR, 22-23. For some reason, Fanon actually contrasts West Indians to Dakarians, Brazilians. to Madrilinians, then the West Indian people to the African people, and eventually a West Indian world to an African world. Of the four pairs, only the third strikes him as wrong, even though the first two seem to be disproportionate contrasts.

crisis. These were problems which might have been easily resolved had the newcomers not brought blatant racist attitudes along with them. Slowly, the citizen of Martinique began to resent these whites who held him in such manifest contempt and caused him heretofore unexperienced suffering. Slowly, the citizen of Martinique began to question those European values he had previously accepted so blithely and to think again about Cesaire's audacious remarks. Then, with de Gaulle's formation of the Free France movement and his designation of those who remained loyal to Vichy France as traitors, the citizen of Martinique transferred his allegiances. Persuaded that the defeated racists who had caused him such pain and who personified a France in which he had no place were not deserving of his respect, he ceased to think of himself as a Frenchman like them and began to glory in his blackness. Holding them and their values to be synonymous with the enemy, the citizen of Martinique dramatically expressed his new awareness at the end of the war by voting in Communist representatives for two out of three parliamentary seats. His newly acquired black awareness went hand in hand with the political awareness that his affinities were with the working class. (AR 24-9, especially 28-9).

Just as the casting of previously held values into doubt triggered movement toward black awareness, so did a distinct turning away from the previous infatuation with white society symbolize the solidity of that awareness. As Fanon understands it, it was not until the West Indian began to seek passionately to appreciate his affinity with other black people that he first took notice of the extent to which he had surrendered his black identity so as to fit more readily into white society. This event, like those which led him to seek black awareness, represents another major step toward the liberation of black people. But neither it nor the *negritude* movement itself constitutes black liberation. Delight in blackness, delight so intense as to allow blacks to turn their backs on the white culture they had sought as their own, is only a moment in time or a "black mirage" (AR 30-1). Although Fanon does not make it explicit here, delight in blackness must pass away because it offers no hope for black liberation. It does not offer such a hope because there is no such thing as a black people. This article, then, testifies to the significance of the *negritude* movement and to its limitations.

The next article, "Racism and Culture," shows why black awareness is insufficient and explains what is needed. It is presented as a harsh attack on the racism perpetrated by the colonialist

masters. From the very opening line, Fanon contends that claims to cultural superiority are without basis, that they are simply part of the attempt by one people to subjugate another.

> Unilaterally decreed reflection about the normative value of certain cultures ought to make us attentive. One rapidly encountered paradox is the way egocentric and sociocentric definitions are being pushed away. (AR, 33).

And like Chapter Five of *Black Skin, White Masks,* it is almost autobiographical in tone; here, too, Fanon personifies the colonized intellectual.

He would like us to think about racism and culture, because racism now appears in cultural garb. Whereas the racist originally grounded his arguments in the Scriptures and then changed to distinctions based on comparative physiology, he has now recognized the value of pointing to cultural hierarchies in order to deduce the right of a superior culture to destroy an inferior one. Yet, however varied the supporting arguments, the basic goal remains the same: subjection of the people said to be inferior. And there is a constant pattern in the cultural destruction that accompanies this subjection. After subjugating the inferior nation, the victorious colonial power decides to recognize the salient features of its culture. In its attempt to do so, it either raises up antiquated patterns or dwells on the exotic features of that culture (AR, 33-5, 36-7).

For Fanon, none of this occurs by chance. As the subjugated country advances and more natives begin to work with the colonialists, the old condescending racism must change in tone. It thus takes on a more agreeable hue without ever ceasing to be racism. More significantly, no matter how varied the form, it is still conscious racism. In other words, no racist can evoke ignorance as an excuse.

> Racism puffs up and disfigures the face of the culture which practices it. Literature, plastic arts, teeny-boppers' songs, proverbs, customs, patterns, whether they seek to make a case out of racism or to make it banal, restitute it. That is to say, neither a social group, nor a country, nor a civilization can be unconsciously racist. (AR, 39. See also 37-8)

The members of the dominant race always think of themselves as superior and conduct themselves accordingly with respect to the dominated. Even their attempts to play down their cultural achievements originate in the conviction that it is unseemly to vaunt

such superiority. Likewise, those who have forgotten or are otherwise in the dark about the reasons for the reputed superiority of their culture still retain the attitudes of people blessed with a superior culture. Fanon rejects the assertion of cultural superiority because of his strong conviction that all racism is economically based. Insisting that no national or ethnic group can have mental or psychological acquisitions which are superior to those of another such group, he explains that one group comes to dominate another only because it has reached a level of superior technical development. It then subjugates the other group in order to exploit its technical superiority.

Still this is of little interest to Fanon, his primary concern being the way the subjugated or colonized individual reacts to the racist society imposed on him. At first, he seeks to reject himself and his race in order to become adept in the new culture. To the extent that he succeeds he becomes assimilated or, to use a term Fanon considers equivalent, alienated. [12] However, some of the colonized who have reached such a point also come to recognize the basic exploitation fostered by the new culture and rear up against it or against some of its representatives. Fanon has no illusions about the folly of contesting the actions of individuals. In his eyes, racism is not an individual but a group phenomenon. For the same reason, it is improper for the colonized to turn in horror from the new culture and appeal to human dignity. It is improper, because such conduct represents failure to comprehend the utter thoroughness of racism. If the colonized individual perseveres, he will recognize that his earlier attempt to deny his own culture is at the source of his misery and he will return to it with fervor and with passion. He does not return to the culture that presently exists, but to a past that has remained immobile. And it is only subsequently that the process comes full swing: in spite of overtures from the colonialists promising a new dawn of respect and understanding, he joins his countrymen in the struggle to liberate the national territory. In other words, the struggle for cultural identity leads him to the struggle for political identity, to a struggle which has no room for racism (AR, 40-3, 44-5.

12. AR, 39-40. "Having looked on as his reference points were liquidated, as his cultural schemes fell apart, the native has nothing else to do but to admit with the occupying force that `God is not on his side.' The oppressor, due to the global and frightful character of his authority, comes to impose new ways of seeing upon the native, above all, pejorative judgment with respect to his original mode of existence. "This event, generally designated as alienation, is naturally very important. It can be found in official texts under the name of assimilation." See also above, n. 4.

See also 75-7, 78-9).

Fanon discerns, then, a kind of natural dynamic in racism. Left to follow its own course, racism will proceed from the attempt to destroy the culture of a less technically developed people, to the winning of converts to its cultural superiority from among the native populace, then to their disaffection, and eventually to their participation in militant activity intended to hurry its self-destruction. In these terms, the dynamic accounts for the hesitations and extravagances of the native caught up in its throes. And presented in this manner, it bears witness to an extension of Fanon's earlier argument. Now he portrays the colonized intellectual as also recognizing the necessity of joining in the struggle for national liberation. He is obliged to draw the intellectual into the struggle at this juncture because of his uncompromising contention that words are not enough, that racism can be eliminated only by throwing out the colonialists and validating the original culture.

The other articles in this volume make similar arguments but do so in a far more polemical tone. Most were written either to lead others to empathize with the plight of the Algerians or to justify their struggle. That is to say, they bear witness to Fanon's rejection of the prudent reserve that characterizes the argument of *Black Skin, White Masks.* Nothing else has changed. His analysis of colonialism remains the same. But now he embraces the consequences he deftly avoided in the earlier work and does so because he now has less faith in man's willingness to listen to reason. Yet his pessimism with respect to human reasonableness is balanced by an almost cheerful confidence that the conflict and turmoil necessarily resulting from human irrationality will lead to new and lasting peace for all. No reasons are given for such optimism. However, each analysis leads to an equally bright hope for the future.

III

Fanon's *Sociology of a Revolution* or *Year V of the Algerian Revolution is,* in fact, an account of the changes which occurred in Algerian society during the first five years of the struggle for liberation. He places major emphasis on the way traditional customs and mores were transformed, formerly unassailable standards of conduct called into question, and age-old patterns of hierarchy cast aside. According to Fanon every facet of Algerian life was reexamined in light of the needs of the revolution and adjusted to fur-

ther its goals. With the exception of passing references to the injustice of the colonial regime, he makes no attempt here to explain what warrants such a struggle. His presupposition is that every reader, fully aware of what is wrong with colonialism *per se* and in this particular instance, comprehends how essential it is to overthrow the existing regime. To meet the possible objection that such action would leave a political vacuum, Fanon carefully outlines how the Algerian people have already begun to reshape their society, as well as themselves, and have thereby proven themselves capable of self-government. Their demonstrated ability to adapt old values and customs to new exigencies gives the lie to the colonial charge that they are so backward as to require paternalistic government imposed by a benevolent foreign force. Indeed,the basic reticence of the Algerian people, their stubborn refusal to adopt colonialist mores, can more readily be traced to their sullen hatred of the foreigner. [13]

The volume consists of an introduction, five chapters-two of which have annexes or appendices-and a conclusion. Each of the first four chapters describes in some detail how social or behavioral patterns have been consciously transformed since the outbreak of hostilities. Fanon sides with the Algerians in these narrations and thus communicates a sense of how the colonialist world looks from the perspective of the colonized. His allegiance remains equally clear in the last chapter, but simple honesty forces him to acknowledge the existence of basic differences among the colonialists with respect to French policy in Algeria.

In the introduction, Fanon seeks to defend the Algerian liberation fighters against charges that they have engaged in terrorist tactics, to explain the significance of the rest of the book, and to assure the reader that a war for liberation is consonant with the goal of human dignity. As has already been noted, the significance of the sociological studies to follow is that Algeria is ready for national responsibility, that a new society has come into being on Algerian

13. SR, 172. "The thesis to the effect that it is possible to further a new society only within the framework of national independence finds its corollary here. Namely, at the same time that the colonized man rears up and rejects oppression, he undergoes radical turmoil which makes any attempt to maintain the colonial regime impossible and scandalous. It is this turmoil that we have studied here."

"It is accurate that independence brings about the spiritual and material conditions for the transformation of each man. But internal change and the renewal of social and familial structures also impose, with the rigor of law, the emergence of the Nation and the blossoming of sovereignty." (Emphasis Fanon's)

soil, and that "the old Algeria is dead."

> We will show that the form and content of national existence already do exist in Algeria and that no turning back can be envisaged. Although in many colonial countries it is independence acquired by a party which progressively informs the diffuse national consciousness of the people, in Algeria it is the national consciousness, the collective suffering and fears which make ineluctable the seizure of their destiny by the people.
>
> Algeria is virtually independent. The Algerians already think of themselves as sovereign. (SR, 10)

France, however, has steadfastly refused to recognize this new state of affairs. Consequently, Algerian patriots have been obliged to take up arms in order to make their point. Fanon's audience is thus not the French nation nor the colonialists themselves. Desirous to praise the changes wrought in Algeria by the people, he is sadly aware that his eulogies are for the ears of the rest of the world, that the colonialists will heed nothing but greater force.

Yet Fanon is at pains here to insist that even though the Algerian people decided to fight against the French colonialists and thus to resort to violence, they respected the international rules of war. He also asserts that they should continue to do so despite the ferocity and shocking atrocity of the colonialists. Counsels of decorum addressed to those who have been forced to look on helplessly as their loved ones were sexually assaulted or murdered seem nonetheless doomed to failure, and Fanon later acknowledges the eventual necessity of terrorism. He does not praise it even then, but simply recognizes that at a certain point the revolution would have faltered had the liberation fighters not changed their tactics (SR, 6,8, 37-8). Persuaded that the revolution is the only way to acquire the human dignity he holds to be so important, he will allow nothing to prevent its success.

> The new relationships are not those of replacing one kind of barbarism by another, nor one way of crushing man by another. What we Algerians want is to discover the man behind the colonizer, this man who is both the organizer and the victim of a system which suffocated him and reduced him to silence. As for us, many months ago we rehabilitated the colonized Algerian man. We have torn the Algerian man away from secular and implacable oppression. We have dragged ourselves up and we now move forward. Who can bring us back to servitude?
>
> We want an Algeria open to all, propitious for all minds.
>
> That is what we want and what we shall make. We do not think there is any power anywhere capable of keeping us from it. (SR, 15)

Once the old colonialist arrangement has been destroyed, then, it will be possible to accede to a new stage of human dignity. Differently stated, Fanon now considers dignity so important that armed struggle for its sake is warranted. Still, stated in such terms, armed struggle-whether by conventional or unconventional means-is nothing more than a tool, and violence has no value in itself.

In Chapter One, Fanon relates how the Algerians learned to use customs based on religious doctrine as a weapon against the colonialist enemy. As in many traditional Muslim societies, Algerian women are expected to veil their faces, to dress in garments that obscure their physical comeliness, and to restrict themselves as much as possible to the inner recesses of the home. The French colonialists had no sympathy for such practices and constantly badgered Algerian men about the way they treated their wives and daughters. For Fanon, the attempts to pressure Algerian employees into bringing their families to receptions at work or to indoctrinate women when they sought public assistance were not ill-conceived liberal overtures, but part of a policy intended to break down all resistance to colonial domination. As long as Algerian society held fast to its pre-colonial ways, there was no hope of bringing about the assimilation or alienation of individual Algerians which is so central to the long-term goals of colonialism. Precisely because so many ethnologists and sociologists had carefully explained the significance of these practices and their role in Algerian domestic life, Fanon looks more closely at what would otherwise appear to be a naive attempt to impose Occidental ways upon a reputedly backward people (SR, 16-25, 25-9, 44-6). In addition to the political goal behind such social engineering, he discerns a psychological impulse. The veil and the flowing outer garment hide the Algerian woman from the prying glances of the colonialist. The longer she remains a mystery to him, the more his imagination magnifies her charm and beauty. She thus becomes an inordinate object of desire, and he comes to equate the satisfaction of his passion with removing her veil.

Despite concerted efforts at all levels of society, little progress had been made toward the liberation of the Algerian woman by the time hostilities erupted in 1954. Only during the throes of armed struggle did Algerians begin to alter the roles traditionally assigned to women. To hide wounded comrades from colonialist soldiers, it became necessary to bring them into parts of the house previously set aside for the family. In the countryside, especially in guerrilla encampments, women greatly aided the revolutionary effort by serv-

ing as nurses. But the greatest transformation occurred in the cities. As the revolution gained momentum and the colonialist forces began to patrol the' native residential sections, it became increasingly difficult for men to venture forth without being stopped and searched or interrogated. It was thus virtually impossible for an armed guerrilla to go from one hiding place in the city to another or from his hiding place to a meeting place. Nor did men, guerrillas or not, dare carry revolutionary tracts, maps, or any other documents from one place to another. Thus it became necessary to call upon Algerian women. They were asked to abandon their former habits of withdrawal and seclusion in order to guide a guerrilla leader to a meeting place or a new safe haven and to do so while carrying his weapons under their own loose fitting garments. Or, shedding their veils and traditional garb in favor of European fashion, they were asked to stand alone in the street outside a meeting place like common prostitutes in order to serve as sentinels. Algerian women responded to all such requests and eventually came to be used as accomplices in terrorist attacks carried out in the colonial sections of the city. For such maneuvers, it was especially important to have a young, unveiled Algerian woman dressed in European fashion who could nonchalantly thread her way along the streets of the colonial section and surreptitiously place her explosive charge (SR, 29-41).

The transformation was by no means painless, neither for the Algerian women nor for the men in their families. But after some initial resistance, the men came to understand that the success of the revolution depended on such activities being carried out by their wives, sisters, and daughters. And national pride soon replaced any feelings of shame they might have had about their women abandoning old ways. For the women, however, the transition was far more difficult. In addition to doubts and feelings of anxiety they might have about setting aside venerable customs, they had to overcome fears about what would happen to them if they were caught and feelings of shame or embarrassment at walking around in such immodest attire. As Fanon aptly points out, a woman strolling down the street in a veil and loose fitting garment occupies space and encounters others in an entirely different manner than does a barefaced woman strolling down the street in form-fitting clothes.

> In the traditional society, the body of the young Algerian woman is revealed to her by nubility and the veil. The veil covers the body and disciplines it, tempers it, at the very moment that it undergoes its greatest phase of effervescence. The veil protects, reassures, isolates. It is necessary to have heard confessions of

> Algerian women or to have analyzed elements of the dreams of some recently unveiled women to appreciate the importance of the veil for the body in which a woman lives. An impression of a plucked body thrown into a skid; its parts seem to extend indefinitely. When the Algerian woman has a street to cross, for a long time there is a judgmental error about the exact distance to cover. The unveiled body appears to get away, to fall into pieces. An impression of being badly dressed, even of being naked. Incompleteness is felt with great intensity. An anxious feeling of being unfinished. A frightening sensation of disintegrating. The absence of the veil alters the bodily schema of the Algerian woman. She must rapidly invent new dimensions for her body, new means of muscular control. She must create a bearing of unveiled-woman-outside for herself. She must break through all timidity, all awkwardness (for she must pass herself off as a European woman) while at the same time avoiding over-playing or too much emphasis, which would attract attention. The Algerian woman who comes into the European part of the city completely naked rediscovers her body, comes back into it in a totally revolutionary manner. This new dialectic of the body and the world is capital in the case of the woman. (SR, 42-3. See also 41-2, 43-4, 46-7)

When this woman is also forced to endure the contemptuous stares or insulting remarks of her co-religionists who have absolutely no notion of the revolutionary service she is performing, her fears and shame become all the more acute. That so many Algerian women mastered these feelings in order to participate actively in the struggle for liberation and that so many Algerian men encouraged them to do so is for Fanon ample proof that the Algerian people can handle their own affairs without foreign tutelage. Even their subsequent return to the veil and traditional dress is in his eyes a sign of Algerian political awareness, for this return was a defiant response to the colonialist attempt to force all Algerian women to adopt European dress. In the course of the struggle for liberation, Algerian men and women have come to understand that the only way to preserve their culture is to use it-its irrational and unquestioned as well as its deeply intellectual aspects-as a tool against the colonialist enemy.

In the second chapter Fanon relates how the Algerians modified former taboos about the radio as it became an increasingly important source of information about the revolution. Before hostilities broke out, most Algerians refused to listen to the radio because they perceived it as a blatant instance of colonial power insinuating itself into their national affairs. For a number of reasons, but primarily because of moral considerations, the programs were not deemed suitable for the entire family. When the revolution began, many Algerians wanted to have daily news about its progress. The best

source of unbiased news was the newspapers arriving from France. However, when the Algerians began to win significant battles, the colonialists placed restrictions upon the sale of newspapers and frequently arrested those who tried to buy them. At this point the radio became the sole reliable source of information, and radio sales increased so rapidly that the colonial authorities also restricted this market. But the Algerians persisted and either bought radios through the good offices of European friends or assembled their own. Even colonialist attempts to jam the air-waves did not discourage the Algerians; they would sit for hours on end straining to catch one or two words which would clarify the situation. In sum, once the struggle for liberation began in earnest, Algerians dropped all former scruples about using the tools of the colonialist. At this point the continued success of the struggle outweighed concern about adverse influences on family morality or desires for indigenous music and poetry.

The struggle for liberation also had profound effects on the structure of the Algerian family. Traditionally, the father was accorded absolute respect and the oldest son, as the father's designated successor, had an unquestionable right to the same respect. Women played little to no role in family decisions and were simply expected to heed the directives or councils of the men. However, when the liberation struggle began, many Algerian fathers found themselves still undecided about their allegiances and sought ways to avoid confronting the issue. Such conduct was painful for their children and womenfolk to behold and gave rise to hitherto unheard of tensions within the family. Then as the liberation struggle moved forward and demanded more commitment on the part of Algerian patriots, the traditional pattern of family relationships was transformed in a number of ways.

In many respects these transformations represent a coming of age or a process of individual maturation. At some point children come to have different opinions about the world or about political action than their parents and they break away from an earlier unquestioning allegiance to the family. Yet, normal as this pattern of individual growth is to Occidental families, it had no parallel in prerevolutionary Algeria. Children grew up within the family and then stayed close to that family even after forming their own family. It was only because of an entirely novel occurrence, a revolutionary struggle whose outcome would determine the ultimate sort of the fatherland, that changes took place in the traditional Algerian fami-

ly. Imperceptible, even unconscious, at the outset, such changes came to be willed as the revolution progressed.

> In the course of the multiple episodes of the war, the people realizes that if it wants to bring a new world to life it must create a new Algerian society from scratch. To achieve his aspirations, the Algerian must adapt to the new re-evaluations at an exceptional speed. (SR, S8)

Throughout his patient explanation of these transformations with respect to each of the family inter-relationships-father-son, father-daughter, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife-Fanon stresses again and again that the basic unity of the family was never threatened. To be sure, sons did resist the marriages arranged by their fathers as a means of preventing them from joining the guerrilla forces. Likewise, sons challenged their father's tacit allegiance to the colonial regime-an allegiance evidenced by continued employment in the colonial administrative services, for example. But despite the father's previously unquestioned authority becoming subordinate to the needs and authority of a nascent fatherland, the family structure remained inviolate. And even though Fanon cannot pass over in silence those instances of sons stipulating revolutionary taxes for their parents to pay or the more extreme cases of sons being obliged to vote with the revolutionary council against the treason of their fathers, he insists upon the continued solidity of the family bond (SR, 83-6, 86-8, 89-90).

So, too, with the daughters. As has already been noted, revolutionary tactics forced Algerian women, especially younger Algerian women, to abandon traditional dress and even to flaunt basic codes of respectability. Having participated in revolutionary actions and thus being obliged to flee police investigations, these young women had to leave the protection of their families for the relative safety of guerrilla strongholds. And they had to do sous unmarried women, an act totally unthinkable under other circumstances. Now, however, the common goal demanded much of all the citizens, even to the point that fathers accepted such conduct by their daughters and no longer held them back for fear of their reputation. A larger perspective had come into view, a new standard for judging right and wrong-namely, the standard of what would contribute most to the revolutionary effort. And this new standard carried over into the relationships between couples, for wives now began to chide their husbands for not taking part in the struggle or to demand basic information when their husbands did become involved. In both in-

stances the wife abandoned her earlier role of silent and submissive partner in order to contribute on her own to the struggle. And when she actually participated in revolutionary acts herself, it fell upon the husband to respect her new activity as well as her prolonged absences without criticism or detailed questioning. In sum, the revolutionary struggle forced fathers and husbands to view their daughters and wives as responsible, independent human beings capable of fending for themselves (SR, 90-5, 96-100).

Fanon's analysis goes farther. He speaks of the way patterns for marriage as well as causes for divorce were modified by dint of the struggle. He notes with pride how women, left without resources as their husbands were carted away or indiscriminately imprisoned, learned basic skills and adopted new attitudes. And throughout his discussion, one point rings out most clearly: all these transformations, all these adaptations, as marvelous as they are to behold and as indicative as they are of how ready Algeria is for nationhood, are nothing more than a dedicated people's determination to resist the extreme brutality of colonial repression.

> Since 1954, French colonialism has wanted only to break the will of the people, flatten its resistance, liquidate its hopes. For five years it has pulled back from no kind of outrage, neither of terror or of torture. By stirring up these men and women, colonialism has brought them together under the same sign. All equally victims of the same tyranny, simultaneously identifying a single enemy, the objectively dispersed people recognizes its unity and founds, in suffering, a spiritual community which constitutes the most solid bastion of the Algerian revolution.1[4]

Even attitudes about medicine and the way one should conduct oneself in the presence of colonial medical personnel were transformed in the course of the liberation struggle. In Chapter Four, Fanon explains how Algerians regarded the European medical personnel with whom they sometimes had contact and why, despite years of distrusting them and of refusing to heed their counsels, they eventually came to solicit their help and to do all within their power to be exemplary patients. In many respects, this account is the mirror image of that set forth in *Towards the African Revolution,* the major difference being that this one examines the relationships be-

14. SR, 106. The gerund "stirring up" at the beginning of the third sentence is used to render Fanon's ***brassant,*** a word which has the more immediate sense of "brewing," as with brewing beer.

tween colonial medical personnel and colonized patients in the colonized person's native environment whereas the other one examined such relationships as they occurred in the colonizer's homeland. [15] And in the course of his explanation, Fanon grimly notes how the colonialists eventually sought to use even their medical skills in order to thwart the revolutionary struggle. Once the preservation of colonial domination was at issue, no tool was considered to be beyond the pale.

From the beginning, the Algerian viewed the. colonial medical personnel with suspicion and even with fear. After all, for most Algerians sickness and health were matters of chance and of supernatural intervention. Diseases were to be combatted by propitiating the evil spirits that had brought them, not by having recourse to foreign treatments. And since disease was surrounded by such a mysterious aura, most sick people had no clear idea of how they suffered or where they were in pain. Consequently, they could not respond properly to the questions posed by otherwise well-intentioned doctors and nurses. What is more, the patients could not appreciate the significance of such questions: after all, how could they trust a doctor who was so ignorant about their disease that he had to ask them a series of questions as though he could not recognize the problem just by seeing how sick they were? To all this must be added the gradual distrust that arose because of the unscrupulous practices of those doctors or pharmacists who would exploit the basic ignorance of their patients by giving them salt-water injections at exorbitant rates. They excused themselves on the grounds that their patients were really *malades imaginaires* who needed to be humored, but the patients-who in fact were not *malades imaginaires* and were thus not cured by such trickery-soon concluded that the European medical personnel were simply incompetent. Finally, the situation worsened the more the colonialist attempted to impose the value of his medical knowledge upon the people as yet another instance of the great benefits of colonization. No one likes to be reminded of his own inferiority, especially when it is set forth as proof that he deserves to be subjugated (SR, 107-19, 121-8).

Such attitudes were never completely dispelled before the outbreak of hostilities, partly because no colonialist considered it important to understand why Algerians resisted European medical practices and partly because many medical practitioners thought it

15. See above, pp. 273-75

possible to induce the Algerians to be good patients simply by treating their traditional views and practices with utter contempt. When the liberation struggle began, the medical situation became almost impossible. Because Algerians had previously accepted hospitalization only in extreme cases, usually when the sickness was so advanced that there was really little anyone could do, their original ignorance and reticence had become mingled with fear about what really occurred in such places. To the extent that all Europeans were now considered as representatives of the violent and hated enemy, Algerians developed greater fears about submitting to medical treatment or entering the hospital. While Fanon's explanation reveals a basic sympathy with the Algerian people and a willingness to understand the roots of their medical behavior as well as their opinions about medicine, it never suggests any doubt about the soundness of European medical knowledge or the wisdom of putting it into practice. His goal is to reveal why, despite the obvious merits of European medical practices, the colonialists could not persuade the Algerian people to accept it and how the Algerians eventually adopted of their own accord what they had so pertinaciously refused heretofore. Ironically, the very contempt for the Algerian people that made French colonialism so obnoxious and that prompted the colonialists to respond so harshly to the liberation struggle contributed most to this change. Once hostilities erupted, the colonial powers sought to weaken rebel resistance by denying the subject populace medical services and supplies. Persons seeking medical care for bullet wounds and similarly induced injuries were detained for questioning. When Algerian medical students met this challenge by themselves treating their wounded compatriots, pharmacists were ordered to hold back any medical supplies susceptible of being used for battle casualties and to alert the authorities about anyone seeking such supplies. Fortunately, these orders were not universally obeyed. Moreover, some supplies trickled in from Tunisia and Morocco. At the same time, tradition-bound Algerians turned away from their former medical practices and embraced those which the Europeans had previously tried to force upon them. They learned to be exemplary patients and to adhere scrupulously to the directives of those who cared for them. What is more, they learned to resist the pleas of wounded friends and relatives for liquids or food which had been forbidden because of particular kinds of wounds. Civilians were persuaded to set aside their fear of European medical installations and to seek treatment for non-battle related injuries, thereby

permitting the limited medical supplies to be reserved for the militants who dared not enter such places (SR, 128-35). Once again, then, Fanon demonstrates how capable these beleaguered people were of adopting an entirely novel mode of conduct in order to further their nationalist aspirations.

Now Fanon's acknowledgement that medical supplies were obtained in Algeria despite formal bans on the sale of such items and his earlier account of the way some Europeans provided Algerians with radios in spite of similar restrictions on their sale constitute clear evidence that some Europeans were sympathetic to the Algerian cause. In Chapter Five, he enumerates the various ways in which the different segments of the European populace assisted the revolution. Even though the intransigent refusal of the ruling minority to extend democratic privileges to the Algerian majority made recourse to arms necessary, Fanon notes with satisfaction that not all Europeans shared the views of the colonialist powers. Nonetheless, the Europeans residing in Algeria who did subscribe to the goal of a free Algeria and who had even belonged to the early Algerian nationalist political parties, though recognized as allies by the revolutionary movement, were no more capable of softening the colonialist oppression than their counterparts in France were of modifying the French government's attempts to stifle the revolution.

> It has often been claimed that the F.L.N. did not distinguish between the different members of the European society in Algeria. Those who make such accusations ignore both the long defined policy of the Front with respect to Europeans in Algeria and the constant aid which hundreds and hundreds of European men and women have given our military units or political cells. What we have said is that the Algerian people perceive the oppressive system spontaneously because of the size of the European populace and above all because of the silence and inaction of French democrats in Algeria with respect to the proclaimed and sovereign violence of the colonialists.
>
> All things being equal, what has been constantly reiterated about leftist French political parties can be said of European democrats in Algeria: for a long time now, history has been made without them. They were not able to prevent the sending of military contingents to Algeria, nor Guy Mollet's capitulation, nor Lacoste, nor May 13, However, their existence puts the neo-fascists of Algeria and France on their guard. *For a long time now the Left has accomplished nothing in France.* But by its activity, its denunciations, and its analyses, it has *prevented* a certain number of things. (SR, 138-9. His emphasis. See also 138-7, **139-42)**

And, as Fanon points out in the rest of the chapter, even though

those members of the European community who were sympathetic to the voiced grievances of the Algerians could do little to mitigate colonial rule, they did much to further the struggle for liberation once it began in earnest, often at great personal risk.

He distinguishes the Jewish population from the rest of the European community, partly because they had been in Algeria for such a long time and were so thoroughly established there that they could not properly be described as European. Nonetheless, the colonialist powers accorded the Jewish upper classes privileges such that their personal interests ran counter to those of Algerian Muslims. Jewish merchants and civil-servants, for example, were accorded the status of French citizens and thus stood to lose much by Algerian independence. Yet some merchants and civil-servants did side with the revolution, as did those in the Jewish lower classes who were completely Arabicized and who identified themselves as Algerians. In Fanon's narration of how some European planters and city-dwellers also assisted the revolution by secretly storing grain or arms, hiding guerrillas, ministering to the wounded, transporting healthy guerrillas or the wounded or arms, performing secretarial tasks, and even training medics, the same complex picture emerges (SR, 142-8, 148-54). Contrary to his earlier assertions about the totality of European oppression, it now becomes evident that the non-Muslim population of Algeria was as diverse in its political opinions as populations everywhere. No simplistic economic or religious or sociological explanation is at hand to account for the way some of those most likely to benefit from the continuation of colonial rule worked assiduously to hasten its demise. Forced to find another explanation for such a phenomenon, Fanon appends the testimonies of two Europeans who served the revolutionary cause. In so doing he reinforces an argument he has inadvertently weakened: if the oppressiveness of colonial rule does not stem from the fact that all Europeans unite against the native population, it is nonetheless true that the colonialist rulers harshly repress any Europeans who seek to modify the status quo.

The first testimony, that of a European medical student born and raised in Algeria, is primarily a history of a sensitive young man's growing awareness of political injustice. He explains how his early concern for humanitarian principles and equally early aversion to racism brought him into conflict with colonial authorities and even tually with other classmates, but he never pauses to defend either of these early predilections nor to reflect upon the opinions which

might have motivated those who opposed him. Instead his testimony suggests that the intransigeance of the colonialists forced him into revolutionary activity in order to maintain his humanitarian principles, that their recalcitrance made non-involvement impossible (SR, 155-7, 159-60, 165-8). He manages thereby to create an image of a totally absurd world in which normal law-abiding citizens are forced to become revolutionaries, a role they would normally repugn, simply because those charged with safe-guarding the laws refuse to heed reason. Nor, if the second testimony be given credence, is such a portrait of the absurdity pervading colonialist society simply the product of a young and inexperienced mind. Even a police officer finds it necessary to undermine the efforts of the colonialist powers, because he cannot excuse the recourse to torture and the blatant murder of Algerian Muslims. Like the student, this police officer thinks of himself as an Algerian and wants to work with Arabs and Europeans to build a free, non-colonialist Algeria. Like the student, he finds himself engaging in acts he would normally abhor, but which are excusable in his eyes because they parry the blatant injustices of the colonialist police authorities.

> It is as an Algerian that I have done all pf these things. I do not have the impression that I have betrayed France. I am Algerian and like any Algerian I have fought and I continue to fight against colonialism. As an aware Algerian citizen, my place was at the side of the patriots. That is where I was. (SR, 171. See also 169-70)

And like the student, the police officer makes no attempt to understand the opinions of those whom he opposes. He simply lets their absurd conduct trigger in him retaliatory action which is equally preposterous.

Nor does Fanon comment on these two testimonies in order to complete such lacunae. He simply presents them as indications of how Europeans from two entirely different backgrounds came to serve the revolutionary struggle, as though no other questions need to be raised. After all, for him colonialism is absurd in all of its ramifications, and no one can make sense of it. Thus it appears that his *Sociology of a Revolution* picks up the theme of the down-trodden from *Black Skin, White Masks.* There is no viable political solution for Algerian Muslims, just as there was no solution for the down-trodden or the non-intellectual. Since Algerian Muslims can neither obtain justice in Algeria nor leave to seek it elsewhere, they must change the political order. However, since all attempts to

bring about change peacefully are doomed to failure, they must eventually turn to revolution. And as the revolution continues, the Algerians find new resources within themselves. They develop attitudes and practices that will facilitate national survival and they do so of their own free will.

IV

Stirring rhetoric is the hallmark of Fanon's last book, *The Wretched of the Earth.* And that rhetoric, as Jean-Paul Sartre recognized in his preface to the first edition of the work, is addressed primarily to the victims of colonialism. Fanon wants to prod them to action, to help them take the first precarious steps towards abolishing colonialism or achieving national liberation and then to organize their fledgling nation in such a way as to avoid the labyrinths of irrational enthusiasm as well as the pitfalls prepared by those who wish to prolong the vestiges of colonialist rule. Though his examples are primarily African-from the countries of North Africa as well as of sub-Saharan Africa-Fanon claims universal validity for his argument. It is, therefore, abstract and sometimes nearly incomprehensible-to such an extent that it can be seized only by paying close attention to all of its intricacies. His basic contention is set forth *in* the first four chapters and the two appendices to Chapter One and Chapter Four. In that part of the work he explains why colonialism must be terminated at all costs, even by recourse to violence, and how to avoid the problems which plague formerly colonized nations. The last chapter consists of a long analysis of the mental troubles besetting both the colonialists and the colonized and thus poignantly buttresses Fanon's other arguments against colonialism. It, too, has an appendix in which Fanon reveals the grotesque errors made by European psychiatrists in their explanations of why a large proportion of North Africans vented their rage in violent crimes and then shows how this phenomenon can be more accurately appreciated. In the conclusion, Fanon reminds his readers of the evils wrought by Europe as well as by her most successful imitator, the United States of America, and urges them to make human dignity so encompassing a goal that they will eschew trying to catch up either with Europe or the U.S. He encourages the nations of the third world to set their own pace, one in keeping with their needs and capacities, and above all to concentrate on helping their citizens to live well.

The first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* explores the problem of violence at length. Fanon is primarily interested in showing why decolonization must be violent, but interrupts his argument momentarily to consider the signs which show that a people is ready for national liberation. After this digression, he resumes his major argument and concentrates on the character of the violence by which decolonization is achieved. In other words, Chapter One consists of three parts: the two arguments which show respectively the necessity of violence for achieving decolonization and its therapeutic consequences for the formerly colonized people, but whose continuity is curiously interrupted as Fanon evaluates the different indications of a people's readiness for national liberation almost the way a physician would discuss the various signs that a patient can benefit from a major operation (WE, 5-23, 23-35, 35-52) .

For Fanon, there are three reasons why colonization must be achieved by violent means. Above all, it must be a violent process because of what it signifies, namely, the sudden replacement of one species of human beings by another and the total social re-organization that represents. Taking seriously either the claims of the colonialists that they represent a superior form of humanity or at least the ways they expressed their beliefs in these claims by excluding the native population from certain kinds of employment and from most social settings, frequently by force, Fanon notes that decolonization requires a total, complete, and absolute replacement of the colonialists by the formerly colonized and that this change will frequently have to come about in the same way that the colonialists originally occupied those positions and protected their social privileges-by force. He does not pause to consider whether the process is just; he simply notes that what was taken by force usually needs to be taken back by force. In other words, a policy of "might makes right" inevitably leads to more might, not to a more secure right. [16] The history of colonial rule, a history marked by the liberal use of violence against the colonized, shows why speech alone will not persuade the colonial power to relinquish control.

Another reason that decolonization must be violent is that the society established by the colonialists is characterized by violence. Now this line of reasoning differs from the preceding one in that the violence alluded to here is the violence used by the colonialists to maintain a completely compartmentalized world. To illustrate this point, Fanon notes that while the colonialist can and does use violence against the colonized, the

16. Cf. J.-J. Rousseau *Social Contract,* Book I, Chap. 3.

colonized must remain passive; that the colonial residential quarter is separate from and wealthier than the colonized residential quarter and that it is closed to the colonized; that the colonized is constantly reminded that he is of a different, and somehow inferior, race; and that all relations are overshadowed by a basic Manichaeism which portrays everything pertaining to the culture of the colonialists as good and everything pertaining to the culture of the colonized as bad.[17] The effect of the first three types of violence is to cause the colonized to draw back and enviously await the day that he can avenge himself of the insults heaped upon him, can move through all parts of his city proudly and without fear, and can prove to others that though different he is no whit inferior. The effect of the fourth is that the colonized comes to perceive the cultural values of the colonialists as serving only to oppress him and thus longs for the day he can reject them. In the meantime he learns to dissimulate, to pretend to adopt the values of the colonialist.

> To the lie of the colonial situation, the colonized replies with an equal lie. His conduct is open with his fellow countrymen, contracted and illegible with the colonialists. Truth is what precipitates the downfall of the colonial regime, what favorizes the emergence of the nation. Truth is what protects the natives and hurts the foreigners. In the colonial context, there is no truthful conduct. And the good is quite simply what causes *them* harm. (WE, 17. His emphasis)

But all this is merely part of the extraordinary patience of the colonized, of his ability to work slowly and carefully towards the day of reckoning, because for him human dignity is limited to the very simple goal of having others recognize that he is equal to the colonialist (WE, 12-3. Compare with BW, 195-200)

In effect, this whole argument suggests a latent store of violence pent up within the colonized and ready to burst forth at the moment of liberation. And Fanon points to that latent store of violence in his third argument as to why decolonization must be violent. However, lest he be accused of too much conjecture, he prefaces that third argument with an explanation of how the violence generated by the evils of colonial rule is manifested in self-destructive ways prior to the war of liberation(WE,23,17-23,see also 215-28). This explanation allows him to respond to the frequently raised question about the senseless violence colonized people wreak upon each other and about their stubborn insistence upon perpetuating irrational tribal

17. WE, 7-17. However, in Chapter Two Fanon inadvertently admits that the second contrast is overstated here; see 67.

customs. The basic premise of his explanation is that however sensitive the colonized person might be to the Manichaeism of the colonial world, he can escape it only among his own people. Thus, the insults he has received from the colonialists but dare not return in kind are behind his severe castigations of, or even grievous assaults upon, a fellow countryman for an otherwise insignificant slight. Similarly, he may seek to escape the harsh reality of the colonial world by turning to the magical world of tribal culture or by losing himself in tribal eroticism and dances. Yet these are only transitory releases, and the basic reactional violence remains pent up within him ready to burst forth once the struggle for liberation begins in earnest.

Fanon's conviction that colonialism, necessarily leads the colonized to build up such a reservoir of reactional violence prompts his conclusion that violent decolonization cannot be avoided. And an implicit corollary of that conclusion is that it should not be avoided. Precisely because decolonization must be achieved, violence must be employed. This becomes more explicit in the course of his inquiry into the signs which indicate that a nation is ready for national liberation, an inquiry that is presented as something of a digression. Fanon begins by enumerating the flaws in the reasoning of those who criticize revolution while pleading for peaceful alternatives, namely, the leaders of the political parties and the intellectual or commercial elites. For him, their praise of non-violence and exhortations to compromise rest on three basic errors. First, in citing the military unpreparedness of the colonized people and their lack of arms as reasons to eschew violence, such counselors ignore how widespread revolution has become. More significantly, they neglect that precisely because the colonialists are drawn to the colony for its market-value, they can be quickly swayed as they see that market-value threatened. Finally, these critics fail to understand that compromise changes nothing, that colonialism is so destructive of the colonized that it must be eradicated and not simply modified (WE, 24-5, 26-9, 29-31). Once he demonstrates the errors in their position, Fanon can point to the attempts by the rural populace to harrass the police and to the recurrent celebrations of former national heroes as signs that a nation is on the verge of revolution (WE, 31-35).

Having shown why violence is a necessary concomitant of decolonization and why such violent decolonization is inevitable, Fanon attempts to explain the psychological character of this violence. Above all, he perceives it as a necessary tool, as the only means by which the colonized can get the attention of the co-

lonialists, and as the only appropriate response to the colonialist's frequent refrain of "them or us" (WE, 35-40, 43-4). It serves also as a bond among revolutionaries, a kind of rite of initiation which proves one's commitment to the cause. To illustrate this point, Fanon cites again the passage of Aime Cesaire which he cited in *Black Skin, White Masks,* but here he reads Cesaire literally. Now the black man must kill the white man outside in order to liberate himself from the white man within. In this sense, violence is the means to psychological as well as to physical liberation. And as the liberation struggle succeeds, the bond that was originally a rite of initiationbecomes a bond of comradeship, a basic proof that one has served the nascent fatherland.[18] It is so transformed because the struggle for liberation calls for violent conduct. In other words, all of the positive features of violence may ultimately be traced to reasons of necessity-including violence as a psychologically liberating force.

Even after the liberation struggle results in the colonized nation achieving its independence, violence or the threat of violence continues to be useful. In an appendix to this chapter Fanon explains how the former colonial nation tries to pressure its former colony to accept the continued presence of its military troops, economic advisors, and managerial experts or to risk prolonged backwardness. And many fledgling nations give in to this pressure, so persuaded are they of the need to catch up to Europe as quickly as possible. Fanon counsels against acquiescing in such ruthless bargaining and also urges the newly independent nations to avoid excessively harsh programs of self-sacrifice designed to achieve the same goal of quickly catching up to Europe. His reasoning is that the European nations never had to engage in such a race against such odds. When industrialization came to Europe, all of the different nations were at roughly the same level of development. Thus no one European nation was in a position to insult any other European nation the way almost all European nations now insult the former colonies (WE, 53-5). More importantly, the backwardness of the former colonies is primarily a result of their colonization, and they therefore have a

18. Compare WE, 44-7, 47-50, and 51-2 with BW, 180-1. See also above pp. 289-270. and n. 7. However, this passage from Cesaire's play, *Et les Miens se taisaient,* must be read in context. His rebel achieves neither physical nor psychological liberation, because his very intransigence causes the people to avoid him and because he cannot forget the brutality of his action.

sound claim for reparation from their former colonizers. Fanon wants the newly independent nations to reconsider their position: they should demand that investment capital be given as reparation without any attached conditions and should refuse to serve as markets for goods from the former colonialist nations until reparation is made. Fanon seeks the rehabilitation of man and the redistribution of wealth so as to give all citizens equal opportunity. He thinks such goals are more easily achieved under a socialist than under a capitalist regime, but passes over that issue quickly in order to reiterate his major contention that the previous violence of the former colonial power and its willingness to bring the fledgling nation back under its control by attaching conditions to assistance warrant a firm demand for reparation as well as a clear threat of a new kind of violence should the demand be refused (WE, 56-8, 58-62). Here, then, Fanon returns to his original concern for human dignity, but now insists that it cannot be achieved without material means. To acquire those means, recourse to violence and subsequently to threats of violence are necessary.

In Chapter Two Fanon turns his attention from arguments justifying the use of violence to the practical issue of how the colonized peoples can first be induced to resort to it and then to keep it active once other events induce them to become less bellicose. This practical advice emerges from his reflections on the failure of the national political parties to establish sound relationships with the rural masses and their traditional leaders. And those reflections go back to his earlier criticism of the national political parties for their counsels of forbearance and compromise. After exploring the reasons for the tense relations between the national political parties and the rural masses, he enters upon a general explanation of how these masses play a major part in setting off the struggle for liberation and of what needs to be done to keep the struggle going once it has begun (WE, 63-75, 75-94).

Tensions come to exist between the national political parties and the rural masses because the intellectual and commercial elites who occupy positions of authority within these parties are overly concerned with formal organization. Desirous of patterning their parties on those of the colonial power, they concentrate on enlisting the urban working class and neglect the rural masses engaged in agricultural tasks. They do so partly because they consider the rural masses as too tradition-bound, backward, and inert to join in modernizing political activity. When they do attempt to enlist the

rural peoples, they usually fail because they ignore or at least circumvent traditional rural leaders-individuals whom they hold responsible for the continued backwardness of the rural areas. Yet such tactics are mistaken, for the colonial authorities are only too ready to exploit the resentment of these traditional leaders and thus to enlist them to speak or even to act against the policies of the nascent political parties. More importantly, even if the liberation movement should somehow succeed without the help of the rural masses, the leaders of the newly independent nation soon find themselves able to rule only a few cities and utterly incapable of extending their modernizing policies to the hinterlands (WE, 63-71, 71-5).

Fanon's unique appreciation of the revolutionary fervor of these rural masses prompts him to present a scenario of successful decolonization culminating in post-independence national unity. He notes that the fundamental conflict within national political parties, that between those who urge immediate release from the colonialist yoke and those who insist upon cajoling the colonialists to permit gradual steps towards independence, eventually leads to an irrevocable split within the party. Assuming that the faction which favors a temporalizing posture with respect to the colonialist power will always be dominant, Fanon foresees a moment at which this group will act in concert to force out their critics. When this occurs, the critics renew contact with party militants who had been excluded earlier because of intransigent attitudes or overt acts of resistance against the colonialist forces and together they form a clandestine political party. Given the convictions and perhaps the bitter prison experiences of the members of this new party, they have a clear notion of what to expect from continued colonial rule and thus refuse any talk of compromise. However, just as it begins to function and to attract new members, the legal political party moves closer to the colonialist powers, hoping thereby to reform colonial rule from within, and joins with the colonialist authorities in attempting to crush the clandestine party. No longer secure in the city, the leaders of the clandestine party flee to the countryside in search of refuge among villagers or peasants. At this juncture they discover the bitterness of these otherwise placid people towards colonial rule and their eagerness to break its hold over their country. From that discovery to the outbreak of guerrilla warfare is a short step, and Fanon interrupts his scenario to explain that the party militants must at this point concentrate on the political indoctrination of the peasants in order to keep the revolutionary momentum going (WE, 75-90).

Though it sounds like a thinly disguised case history of Algeria, Fanon presents his scenario as universally valid and frequently cites parallels from the Angolan, Congolese, and Kenyan liberation struggles to buttress that claim. His basic contention is that the rural peoples are central to the struggle and frequently responsible for initiating it, because they have the most poignant daily experience of the evils wrought by colonialism. Resuming the scenario, Fanon draws attention to another source of rural support which is all too frequently overlooked. Those who suffer most from colonialism are the landless peasants who are forced to quit the countryside and move to the cities in search of work. Once there, they agglomerate in wretched hovels at the peripheries and offer their services for any task that brings remuneration-day labor, domestic work, shoeshining, even prostitution. These hapless souls constitute the lumpen-proletariat, a class of people who truly have nothing to lose. But when the liberation struggle moves from the countryside back to the cities, as eventually it must in order to succeed, they are the ones upon whom Fanon rests his hopes. And having taken the scenario this far, Fanon abandons it for good in order to stress again the need for political indoctrination.

Apparently, the spontaneity of the rural masses and the resentment of the lumpen-proletariat are not enough. To succeed, a liberation struggle must be carefully managed by politically sensitive guides. These guides must never forget the insidious cunning of their colonialist foes. Anything that harms the liberation struggle is seized upon, even treating the colonized peoples like respectable human beings and using polite forms of address when speaking to them. However, having stressed the need to guard against colonialist guile, Fanon changes course to introduce a new complexity: at some point those engaged in the struggle must learn that not all colonialists are implacable enemies. There are, after all, some colonialists who have decided to help the colonized peoples achieve their independence (WE, 90-94). Here, then, Fanon returns to the candor that marked the last pages of *Sociology of a Revolution.* Having made as strong a case as he could for the violent rejection of colonialism and having shown how that goal might best be accomplished, he deems it appropriate to acknowledge that the colonial situation is actually more nuanced than his previous arguments would suggest.

Fanon's emphasis here on the revolutionary significance of the rural masses and his desire to illustrate how they might contribute to

a successful liberation struggle lead him to assert the inadequacies of the usual party leadership too cursorily as well as to treat the whole question of political indoctrination in far too summary a manner. He returns to both of these subjects in the third chapter. His contention is that even though the anti-colonialist fight need not always be part of a struggle which has a nationalist perspective in order to succeed, national awareness must be created for the newly independent nation to flourish. However, to the extent that the old national bourgeoisie dominates the political party and controls the nation, such a goal cannot be achieved.

In fact, the old national bourgeoisie-composed as it is of colonized persons who were schooled in colonial ways and who succeeded by adapting to colonial norms at the expense of traditional ones-is an impediment to the creation of national awareness (WE, 95-108) . It perpetuates the evils of colonialism insofar as it seeks to do nothing more once independence has been achieved than to put its own members into the positions formerly held by the colonialists or to reward them with land-holdings the colonialists were forced to abandon. Nothing changes, then, except the actors. Nor can any change be expected, for the members of this bourgeoisie know nothing about the economy of the nation. Heretofore they were content to live in the capital city and to turn their thoughts to Europe while enriching themselves as merchants or liberal professionals tolerated by the colonialists. This is why they must now strive to keep multiple economic ties with the former colonial power, ties which perpetuate the old system. Yet, ever anxious to enrich themselves and to extend their own power, the members of this bourgeoisie resort to slogans of nationalism and even to cries of racism in order to drive others from positions of power and wealth. Individuals who helped the nationalist struggle and had nothing to do with colonialism, but who are nonetheless of another race or country, now find themselves forced to abandon everything and flee for safety. Moreover by prolonging the colonial mode of development which favored some parts of the country while neglecting others, the bourgeoisie encourages a noxious regional rivalism. The developed, wealthier provinces no longer want to support the backward, poorer provinces. In sum, every step taken by the national bourgeoisie hastens the demise of the newly independent nation and the consequent return of the former colonial power.

Even when the national bourgeoisie tries to consolidate its power by naming a leader to set a new tone, it harms the nation. Far from

creating a national awareness, such a leader simply strengthens the hold of the bourgeoisie. Fanon acknowledges the probable sincerity of these leaders and applauds their heroic deeds as former freedom fighters (WE, 108-15). But neither sincerity nor heroism is at issue. What is at issue is the formation of national awareness and the development of a nation, tasks which the leader cannot accomplish because he has no broad political wisdom. And there is another problem as well, the absence of a strong national political party. If the party that helped the nation achieve independence had been sufficiently strong, the national bourgeoisie would not have gained the upper hand nor been able to bring a leader to power.

For all these reasons, then, Fanon urges developing nations to bypass the bourgeois phase. He refuses to enter into the theoretical debate about whether or not this phase can be bypassed and simply insists that it must be if the revolution is to succeed.

> The struggle against the bourgeoisie of the under-developed countries is far from being a theoretical position. It is not a question of decoding the condemnation brought against it by historical judgment. The national bourgeoisie in under-developed countries must be combatted not because it risks slowing down the global and harmonious development of the nation. It must be opposed resolutely because it literally does nothing. This bourgeoisie, mediocre in its profits, in what it brings about, in its thought, tries to mask its mediocrity by prestigious construction on the individual level, by the chrome of American automobiles, vacations on the Riviera, week-ends in neon-lighted night-clubs.'[9]

Precisely because this bourgeoisie is relatively indigent, it seeks to enrich itself at the expense of the nation and directs all of its efforts to that goal and to the display of its new wealth. It cannot be a dynamic, entrepreneurial bourgeoisie because it does not know how to be and because its interests lie in immediate satisfaction. Thus, to

19. WE, 116. As is evident from his remarks two paragraphs earlier, Fanon is mindful that his advice is likely to trouble doctrinaire Marxists. But his concern is with successful development, not with sound doctrine:

> The theoretical question raised for about fifty years now whenever the history of under-developed countries is considered, to wit, whether or not the bourgeois phase can be by passed, must be resolved at the level of revolutionary action and not by a line of reasoning. In under-developed countries, the bourgeois phase can be justified only to the extent that the national bourgeoisie is economically and technically powerful enough to build a bourgeois society, to create the conditions for the development of a significant proletariat, to industrialize agriculture, in short, to make an authentic national culture possible.

avoid the kind of internecine piracy that must eventually lead to the nation having to call back the former colonial power, Fanon pleads for the nationalization of the tertiary sector, that sector of the economy formerly controlled by the colonialists and from which the members of the national bourgeoisie now hope to enrich themselves. Yet simply to nationalize this sector is not sufficient: in addition, great care must be taken to place politically sensitive citizens at the head of the different services, citizens who can themselves help to politicize the people by their administrative actions (WE, 117-21).

Differently stated, only by rapidly democratizing the nation can the phase of bourgeois control be eluded. However, to succeed, such democratization must be handled by a well-coordinated political party, and Fanon now explains how such a party should be formed. Above all, his concern with democratization is reflected in his insistence that the political party be popular. The structure of the party must be decentralized and the various levels of authority within the party located in different regions of the nation. Under no circumstances is the struggle for a popular party to be abandoned in favor of the old bourgeois device of a leader, that is to say, a dictator.

> To avoid these many reefs, we must fight tenaciously so that the party never becomes a docile instrument in the hands of a leader. Leader,' from the English verb meaning 'to lead.' The one who leads the people, that no longer exists now. Peoples are no longer herds and do not need to be led. [20]

And to ensure against such an eventuality, Fanon insists that the party be separate from the government, that it be the organ by which the people makes its will known and not the voice of the government.

Now his conviction that people no longer need to be led is based in large part on what he has learned from the Algerian people during their liberation struggle and is closely linked to his attempts to provide the grounds for human dignity. In fact, one of his major criticisms of political leaders is that they fail to promote "the real dignity of the people, that which comes through bread, earth, and putting the country's power back into the sacred hands of the people," so intent are they upon furthering the interests of their own benefactors,the members of the national bourgeoisie(WE, 1O9;see also 125-6) . And they are only too willing to encourage political leaders

20. WE, 123. The quotation marks are added for clarity.

to refrain from giving power to the people, for they are utterly convinced that the masses are incapable of governing. By citing examples of instances when the Algerian people quickly seized the nuances of political rule and overcame unbelievable obstacles during the liberation struggle, examples which reinforce the arguments made in *Sociology of a Revolution,* Fanon defends his faith in their political ability. Then, pointing to the way agricultural production increased once the Algerian peasants understood that it was their own soil which they were tilling, increased even amidst the turmoil and bombardments of the liberation struggle, he links the two phenomena. When the Algerian people took possession of their land, they felt responsible for what they did with it and developed a sense of awareness about the service they could render to fellow Algerians by their use of it. These sentiments are at the core of human dignity for Fanon and are also the kinds of qualities which permit a people to act as its own leader (WE, 127-8, 128-31).

Still, it must not be forgotten that all of these arguments are subservient to Fanon's contention that a newly liberated nation needs a strong political party. In other words, despite his faith in the ability of the people to guide themselves without relying on political leaders, he recognizes the continuing need for political indoctrination. Having explained how the party ought to be organized so as to represent the popular will, Fanon turns to the problem of educating the people in self-government. The party must guide the people with respect to many questions, but it must do so in such a way as to safeguard the notion of popular sovereignty. Consequently, it must strive to consult the people at each stage of decision-making and to avoid any program which hampers collective action. At the same time it must make sure that the people understand how they are affected by each governmental project, that they discern its contribution to their well-being. In these ways the party contributes to the genesis and development of national awareness. To make this burgeoning sense of national awareness more profound is the task of the government, and Fanon closes the chapter with concrete suggestions about governmental programs which will achieve that goal (WE, 134-5. See also 44-5, 135-6, 136-9).

Now that he has given an adequate account of his criticism of bourgeois party leadership and more fully indicated what he means by political indoctrination, Fanon can turn away from such practical issues and take up again the theoretical problem of justifying revolutionary struggle. This shift of emphasis is announced by a stirring quote from Sekou Toure placed at the head of Chapter Four. For Sekou Toure, as for Fanon, neither words nor fine arts are

enough. Action alone, revolutionary action, counts. Fanon understands that he must nonetheless explain why only this kind of action is to be deemed worthy of praise and thus proposes to analyze "in this chapter the problem, which is felt to be fundamental, of the legitimacy of demanding that a nation be given back." And, as though to underline that such an analysis is primarily a theoretical task, he immediately explains "it must be recognized that the political party which mobilizes the people hardly bothers itself about this problem of legitimacy. "[21]

Simply stated, Fanon considers it 'legitimate to fight for national independence, because he believes a people without a nation to be a people without a culture and culture to be an essential element of a people's dignity. He quickly dismisses the objection that dignity is fine, but hardly nourishing, by asserting that, contrary to what it claims, colonialism cannot improve upon the material well-being of the colonized people. To defend that assertion he points to the misery in which the citizens of the colonial power continue to live in their own homeland and to the failure of colonial regimes to improve the material conditions of the colonized even after having proclaimed their intention of doing so (WE, 142-3). Then, returning to the perspective of Sekou Toure with which he identified at the beginning of the chapter, Fanon proceeds to analyze the legitimacy of national self-determination, that is, "demanding that a nation be given back," by explaining the psychological and political significance of the mental peregrinations of the colonized writer or intellectual. Consequently, the argument here returns to many of the themes first raised in Chapter Five of *Black Skin, White Masks* and shows the way to their ultimate resolution. Or, to be more precise, to the extent that he successfully proves culture as national expression to be an essential element of human dignity, the latter being for him the fundamental goal of political action, he shows how those issues may ultimately be resolved.

The key to his analysis is the tri-partite summary of the colonized writer's or intellectual's evolution set forth in the middle of the chapter (WE, 153-4). According to this schema, colonized writers or intellectuals begin by immersing themselves thoroughly in the

21. WE, 142. To make his point more explicit, Fanon adds: "The political party can very well speak about the nation in moving terms, but what interests it is that the people who listen to it understand how necessary it is to participate in the struggle for them simply to aspire to existence.

culture of the colonialists. They completely take over the literary standards and style of the colonialist nation, just as the West Indians portrayed in the first chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* completely adopted the linguistic conventions of the colonialists. But even though this stage is prior in time, Fanon begins by speaking of a second stage and focuses on the first stage only in order to identify the psychological needs engendered by it to which the second stage responds (WE, 150-1 and 143-50, 151-3). This later stage is characterized by the colonized writer's or intellectual's desire to return to his people, a desire he cannot satisfy because he no longer has contact with them and thus can do little more than try to recall his original culture. Thus, it is frequently marked by passionate praise of the great cultural achievements his people formerly achieved. To the colonialist's contention that hearkening back to a glorious cultural past does nothing for the colonized person in present times, Fanon now has a reply: to discover a rich past does indeed help the colonized individual today, for it responds to a psychological need by giving him something to be proud of when faced with colonialist scorn (WE, 143-7, 13-7). Here, too, Fanon notes that this second stage-which corresponds to both the *negritude* and the Arab renaissance movements-must also be transcended in order for a more precise form of self-expression to be recognized.

Pausing to explain how leading participants in the *negritude* movement came to recognize the cultural differences between black people of different countries, just as proponents of the Arab renaissance movement came to acknowledge differences among the Arab peoples, Fanon argues that the attempt to identify culture and race must pass away (WE, 148-50). That identification responded to the psychological need of the colonized writer or intellectual who sought to shake off the cultural garb he had borrowed from the colonialists. But whatever its therapeutic merits, it does not correspond to reality. The recognition that culture is specific to a group of people and cannot be adequately treated in terms of race ushers in what Fanon considers to be the third stage of the colonized writer's or intellectual's evolution. Persuaded now that the culture which counts is the culture of his people as a people and yet aware that his people cannot function as a people so long as they are subjected to colonial domination, he wholeheartedly embraces the struggle for national liberation. That commitment brings him into contact with the real concerns of his people and permits him to

understand what truly unites them and other apparently similar peoples. The true bond between them is not a common share in some great past cultural achievement, but the problems they now face because they suffer from the same colonialist oppression (WE, 154-64, especially 162-4).

Thus, to use Fanon's own example, Senegalese and Guineans can work together to shake off the colonialist yoke. Once successful, they can rejoice in their mutual effort and celebrate the heroic deeds of each people. Nonetheless they must not allow such rejoicing to keep them from the pressing task of building a viable and responsive nation. And precisely because the goal of the Senegalese is to form a nation which will meet the needs of the Senegalese people, just as the goal of the Guineans is a nation for the Guinean people, they must now travel separate paths. This does not mean that they must be opposed to each other; it simply takes into account the different needs faced by different national groups and denies that ethnic or racial ties should supersede national concerns.

As presented here, Fanon's argument presupposes universal agreement about the shortcomings of the pan-African or *negritude* and the pan-Arab movements. In the appendix to this chapter, however, Fanon addresses himself more directly to the lingering arguments in favor of those movements and thus presents a fuller defense of his own nationalist position. Originally a paper presented to the Second Conference of Black Writers and Artists held in Rome in 1959, it serves as a sequel to his "Racism and Culture" which was presented to the first Conference of this same group held in Paris three years earlier (see above p. 21-4 and n. 12). He begins, then, by linking cultural deprivation and physical misery as factors prompting a colonized people to begin a liberation struggle. Differently stated, he contends that colonialism's efforts to destroy the culture of the colonized people while imposing its own upon them as well as its inability or unwillingness to respond to their basic physical needs are powerful antecedents of revolutionary sentiment (WE, 166-8). That now familiar theme is restated only in order to prepare the way for his major argument, an explanation of the way the somnolent national culture of the colonized people is at first quickened by the liberation struggle and subsequently contributes to its continuation.

Fanon envisages this interaction as beginning when the colonized writer or intellectual turns away from the colonialist culture in order to address himself to his own people. And since the one issue of concern to his people is the successful outcome of the liberation

struggle, he deals with themes of combat and national existence. Tales of past national exploits gradually lose time references and are narrated as though they belong to any moment, even the present. In the plastic arts, styles and forms rigidly followed heretofore are now abandoned because they conform too closely to stereotypes of the colonized people's artistic expression propagated by the colonialists. It is in this sense that cultural change or growth, even rebirth, goes hand in hand with a burgeoning national awareness, in this sense that there is a fundamental interrelationship between nation and culture.

> The nation is not only a condition of culture, of its effervescence, its continued renewal, its becoming deeper. It is also a requirement. At first, it is the fight for national existence which unblocks culture, opens the doors of creation to it. Later, it is the nation which will make sure that there are conditions and a frame of expression for culture. For the sake of culture, the nation brings together the different indispensable elements which alone confer upon it credibility, validity, dynamism, creativity. It is likewise its national character which will render this culture permeable to other cultures and will allow it to influence, to penetrate other cultures. What does not exist can hardly act upon the real or even influence it. First, the re-establishment of the nation must give life, in the most biological sense of the term, to national culture. (WE, 172-3. See also 168-72)

Fanon's understanding of the close way in which these two are linked leads him to identify, a few lines later, the liberation struggle as the fullest cultural expression of a colonized people. He does not mean to suggest thereby that it somehow breathes new life into the old culture nor that it gives the people some notion of their culture's higher possibilities, but simply that it allows this people to consider themselves as a people and to cast off all vestiges of their colonial subjection. Moreover, the struggle sets the tone for the fledgling nation insofar as it is carried on by all the people and in the name of all the people. In a nation which has come into being under such conditions, there can be no doubt about immediate goals nor about whether the masses who fought so valiantly should have a future political role.[22]

According to this line of reasoning, culture refers primarily to the way a people becomes aware of itself as a people and continues to

22. WE, 173-4. Whether those goals are achieved and the people actually allowed to play a role in the politics of the fledgling nation depends, of course, on a resolution of the practical issues raised in Chapters Two and Three.

develop that awareness. Stated in these terms, culture is first and foremost a national phenomenon. This does not mean that Fanon denies the existence of an awareness which transcends national boundaries, but rather that he denies the political viability of pursuing this kind of awareness. As long as colonialism continues to hold peoples in thrall, major attention must be paid to furthering national liberation movements. And just as hearkening back to a glorious past in which all blacks might rejoice in no way resolved the problems of their present subjection, so, too, attempts to emphasize the common elements in the self-expression of black peoples today without respect to national boundaries do nothing to remove the colonialist powers. Only the struggle for national liberation, what Fanon terms a people's fullest cultural expression, can achieve that all-important goal. Consequently, Fanon puts that task first and simply suggests postponing the quest for a culture which transcends national boundaries until all colonized peoples have achieved national liberation (WE, 174-5). Since the white man refuses to grant any validity to the colonized people's past efforts at self-expression, they must now learn to express themselves as a people working together for their own independence. They must also encourage other colonized peoples to do the same. After the colonialist powers have been routed, the liberated peoples will have ample time to explore the common elements in their forms of self-expression.

Strictly speaking, the argument of *The Wretched of the Earth* ends here. Neither Chapter Five nor its appendix introduces any new material, Chapter Five being composed of a series of case studies which poignantly depict the psychological traumas arising from the colonial situation and the appendix providing a fuller account of a phenomenon adumbrated in the first chapter of this work.[23] Moreover, whereas the basic theme of this work is the successful outcome of the liberation struggle and the problems facing the newly independent nation, the case studies reach back to the very beginning of the revolution. Fanon includes them, nonetheless, because he cannot close his ears to their rending testimony about the horrors of colonialism. And he returns to the problem of the colonized person's aggressiveness in the appendix, because it allows him to argue more pointedly for the therapeutic benefit to be gained from revolutionary struggle.

Incidences of mental disturbances abound among colonized

23. See above. pp. 296-97

peoples, claims Fanon, because colonialism represents such a thorough and determined denial of their humanity (WE, 177-8). In this respect, his recitation of these cases here provides additional evidence for his earlier charge about the violence of colonialism. With the outbreak of the struggle for national liberation, the terrain was made even more conducive to psychiatric upset-especially among those whose independence is at stake. Thus, examples of mental disturbances of Algerians abound in this enumeration. Among the first two kinds of cases that he narrates, five concerned with reactions to precise events and five arising from the atmosphere of total war, three and four examples respectively are of Algerian patients. And when he speaks about the kinds of disorders arising from the effects of torture, all of his examples concern Algerian victims. Finally, his enumeration of seven kinds of psychosomatic disorders is drawn exclusively from his experiences with Algerian patients, many of whom contracted these diseases while in concentration camps. It appears, then, that colonized peoples suffer as harshly inwardly as outwardly from colonial rule.

Fanon speaks about a different kind of mental disturbance in the appendix to this chapter and shows how it, too, can be traced back to the colonial setting. "From the Criminal Impulsiveness of the North African to the War for National Liberation" is a careful analysis of the Algerian's propensity to criminal conduct, a phenomenon several French psychiatrists had tried to explain. Though he appears to agree that such a phenomenon does exist, Fanon prefaces his consideration of it and of the various explanations others have set forth by reminding the reader of the larger context-the colonial setting. Here he replies to the colonialists' pejorative characterizations of the colonized by insisting upon the way colonialism depersonalizes the colonized individual. A colonized individual cannot be concerned about whether his conduct is honorable or dignified nor about whether he truly means to keep his word because he is faced with the more immediate question of survival. Pitted against his own countrymen in the daily struggle for existence, his only thoughts can be upon securing basic necessities-by any means possible. And constantly reminded of the gap that separates him from the colonialists, he is ecstatic whenever he can outwit those superior beings and thus reassure himself that he is not as inferior as they would have it (WE, 215-7).

Turning to the scientific account of this phenomenon, Fanon reproduces the basic charges about the criminal behavior of the

Algerian and the ways it is explained. Common to each is the notion that the cerebral structure of the North African accounts for his criminal behavior. In other words, the problem is biological (WE, 217-23, especially 223). But Fanon rejects this explanation for two reasons, both of which suggest that the Algerian's criminality is a minor aspect of a larger problem. First, he points to the fundamental difference between the criminal actions of Algerians living in France and those of Algerians living under colonialist domination. Secondly, he notes that the victims and the social groups of Algerian criminals living in France differ from those of Algerian criminals in Algeria. Then, Fanon introduces a striking fact: after 1954, that is, after the outbreak of the revolutionary struggle, there were fewer crimes committed in France by Algerians (WE, 224-5). For Fanon, it is evident that the explanation of Algerian criminality is social rather than biological. With the onset of the war for liberation, Algerians began to work with one another for a bigger cause.

Having now explained why colonialism must be overthrown, as well as why violence is an appropriate tool for this task, and having argued valiantly for bringing the revolution to all of the people in any given country, Fanon can conclude. He does so by reminding his reader that Europe has failed miserably in all it set out to do and that the future therefore belongs to the peoples of the newly independent nations. They must have the confidence to step forward on their own, the courage to reach out to their fellow men without giving any thought to Europe:

> For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must grow a new skin, develop a new thought, try to stand a new man on his feet. (WE, 233)

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As must now be patent, Fanon's thought is not immediately accessible to his reader. This is due less to its inherent complexity than to the complicated way in which it is presented. And Fanon was the first to admit that his writing was difficult to follow. Responding once at some length to a question that Francis Jeanson had about a passage in *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon added:

> This phrase is unexplainable. When I write about such things, I seek to touch my reader emotionally...that is, irrationally, almost sensually."

24. See Preface, by Francis Jeanson, BW, 12.

He then went on to speak about how sensitive he was to the magic of words and how the unconventional use of language allowed him to enjoy the thrill of coming face to face with himself:

> Words have a charge for me. I feel that I am unable to escape the bite of a word, the dizziness of a question mark.

Still, lest the reader throw up his or her hands in despair, it should be noted that upon receiving Fanon's long reply and looking again at the passage in question, Jeanson found it to be comprehensible in itself as long as he sought to read it sympathetically without reducing it to preconceived concepts.

In the preceding discussion, I have tried to provide an example of such a reading, to uncover the basic thread of Fanon's thought and take judicious note of his powerful feelings while striving to relate them to what he declares to be his goal. To accomplish this, it has often been necessary to investigate the formal structure of a chapter and to question how its particular argument is set forth as well as how that argument is related to the argument of the other chapters in each work. Even though this attention to Fanon's highly charged prose and unusual manner of expressing his ideas meant that the issue of how accurately he presents the teaching of the authors to whom he refers could be treated only in passing, such a procedure has made it possible to provide the comprehensive analysis of his thought missing from the work of all those who have heretofore written about him.[25]

25. The work which comes closest to such a goal is Irene L. Gendzier's *Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973). For an account of this work and Professor Gendzier's reply, see Charles E. Butterworth, "Frantz Fanon and the Justice of Violence," *The Middle East Journal* 28 (1974), pp. 451-458. Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan also criticizes Gendzier and promises to indicate Fanon's "orginality as a behavioural scientist" by examining the way he treats thinkers like Freud, Jung, Adler, and Mannoni, but fails because he treats the subject too superficially. See "Frantz Fanon: the revolutionary Psychiatrist" in *Race and Class,* XXI (1980), pp. 251-271.

Both Edmund Burke in his "Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth" (Daedalus,* 1976, pp. 127-134) and Aristide Zolberg in his "Frantz Fanon, a Gospel for the Damned" *(Encounter,* 27 [19681, pp. 58-63) show an awareness of Fanon's difficult prose, but neither provides more than a superficial account of *The Wretched of the Earth* -Burke because he is intent upon explaining the work as a necessary product of a particular kind of man living in a particular setting and Zolberg because he is too anxious to show the impracticality of Fanon's politics.

Still, this explanation of why it has been necessary to examine Fanon's arguments in such detail is only intended as a transition to a more immediate task. Now that the different parts of his thought have been set forth, it is possible to look at his work as a whole in order to state more succinctly his teaching about the relationship between human dignity and violence, the need for national liberation, and the importance as well as the meaning of national culture. When these themes are considered, it becomes evident that his thought did change between the writing of his first book and his last.

In *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon refrains from espousing violence as a means of achieving human dignity, even though he recognizes that in certain circumstances dignity can be achieved by no other means.[28] However, in each of the other volumes he clearly proclaims the necessity of resorting to violence and even goes so far in *The Wretched of the Earth* as to claim it will have a salutary psychological effect on the colonized rebel. The change in doctrine arises from his recognition that neither speech nor reasoning will bring the colonialists to change their policies. Even supposedly liberal colonialists refuse to admit the justice of turning the colonies over to the colonized peoples, and the other colonialists can be persuaded neither to abandon their prejudices against these peoples nor to consider treating them more humanely.

Although references to his loss of confidence in the power of reasoned speech abound in his later writings, Fanon never explains what prompted this change. Consequently, many of his commentators have attempted to identify its cause by speculating about particular events in his life and indulging themselves in fanciful circum-

26. See B.W., 199-200 and the admission that black people in America may have to do battle before whites will give them their due recognition. But note also the last words of Chapter Seven:

> To bring man to be *action-bound* while keeping respect for human values in motion, this is the most urgent task of him who, having reflected, readies himself for action. (200)

The emphasis is Fanon's. His neologism "actionnel,"translated here as "action-bound," is meant to be an antonym for the word *"reactionnel."* which he uses in the paragraph just before this in the sense that man should not always be in the position of reacting to events around him.

stantial conjectures.[27] It is not necessary to go so far afield, however. if one reflects a little more carefully on Fanon's basic argument. His basic contention is that those whose human dignity is most threatened by colonialism are the colonized individuals who have had the greatest exposure to the culture of the colonialist. Their plight constitutes the theme of Fanon's first book and continues to occupy a principal role in all of his other writings. The problem is that however strenuously one of the colonized intellectuals might struggle to aid the others, he cannot succeed by himself. If the problem were amenable to reason and persuasion, that is, if it were only a question of ignorance, then a single individual-who, after all, has no weapon but his tongue or pen-could succeed. Fanon recognized already in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the problem was far more than a question of ignorance, that it was primarily a question of economics and of politics. But he did not address himself to that larger problem there, because he deemed it necessary to start by drawing attention to the human aspect of the problem. This is why he opened the book with the declaration that it was time to utter certain harsh truths and then acknowledged the necessity of proving his assertion about there being too many imbeciles around.

Some reflection about what is novel in the two articles written immediately after the publication of *Black Skin, White Masks,* namely, "West Indians and Africans" and "Racism and Culture," will reveal the probable reason for Fanon's change. In *Black Skin, White Masks,* he was intent above all else on liberating the colonized black intellectual from the debilitating effects of the judgment the white colonialists had made about him, his culture, and even his race. The

27. David Caute, for example, suggests that Fanon's reaction to Algeria and to the atrocities committed by the French, as well as his greater awareness of the "socio-economic causes of mental stress" account for his change in attitude. A similar line of explanation is followed by Emmanuel Hansen and Peter Geismar in their analyses of Fanon's thought. See David Caute, *Frantz Fanon,* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), pp. 31-32, 36-37, and 43-44; Emmanuel Hansen, "Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual," in *Transition,* 46, pp. 25, 30, and 35; and Peter Geismar, "Frantz Fanon: Evolution of a Revolutionary, A Biographical Sketch," in *Monthly Review* XXI (1969), p. 24. L. Adele Jinadu, G.K. Grohs, and J.E. Seigel attribute the change to the uniqueness of the Algerian conflict. See C. Adele Jinadu, "Some Aspects of the Political Philosophy of Frantz Fanon" in *African Studies Review, XVI* (1973), pp. 258 and 259-260; G. K. Grohs, "Frantz Fanon and the African Revolution" in *The Journal of Modern. African Studies,* VI (1968), pp. 554-555; and J.E. Seigel, "On Frantz Fanon" in *The American Scholar, XXX*-VIII (1968), p. 91.

book was addressed both to the white colonialist and to the colonized black intellectual, to the former in order to show him why his judgments were as harmful as they were groundless and to the latter to show him how foolish he was to be affected by those judgments as well as how he might make himself impervious to them. Although Fanon based his arguments extensively on his own experiences as a colonized black intellectual, he also drew upon other sources in order to illustrate how colonized black people disparage themselves almost without knowing it and to prove the validity of his accusations about the noxious judgments of white people. Even so, there are at least two major shortcomings to the solution adumbrated in *Black Skin, White Masks.* One, which he explicitly acknowledged in the book, is the need for colonized black people to be able to claim a culture of their own in which they can take pride-a need he thought the circumstances of the day made it impossible to meet.[28] The other is Fanon's figurative adaptation of the speech of Aime Cesaire's rebel to suggest that the colonized black man could liberate himself insofar as he succeeded in killing the white man within him, a shortcoming he implicitly acknowledged by taking the very same passage in its most literal sense in *The Wretched of the Earth.*[29]

Common to *Black Skin, White Masks* and the two articles which stand as sequels to it is Fanon's concern with explaining to the white colonialists the nefarious effects their racist judgments have upon black people and with helping colonized blacks escape this kind of harm. In these articles, however, Fanon looks more closely at the non-intellectual segments of the colonized population and reveals the practical soundness of their conduct. Either as voters dramatically displaying utter contempt for their racist tutors or as guardians courageously preserving the old national culture against the verbal onslaughts of the colonialists and even the colonized intellectuals, the common people bear witness to a prudent wisdom and a strength which Fanon ignored in his first book. Now, somewhat like the hypothetical colonized intellectual whose return to the people he narrates, Fanon recognizes its inevitability and its practical merit. Apart from offering the only means to escape the personal alienation which results from his total immersion in the colonialist culture, such a return now appears to offer the sole means of

28. See above , p. 269
29. See above, pp. 297-98 and n. 18.

combatting the desperate lies in the accounts the colonialists give of the colonized: freeing the nation of colonial domination. [30] Although he remains cognizant of basic limitations in the traditional culture, Fanon no longer feels any anguish about the white man's haughty dismissal of it. By reflecting on it and on its guardians more carefully, he realizes that the colonialists have duped him about his own culture as well as about those who have held themselves aloof from the colonialists and their culture.

In other words, Fanon changes because he now appreciates the strategic importance of identifying with that traditional culture and with all those who continue to draw inspiration from it. This explanation suggests that Fanon shunned violence in his first book on practical grounds, nothing more." It also suggests that his thought is self-contained and can be explained in its own terms without recourse to extraneous events.

Now the last of these two articles shows that concomitant with his recognition that violence could be useful in the pursuit of human dignity comes his acknowledgement that national liberation is necessary. When the colonized intellectual becomes aware of the strength of his own people, he can begin to think about overthrowing colonial rule. And because his quest for a non-alienating culture culminates in his return to the traditional culture, national liberation and national culture are intimately linked. As a result, the meaning of culture becomes radically altered. Fanon never speaks of culture as something common to the whole human race. That is to say, he does not think of culture in the philosophic sense as something which represents the highest achievements of the human soul or intellect, whatever the national origins of the individual. Instead, he thinks of it in a more sociological sense, as the expression of a particular people or nation. In spite of its manifest irony, the following passage clearly illustrates that understanding of culture:

> What is this nonsense about a black people, a Negro nationality? I am French. I have an interest in French culture, French civilization, the French people. We refuse to consider ourselves as "by the side," we are in the middle of the French drama. When mystified, but not fundamentally bad, men invaded France to enslave it, my job as a Frenchman showed me that my place was not by the side, but at the heart, of the problem. I have a personal interest in the French

30. See above, pp. 279-80
31. See above., pp. p. 266; pp. 271-72.

> destiny, in French values, in the French nation. What do I have to do with a black Empire?[32]

Here culture, though national, stands for something lofty. It can be embraced even by someone who is denied the normal benefits of citizenship in the nation whose ideals it expresses. Because it is lofty and intellectual in content, it can be evaluated in terms of higher and lower, advanced and primitive.[33] Later, as Fanon or the colonized intellectual tries to become non-alienated, he rejects the notion that he is a Frenchman or any other kind of colonialist national. He steeps himself in his own culture, however basic it may be. He is no longer concerned about whether it has anything to do with letters, civilization, or values. All that interests him is that it be national and militant, that is,

> ...the ensemble of the efforts made by a people on the level of thought to describe, justify, and sing the action by means of which the people has constituted and maintained itself.[34]

In this sense, culture is shaped by the struggle for national liberation. It bears witness to their hopes and to their labors. Prior to the struggle for national liberation, culture venerated a glorious past and reminded the people of the strength they had once possessed. And those memories, at first serving as little more than ointment for the daily hurts of colonial existence, eventually encouraged the people to think that they could once again be strong. Thus, with culture as with human dignity, the struggle for national liberation is pivotal. Prompted by the desire for human dignity to demand freedom from their colonialist masters, the colonized people found confidence for the task by celebrating their former greatness. Yet even though this desire for human dignity and return to the traditional culture provided the spark for the liberation struggle, it was

32. BW, 184. The expressions "I have an interest in..." in the third sentence and "I have a personal interest in..." in the sixth sentence are translations of Fanon's "je suis interesse a..." and "je suis interesse personnellement a...." and hopefully suggest as many nuances to the English reader as Fanon's unusual formulation does to the French reader. The quotation marks around "by the side" and the capitalization of Empire are Fanon's.

33. See above, pp. 264-65.

34. WE, 163. See also SR, 23-4.The young French psychiatric intern whose testimony is included in one of the annexes to Chapter Five seems to anticipate Fanon's later definition by claiming that culture is simply "a common life, common experiences and memories, common goals" (SR, 168).

only the success of that struggle which could vouchsafe the one and sustain the other. Simply stated, Fanon can envisage no possibility of there being human dignity without national liberation. Sovereignty and dignity are equivalent in his eyes. A sovereign people has, along with freedom and responsibility, dignity. And it is the touchstone of the others (WE, 134,216-7). Similarly, culture being national expression above all, a people can have no genuine culture until it arrives at nationhood.

Attaching such over-riding importance to national liberation and convinced that speech can be of no avail in attaining it, Fanon has no choice but to acquiesce in the use of violence. The same line of reasoning also explains why he eventually defends terrorist tactics. Having reached such a point in his thinking, Fanon really had nothing more to say to the colonialists or to other non-colonized peoples. Thus, *Sociology of a Revolution* was the last work in which he spoke to the public in general. In *The Wretched of the Earth,* he addressed himself to the colonized alone and sought to move them to achieve the human dignity which he had shown to be their due. However, just as we could not let Fanon's judgment that he had nothing more to say to the rest of the world defer us from examining that work, we cannot now let his conviction that he has stated his position beyond reply keep us from investigating its merits, Fanon has powerful arguments to support his vision of human existence and political justice, and it is only fitting that we conclude by asking whether those arguments are correct.

VI

Such an assessment must begin by acknowledging the merit of Fanon's teaching about racism. Although he was not the only thinker to have cried out against racial prejudice, his was surely one of the more effective voices. With greater clarity than anyone who comes to mind, he depicted the inanities of racial prejudice. By directing his attention to the way racism affects its victims and showing that it exempts no one-the learned no more than the materially successful-he forced racists themselves to recognize the foolishness of their prejudices. Moreover, his skill in concentrating upon the way the victim of racism tries to ape the racist in speech patterns and in erotic choices, as well as in daily habits, enabled Fanon to identify the utter destructiveness of racism. These different lines of analysis permitted him to persuade us of the thoroughness or

comprehensiveness of racism and to convince us of its nefarious effects.

What is more, by presenting us with the arguments racists proffer in their own defense and then revealing the ways in which they are flawed, Fanon proved racism to be without rational justification. And by exploring the fallacies in the contention that there is a broader explanation for racism, the notion that it is somehow part of the human unconscious, he eliminated that as a possible apology. At the same time his examples are so precise and his analyses so finely drawn that we are all able to perceive the extent to which we are each and every one guilty of racism. Thanks to Fanon's unyielding attack on the multiple guises in which racism appears, it has now become almost commonplace to think critically about the way we judge other cultures and peoples. For teaching us about the nefariousness of racism, alerting us to its pervasiveness, and persuading us of the extent to which each of us indulges in racism, we must be grateful to Fanon. Without undue exaggeration, we can speak of him as having liberated us, as having made it possible for us to conduct ourselves more humanely with respect to those who differ from us.

Nor is that all. Fanon's analysis of racism also benefitted its victims, for he was able to show them both how foolish they were to let themselves be affected by racist judgments and how unjustly they contributed to its nefarious effects. His anecdotes about the attempts of colonized peoples to imitate the colonizers and his depiction of the extent to which the victims of racism internalize the destructive standards of their racist overlords, as well as his accounts of the frustrations and agonies of the colonized individuals who sought to break free of the limiting judgments placed upon them by racist colonialists, all helped racism's victims to understand their plight better and encourage them to resist its debilitating effects. Above all, by proving that racist judgments are not intellectually defensible and are prompted more by a desire to control than by anything else, Fanon persuaded the victims of racism that they need not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by racist judgments. His remarkable insights about racism permitted him to suggest the possibility of a new ground for human relationships, and for this he deserves high praise.

Because it is so closely linked to his attack upon racism, Fanon's teaching about human dignity is primarily negative. To be sure, he was able to show how actual practice deprives others of their digni-

ty, and his keen perceptiveness permitted him to identify the type of thinking which leads to such practice. Similarly, by the adroit use of his pen, he successfully attacked the practice as well as the thinking behind it. And he was sufficiently persuasive as to induce the victims to resist all manifestations of racism, whether they be in deed or in thought, and to prompt the victimizers to reconsider the harm they wreak upon their fellow man. In other words, Fanon succeeded in showing how racism threatens human dignity and why it has to be resisted. However, he never arrived at an adequate understanding of what lies at the heart of human dignity and thus was not able to offer a positive teaching. To the extent that his standards are only those which might arise from dialectical assent, Fanon is unable to point to an unassailable notion of individual worth.

Fanon's shortcoming is not simply that he depended on others for approval or based recognition of individual worth upon their agreement, but that he set forth no criteria for judging the validity of their approbation. Firmly persuaded that racism was utterly groundless, he thought that the approbation or disapprobation of racists must be based solely on momentary fancies. Behind such reasoning was the conviction that the racist would always have an excuse for not admitting the worth of his victim or of his culture. Nonetheless, deeming it essential that the victim be fully apprised of how implacably the racist would resist all appeals to reconsider the adverse judgments he held about the culture and the person of the victim, Fanon insisted upon this standard of explicit recognition. He did so because he was persuaded that as soon as the victim understood the utter impossibility of persuading the racist to acknowledge his worth, he would be willing to return to his people and urge them to fight against the racist and his standards. Fanon never claimed that victory in such a struggle would constitute a vindication of the culture or even the person of the victim. Nor could he make such a claim without contending that military prowess contributed to cultural merit or personal dignity, a contention that would undermine his whole broader argument. Rather, victory in such a struggle permitted the victim to vaunt his own notion of individual worth without concern for what the now vanquished racist might object. Apparently persuaded that all notions of what constitutes human worth are equally defensible, that is to say, are all without rational justification, the only important consideration becomes that of whether a person or a people can vaunt a particular set of standards without being obliged to seek the approbation of a

protagonist-a privilege belonging only to sovereign peoples.

As conducive as such an appreciation of the ground of human dignity is for encouraging subject peoples to strive for independence, it does not contribute much to the understanding of what it means to be a human being and is thus of little value when trying to persuade some individuals to respect the dignity of others. Nor does it offer much succor to those who cannot break free of the control of others, but who nonetheless need desperately to develop a sense of their own worth. In this respect, Fanon's teaching is inferior to that of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, or W.E.B. Du Bois, each of whom-despite differences with one another about how best to further the interests of black Americans-had far sounder opinions about the grounds of human dignity. All three believed that human dignity should be based upon personal merit or excellence and thus argued for the development of sound character. Though Frederick Douglass attributed his first sense of self-confidence and of self-respect to his success in resisting a cruel slave-trainer or slave-breaker, the deeper sense of worth that allowed him to accept the indignities of segregation and yet not lose sight of his higher goal, namely, persuading white Americams to join the Abolitionist movement, was based on his certitude that he was as upright and decent as anyone else. He understood that he had to prove by the force of his own character that the black man was inferior to no one of any other race. Consequently, he urged his fellow black Americans to pay careful attention to developing their intellectual qualities, building their moral and religious character, and becoming socially useful. Confidence in his own integrity or worth, as well as in his ability to contribute to society, thus rendered him impervious to any attempts white Americans might make to denigrate him. [36] Booker T. Washington also stressed the development of character and was persuaded that by training young black Americans to be industrious, to perform common tasks with uncommon skill, he could best help them build such character. At the same time he emphasized the importance of personal hygiene and the cleanliness as well as the

35. See Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (London: Collier Books, 1962), p. 143; Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), pp. 388-389 and 405-406, and Booker+ T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Bantam Books, 1963), p. 69. See also Herbert J. Storing, "The School of Slavery: A Reconsideration of Booker T. Washington," in *One Hundred Years of Emancipation,* ed. Robert A. Goldwin (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964), pp. 47-79, esp. pp. 61-69.

maintenance of living quarters, because he believed that pride in self arose from pride in these kinds of things. Washington so esteemed the development of character and of self-sufficiency that he would allow his students to consider schooling in more complex intellectual subjects only after they mastered these preliminary steps. In fact, he frequently urged black Americans to concentrate solely on moral development and the acquisition of a trade that would promise economic independence. [30] As already suggested, Douglass' concern was far broader. So, too, was that of W.E.B. Du Bois. Although of the three Du Bois is closest to Fanon with respect to his understanding of racism and its causes, he nonetheless insisted upon the importance of building human character. He considered education to be the best way to improve individuals-education in all subject matters and at whatever level the student could perform. Moreover, he was just as concerned as his predecessors that black Americans be encouraged to develop their moral character and to improve the conditions in which they live. At the same time, he insisted on going beyond such exhortations in order to explain the plight of the black man and to investigate the putative cause of racism. [37]

36. See Booker T. Washington, *op. cit., pp. 27-28, 59-60,* 61-62, *86, 88-89, 104, 107-108,* 108-109, and *142.* In a succinct and powerful statement at the conclusion of his essay, Storing (op. *cit.,* p. *79)* sets forth the core of Washington's teaching and shows how it differs from more recent spokesmen, among whom Fanon must be numbered:

> It is much, perhaps it is too much, to ask the Negro to set himself as an example of devotion to duty, when his fellow Americans clamor for rights. It is much to ask the Negro to affirm that dignity and self-respect are not within the gift of any man or any law and to deny that a man consists of his psychological reaction to the psychological prejudices of those around him, when more and more whites look for themselves in the opinions of others. It is much to ask the Negro leader to teach his own people that a man is, finally, responsible for himself, when the other members of his society hanker to place the reponsibility elsewhere. That is what Washington asked and taught. Could any lesson more noble or more needed issue from the school of slavery?

37. See W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Greenwich: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1967). pp. *86-87, 106-108,* and *186-187;* and *Darkwater, Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), pp. 155-159. For Du Bois, "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line," a phenomenon which was characterized by the existence of "the two worlds within and without the Veil." (See *The Souls of Black Folk, op cit., p.v).*

In *Dusk of Dawn, An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept,* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), *p.* 1, Du Bois characterized his work in the following terms:

Even though such concerns suggest an ultimate affinity between the thought of Du Bois and that of Fanon, such a possibility is of no greater significance than that of the ultimate affinity between the thought of Douglass and Fanon suggested by Douglass' political goals. To be sure, there are affinities between all three of these thinkers and Fanon. For instance, each of these thinkers was as anxious as Fanon that the white man acknowledge the achievement of the black man. However, I have alluded to these thinkers here not in order to speculate about the extent of the agreement between them and Fanon, but to explain why I believe their teaching about human dignity to be superior to the one he sets forth. For despite their desire that the white man eventually recognize the merit of the black man, none of these thinkers considered such an acknowledgement to be the touchstone of human dignity. Precisely because Douglass, Washington, and Du Bois understood the excellence to which black Americans should aspire to be the same as that to which all human beings qua human beings should aspire, their teaching about human

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> I have essayed in a half century three sets of thought centering around the hurts and hesitancies that hem the black man in America. The first of these, "The Souls of Black Folk," written thirty-seven years ago, was a cry at midnight thick within the veil, when none rightly knew the coming day. The second, "Darkwater, now twenty years old, was an exposition and militant challenge, defiant with dogged hope. This the third book started to record dimly but consciously that subtle sense of coming day which one feels of early mornings even when mist and murk hang low. But midway in its writing, it changed its object and pattern, because of the revelation of a seventieth birthday and the unawaited remarks and comments thereon.

A few pages later (p. 6), in speaking of World War I and its aftermath, he set forth his interpretation of the course of racism and recommendations for dealing with it:

> The lesson of fighting was unforgettable: it was eternal loss and cost in victory or defeat. And again my problem of human difference, of the color line, of social degradation, of the fight for freedom became transformed. First and natural to the emergence of colder and more mature manhood from hot youth, I saw that the color bar could not be broken by a series of brilliant immediate assaults. Secondly, I saw defending this bar not simply ignorance and ill will; these to be sure; but also certain more powerful motives less open to reason or appeal. There were economic motives, urges to build wealth on the backs of black slaves and colored serfs; there followed these unconscious acts and irrational reactions, unpierced by reason, whose current form depended on the long history of relation and contact between thought and idea. In this case not sudden assault but long siege was indicated; careful planning and subtle campaign with the education of growing generations and propaganda.

dignity stands on its own. Fanon's does not. Unless Fanon's black follower takes refuge in a victorious liberation struggle, he must lose himself in an emotion-laden return to his cultural past or servilely beseech the colonialist for approval.

Fanon offers no teaching about human dignity grounded upon what is common to all human beings because such a concept means nothing to him. For him, man is always becoming; he has no essence, no fixed character. Thus the pursuit of excellence is to be eschewed because it introduces notions of superiority and inferiority, whereas the goal should rather be simply "to try to touch the other, to feel the other, to reveal the other to myself."[38] At the most, then, Fanon can shame us into remembering that this miserable boot-black is a fellow human being who ought to be treated as such, but out memory will quickly fail us when he abjectly begs for more money after having done an inadequate job of polishing our shoes. Clearly, Fanon can say nothing to encourage this man to do his job better, for he puts no faith in the standards which permit such judgments to be made. Even with respect to the colonized intellectual, Fanon's argument is of little help. To be sure, we are as much to blame as Fanon because we will never accept the colonized intellectual as equal or even superior to us in his knowledge of our culture. We always insist on praising him for his accomplishments in a condescending manner that seems to say: "That is not too bad for someone from such lowly origins." Yet Fanon does no better, for he can offer the colonized intellectual no standards by which to judge his achievements and insists that the only kind of salvation lies in a rejection of our culture. The colonized intellectual must find health and confidence by fabricating his own standards, in whatever manner he chooses.

These reflections on the reasons for the inadequacies in Fanon's teaching about human dignity also buttress my earlier claims that his thought is self-contained, that it can be explained in its own terms without reference to external events. Simply stated, it is Fanon's belief that each man creates his own world, that each man is subject to the standards of others only so long as the others can hold him in thrall, which forces him to the position that the subject must struggle for independence. And this understanding of the significance of liberation obliges him to extol the violence which

38. BW, 208. See also 206: "In the world in which I follow my course, I interminably create myself."

leads to independence as a catharsis. Such violence is cathartic because it permits the colonial victim of racism to prove to himself that he is no longer afraid to stand up to the colonial racist. He achieves the dignity to which he has for so long aspired by daring to lash out at the colonialist he formerly feared. As he observes the colonialist suddenly grow fearful of him, he becomes aware of his own strength. Violence, whether it be carried out overtly or by stealth, thus allows the colonized subject to throw off his subservient attitude and to stride forward with confidence toward the new world he is about to shape.

> On the individual level, violence dis-intoxicates. It rids the colonized of his inferiority complex, of his contemplative or despairing attitudes. It makes him intrepid, rehabilitates him in his own eyes.(WE, 51-2)

Now there can be no doubt about the cruelty of French colonialism in Algeria. Nor can there be any doubt about how futile it was for Algerians to use peaceful methods in the hope of cajoling the French into a renunciation of their rule. Far too much has been written about the brutality of French rule in colonial Algeria, far too much is known about the rapacity and the determination of French colonials there. Yet even though the same might be said of other instances of colonialism, the validity of such remarks does no more than testify to the practical necessity of recourse to violence in such circumstances. It certainly does not prove that violence has a cathartic character or that it is in any respect praiseworthy. Fanon can praise necessity, can make a virtue of it, only because he places so much emphasis on the importance one individual attaches to the way he is perceived by another individual.

However, according to the strictest reasoning, necessity is not only not praiseworthy; it is not even just. There are many circumstances in which one person may be forced to harm another in order to protect his own self. Yet the plea of self-defense is simply an exculpatory

39. In a conversation with Jean Lacouture, Raymond Aron expressed this same opinion as follows:

> There was a time when Sartre thought that in the name of the revolution all violence was good and even necessary-as in the famous preface to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth.* For myself, I do not believe that compromise is always of more value than struggle-Algerian independence could not have been won except by violence. What I detest, in dealing with such a situation, is not the choice of violent means over accommodation; it is a philosophy of violence for itself.

See Jean Lacouture, "The New Horror" in *The New York Review of Books XXVI,* No. 13 (August 16, 1979), p. 39.

one: he who has killed another man in self-defense neither expects nor receives praise from the court; in such an instance, all that is requested is that he who has so defended his person be excused from the normal legal penalty. Similarly, under certain conditions, a group of people may seek to reform the political regime by force. Nonetheless, if that action is praised in later years, it is praised because they managed to found a better regime after their rebellion became successful, not because their original revolutionary action had any significance in itself. In fact, the strictest reasoning suggests that it is better to endure tyrannical rule than to rise up against it, that it is better to suffer injustice than to treat someone else unjustly.

Still, the problem with Fanon's argument can be indicated without resorting to such strict construction. Though correct about the necessity for violence to resolve the Algerian dilemma, he is incorrect to make of that unfortunate necessity a virtue." Because he does try to make a virtue of it, his argument is fundamentally misleading. Fanon would have us believe that all liberation struggles are praiseworthy, that history and nature are with those who seek independence-however dear the price. Ironically, then, the same concern with the way we learn to understand ourselves through the image others hold of us-a concern which prompted the stirring prose that first aroused our wrath about racism-is what eventually prevents him from setting forth an adequate account of the components of human dignity and from distinguishing clearly between necessity and justice. Though we must admire and praise Fanon for alerting us to the evils of racism and to its pervasiveness, in the end we discern that he cannot provide sound counsel about how to eradicate those evils without encouraging us to commit even greater ones.

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