

## ARTICLE

# Appraising Frantz Fanon's Contributions to Liberation Struggles in Africa

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### Abstract

The widespread ravaging effects of colonialism on virtually all parts of Africa, as particularly intense in the days of Frantz Fanon in Algeria, propelled him to challenge colonialism and radically seek a new world order of decolonisation across Africa. This paper appraises Fanon's contribution to liberation struggles in Africa. It reveals that using his bitter experience of colonial underdevelopment and chastise of and plagues on Algeria, he championed a violent revolution against colonialism cum its perpetrators through radical philosophies and write-ups. His major aim was to overthrow Whites' oppression through an unpretentious violent radical revolution, beginning with the grassroots, and to restore true Africanity and Black dignity. The paper concludes that Fanon had enormously contributed to liberation struggles in Africa through the prism of his radical philosophical and psychological views and pragmatic actions, which roused the deserving attention, actions, moves and policies of many Africans against colonialism that consequently ended it at last.

**Keywords:** Frantz Fanon; Neo-colonialism, Liberation struggles; Africa

## 1. Introduction

Colonialism was forcefully imposed on the colonies as well as the peoples of the colonies. Thus, colonialism was imposed on Africa and its peoples. The devastating effects were and are still everywhere on African continents and most other parts of the world, wherever it was imposed on. It had more negative than positive effects on the colonies, most of which still linger till date in the ex-colonies. To covertly sustain it, after being forced out by the revolutionary actions of the emergent nationalists of the colonies, the West had resorted to neo-colonialism and evolving and globalising many new crafty disguised imperialist models and systems, through which they continue to colonise Africa in

particular indirectly. It is more disheartening that most of the post-independence African indigenous leaders continuously sustain and worsen colonial legacies and worse cruelty and bad leadership are meted out on the people and the continent alike over the years.

Franz Fanon was a living witness of colonialism, who suffered its ills a lot and decided to revolt against the colonial man-tailored woes against Africans as well as other colonised peoples. Therefore, this paper appraises how his violent intellectual, philosophical, professional, leadership, literary and ordinary revolution against colonialism contributed to liberation struggles in Africa. His words such as those in the excerpt below exerted great influence on many of his African audience. After the sustained struggles against colonialism in Africa, which he had contributed to earlier before its overthrow for independence, Fanon urges Africans in *The Wretched of the Earth* viz:

Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended. ...Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration... We must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe. ...So, comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe/America by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her. ...If we want humanity to advance a step further; if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe/America has shown it; then we must invent and we must make discoveries. If we wish to live up to our people's expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe/America. For Europe/America, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf; we must work out new concepts, and we must try to set a new man (Fanon 1963, 252-5).

## 2. Frantz Fanon: A Biographical Sketch

Frantz Fanon was born in Martinique (then a French-ruled island in the Caribbean) in 1925. His father was an African slave descendant. His mother was of mixed African, Indian and European descents, whose white ancestors came from Strasbourg in Alsace, France. His family was well-to-do and so he was educated at the Lycée Schoelcher, the most prestigious high school in Martinique then (Macey 2000). One of his teachers was the famous poet of 'Negritude', Aimé Césaire, whom he was later to encounter in metropolitan France, and collaborate with – sometimes uneasily – in political and intellectual endeavours. Fanon fled from Martinique, when he was 18 and went to join the French Patriotic Forces, led by General Charles de Gaulle, who were resisting German occupation of France and harassing German troops wherever they could engage them (Akpan 2012, 139).

When France was conquered by Hitler's Nazis in 1940, naval troops, under the control of the Vichy French (stooges of the Germans), were barricaded on Martinique and unable to leave for France. But the defeat of their country did not make the French nationals on the island any less imperious. They continued to practice racism, with the soldiers in particular, carrying out rampant harassment of the populace and engaging in sexual misconduct. It is said that 'the abuse of the people of Martinique by the French Army influenced Fanon, reinforcing his feelings of alienation from, and disgust with colonial racism.' Fanon travelled to British-controlled Dominica, where he joined de Gazelle's Free French Forces. Having formally enlisted in the French Army, he joined an Allied (British-American-Free French) convoy that was en route to Casablanca, Morocco. He was later transferred to an Army Base at Béjaia on the Kabyle coast of Algeria. Fanon was later put on a ship from the Algerian Port of Oran to fight in France. He took part in dangerous battles at Alsace, and at Colmar, where he was wounded in 1944 (Macey 2000).

He was awarded the Croix de Guerre, one of the most prestigious French medals for war bravery and gallantry. But after the Nazis were defeated and Allied Forces crossed the Rhine into Germany, along with photo journalists, Fanon's regiment was bleached of all non-White soldiers so that none of the brave non-White soldiers were featured in the photographs depicting the defeat of the Nazis by the Allies and the Free French. Instead, Fanon and his fellow Caribbean soldiers were sent to

provincial Toulon, in Provence, and then transferred to Normandy to await repatriation home. As far as the Allies and the Free French were concerned, even if you had won the Croix de Guerre, you should not be seen to have taken part in the liberation of France – if you were not White (Sharawi 2003, 2). That was a clear chronic situation of racism, even in the military and in warfare.

In 1945, Fanon returned to Martinique and stayed for quite some time. While there, he campaigned for his friend and mentor, Aimé Césaire, to be elected as a parliamentary delegate from Martinique to the first National Assembly of the French Fourth Republic. Fanon stayed in Martinique long enough to complete his baccalaureate and then went to France to study Medicine and Psychiatry. He was educated in Lyon, where he also studied Literature, Drama and Philosophy, sometimes attending Merleau-Ponty's lectures. During this period, he wrote three plays, whose manuscripts got lost thereafter, unlike those of his other works. After qualifying as a psychiatrist in 1951, Fanon did a residency in Psychiatry at Saint-Alban under the radical Catalan psychiatrist, Francois Tosquelles, who is said to have invigorated Fanon's thinking by emphasising the role of culture in psychopathology. Fanon then practised psychiatry at Pontorson, near Mont St Michel, for another year and was then sent to work in Algeria in 1953. He was chef de service at the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital, Algeria.

Before going to Algeria, Fanon's experiences in the French Army as well as his observation of how the French colonialists behaved in Martinique had influenced him to write one of his most famous books, *Black Skin, White Masks*. He founded Africa's first psychiatric clinic in 1959. He survived many political assassination attempts and even the slaughter of 1957 in which 300 people lost their lives (Akpan 2012, 139). He became very sick after undertaking a 1,200 miles' intelligence expedition from Mali to Algeria in 1960. He was later diagnosed with leukemia and died in Washington DC on December 12, 1961. Twenty years after his death, his White wife committed suicide in Algeria (Akpan 2012, 139).

### 3. Fanon's Views on Colonialism

Fanon viewed colonialism as a situation of dehumanisation caused by Eurocentrism cum its negation of the others outside the Euro-American folk. He methodically applied psychological, philosophical and literary perspectives, research methods and ideologies to the phenomenon of colonialism, focusing more on the general social situation than on individual case studies (Burke 1998, 5-6). With these, he was able to identify the global aspects of colonialism. With the first wave of political independence in the 1950s, Fanon was able to rasp the meaning of neo-colonialism as it transpired in regimes that grappled, less than successfully, with the issue of liberation. The term 'neo-colonialism' later gained currency at the All African Peoples' Conference held at Cairo in 1961 (Zietlow 2020, 1-2; Bose 2017, 1; Ghada, 2006, 1-3). Bose (2017, 1) notes,

Many of Fanon's writings after his first published work *Black Skin, White Masks* were an intervention into the debates in the Francophone public sphere about whether to form a federal system with France, or whether to pursue the path of national independence in order to bolster an anti-imperialist coalition with other postcolonial states. The emancipatory potential of federalism was particularly attractive to Francophone intellectuals and activists such as Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor, for whom freedom from colonial rule could be pursued within a supranational federation such as Greater France.

With this wide-reaching understanding of colonialism and imperialism, Fanon invented the terms 'containment' and 'negation' (Sharawi 2003, 2) to analyse the situation in Third World countries ruled by colonial powers. He gave much thought to this state of affairs, which extended from the Caribbean to the Arab world and encompassed large parts of Africa, focusing particularly on settler colonialism and apartheid. Although some of his critics deny it, Fanon's insight went beyond these specific points, particularly as he discussed the Congo and other colonised regions. He examined the

significance of 'colonial hegemony' in the colonised communities, their cultures, and the human situation in general. He defined 'colonial violence' in a broad sense, incorporating the way in which Blacks would assume 'White masks' as a result of the tension between the colonisers and the colonised (Fanon 1952, 2). In this Fanon's book, he x-rays the psychology of racism and dehumanisation that were inherent in situations of colonial domination.

This early understanding of the concept of 'negation' made Fanon both a philosopher and sociologist. This concept was generalised by Walter Rodney and Cabral a few years later, when they spoke of 'negation from history', in reference to the impact of colonialism on Africans. Fanon spoke at length about the alienation of the individuals and communities from themselves, not just from their homeland. Obviously, it is indisputably clear that his position on alienation tallies extensively with that of Karl Marx on alienation of labour and even goes far beyond Marx's. For example, he sees alienation beyond labour. African and other Blacks were always alienated in all regards, not just in labour context alone. Fanon did not stop at the physical sense of racism. His lecture on 'Racism and Culture' at the African Writers Conference in 1956 made his position on racism abundantly clear. In the course of his interpretation of the colonial phenomenon, he insisted that there is more to colonialism and racism than super- and infra- structures. The Whites dominated the life, wealth and virtually all affairs of the peoples they brought under colonialism. Having looted from Africa and other colonies, the White colonialists were invariably rich and in control of the super- and infra-structures. As Fanon decries, the colonialists were extreme racists, who contained and subsumed the Blacks and their homelands.

Fanon has thus responded early on to the scholars who, using social and class interpretations, reject the totality of colonialism and racism. He used social analysis effectively to further his 'national' interpretation. Imperial containment, as described by Fanon, works in the physical, psychological, social and economic aspects of the life of the colonised. For instance, Martinique, Fanon's birthplace, was so contained by France that it actually declared itself part of the latter. Fanon went beyond hegemony and containment to label colonialism an act of complete violence; an act that can only be confronted with revolutionary and spontaneous violence; the violence of emancipation and liberation, not just counter class domination. The 'negation of the African soul' by the colonists is not just a material or social act, but also an act of depersonalisation that could only be reversed through cleansing revolutionary violence. Here, Fanon turns consciousness, an abstract term, into an all-embracing force. He does not stop in the long run at the consciousness of colour or the issue of Black versus White during his North African phase. His *White Masks* outlines a situation describing the way the dispossessed view the 'other'. Fanon was more interested in the overall colonialist process than in the conventional methods of apartheid. Fanon argued that colonialism dehumanized the native. This process was thorough that the black man can see himself only as the black (mirror) image of the white man. The white man is the master, and represents an object that is to be feared and desired. The black therefore tries to be more like the (desirable) white man/master. He puts on 'white mask' (Fanon 1952).

According to Fanon, the *White Masks* denote an insidious 'oneness' between the colonisers and the colonised. Whiteness becomes a symbol, a situation that cannot be terminated except through absolute violence, through the destruction of the society and state associated with this symbol. This is why Fanon linked liberation to emancipation as well as to 'a new humanity'. This is why he opposed the ideas adopted by the assimilated classes on reform and gradual change. He dismissed the philosophy of non-violence and looked sceptically upon the transition from one 'state' to another. He warned that 'The freedom of the state does not mean the freedom of the human being, as neo-colonial leaders would claim.

#### 4. Fanon's Views on Alienation and Presence

Although not as cohesive as the *Wretched of the Earth*, *Toward the African Revolution* is perhaps the key to Fanon's lifework. In this thought-provoking book, Fanon traces his journey as a revolutionary intellectual, a man of commitment, an individual who was alienated and found himself only through praxis. In it, he merges philosophical and psychiatric ideas, drawing freely on his experience in the Antilles, Europe, North Africa, and the sub-Sahara. He comments on the Algerian revolution and then moves on to discuss revolution in Angola, and also criticises Ghana. Fanon expresses sorrow over the death of Lumumba and is dismayed with the experience of the Congo with the UN. He brings forth many new ideas, including the alienation of doctor and patient, and coloniser and colonised. That is, he describes how the doctor alienates the patient, and how the coloniser alienates the colonised. Fanon describes how doctor and patient remain trapped into their pre-conceptions. He concludes that silence, in the colonies, is treasonous and that the patients should be led down the path to revolutionary awareness, for this alone would save them from self-destruction (Zahar 1969).

Meanwhile, Fanon had described this latter idea in the 'North African Syndrome', a study first published in *Esprit*, Paris in 1952. Drawing upon his experience with colonialism in Algeria, he concludes that individual alienation is both a human and general phenomenon. The main thrust of his argument is that the 'usurpation' or 'alienation' takes place on the individual human level, as an act of overwhelming and direct violence. The collective violence among the downtrodden is a reaction to this act of direct violence. In Fanon's writing, alienation is described in individual terms, whereas oppression and counter-oppression are described in collective terms. And culture remains the 'vehicle of truth' in all matters concerning repression and rebellion. Far from denouncing modernisation, Fanon saw it as a requisite for the formation of a true national culture. Modernisation, in Fanon's thinking, is inextricably linked with liberation (Zahar 1969).

Fanon trades post for position, turning from a philosopher and doctor to a journalist with the Algerian newspaper *el-Moudjahid* in 1958. He later became an emissary, then ambassador, of the revolution. For him, national culture is born of the womb of the revolution and takes shape through self-awareness. Fanon foresaw that a crusader-style war may result from the persistence of backward cultural formulas. He specifically talks about a potential religious onslaught in Algeria and contemplates the implications of negritude, advocated by his friend—Cesaire, in the Martinique and Africa. He saw the mass appeal of both religion and negritude and warned that their rise may isolate the intellectual strata, who due to their false awareness, would drift closer to colonialists and to western culture. These strata, while calling for modernisation, would adopt cultural ways that are alien to the domestic scene (Zahar 1969).

Fanon advocated a national culture that can evolve, and an international scene that maintains its sense of variety. He would not approve of the concept of a global village, or the triumph of a single oppressive and colonial culture. One of Fanon's favourite themes was self-awareness among the masses. He remained an intellectual committed to the masses, a man immersed in praxis in the Marxist tradition. Although he believed in the role of an enlightened popular leadership, he was sceptical of those committed to the promotion of awareness among the people, for many among them, he suspected, were little more than self-seeking opportunists (Zahar 1969).

#### 5. His Views on the Role of Class in Revolution

For all his interest in the class issue, Fanon did not conduct a dialectic social analysis of classes. Instead, he focused on the role of class in revolution and liberation. He maintained that the aim of the Third World countries label was not to achieve western liberalism or even socialism, but to resist total containment by a capitalist system with a global agenda. Fanon was particularly adept at describing the phenomenon of colonialism and identifying its inherent violence and dehumanising effect (Bulhan 1985).

As a nationalist revolutionary, Fanon chose not to examine the domestic social composition except

to identify the elements of revolution, and the susceptibility of various social groups to western domination. He wrote extensively on the situation governed by violence, racism and alienation, while devising methods for ridding the colonised of the oppressive presence of the 'great white error'. This is why Hansen describes Fanon's classifications as a description of the agents of violence rather than a categorisation of classes. Fanon's vision was more powerful than his analysis with regards to the social forces in the Third World. In 1961, when he wrote the *Wretched of the Earth*, the national bourgeoisie, which he suspected of treason too early—had not yet basically appeared in the sub-Saharan, although it was already taking root in the Arab world (Fanon 1961).

Armed with this vision, Fanon concluded that the proletariat was a subsidiary force that sought the crumbs of colonialist bridges. For him, the only redeeming elements of the proletariat are the revolutionaries, the women, and their supporters from the ranks of the lumpen proletariat. The peasants, according to Fanon, are a revolutionary class ready to embrace the revolutionary system and capable of retaining a communal spirit while upholding pre-colonial creeds and legacy. Unlike city dwellers, the peasants are not subjected to westernisation. Unlike the national bourgeoisie, they have no feelings of inferiority. Their folklore supports the notion of resistance and their impoverished status makes them ripe for revolutionary ideas as well as self-awareness. Fanon backed such views with examples from Algeria and Morocco, from the Mao Mao revolution in Kenya, from the central and eastern Congo, or from the Matabele, Shona, and Zulu history in southern Africa, showing the patterns in which the locals clashed with settler colonialists.

Fanon was not a great fan of conventional Marxism, not of its European manifestations, and not of the Soviet school that supported it. It was this Marxism, he argued, that provided protection for the petit or national bourgeoisie and its pitfalls. What Fanon truly admired was the far eastern revolutions, those in China and Indo-China, where revolutionary consciousnesses seemed pure and true revolutionaries were in-charge. Therefore, Fanon was not a romantic rebel or an isolated intellectual, but someone intent on identifying a global pattern. He was also certain that colonialist violence would trigger spontaneous and systematic violence among the peasants, and that the violence would banish their sense of negation. He maintained that this is something that should happen before the peasantry moves to the cities. Once they migrate to urban areas, the peasants would become a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Ultimately, they would only swell the ranks of the lumpen proletariat.

Not being a patient dialectician, Fanon failed to see that the implications of the peasantry's isolation from the process of capitalist accumulation (Marcuse criticism hits the nail on that point). He also failed to see that the peasantry's lack of alienation would limit their awareness of the ongoing contradictions. Fanon did not realise that historical traditions, particularly in the Arab and Muslim countries in which he lived, would hinder the level of awareness required for the revolution he hoped for. One must not forget that Fanon saw the Chinese revolution as a landmark in the confrontation of colonialism. This revolution popularised the idea of the peasant revolution and suggested a pattern in which the countryside would encircle the imperial cities—to use the words of Mao's doctrinaire Lin Piao. Fanon was obsessed by notions of ending the 'old system', whether conventional or inherited from colonialism. He hoped that revolution and revolutionary violence would bring down the inherited structures to the benefit of the more oppressed class, the peasantry. Unless the peasants are moved by their revolutionary consciousness, their own social structure would not entice them into action. This is why Fanon considered the sense of consciousness as existential rather than super-imposed.

From the ranks of the impoverished peasants, a new stratum emerges, one that caused controversy among Marxists and liberals alike, the lumpen proletariat. Marx was harsh about the lumpen proletariat, whereas Lenin was relatively sympathetic, for he saw this stratum as a revolutionary reserve that can be tapped by the Bolsheviks. In the lumpen proletariat, Fanon saw a great potential. Those countryside people, much praised by Fanon, seek the cities to make a living, but end up

living in shanty towns bordering the cities, leaving their families behind. Fanon argued that they were allies of the revolution because of their spontaneity, their courageous ability to rebel, and their resentment of the social colonial system (Fanon 1969, 83). Unless the revolutionaries recruit the lumpen proletariat, as Lenin advised, the colonialists would. Fanon tried to figure out ways to keep this class separate from the *petit bourgeoisie* and the traditional proletariat.

## 6. Fanon's Contributions to African Liberation Struggles

Fanon left the Antilles to fight with the Allies for promised liberation from Nazism and Fascism. Following the war, he was so frustrated by the realities of colonialism and the denial of self-determination for many nations that he decided to turn his back to colonial citizenship and extricate himself from the 'White great error', as he called it. Fanon went in search of another identity, one that he referred to as the 'new human'. Having tried unsuccessfully to find a chance in Senegal, and just at the time when his *Black Skin, White Masks* came out, he landed a job in Algeria. In a letter he wrote when he was 27 years old, he remarked that colonialism and capitalist exploitation are world phenomena and that the confrontation of colonialism is a personal, national, and world choice.

Having arrived in North Africa, Fanon abandoned his French citizenship to join the Algerian revolution. The situation in Africa and the Far East inspired him to voice strong opposition to the Antilles' decision to join the Francophone. He maintained that acceptance of colonialism is detrimental to individuals as well as nations. He argued that because colonialism is a form of material and moral violence, it has to be confronted with revolutionary violence. He noted, 'Solidarity among the colonised is a form of absolute praxis, a true act of commitment.'

As a journalist with the Algerian newspaper *el-Moudjahid*, Fanon played a major role in spreading daily awareness of the revolution. His semi-daily articles were later incorporated into his book: *Toward the African Revolution*. Fanon warned the revolutionary cadres and the Algerian liberation movement against liberalist deception, maintaining that the liberals spoke out only because of the revolutionary violence the colonised mounted against colonialism. In that book, he goes on to stress that colonialists do not understand the dynamism of national resolve and are bound to continue their violence. Meanwhile, the 'national bourgeoisie' and its affiliated intellectuals would be desperately seeking reconciliation with the colonists. The national bourgeoisie is more interested in partnership with the colonists than in protest against them. He further informs his readers that the colonialist powers understand this psychology of capitulation and allow a certain margin of opposition to take place, as they feel safe from counteraction.

In his constant search for a unified African stand, one with which to confront the unity of colonialism, Fanon maintains that it is untenable to have an Africa that fights colonialism and another Africa that collaborates with it. He notes that as a result of that divided stand, the colonialists were not going to withdraw easily; exemplifying with the situation in Congo and the assassination of Lumumba (Fanon 1969, 191). Fanon was convinced that the unity of the African revolution calls for solidarity against settler colonialism as well as the new forms of colonialism. He kept calling for the creation of 'another Algeria' in Angola, Congo, and South Africa (Fanon 1969, 191).

Fanon, who fought with the Allies against the Axis, was apparently hoping that European leftists, democrats and working classes would act in solidarity with revolutions among the colonised nations. His disappointment is clearly captured in many paragraphs of his books and in a whole chapter in *Toward the African Revolution*. Fanon is of the strong contention that colonialism created a repressive presence that marked every European on the African continent as a repressor. He argued that their apologists are the European democrats. He maintains that they speculate on the natural end of colonialism, mentioning the Bandung Conference, which he dealt with all through besides Algeria's issue in specific. Others argue that colonialism is connected to the ills of the French system or those who considered the assessment of the cost of war.

Some democrats prefer to keep their peace and refrain from supporting colonialism. Some

prefer to focus on the Anglo-Saxon competition on international level or towards the role of certain individuals, such as Gamal Abdel- Nasser, etc. Some discuss alternative forms to maintain the ties with the metropolitan, while giving advice to the Algerian revolution, or criticising its methods. Whenever revolutionary action leads to casualties, some begin using the term 'terrorists'. Colonialism is indivisible. This is a point on which Fanon was not ready to compromise either with communists or democrats. As a result, he had trouble staying on good terms with Aime Cesaire. To the last days of his life, Fanon was arguing with Sartre over that matter. This alone indicates how much it meant to him. Fanon took part in every African conference he could attend, including those held in Accra, Tunis, and Conakry. In Accra, his assault on the philosophy of non-violence prompted Nkrumah to change his position and support armed struggle even in the framework of the Organisation of African Unity (Hansen Fanon 1977, 5-6).

Fanon was particularly interested in furthering African support to the Algerian revolution, noting that political solidarity was not enough and that actual action was needed. He supported the idea of forming an African legion, composed of African volunteers, to support the movements of African liberation, starting with Algeria (Hansen Fanon 1977, 6). When the Algerian revolution appointed him Ambassador of the Algerian interim government in 1961, he visited Egypt, Ghana, Guinea and Mali, all the time making preparations to smuggle weapons to southern Algeria. He also visited guerrilla camps from Mali to Sahara, hid 'terrorists' at his home and trained nurses on how to dress wounds. He also survived many political assassination attempts and the 1957 slaughter in which 300 people lost their lives. Unfortunately, he became sick after a 1,200 mile intelligence expedition from Mali to Algeria.

Fanon's revolutionary writings had profound influence on radical movements around the world and in Africa where colonialism was raging at the time. His writings spurred up anti-colonial writings from the likes of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Tsitsi Dangaremba of Zimbabwe and Ousmane Sembene of Senegal (Akpan 2012, 139). Fanon's political and social discourse inspired much of Steve Biko's ideas about black consciousness. For him, decolonisation and liberation means 'True liberation is not that pseudo-independence in which ministers having a limited responsibility hobnob with an economy dominated by the colonial past; liberation is the total destruction of the colonial system' (Hansen Fanon 1977, 5-6). In the course of his struggle to rally solidarity with national liberation, Fanon discussed two important issues. One is major powers, socialist and capitalist; the other is the United Nations.

Fanon saw the Cold War and the conflict between the superpowers as a peaceful form of violence towards Third World nations; warning that the Cold War may impose certain choices on the Third World countries, and urging that nations choosing between capitalism and socialism should do so based on their own preferences. He viewed the Suez battle and Nassir as a model for Third World opposition to Western imperialism, and the Budapest events of 1957 as a model for human liberation of communist totalitarianism. This epitomises his view of liberation as a human ideal. Not hiding his socialist leanings, Fanon maintained that socialism in Third World countries is possible, even necessary to avoid authoritarianism and prevent bourgeois control of the one-party system. While deeply suspicious of the Soviet system, Fanon acclaimed to the peasant revolution in China as a triumph for human liberation worldwide. He did not go too far dealing with the multiple form of this nation of peasants.

Concerning the institutional international system, Fanon spoke at a length of the United Nations. The UN intervention in Congo, which ended in the killing of Lumumba, made him see the UN practices as a model as well as a vehicle for imperialist violence. In *Toward the African Revolution*, he says,

The UN did not fail in Congo because of the difficulty of the situation, but because it is used as a legitimate cover by the imperialists at times when brute force fails. Partition, arbitration and mandates are international legitimate tools used to torment and crush

the resolve for independence and spread chaos, plundering and havoc, as in the cases of Vietnam and Laos. ... Lumumba was wrong to trust the UN (Fanon 1969, 191).

## 7. Critiquing Fanon

Firstly, Fanon got married to a white French woman, Josie, despite his hatred for whites' dominance and subjugation of the Black race. Secondly, he preached that the only way to destroy colonialism was through violence, but he offered no procedures or pragmatic steps to realising it. He also failed to foresee the power of education, science, technology and innovation in the liberation of other parts of the world, e.g. Japan. He overstretched the case of China against colonialism, undermining those of several other nations of such. Although he distant himself from Western philosophers like Karl Marx, whom he faults on labour alienation ideology, his ideas on alienation tally extensively with those of Marx. From that angle, it could be argued that he had drawn from Marx to some extent and then modified the ideas he tapped from him. In the same vein, his ideas on bourgeoisie and proletariat reflect Plato's ideas, though they had employed different approaches, methods and experiences.

Moreover, Fanon so much believed that the peasantry can start and lead a revolution against colonialism because they have not been infected with 'colonial mentality', so to say. He however failed to see that the complex world they lived in, even at that time, required complex thinking which an uneducated rural dweller cannot comprehend. Although he believed in the role of an enlightened popular leadership, he was sceptical of those committed to the promotion of awareness among the people, since he considered many among them as 'little more than self-seeking opportunists'. Similarly, he so much believed in a unified African that forever stands against colonialism, and even thought of a stand by African Force (i.e. African Legion) to fight the colonialists. Some of his critics feel he is romantically sentimentalist, although many portray him as such in order to discredit him, belittle his contributions to African thought system (philosophy), and question his relevance to events inside and outside Africa (Sharawi 2003, 3). He did not foresee betrayal from Africans, who would be members of the African Force. He ought to have also put forward ways of surmounting the possible betrayal that may likely emerge and how best to unify and also handle individual differences.

And, those who know the nature of Arab, Muslim and African societies would be surprised at how Fanon pushed the case of women into new horizons, far beyond anything yet accepted in most Third World countries. The way in which most Arab and African countries still deny the role of women in society, transformation and modernisation is in sharp contrast with the ideas that Fanon advocated. That is, he offered women, African women in particular, crucial role in the sustained struggle against colonialism. Although that is a good one, he fails to consider the gender issues against women, which inevitably underscore the enormous role in the struggle. He ought to have also championed a violent revolution against the relegation of women in Arab, Muslim and African societies.

## 8. Using Fanon's Framework to Resolve Internal and External Contradictions in Contemporary Africa

Fanon's framework remains viable across the ages. The non-viability of it only depends on the way a person or a people use(s) it. Fanon's ideas, concepts and philosophical preoccupations could still be used by African philosophers, political leaders and individual revolutionists to effect positive changes on the African continent (Samman 2006, 13-126). Contemporary Africans can lean on Fanon's legacies and get rid of the lingering colonialism in contemporary Africa, which contradicts diplomacy and the so-called assistance from Western powerful nations. We can repel their advances and free ourselves from their chastisement in contemporary times. The lingering colonialism, now in form of neo-colonialism, has to be revolted against and got rid of through moderate decolonisation using various means. We have to realise that the war against colonialism is generational, if the ex-colonies must ever be free sovereign states. Thus, once we remain charged by the African spirit

of originality and *Africanity*, upholding anything African that is positive, consistently rejecting the outsiders' invasion, falsehoods, indictment and prejudices, and correcting all the wrongs of yesterday for a better today and tomorrow, the new Africa dreamed of, and pursued by Fanon along with his fellows would be attained in no distance time.

Fanon was always driven by the African spirit and never ceased to question this and that in the African society, including the prevailing contradictions then (Samman 2006, 126-31). Samman (2006, vi) states categorically that Fanon has offered an international vision about the relation between Europe and the Third World, described the mechanism of the classes' and groups' behaviour in Africa, described the mechanism in the specific context of South Africa and the liberation movements and groups that were formed to end colonialism. Samman is of the view that Fanon played a significant role in the restructuring of South African society in particular and the African continent at large (Samman 2006, vi). Fanon is also affirmed to have explained the role of violence and revolution and their importance in making a change. Thus, his call for a radical revolution to bring in a new world order is evident in his *The Wretched of the Earth* (Samman 2006, vi). That revolution, which starts with intellectual revolution, can still be used to affect significant changes in contemporary African politics, education, social spheres, intergroup relations, diplomacy with Europe and other developed nations, and so on.

It is an indisputable fact that most of the contradictions of Fanon's times still stare at the face of the contemporary African. What is quite regrettable is the fact that the present day African seems perpetually unwilling to get charged by the same spirit and revolt against all forms of oppression from both African leaders and elites and Western neo-colonialists with their mechanisms. Taking to quietude, the contemporary African populace rather remain perpetually swallowed by the prevailing contradictions. For some of the contemporary African philosophers, Fanon was rather violent in his approach against colonialism and oppression. Thus, they need not follow the path of his agenda for the new Africa he dreamed of. Such conception of Fanon is undoubtedly the manifestation of the problem of perception. Be it as it may, rather than criticising him, contemporary Africans of all fields should draw insight from his framework and those of his fellows to evolve something better, which could be used to attain some revolution in contemporary Africa. The pitfalls of his ideas and philosophies could be improved on and sustained for the purpose of bettering the African course and society.

Also, as evident in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon's concepts, ideas and philosophy could still be used to resist racism. He clarifies that skin colour is no means or parameter for racism or discrimination of any kind. He reframed Blackness (Zietlow 2020, 13-36) and thereby left a legacy that the contemporary African must follow to get asserted from the misuse of the Black label for discrimination. Skin colour has no practical reality of what it is made to depict in the mind. Mind has no colour. In fact, the inside of the human body has no colour difference. And, so colour does not make the African inferior to the Westerner or any other person in and/or outside the African continent. This framework of recreating and rightly representing skin colour could be used to sensitised the white South Africans, who often resort to skin colour as a parameter for racism, racism against their fellow Africans of South Africa and Nigeria in particular. Fanon's framework is also a viable means of resolving the Xenophobia against Nigerians in South Africa. The reality of his skin colour framework has to be popularised and socialised across the globe. This requires a thankless task for the contemporary African in particular and all agents of socialisation in African in general. The bulk of this task lies with African schools.

More so, using his words, not just as wits or sages, but as mottos and dictums at both general and individual levels in our daily lives (See White 2002), as contemporary Africans, would help a lot in resolving the looming internal and external contradictions in our contemporary African society. For example, by being conscious of and holding on to his words like: 'Oh my body, make of me a man who always questions' (Samman 2006, iii), one is bound to be pushed by these words to become

conscious of questioning what happens in the society. *A man who questions is the philosopher*. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of philosophers. These are the specific or professional philosophers and the general or personal philosophers. Philosophising does not necessarily mean that a person must be a professional in philosophy before they could philosophise. The difference is that the professional philosopher is more grounded in formal philosophy than the personal philosopher, who lacks most of, if not all, the cores of formal philosophy. Basically, philosophising entails critical and creative thinking; asking rational questions; questing to know this and that in the universe and even beyond; attempting to offer answers to various problems of being, existence and the universe; and making logical arguments for empirical analysis and/or results; among others. Obviously, most of these traits are inborn in the individual. Thus, they are possessed by philosophers of both categories.

A man who always questions is bound to question practices and systems that are not worthwhile (unethical). In the act of questioning always, we are bound to find answers to the internal and external contradictions confronting us in contemporary Africa, and mankind as a whole. Imbibing and/or being conscious of these Fanon's words and others would make one to question the negative trends of colonialism, neo-colonialism, westernisation, the erosion of indigenous African cultures, Eurocentricism, Western assumptions about African philosophy and history, racism, ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, conflicts man-tailored incessantly by practical politicians, and oppressive leadership worse than the deeds of rulers of the Republics condemned by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes and Immanuel Kant, among others. A man who always questions would know why he should: do this or that; vote in this leader or not; be objective rather than subjective in all dealings of life; and so on. The contemporary African who always questions is bound to be and do like Frantz Fanon and his fellows.

Again, by his body, Fanon means his mind (soul or consciousness). Ancient philosophers (e.g. Plato and Aristotle) are known to have used soul to mean mind (Martinich 2016, 165–6; Also See Rudebusch 199; Cooper 2012). Some of them used soul and mind interchangeably. The soul is said to be pure, immortal and of God or nature. So, thinking lies with the mind. We are not going to engage in the mind-body argument here. We leave out that, even though we are aware of the contradictions about that. It is important to note that for Fanon, one can simply use the body to talk about both the mind and the body. The reason, it could be inferred, is that mind, heart, brain, nervous systems and all other parts of the body are integral parts of the body. Therefore, when one simply refers to the body in generic term, one refers to both body and mind along all other parts of the body that constitute the integral parts of the whole – one body. This is because all the parts are existentially connected (integrated) and interdependent on one another. The absence of one part makes the body naturally incomplete and causes one form of malfunctioning or the other (See Ozumba 2012, 21).

## 9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the bulk of Fanon's work and life focused on freedom from 'imperial repression' spearheaded by the Europeans. Regardless of the critiques against Fanon over the years, he was a true freedom fighter and a Pan-African nationalist, whose radical ideas immensely contributed to the successful overthrow of colonialism in Africa and even beyond. He fearlessly showcased his relentless violent struggle against colonialism in actions, words, deeds, books, leadership, professional work of various fields, face-to-face African project evangelisation of his fellow Africans and lots more. Through these, he roused deserving attention, actions, movements, policies and many Africans against colonialism, which consequently ended it at last. He was a patriot, who even on his sick bed, dying, held on to his ideas and remained committed to liberation struggles in Africa, charging others to sustain the liberation struggles and even do more.

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