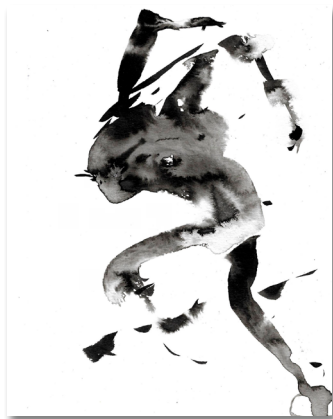


Hatred and enemy in Fanon and in the Algerian revolution

MARCO GABBAS

ABSTRACT: The article interprets Fanon's thought through the framework of hatred and enemy formation and tracks the origins of his anticolonialism. Fanon depicted and presented the colonial enemy in harsh terms, but colonialism can hardly be described as an "invented" enemy. Moreover, the Fanonian concept of the enemy was politico-moral, not biological. With his powerful rhetoric, Fanon sought to mobilize Algerians and potential anticolonialists worldwide.

KEYWORDS: Fanon. Algeria. Enemy. Colonialism. Hatred.



Ódio e inimigo em Fanon e na revolução argelina

RESUMO: O artigo interpreta o pensamento de Fanon através da estrutura do ódio e da formação do inimigo e rastreia as origens de seu anticolonialismo. Fanon descreveu e apresentou o inimigo colonial em termos ásperos, mas o colonialismo dificilmente pode ser descrito como um inimigo "inventado". Além disso, o conceito fanoniano de inimigo era político-moral, não biológico. Com sua retórica forte, Fanon queria mobilizar argelinos e potenciais anticolonialistas em todo o mundo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Fanon. Argélia. Inimigo. Colonialismo. Ódio.

MARCO GABBAS

Historian of the International Communist Movement, who has published on Soviet and Latin American Communism. He is currently a PhD Candidate at Milan State University, Italy.
E-mail: gabbas_marco@alumni.ceu.edu

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Introduction

The Martinican-Algerian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) is often remembered as the theoretician of the Algerian Revolution. His most famous work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, is known because of its open advocacy of hatred and violence towards the French enemy, and because of its vehement indictment of European colonialism and racism. This article uses the crucial concepts of hatred and enemy to interpret Fanon's thought. Fanon is today a largely forgotten figure, especially in the West, and especially outside of specific academic circles. Beginning with Karl Popper (LOSURDO, 2012), and following with scholars including Niall Ferguson (2003, 2004, 2005, 2011), Paul Johnson (1993), and Bruce Gilley (2018), colonialism is being rehabilitated, while anticolonialism is being dismissed. However, Fanon deserves further study through a re-reading of his works with new conceptual frameworks. Umberto Eco (2012) and Carl Schmitt (1986, 2007) emphasized that hate is often used to unite a group/nation and to "construct" its enemy. However, this article will show that colonialism could hardly be described as a "constructed" enemy. The article is based on an analysis of Fanon's works *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) and *Toward the African Revolution* (1967). Details from David Macey's (2012) biography of Fanon are also used to highlight the crucial link between Fanonian thought and psychiatry, and to assess the question of why Fanon developed such a strong hatred for colonialism. Fanon became an intransigent spokesperson of the Algerian FLN (Front the Libération Nationale), and the hatred/enemy thread in his thought must be read through his deep knowledge of the psychology of colonization. Many Algerians saw the French as enemies, but Fanon's works can tell us how a *specific, precise image of the enemy* was presented.

From the 1960s to today, Fanon has been accused of being an advocate for senseless hatred. In December 1961, *Paris-Presse* argued that is "is as profitable and interesting to read *Les Damnés de la terre* as it was to read *Mein Kampf*" (*Paris-Presse*, 1961). In 1962, the French author Gilbert Comte was so outraged by the book that it wrote two different reviews on it. One openly accused Jean-Paul Sartre of prefacing "the book of an enemy", a "mulatto

from Martinique [who had] died of cancer in an American hospital [...]. Why did he ask the West he hated so much to prolong his life? His choice seems just as disturbing as his hatred, to judge by the written testimony he has left" (COMTE, 1962). In the other review, Comte reiterated this Hitlerian comparison. Fanon's "brutal frankness and the pitiless hostility that screams in the mad darkness" was reminiscent of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*" (COMTE, 1962). According to Comte, *The Wretched of the Earth* was, in reality, a veritable "*Mein Kampf* of decolonization" (COMTE, 1962). In 1982, the repentant Maoist André Glucksmann claimed that Fanon was responsible for contemporary "planetary terrorism" (GLUCKSMANN, 1982, p. 19). In 1988, Allan Bloom condemned Fanon for his "murderous hatred of Europeans and his espousal of terrorism" (BLOOM, 1988, p. 3), while liberal leftist Alain Finkielkraut (FINKIELKRAUT, 1989, p. 98-99) argued that Fanon revived *völkisch* European nationalism. In the early 1990s, a French sociologist went so far as to state that Parisian skinheads' racist hatred was reminiscent of Fanon (WIEVIORKA, 1992). The conclusion will assess whether these claims are accurate with the help of the works on colonialism and Nazism by Domenico Losurdo (1998, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015), Giorgio Galli (2002), and Enzo Traverso (2002).

2 To hate the enemy, colonialism

The first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence", is also its most famous. In it, Fanon makes clear that "decolonization is always a violent event [...] the substitution of one 'species' of mankind by another", which is "unconditional, absolute, total." Colonist and colonized belong to two different species/races which are mutually exclusive. The colonized can exist only by eliminating and excluding the colonizer. Decolonization is "experienced as a terrifying future in the consciousness" of the other "'species': the *colons*" (FANON, 2004, p. 1), as it "is the encounter between two congenitally antagonistic forces." It is the colonist who fabricates the colonized subject, and colonization is characterized by violence since its very beginning. That is why the colonial situation must be radically challenged. Interestingly, Fanon argues that

decolonization can be summarized with the words “The last shall be first” (FANON, 2004, p. 2), and “the last can be the first only after a murderous and decisive confrontation between the two protagonists” (FANON, 2004, p. 3). Fanon’s thought is permeated with a strong duality or dichotomy.

Fanon states that the colonial world is “compartmentalized”, divided into two. It is divided into European and native towns, schools for Europeans and for “natives”, etc. “The dividing line [...] is represented by the barracks and the police stations. In the colonies [...] the spokesperson for the colonizer and the regime of oppression, is the police officer or the soldier” (FANON, 2004, p. 3). Fanon singles out the main, armed representatives of the enemy who must be fought. In the capitalist mainland there are intermediate bodies that soften the conflicts between exploiters and exploited, while in the colonies the colonized are always watched over by the military and the police.

The agent does not alleviate oppression or mask domination. He displays and demonstrates them [...], and brings violence into the homes and minds of the colonized subject.

The “native” sector is not complementary to the European sector. The two confront each other, but not in the service of a higher unity (FANON, 2004, p. 4).

“Governed by a purely Aristotelian logic,” they are mutually exclusive: “There is no conciliation possible, one of them is superfluous” (FANON, 2004, p. 4). Part of the hatred the colonized feel against the colonist-enemy is envy. The colonized looks at the colonist’s sector with a “look of envy” (FANON, 2004, p. 5), while the “whole European city” points “its hatred, like a gun, at the Algerian quarter” (FANON, 1965, p. 103). The colonized are envious, and that is why the colonists are afraid: “They want to take our place”. True, Fanon argues, “there is not one colonized subject who at least once a day does not dream of taking the place of the colonist”. The native does not want to become a colonizer, he wants to replace him. The colonist-enemy “always remains a foreigner” (FANON, 2004, p. 5). The colonizers think they have a right to stay in the colonies, but they do not. Fanon apparently

applies to the colonizers a politico-moral and naturalistic de-specification at the same time, but as we will see, this naturalistic de-specification is not total (LOSURDO, 2015). “The ruling species is [...] the outsider from elsewhere, different from the indigenous population” (FANON, 2004, p. 5). Moreover, to “dislocate the colonial world does not mean that once the borders have been eliminated there will be a right of way between the two sectors. To destroy the colonial world means [...] demolishing the colonist’s sector” (FANON, 2004, p. 6).

The colonized shall not seek equality and dialogue with the colonizers; colonialism and the colonizers must be eliminated. Fanon’s view may seem Manichaeic, but he argues that the colonial world is compartmentalized and Manichaeic. He even insists that “the Manichaenism that [...] governed colonial society is maintained intact during the period of decolonization.” In fact, “the colonist never ceases to be the enemy, the antagonist, in plain words public enemy number 1” (FANON, 2004, p. 14). Fanon argues that Manichaenism reached “its logical conclusion,” dehumanizing and animalizing the colonized.

The dichotomous colonial world needs to take “a radical decision to remove its heterogeneity, by unifying it on the grounds of nation and sometimes race” (FANON, 2004, p. 10). Though it would be more politically correct to say there are no races, in a colonial setting this makes no sense. The first phase of decolonization is characterized by nationalism and a sort of racism in reverse. That is, the colonized subjects develop a strong hatred against European colonizers, seen as an enemy race. Fanon spells out a view of history which staunchly rejects Western and colonial hypocritical objectivism. History and history making are part of the fight against the enemy. “The colonist makes history and he knows it”, referring “constantly to the history of his metropolis”. But the

history he writes is [...] not the history of the country he is despoiling, but the history of his own nation’s looting, raping, and starving to death. The immobility to which the colonized subject is condemned can be challenged only if he decides to put an end to the history of colonization and the history of despoliation in order to bring to life the history of the nation, the history of decolonization (FANON, 2004, p. 15).

History, in Fanon's view, is a violent process, and the colonized must eliminate the enemy's history and create their own. The colonist's world is intrinsically hostile, and that is why the colonized subject "patiently waits for the colonist to let his guard down and then jumps on him. [...] he is always ready to change his role as game for that of hunter. The colonized subject is a persecuted man who is forever dreaming of becoming the persecutor" (FANON, 2004, p. 16). However, the colonized's hatred firstly explodes not against the colonist-enemy, but within themselves: "in the colonial situation the colonized are confronted with themselves. They tend to use each other as a screen. Each prevents his neighbor from seeing the national enemy" (FANON, 2004, p. 230-231).

Exposed to daily incitement to murder resulting from famine, eviction from his room for unpaid rent, a mother's withered breast, children who are nothing but skin and bone, the closure of a work-site and the jobless who hang around the foreman like crows, the colonized subject comes to see his fellow man as a relentless enemy (FANON, 2004, p. 231).

"Deep-buried, traditional hatreds" (FANON, 2004, p. 83) will be rooted out to focus the struggle against the real enemy.

3 The colonized intellectual elite and religion

The colonized, however, have another enemy: the colonized intellectual elite. When "the colonialist bourgeoisie" cannot "maintain its domination over the colonies it decides to wage a [...] campaign in the fields of culture, values." To eliminate the colonist-enemy "outright from the picture", to "take his place" also means a "collapse of an entire moral and material universe". The colonized intellectual elite who "adopted the abstract [...] values of the colonizer" would like colonized and colonists to live in peace, but the colonist is not "interested in [...] coexisting" (FANON, 2004, p. 9) when colonialism is no more. After an authentic liberation struggle, the colonialist superstructure borrowed by the intellectuals must be eradicated. Though I cannot ascertain whether Fanon knew Gramsci's thought, what he argues is that the colonized shall not only fight the domination of the colonist-enemy, but also its hegemony. Western values accepted by colonized intellectuals are

“worthless because they have nothing in common with the real-life struggle in which the people are engaged” (FANON, 2004, p. 11).

But intellectuals are not enemies forever. They can become good comrades in the struggle if they wage an inner struggle against mental enemies. The conversion from individualist to collectivist ideals is possible thanks to the enemy’s mortal presence. Collaboration is indispensable and not to be crushed. For many intellectuals, the struggle may be difficult because they forget that colonialism can be defeated only through a popular revolution. Other intellectuals do not convert. They may be vulgar opportunists, “whose behavior and ways of thinking” remain that of the colonialist bourgeoisie. Once in power, they may loot national resources, but their behavior “sparks anger and violence from the people” (FANON, 2004, p. 12). Fanon’s book, written in 1961, is prophetic, because it describes the degenerative course taken by many anticolonial revolutions. However, he was convinced that the populations of poor, newly independent countries would achieve the strong social consciousness needed to fight these new enemies.

In Fanon’s view, the intellectual and political elite were strongly linked. The political elite could turn into a serious enemy of real decolonization, putting “aggression at the service of” their own interests. The colonized, however, do not care much about these “freed slaves” (FANON, 2004, p. 22). The colonized do not demand “the status of the colonist, but his place.” By singling out many other potential enemies, Fanon makes clear that in the colonies there is only one, true revolutionary class: the peasantry, which in fact “is systematically left out of most of the nationalist parties’ propaganda”. The peasantry is revolutionary because it

has nothing to lose and everything to gain. The underprivileged and starving peasant is the exploited who very soon discovers that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possibility of concession. Colonization or decolonization: it is simply a power struggle.

The FLN once stated that “colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat. No Algerian really thought these terms too violent”. This “merely expressed what every Algerian felt

deep down: colonialism [...] is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence" (FANON, 2004, p. 23).

Religion presents a further enemy to the colonized. Christianity sowed nothing among the colonized but "deep [...] seeds of alienation." The "Church in the colonies is a white man's Church, a foreigners' Church. It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man" (FANON, 2004, p. 7). The colonized may

lose sight of the colonist through religion. Fatalism relieves the oppressor of all responsibility since the cause of wrong-doing, poverty, and the inevitable can be attributed to God. The individual thus accepts the devastation decreed by God, grovels in front of the colonist, bows to the hand of fate, and mentally readjusts to acquire the serenity of stone (FANON, 2004, p. 18).

Are not zombies more terrifying than colonists? According to this superstitious, mythical thinking, the problem is not even colonialism; and yet, things change through the liberation struggle. Again, Fanon uses interpretative categories taken from psychiatry (FANON, 2011). In fact, the traditional "magical superstructure that permeates the indigenous society has a very precise" (FANON, 2004, p. 18) function. The libido of the colonized "is kept on edge like a running sore flinching from a caustic agent. [...] the psyche retracts, is obliterated, and finds an outlet through muscular spasms." This overexcitement of the colonized "takes an erotic delight in the muscular deflation of the crisis." Repressed psyches are "drained of energy", for example "by the ecstasy of dance [...] and possession." During these "muscular" orgies the "most brutal aggressiveness and impulsive violence are channeled, transformed, and spirited away" (FANON, 2004, p. 19). These gatherings have no other purpose than "to let the supercharged libido and the stifled aggressiveness spew out volcanically. Symbolic killings, [...] imagined multiple murders, everything has to come out. The ill humors seep out, tumultuous as lava flows." All this "plays a key regulating role in ensuring the stability of the colonized world."

Strikingly, however, Fanon notes that in "the struggle for liberation there is a singular loss of interest in these rituals. With his back to the wall [...] the colonized subject" stops "telling stories", and

after “years of unreality [...] finally confronts” his real enemy, “the only force which challenges his very being: colonialism” (FANON, 2004, p. 20). This violence now must be seized and exploited through useful channels, like political parties, but they too risk becoming an umpteenth enemy. Many of these parties do not do anything concrete to fight for decolonization and “never insist on the need for confrontation precisely because their aim is not the radical overthrow of the system.” Fanon argued that this attitude was not coincidental. Their supporters in fact are city dwellers – “elementary school teachers, small tradesmen, and shopkeepers” – “who have begun to profit from the colonial situation” and who “have their own interests in mind”: “better life and improved wages” (FANON, 2004, p. 22).

“At the critical, deciding moment the colonialist bourgeoisie” introduces the notion of non-violence. This means that the interests of “the colonized intellectual and business elite [...] are identical to those of the colonialist bourgeoisie and it is therefore indispensable [...] to reach an agreement for the common good” (FANON, 2004, p. 23). According to Fanon, however, the notion of compromise and negotiations with colonialism is one more enemy. These intellectuals, the “rear guard of the national struggle”, are a “section of the people who” in reality “have always been on the other side” (FANON, 2004, p. 24). These nationalist parties usually “distance themselves from the people’s struggle and can often be heard in private condemning those spectacular acts that have been decreed heinous by the metropolitan press and public opinion” (FANON, 2004, p. 24-25). They deem violent methods ineffective, because “reckless violence” is not “the most effective way of defending their own interests.”

For them [...] any attempt to smash colonial oppression by force is an act of despair, a suicidal act. [...] the colonizer’s tanks and fighter planes are constantly on their minds. When they are told we must act, they imagine bombs being dropped, armored cars rumbling through the streets, a hail of bullets, the police—and they stay put.

According to Fanon, this is a defeatist attitude of “losers.” “Their incapacity to triumph by violence needs no demonstration; they prove it in their daily life and their maneuvering” (FANON, 2004,

p. 25). Fanon lambastes the defeatist stance of these intellectuals by citing a part of Engels's book, *Anti-Dühring* (1901), that deals with the material pre-conditions for military victory. Between two adversaries, one may be stronger than the other. According to an idealistic view of history and of conflict, the weaker should simply accept their condition. They should not try to begin the long process of preparation by which they hope to win. With pungent irony, Fanon attacks this scholastic and deterministic view of violence and history. Following this line of reasoning, subaltern, oppressed groups should never revolt against their oppressors. Are not their oppressors stronger? "What do you expect to fight the colonists with? With your knives? With your shotguns?" (FANON, 2004, p. 26). To be clear, Fanon does not deny the importance of material factors, including armament, in war. However, he insists that there are also other important factors, as the colonial situation demonstrates. Napoleon retreated during the 1810 Peninsular War, even though he had an impressive 400,000-strong army. But what is the ingredient that can make a seemingly weaker opponent win over a stronger one? Guerrilla warfare, according to Fanon.

4 Colonialism: a congenital enemy?

The importance of guerrilla warfare can be observed by examining the stiff resistance Napoleon encountered in Spain and the tactics implemented in the American Revolution. Spaniards, with "unshakeable national fervor, discovered guerrilla warfare, which twenty-five years earlier the American militia had tested on the British troops". According to Fanon, guerrilla warfare was "a new factor" in a "global competition." The development of capitalism also changed the military situation in the colonies. At the beginning "of colonization, a single military column could occupy a vast amount of territory—from the Congo and Nigeria to the Ivory Coast." But by mid-20th century, the colonies had become an important exporting market as well as an important internal consumer market, and total militarization is bad for business. Therefore, a "blind domination on the model of slavery is not economically profitable for the metropolis" (FANON, 2004, p. 26), and the "metropolitan bourgeoisie will not support a government whose policy is based solely on the power of arms." A kind of hegemony

is needed instead: “What the metropolitan financiers and industrialists expect is [...] the protection of their ‘legitimate interests’ using economic agreements”. In other words: “Artillery shelling and scorched earth policy have been replaced by an economic dependency. The crackdown against a rebel sultan is a thing of the past. Matters have become more subtle” (FANON, 2004, p. 27).

Moderate parties try to “calmly and dispassionately seek a solution with the colonialist partner respecting the interests of both sides” (FANON, 2004, p. 27), that is, of colonialism and of these parties. Even when they decide to act, they use

extremely peaceful methods: organizing work stoppages in the few factories located in the towns, mass demonstrations to cheer a leader, and a boycott of the buses or imported commodities. All these methods not only put pressure on the colonial authorities but also allow the people to let off steam (FANON, 2004, p. 27-28).

This is a sort of “hibernation therapy”, a “hypnotherapy of the people”. However, this results in a paradox, as can be seen in a sentence pronounced by the president of independent Gabon when officially visiting Paris: “Gabon is an independent country, but nothing has changed between Gabon and France, the status quo continues”. Fanon underlines the complementarity between false pacifism and religion:

The colonialist bourgeoisie is aided [...] in the pacification of the colonized by the inescapable powers of religion. All the saints who turned the other cheek, who forgave those who trespassed against them, who, without flinching, were spat upon and insulted, are championed and shown as an example (FANON, 2004, p. 28).

Fanon describes the “elite of the colonized countries” as “emancipated slaves”. In fact, “once they are at the head of the movement”, they

use the term slavery of their brothers to shame the slave drivers or to provide their oppressors’ financial competitors with an ideology of insipid humanitarianism. Never in fact do they actually appeal to the slaves, never do they actually mobilize them (FANON, 2004, p. 28).

In these parties there may be real revolutionaries, but “their speeches, their initiatives, and their angry outbursts very soon antagonize the party machine”. They are therefore “isolated, then removed altogether. At the same time, as if there were a dialectical concomitance, the colonial police swoops down upon them.” They are wanted “in the towns” and “shunned by” hypocritical “militants, rejected by the party leaders” (FANON, 2004, p. 28). These “undesirables with their inflammatory attitude end up in the countryside. It is then they realize in a kind of intoxication that the peasant masses latch on to their every word and do not hesitate to ask them the question for which they are not prepared: ‘When do we start?’” (FANON, 2004, p. 28-29).

Fanon thought that, their political hypocrisy notwithstanding, nationalist parties could facilitate anticolonialist revolution. They carefully “avoid subversion but in fact stir up subversive feelings in the consciousness of their listeners or readers”. They raise expectations and allow the “imagination [...] to roam outside the colonial order”. Whether realizing it or not, these “nationalist politicians are playing with fire”. At political meetings there is “blood in the air”. But leaders usually want to make a “‘show’ of force—so as not to use it” (FANON, 2004, p. 29).

The excitement that is fostered, however— [...] the police presence, the military might, the arrests and the deportation of leaders— [...] gives the people the impression the time has come for them to do something. During these times of unrest the political parties multiply the calls for calm to the left, while to the right they search the horizon endeavoring to decipher the liberal intentions of the colonial authorities (FANON, 2004, p. 29-30).

Fanon highlights that acts of resistance against colonialism inspire the colonized, no matter who commits them. To hit the enemy is what counts.

The outlaw [...] who holds the countryside for days against the police [...] or who succumbs after killing four or five police officers [...], all constitute for the people role models, action schemas, and “heroes.” And there is no point, obviously, in saying that such a hero is a thief

[...]. If the act for which this man is prosecuted by the colonial authorities is an act exclusively directed against a colonial individual or colonial asset, then the demarcation line is clear and manifest. The process of identification is automatic (FANON, 2004, p. 30).

To foster hatred and courage against the present-day enemy, the colonized may think about past episodes of resistance. The “historical role of national resistance to the colonial conquest” must be underlined. “The major figures in the history of the colonized are always those who led the national resistance against foreign invasion. [...] The emergence of the new nation and the demolition of the colonial system are the result of [...] a violent struggle [...].”

The colonized “discover that violence is atmospheric [...] and sweeps away the colonial regime.” Moreover, the “success of this violence plays not only an informative role but also an operative one” (FANON, 2004, p. 30). By this, Fanon means that the successes of other colonized peoples boost the struggle in other countries. He makes the example of the Dien Bien Phu victory in Vietnam, which had become the heritage of all colonized peoples. Moreover, this “pervading atmosphere of violence affects not just the colonized but also the colonizers who realize the number of latent Dien Bien Phu’s”. The colonists “gripped in a genuine wholesale panic. Their plan is to make the first move, to turn the liberation movement to the right and disarm the people: Quick, let’s decolonize. Let’s decolonize the Congo before it turns into another Algeria. [...] let’s modernize it [...]”. However, what does Fanon mean by “atmospheric violence” a “violence rippling under the skin”? As

it develops [...] a number of driving mechanisms pick it up and convey it to an outlet. In spite of the metamorphosis imposed on it by the colonial regime in tribal or regional conflicts, violence continues to progress, the colonized subject identifies his enemy, puts a name to all of his misfortunes, and casts all his exacerbated hatred and rage in this new direction.

Once the enemy is identified, the colonized must “get from the atmosphere of violence to setting violence in motion” (FANON,

2004, p. 31). According to Fanon, global capitalism could be forced to see that decolonization is inevitable. In that case, capitalism had to grow manipulative: what “must be avoided at all costs are strategic risks, the espousal by the masses of an enemy doctrine and radical hatred by tens of millions of men” (FANON, 2004, p. 39).

One of the many enemies of the anticolonialist revolution are traditional authorities who were, in reality, put in power by the colonizers. Fanon warns that “their enemy is not the occupying power with whom, in fact, they get along very well, but” the urban political elites “who are bent on dislocating the indigenous society and in doing so, take the bread out of their mouths” (FANON, 2004, p. 66). The enemy-friend dialectic developed by Fanon is also about the contrast between towns/cities and countryside. Colonial power resides in cities, while the revolutionary reserves are located in the countryside. To win the anticolonial revolution, therefore, the “leaders of the [incipient] insurrection” must “move the war into enemy territory, i.e., into the serenity and grandiloquence of the cities” (FANON, 2004, p. 80). However, colonial towns and cities are not all alike. They are in fact characterized by an urban conglomerate known as the shanty town. According to Fanon, the “shanty town is the consecration of the colonized’s biological decision to invade the enemy citadel at all costs, and if need be, by the most underground channels” (FANON, 2004, p. 81). In other words, Fanon argues that no matter how the colonists try to exclude the “natives” from urban life, the shanty town represents a contradiction to that intention, a sort of enemy within, who can strike even by hidden channels. Interestingly, this Fanonian vision is reminiscent of the Maoist concept of the countryside encircling the cities.

To win, however, the colonized must correctly see who is friend and who is foe. Tribalism has long divided colonial societies, but in the “atmosphere of brotherly solidarity” created by “armed struggle”, different tribes “link arms with their former enemies.” This solidarity “among tribes, among villages and at the national level is first discernible in the growing number of blows dealt to the enemy. Every new group, every new volley of cannon fire signals that everybody is hunting the enemy, everybody is taking a stand”. This is again crucial. What Fanon is saying is that the natives can

build a positive identity by uniting against the common colonial enemy. “This solidarity”, moreover, “grows much stronger during the second period when the enemy offensive is launched” (FANON, 2004, p. 84).

More than a theoretical text, *The Wretched of the Earth* contains elements which may be described as theoretical-military. For example, he clarifies certain characteristics of the anticolonial struggle. The “enemy” might want to launch “an attack” and to concentrate “large numbers of troops at precise locations” (FANON, 2004, p. 84), applying therefore a war of tactical movement. However, the “national liberation army is not an army grappling with the enemy in a single, decisive battle, but travels from village to village, retreating into the forest and jumping for joy when the cloud of dust raised by the enemy’s troops is seen in the valley” (FANON, 2004, p. 85). The national liberation army applies therefore guerrilla war or war of position tactics. The natives hate the enemy-colonists, but at their very sight the natives are happy to fight them. The colonist forces may think they are the ones taking the initiative, but the revolutionary natives can contradict them: “The enemy thinks he is in pursuit but we always manage to come up behind him, attacking him at the very moment when he least expects it” (FANON, 2004, p. 85-86).

Again, this is reminiscent of Maoist tactics of guerrilla warfare. “Despite all his technology and firepower the enemy” cannot win. According to Mao, in fact, the crucial element in war was not material, but human. Fanon insists: “One can hold out for three days, three months at the most, using the masses’ pent-up resentment, but one does not win a national war, one does not rout the formidable machine of the enemy or transform the individual if one neglects to raise the consciousness of the men in combat” (FANON, 2004, p. 86). The machine of the enemy can be overcome by a strong collective consciousness, by a “social force”, as Adolfo Gilly (1965, p. 5-6) puts it (GABBAS, 2017). The natives cannot win the war in one big showdown. The showdown “began on the very first day, and will not end with the demise of the enemy but quite simply when the latter has come to realize, for a number of reasons, that it is in his interest to terminate the struggle and

acknowledge the sovereignty of the colonized people” (FANON, 2004, p. 91).

The enemy, however, can modify its tactics: “To its brutal policy of repression”, the enemy can add a “judicious and spectacular combination of detente, divisive maneuvers and psychological warfare” (FANON, 2004, p. 86). “The enemy who analyzes the forces of the insurrection”, who studies the

global adversary, the colonized subject, identifies the [...] weakness and [...] instability of certain segments of the population. The enemy discovers, alongside a well-organized and disciplined insurrectionary front line, a human mass whose commitment is constantly threatened by the addictive cycle of physiological poverty, humiliation, and irresponsibility. The enemy will use this mass even if it costs a fortune (FANON, 2004, p. 87).

In other words, the colonialist-enemy can exploit the colonized’s inner weaknesses.

Fanon mentions in his work the concept of antiracist racism, which must be understood within the context of colonial power relations. By this, he likely means that a racialized, colonized people naturally and rightfully develops an instinctive, strong, and general hatred towards all or almost all of the members of the colonizing race. Present-day “politically correct” (BARONCELLI, 1996; PRESTON, 2018; DABASHI, 2017) scholars will likely find this Fanonian stance distasteful as they do not understand the specific context and conditions of colonialism and, crucially, because they were never personally victims of colonialism. According to Fanon,

antiracist racism and the determination to defend one’s skin, which is characteristic of the colonized’s response to colonial oppression, clearly represent sufficient reasons to join the struggle. But one does not sustain a war, one does not endure massive repression or witness the disappearance of one’s entire family in order for hatred or racism to triumph. Racism, hatred, resentment, and “the legitimate desire for revenge” alone cannot nurture a war of liberation. These flashes of consciousness which fling the body into a zone of turbulence, which plunge it into a

virtually pathological dreamlike state where the sight of the other induces vertigo, where my blood calls for the blood of the other, where my death through mere inertia calls for the death of the other, this passionate outburst in the opening phase, disintegrates if it is left to feed on itself (FANON, 2004, p. 89).

Throughout the struggle, the “countless abuses perpetrated by the colonialist forces reintroduce emotional factors [...], give the militant further cause to hate and new reasons to set off in search of a ‘colonist to kill’.” However, “leaders will come to realize that hatred is not an agenda. It would be perverse to count on the enemy who always manages to commit as many crimes as possible and can be relied upon to widen ‘the rift,’ thus driving the population as a whole to revolt” (FANON, 2004, p. 89). Fanon therefore recognizes that hatred is important, but it is not enough to win. The colony must simply be let free. Otherwise, “there is the constant risk that the people will ask why continue the war, every time the enemy makes the slightest concession. [...] The militant must be supplied with further, more searching explanations so that the enemy’s concessions do not pull the wool over his eyes” (FANON, 2004, p. 91). With the success of the struggle for independence, however, things change. At an advanced point, the “colonist is no longer simply public enemy number one.” In fact, certain

members of the colonialist population prove to be closer, infinitely closer, to the nationalist struggle than certain native sons. The racial and racist dimension is transcended on both sides. Not every black or Muslim is automatically given a vote of confidence. One no longer grabs a gun or a machete every time a colonist approaches (FANON, 2004, p. 95).

As we can see, Fanon’s concept of the enemy changes through the development of the revolutionary struggle. It is no longer naturalistic, but becomes politico-moral in definite ways. Antiracist racism can be overcome by a new synthesis. Fanon thanks French soldiers who decided to desert and glorifies French FLN supporters who underwent torture without betraying. When these European renegades were to be tortured, they were always threatened that

Arab-friendly Europeans were treated particularly harshly. And they were. Moreover, Fanon admitted in *L'An Cinq de la Révolution Algérienne* that FLN troops could be guilty of “sudden acts of violence against traitors and war criminals” (FANON, 1965, p. 24). The “immediate reactions of our compatriots”, said Fanon, could not be justified on any account: “We understand them, but we can neither excuse them nor reject them” (FANON, 1965, p. 25). Fanon even admitted that he knew of cases when FLN fighters committed violence against women and children and noted that those found guilty could be executed. Fanon’s nationalism was political and cultural – a “nationalism of the will”, according to David Macey – to the point that towards the end of his life he considered himself Algerian (MACEY, 2012). Again, in *L'An Cinq de la Révolution Algérienne*, Fanon says: “For the F.L.N., in the new society that is being built, there are only Algerians. From the outset, therefore, every individual living in Algeria is an Algerian. In tomorrow’s independent Algeria it will be up to every Algerian to assume Algerian citizenship or to reject it in favor of another [emphasis in the original]”. True, there was a tiny minority of hopeless war criminals and torturers who could not be included into the new society, but even those “should be kept under surveillance” once in France, and “retrieved by psychiatry” (FANON, 1965, p. 152). Moreover, Fanon does not state that Europeans had brought nothing positive to Algeria. Speaking of medicine and being a doctor, he admitted that the “colonized individual” could “frankly” recognize “what is positive in the dominator’s action” (FANON, 1965, p. 122).

After independence, moreover, “old intertribal hatreds” may “resurface” (FANON, 2004, p. 106), and colonialism may try to disseminate discord among different countries. In Senegal, for example, there is “hatred against Islam and the Arabs” (FANON, 2004, p. 107). But according to Fanon, hatred may also be an enemy. It is the case of self-hatred:

Up above, Heaven with its promises of an afterlife, down below the French with their firm promises of jail, beatings and executions. Inevitably, you stumble up against yourself. Here lies this core of self-hatred that characterizes racial conflict in segregated societies (FANON, 2004, p. 232).

As his biographer Macey underlined, Fanon's thought was profoundly influenced by psychiatry, psychology, and, to a lesser degree, by psychoanalysis (MACEY, 2012). In the section "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon reports a case of "Paranoid delusions and suicidal behavior disguised as [a] 'terrorist act' in a [...] twenty-two-year-old Algerian" (FANON, 2004, p. 201). This young man was apolitical and devoted himself only to his studies and to his profession. And yet, suddenly, he began feeling like a traitor for no obvious reason. One day he went out of home like a madman and "tried to grab [a French soldier's] machine gun, shouting: 'I am an Algerian!'" He was arrested and tortured until the soldiers understood that he knew nothing and that he was a clinical case. Afterwards, he was sent to the mental asylum. There he declared: "I was happy to be beaten because that proved they considered me to be one of the enemy as well" (FANON, 2004, p. 203). Fanon is describing a political-psychological paranoia case: this Algerian man subconsciously identified with his people and with the struggle and was then glad to be tortured. That, at least, practically demonstrated to himself that he was an active enemy and not a passive person/traitor.

5 Conclusion: Why?

By way of conclusion, I will address the question of why Fanon exhibits such powerful hatred for the colonial enemy in his works and in his overall political support for the FLN. In his book *Fear of Enemies and Collective Action*, Ioannis Evrigenis notes that the presence of a common enemy can help unite groups with different interests (EVRIGENIS, 2008). This was the desire of Fanon and the FLN leadership. Fanon sought to present and depict the enemy in order to mobilize the Algerian people – and the colonized in general – against it. Eco was right to argue that an enemy may be useful to "measure our value system and to show, facing him, our value" (ECO, 2012, p. 10). However, it is hard to argue that Fanon "created", "formed" or "constructed" an enemy, because this would suggest a rhetorical device without actual correspondence to reality. European colonialism in Algeria and beyond could hardly

be considered a “created”, “formed” or “constructed” enemy. That this kind of hatred was so pronounced in the 20th century is due largely to what Domenico Losurdo calls the original sin of the 20th century: colonialism (LOSURDO, 1998). As hatred is a continuum in Fanon’s thought, it is crucial to understand it. Fanon developed a Manichean system of thought that precisely described and followed the Manicheism of the colonial world, advocating for a diametrically opposed solution. Therefore, Fanon offered a system of thought that he himself defined as antiracist racism. The colonized could not emancipate themselves without taking pride in their race and opposing this pride to the enemy race.

How shall we judge, however, the accusation that Fanon advocated senseless hatred? In a war as brutal as the Franco-Algerian War, where both sides committed atrocities and torture, we cannot but think with Losurdo’s category of moral judgement in all its complexity and inescapability. “While on the one hand moral judgement is inescapable, it would prove superficial and hypocritical if it were formulated making abstraction from the historical context. Thus its complexity and difficulty arise” (LOSURDO, 2008, p. 216). In his book *La non-violenza. Una storia fuori dal mito*, Losurdo argues that Fanon’s “crude, debatable, and at first sight even repelling” statements must be explained in the light of the “long, interminable period of colonial domination and of its de-humanizing practices” (LOSURDO, 2014). Losurdo noted that even Hannah Arendt – who vehemently criticized Fanon’s statements – was no less crude when celebrating armed resistance to anti-Semitism. Moreover, in his biography on Fanon, David Macey shows that Fanon’s views were not born overnight, but developed through a long period of reflection and attempts at compromise. Fanon was born in a relatively well-off Black family in Martinique. Though whites were the dominant minority in the tiny island, his early life was not particularly influenced by racism. He volunteered during World War II and was decorated for his bravery. But during the War he began to see how even the soldiers of the French army were treated differently according to their race. Fanon was left profoundly disillusioned. His disillusionment with European, French, white democracy grew stronger yet during his studies in France.

His work in an Algerian mental asylum, however, proved decisive in his political awakening. Indeed, Fanon the political thinker cannot be separated from Fanon the psychiatrist. When Fanon was in charge of the Blida mental asylum, he became convinced that the problems of his Algerian patients were closely intertwined with colonialism. He grew close to the FLN and risked arrest, torture, and murder. Nevertheless, he remained active as a psychiatrist when he visited and condemned two thirteen- and fourteen-year-old Algerian patients who had together killed a French friend. He also treated tortured Algerians and their French torturers who were obsessed with what they did. However, when he began to receive death threats and saw that his work was impossible, he resigned, writing an indignant letter. According to Macey, he had “realized that objective conditions in that country meant that any attempt to practise psychiatry there would be doomed to failure” (MACEY, 2012). Fanon wrote: “For almost three years, I have devoted myself completely to the service of this country and to the men who inhabit it” (FANON, 1967, p. 52). However, his enthusiasm proved pointless, since he could see nothing but “contempt for man” and “hatred of the natives of this country” (FANON, 1967, p. 52-53). “Madness is one of the means man has of losing his freedom”, he wrote, and “I can say [...] that the degree of alienation of the inhabitants of this country appears to me frightening. If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment”, he could assert that the “Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization” and “systematized de-humanization” (FANON, 1967, p. 53). That was why, after “long months [...] of unpardonable debates” in his conscience, he had reached a conclusion:

I cannot continue to bear a responsibility at no matter what cost, on the false pretext that there is nothing else to be done.

For all these reasons I have the honor, Monsieur le Ministre, to ask you to be good enough to accept my resignation and to put an end to my mission in Algeria (FANON, 1967, p. 54).

As we can see, Fanon underwent a process of progressive radicalization, a realization that nothing else could be done. André Glucksmann's claim that Fanon is responsible for present-day Islamic terrorism is paradoxical since Fanon was agnostic and vehemently attacked religion in his work. However, the FLN acquired an increasingly Arab and Islamic character, and for this reason Fanon – a Black agnostic – is nearly forgotten today in Algeria. The claim that Fanon fostered *völkisch* nationalism is equally astounding. As David Macey noted, the “most striking feature of Fanon's Algerian nationalism is that it does not define ‘the nation’ in ethnic or *völkisch* terms” (MACEY, 2012). The most sensational claim, however, is the Fanon-Hitler comparison. In its incredible bad taste, this comparison erases the ugly and usually ignored fact that Nazism was a radicalization of the European colonial tradition (LOSURDO, 2004; GALLI, 2002; TRAVERSO, 2002). This similarity was not lost on Fanon, who highlighted it in *The Wretched of the Earth* (FANON, 2004, p. 57-58). More precisely, it erases other facts as well: that Fanon was decorated for his bravery in fighting Nazism in WWII; that some French and Jewish activists saw their solidarity with Algeria as a continuation of the antifascist resistance and viewed French tortures in Algeria as a frightening repetition of Gestapo tortures; and that many mercenaries of the Foreign Legion sent to Algeria were former Italian Fascists and German Nazis, including former members of the SS (FANON, 1967, p. 68).

Crucially, Fanon never was an outright FLN leader, but was rather an important international spokesperson, a semi-official diplomat to other African countries. Those who listened to his talks remember him as a powerful orator. *The Wretched on the Earth* and his other works were read by an international literate audience, rather than by FLN fighters who were mostly illiterate. Therefore, did his thought bear any direct influence at all on the violence of the Algerian Revolution? There is sporadic evidence that he at least tried to influence FLN fighters. Boukhatem Farés, an FLN fighter and artist who was treated by Fanon in Tunisia, was encouraged by Fanon to paint: “[D]rawings, art and painting complemented the armed struggle.” After he recovered, Farés dealt with propaganda work. According to him, “Fanon's advice was a great help to

me in producing leaflets for the psychological struggle against the enemy, and for raising the morale of the ALN's troops" (MACEY, 2012). The FLN later showed the watercolors and drawings created with Fanon's encouragement to foreign delegations. There is also evidence that in 1961, when Fanon had already been diagnosed leukemia, he lectured FLN troops on *The Wretched of the Earth*.

To conclude, it is beyond doubt that Fanon's life and works were characterized by a deep sense of hatred, both abstractly towards colonialism and personally towards the colonizer. Much well-intended, liberal-sounding, and politically correct theoretical literature (ECO, 2012; EVRIGENIS, 2008) stresses the concept of enemy "formation"/"creation"/"construction" as a kind of subtle rhetorical, propagandistic, and manipulative device to convince different groups to hate one another. This abstract view seems to imply that conflicts in history are usually invented by manipulative intellectuals and/or state powers. If humans only implemented peace and mutual understanding, there would likely be no violence or war. However, this vision of history is naïve and unrealistic, to say the least (LOSURDO, 2014a; LOSURDO, 2016). As Domenico Losurdo (2014b) notes, Western false consciousness also means good consciousness. According to this false/good consciousness, mainstream Western thinkers may well blame hatred and violence in anticolonial conflicts on manipulative figures like Fanon (or Guevara, Mao, Sankara, etc.). However edifying this view may seem, it has little to do with historical reality. Colonialism was a real, objective enemy for the colonized. The colonized were left with no choice but to resort to hatred and violence, because colonialism had given them nothing but hatred and violence. Today, reflecting on a crucial, forgotten figure like Fanon is still relevant. If this reflection takes place not only in restricted academic circles, but also among the victims of present-day (neo)colonialism – today's wretched of the earth, who include migrants in the global North (GABBAS, 2020, p. 237-239) – this is all the better.

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