

From Paris and Rome to Quebec - Reading Fanon in Radical Montreal Intellectual Circles of the 1960s¹

Michał Obszyński

m.obszynski2@uw.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-5489-6530

University of Warsaw. Poland

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to trace the socio-political context in which Frantz Fanon's thought reached left-wing French and English-speaking intellectuals in Montreal between 1950 and 1970, and to analyze the reception of the theses of the author of *The Wretched of the Earth* in the discourse of these circles on culture and art, especially literature. The reading of Fanon's main concepts becomes here the object of a certain cultural-political interpretation, in which strategies of adaptation or even appropriation make it possible to inscribe Fanon's work in the Franco-Quebecois independence struggle in the era of the Quiet Revolution or to link the identity aspirations of the Quebec Black minority with the demands of the Black Power movement as well as the worldwide anti-imperialist movement. In these different contexts, literature has its own distinct tasks, inextricably linked to the aspirations of the societies within which it is produced. From defending the language of the dominated to creating a new vision of the world and of man, through

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direct involvement in political affairs: the writer, according to Fanon interpreted in Quebec, becomes one of the central figures of the revolutionary struggle.

Keywords

Frantz Fanon; Sixties Montreal; Parti pris; Black Power; Canadian left-wing intellectuals; Canadian revolutionary writers.

Known as one of the foremost theorists in the struggle against racism and colonialism, Frantz Fanon became one of the primary authorities for revolutionary and anti-imperialist circles around the world in the 1960s (Cherki 14-15). Fanon's analysis of the psychological effects of colonization, based on his observations of compatriots in Martinique as well as patients in the Algerian psychiatric hospital in Blida, became within a few decades a canonical interpretation of phenomena such as the institutionalization of racial divisions or the cultural alienation of members of colonized societies. It is also impossible to forget his theories on the independence struggle in colonial conditions as well as the place and role of culture in such activities. All these aspects of the author's thoughts in the essays *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) or *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) became so well known among the supporters of decolonization that they also spread throughout North America, including Canada. In the latter country, Fanon's texts were read and commented on in both English- and French-speaking society as early as the 1960s, shortly after the publication of the aforementioned texts. This paper aims to trace which of Fanon's themes in his reflections on culture found the strongest resonance among Canadian intellectuals of the era, and how the latter shaped their conception of the writer and artist based on Fanon's theses and postulates. The idea will be to examine the influence of this Caribbean theorist of anti-colonialism on liberation movements in Canada, specifically in the Quebec of the 1960s, through a reading of speeches by some of the participants in the 1968 Congress of Black Writers in Montreal as well as selected articles that appeared in the journal *Parti pris*. This analysis will be based on a cross-reading of Fanon's own speeches at the Congresses of Black Writers in Paris (1956) and Rome (1959), as well as on references to two of the author's foundational texts mentioned above.

Culture and the writer according to Frantz Fanon

Organized at the Sorbonne from September 19 to 22, 1956, on the initiative of Alioune Diop, founder of the journal *Présence africaine*, the First International Congress of Black Writers and Artists was to become one of the most important events in the intellectual and cultural life of Blacks after World War II. Bringing

together leading representatives of the Black intelligentsia from Africa, the Caribbean and the United States, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Jacques Rabemanajara, Aimé Césaire, George Lamming, Jacques Stephen Alexis and Richard Wright, among others, the congress proceedings became a space for reflection and discussion on Black culture, their condition in the then colonized world, and possible directions for the development of an international and transcontinental Black community. Planned as a kind of counterpart to the Bandung conference (1955), but focused on cultural issues, the Paris congress became one of the main reference points for subsequent reflection on negritude, Pan-Africanism, and a source of inspiration for anti-colonial theories of culture and art. (Bonner 1-18; Dieng 118-124; John 21-43)

Fanon participates in the Congress as the author of the essay *Black Skin, White Masks*, published four years earlier by the Seuil publishing house, but also as a practicing psychiatrist involved from 1953 to 1956 in the psychiatric hospital in Blida, Algeria. In his paper, entitled "Racisme et culture," Fanon conducts an analytical deconstruction of racism and its pseudo-scientific attitudes, attempting to show it as an ideological construct created and maintained by colonial states as a tool to reinforce the power exercised in conquered territories. In this perspective, placed in the specific context of colonization, "racism ... is only one element of a larger ensemble: that of the systematized oppression of a people" (Fanon, "Racisme et culture" 123; our translation). According to Fanon, unsupportable by any scientific findings that would confirm actual differences between races, racist attitudes are ultimately a product of colonial discourse, sustaining the dominance of colonial powers. For Fanon, then, racism is a phenomenon rooted in politics, the nature of which changes over time, evolving from theories that proclaim the biological superiority of one race over another to concepts and practices that entrench the presumed inferior status of one culture (the dominated culture) over another (the colonizer's culture). It is this aspect that becomes Fanon's main point of reflection given the impact of this type of thinking on the situation of colonized countries at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. Following the reasoning presented by Fanon at the Paris congress, the primary task of colonized societies is to try to fight not racism itself, which is only a consequence of the socio-political situation of a given country, but the multidimensional struggle for liberation from the political, economic, and cultural oppression resulting from colonization. According to Fanon, racism, understood as the humiliation of one social group and its culture by another, can disappear only when the former undertakes a liberation struggle, perceived by Fanon as the only possible path to de-alienation both at the level of the psyche of individual members of a given society and at the level of the collective awakening of national consciousness and identity. Breaking out into independence, achieving political freedom and the

possibility of constructing one's own statehood becomes, for Fanon, the basis for the creation of national culture and the development of the arts. Fanon thus opposes the postulates proclaiming the primacy of culture over socio-political activities, according to which the protection and enrichment of the cultural heritage of conquered societies should be a stage prior to the struggle for independence (Young 94). In his discussion of potential solutions to the problem of colonial alienation, Fanon thus prioritizes the need for action in the area of socio-political construction of new nations as a necessary and prior stage to the cultivation of a living culture of a given society. This conception, already present in the Paris paper, would be concretized in another speech Fanon would give three years later in Rome as part of the Second Congress of Black Writers and Intellectuals (1959). Entitled "Reciprocal Bases of National Culture and the Fight for Freedom," this paper would serve as a direct extension of the reflections presented in Paris and, at the same time, as a leaven for further thoughts in this area that would appear in *The Wretched of the Earth*.²

The Second Congress of Black Writers and Intellectuals takes place in Rome from 26 March to 1 April, 1959 as a continuation of the events in Paris.³ While the latter was held around the central theme of "The Crisis of Culture," and aimed to determine the state of knowledge of Africa's diverse cultural traditions and to provide a general framework for the revival of Black culture, the Rome congress sought to establish more precise directions for the cultural practices of Black societies in the context of Pan-African unity (Appeal 9). During the congress, speeches by such intellectuals as Alioune Diop, Cheikh Anta Diop, James W. Ivy, and William T. Fontaine sit side by side with speeches by writers directly involved in politics, such as Jean-Price Mars (Haiti's ambassador to Paris), Aimé Césaire (longtime mayor of Fort-de-France), Léopold Sédar Senghor (who the next year would become the first president of independent Senegal), and politicians such as Eric Williams (premier from 1956 to 1962 and, subsequently, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from 1962 to 1981) or Sékou Touré (President of independent Guinea since 1958).⁴ The co-presence of these two types of participants, as well as the topics taken up in their

2. The Rome speech is included in Fanon's book as an integral part of Chapter 4, entitled "On the National Culture."

3. The idea of organizing another congress was formulated in Paris as one of the final demands of all the participants. The organizers of the congress in Rome were the Société de culture africaine (an institution founded by the projects initiated at the Paris congress) and the Institut italien pour l'Afrique.

4. It should be noted that most of the individuals mentioned (with the exception of Sékou Touré) attended the Paris congress as some of the main figures in the debates held at the Sorbonne.

speeches (revolving mainly around the leading issues, i.e. African unity and the responsibility of culture towards the nation), testifies to the ever stronger politicalization of the debates held in Rome and confirms the desire to create concrete solutions in line with the thesis put forward by the authors of the issue of *Présence africaine*, in which the papers from the congress were published: "This renaissance of the peoples of color is the work of political leaders. It is also the work of men of culture" ("The Policy of our Culture" 6).⁵ It is in this context that Frantz Fanon speaks, deepening his reflection on the links between culture and the political situation of colonized countries.

In his statement, Fanon starts from the basic observation that colonialism means for the colonized society the complete disappearance of its own statehood and, at a deeper level, national consciousness. Even if a socio-political or cultural life can be observed in the colonized countries, according to Fanon, it is always an artificial reality, operating on the principle of forced, inauthentic, and therefore alienated reactions of the colonized to the conditions of external domination. Attachment to tradition, cultivated and glorified as an artifact of the past (such an attitude Fanon attributes mainly to the *négritude* movement), becomes here only another form of reaction to the colonial deprivation of the right to one's own identity and culture, different from the basic one related to assimilation (imitation of the canon of the dominant culture and more or less conscious denial of one's own culture). According to Fanon, the lack of the possibility of self-determination causes in colonized subjects, locked in a vicious circle of permanent relation to the colonizer, a complete incapacity for community self-awareness as well as for the creative development of culture: "The colonial situation calls a halt to national culture in almost every field. Within the framework of colonial domination there is not and there will never be such phenomena as new cultural departures or changes in the national culture" (Fanon, "Reciprocal Bases" 237). Colonization thus leads to the suffocation and atrophy of both the national identity and creativity of the colonized society. Consequently, the primary goal of the efforts of every member of colonized societies should become, in the first instance, the liberation struggle. The latter is the *sine qua non* condition for the revival of culture: "The condition for its (of the culture; my precision) existence is therefore national liberation and the renaissance of the state" (Fanon, "Reciprocal Bases" 242). Fanon goes a step further in his reasoning by elevating the liberation struggle to the level

5. The more political nature of the congress in Rome is also confirmed by the institutional setting of the proceedings: an audience with the President of Italy, Giovanni Gronchi on the eve of the opening of the congress, an audience with Pope John XXIII after the proceedings, and an address by Senator C. Mazza during the congress itself.

of a symbolic manifestation of the power of the nation: "We believe that the conscious and organized undertaking by a colonized people to re-establish the sovereignty of that nation constitutes the most complete and obvious cultural manifestation that exists" (Fanon, "Reciprocal Bases" 243). According to Fanon's thesis, it is only a truly free society, which, importantly, regains its independence by its own will and its own struggle, that becomes capable of producing a culture that is truly and profoundly valuable, that is, one characterized by strong dynamism, changeability, a creative approach to its own legacy, and, just as importantly, the ability to engage in dialogue with other cultures. This last statement is important because for a long time Fanon's postulates were identified with the notion of radical nationalism (and violence at that), which, allegedly, Fanon praised or even promoted. As Alice Cherki points out in her preface to the 2002 edition of *The Wretched of the Earth*, this reading of Fanon turns out to be invalid (Cherki 10-11). Contrary to some of Fanon's critics, Fanon's conception of the struggle for the emancipation of the colonized world does not imply the promotion of nationalist attitudes understood as the closing of new national societies to others. On the contrary, it assumes the necessity of openness to international and intercultural relations after the formation of new national communities:

The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication...National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension ...The birth of national consciousness in Africa has a strictly contemporaneous connection with the African consciousness. The responsibility of the African as regards national culture is also a responsibility with regard to African Negro culture ... [T]he most urgent thing today for the intellectual is to build up his nation. If this building up is true ...then the building of a nation is of necessity accompanied by the discovery and encouragement of universalizing values. Far from keeping aloof from other nations, therefore, it is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately only the source of all culture. (Fanon, "Reciprocal Bases" 247-248)

Violence, on the other hand, understood as the inner reflex of the colonized rebellion, becomes legitimate only on condition of being "organized in a liberation struggle that allows the overcoming" (Cherki 10; our translation). By subordinating everything to the idea of emancipation, Fanon thus seems to defend the right of colonized societies to the historical stage of the birth and constitution of a new nationhood and a new statehood: "National claims, it is here and there stated, are a phase that humanity has left behind. It is the day

of great concerted actions, and retarded nationalists ought in consequence to set their mistakes aright. We however consider that the mistake, which may have very serious consequences, lies in wishing to skip the national period" (Fanon 245). At the same time, his thought does not oppose the general ideas of Pan-Africanism, the unity of Negro-African societies, or other forms of contact between cultures. The ideal promoted by Fanon, then, is a free, internally strong, and autonomous society, capable of creating its own state institutions and its own culture, while remaining open to dialogue with other nations.

Fanon in Canada

The question of the reception of Fanonian thought in Canada presents itself in two ways. As Sean Mills states, among francophone intellectuals in Quebec he was read mainly as a theorist of colonial alienation and a promoter of violence as a legitimate means of struggle for independence, which was supported by Jean-Paul Sartre's interpretation of Fanon's theses (*The Empire Within* 50). In the circles of the radical Anglophone left, Fanon appears as one of the main authorities in the struggle for Black equality, in which racial issues (understood dynamically and evolutionarily) become a key issue. It seems therefore legitimate to say that Fanon's thought, in both cases, has been interpreted partly differently through interpretations in accordance with the interests of particular social groups. It is therefore a question of a certain appropriation of the Martinican's theses according to the needs of a given intellectual and political movement. An important role in the formation of these two readings of Fanon seems to have been played by the conditions in which his texts reached Canada.

The events of the Congresses mentioned above, both in Paris and Rome, had their resonance in the social consciousness of the time. It was certainly not a very strong resonance, if only because of the wider socio-political context of the time (the bread strike in France in 1956 and the war in Algeria since 1958), but the proceedings at the Sorbonne and the Institut italien pour l'Afrique were mentioned in the French and English-language press. As for the congress in Paris, James Baldwin regularly informed the Anglo-American as well as the French public through his dispatches sent as an accredited envoy-correspondent of the *Encounter* and French *Preuves* newspapers (Winks 605-614). James W. Ivy included a detailed account of the Paris deliberations in the December issue of *The Crisis* magazine (Ivy 593-600). Another event also contributed to the popularization of the ideas of the Paris Congress, namely, the First Congress of Black Writers, held February 28-March 1, 1959, in New York City. Organized according to the Paris model by the American Society of African Culture, the American branch of the French Société de culture africaine (Washington

156), the New York conference was an opportunity to promote the reflections and concepts presented in Paris. Regarding both the Paris and the Rome congresses, it is worth noting that the papers presented during the proceedings were published in bilingual (French and English) issues of *Présence africaine*.⁶ In the case of the Paris Congress, these are issues 8-9-10 of 1956 and 14-15 of 1957 while, in the case of the Rome Congress these are issues 24/25 and 27/28 of 1959. The availability of an English version of the speeches facilitated the circulation of the ideas preached in Paris and Rome, including Fanon's papers, throughout North America, especially through the American Society of African Culture mentioned above.

With regard to Fanon's reception, however, access to his most famous essay of the time, *The Wretched of the Earth*, plays a major role. It is worth noting that among Francophone readers in Quebec this book was popularized by the journalist and essayist Raoul Roy, one of the leading left-wing activists of the 1950-60s, who strongly influenced the crystallization of the attitudes of future members of the FLQ and the journal *Parti pris* (Mills, *The Empire Within* 59). In addition to Roy's role, mention should also be made of the influence of Haitian intellectuals and writers who arrived in Montreal in the early 1960s as a result of François Duvalier's oppressive and dictatorial rule. Figures such as Anthony Phelps, Serge Legagneur, and Roland Morisseau, associated with the Haïti littéraire literary group, come into contact quite quickly with Franco-Haitian writers such as Gaston Miron and Paul Chamberland, introducing them to the work of Antilleans, including Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon himself (Voltaire and Péan 351-395; Mills, "Popular Internationalism" 257). Meetings between Haitian and Quebec writers at the Haitian restaurant Le Perchoir d'Haïti become, then, one of the factors in the spread of Fanon's thought in Francophone leftist intellectual and literary circles. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that Fanon is also read in circles traditionally understood as conservative and which, at the same time, are evolving towards increasingly leftist attitudes. As Sean Mills states, organizations such as Development and Peace or the Jeunesse étudiante catholique undergo a profound shift in sensibility in the 1960s, and some of the events they organize become opportunities for debates around global capitalism or under-development in light of Fanon's analyses and concepts (Mills, *A Place in the Sun* 69).

However, the very milieu associated with the *Parti pris* (1963-1968) seems to have been the strongest vector for the dissemination of Fanon's thought, due to the numerous references to the Martinique psychiatrist-thinker appearing in

6. The journal published an English language edition from 1955 to 1961, with Richard Wright as its editor.

the articles of this periodical as well as to the fact that *The Wretched of the Earth* was available in the permanent offer of Éditions Parti pris (a subsidiary of the magazine founded in 1964).⁷ Fanon's texts thus reached francophone Quebec through leftist circles strongly associated with ideas of identity renewal and the struggle for independence of this Canadian province. It should be emphasized that this is happening at a time when the debate on these issues is already strongly present in Quebec. Suffice it to mention the disputes that preceded or accompanied the publication of Robert Charbonneau's *La France et nous* in 1947. Charbonneau's efforts to strengthen the position of French-Canadian publishers, his criticism of postwar French literature (considered by Charbonneau to be in decline and increasingly hermetic), and his call for French-Canadian writers to realize their American distinctiveness from their European source all fueled internal discussions about what would soon be called not French-Canadian but Quebec culture. By the time Fanon's texts reach Quebec, movements of identity affirmation are already well felt there, and while first concerned with attitudes toward France, they would soon turn even more strongly toward questions of dependence on anglophone Canada. It is in this context of the Quiet Revolution that Fanon's work would resonate most widely among French-speaking intellectuals.

To Quebec English-speaking intellectuals, *The Wretched of the Earth* reached mainly through emancipation groups and the struggle for Black equality in the United States.⁸ The first English translation by Constance Farrington, entitled *The Damned*, was published by *Présence africaine* as early as 1963.⁹ That same year, Grove Press published the same translation in New York, but under the revised title, still known today, *The Wretched of the Earth*.¹⁰ Sub-

7. It is worth highlighting on this occasion the mutual relationship between Fanon's French publisher Éditions Maspéro and Éditions Parti pris. Cf. Gérard Fabre. "Parti pris et Maspéro" *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, 19(2), 87-96, 2011.

8. It should be noted here that Fanon, as one of the leading theorists of the struggle against racism and colonialism, was known in Black radical student circles of English-speaking Montreal. C. R. L. James mentions him at least in his lectures organized between 1966 and 1967 in Montreal, especially in his talk "The making of the Caribbean people" delivered at the Second Montreal Conference on West Indian Affairs held in 1966 (James 190). As we will see later, in the context of the Congress of Black Writers, Fanon's image is also prominently displayed in the meetings of that period, which may indicate that he was well recognized in that community.

9. On the history of the first English translation of Fanon's essay, see Kathryn Batchelor, Sue-Ann Harding (eds.). *Translating Frantz Fanon Across Continents and Languages*, London: Routledge, 2017.

10. According to Robert J. C. Young, this title does not appear until the London edition.

sequent editions (1965, London, Mac Gibbon & Kee; 1966, New York, Grove Press—a reissue; and, that same year, Grove Press, under the Black Cat imprint, in a low-budget version aimed at the general public) reproduced Farrington’s translation, until 2005, when Grove Press published Fanon’s essay, translated by Richard Philcox, with a foreword by Homi K. Bhabha. Interpreted in various ways, as evidenced by the very subtitles added to the various American editions (Young 91), and to which Farrington’s translation distortions may also have contributed (Macey 45-47), Fanon’s essay quickly became one of the primary readings of members and supporters of the Black Power movement, especially activists associated with The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (Arnold 118-135). It was representatives of these movements, who were invited to guest meetings in Canada, especially in Montreal (Austin 17), that helped to spread Fanon’s theses among Black members of the English-speaking part of Canadian society. In all likelihood, it can be argued that central to this dynamic of increasing affirmation of communal Blacks in Canada, especially in Quebec of the 1960s, and in which Fanon’s reflections and theses acted as one of the catalysts, was the Congress of Black Writers held in Montreal from October 11 to 14, 1968 at McGill University.

Organized in part by former members of the Caribbean Conference Committee such as Rosie Douglas, the Montreal congress featured the likes of C. L. R. James, Walter Rodney, James Forman, and Stokely Carmichael. As Sean Mills and David Austin state, along with the events surrounding the occupation of the computer center at Sir George Williams University, this congress was one of the landmark events that brought to the attention of Quebec public opinion racial issues that had often been downplayed until then by both the public and the authorities in that province, but especially influenced the crystallization of the identity and socio-political demands of Blacks in Quebec (Mills, *The Empire Within* 112; Austin 152). Importantly, two speeches from the congress program, delivered by James Forman and Stokely Carmichael, relate directly to the person of Frantz Fanon and his political and social thought. Following them allows us to understand what interpretation of Fanon’s thought reaches Montreal’s Black revolutionary circles, and in this, what concept of culture and literature emerges from these readings of the Martinique author.

Cf. Robert J. C. Young. “Fanon and the Enigma of Cultural Translation.” *Translation: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 1, 2012, p. 91. The copies of the first American edition available even today contradict this thesis. Importantly, the New York edition also covered the Canadian market.

Fanon and *Parti pris*

For leftist Franco-Québec intellectuals associated with the journal *Parti pris* (Gérard Godin, Paul Chamberland, Jan Depocas, André Brochu, among others), Fanon's thought was part of a concept, being developed since the 1950s, of cultural and political solidarity with the countries of the so-called Third World. Support for the independence aspirations of the French colonies, combined with a community of political and economic views rooted in Marxism, goes here additionally hand in hand with an emerging awareness of Quebec's cultural separateness from France, English-speaking Canada, and the United States, as well as an increasingly strong resistance to discrimination against Franco-Canadians in the social and economic life of the Canadian Federation.

Literary-intellectual references associated with Black cultural revival movements play an important role in the process of identity de-alienation of Franco-Canadians. Indeed, Franco-Canadian writers and political activists of the period are quite familiar with the main theses of the *négritude* movement and with the poetry of one of its main exponents, Aimé Césaire, which reaches Quebec through Gaston Miron (Fabre 93) and also, indirectly, through André Breton, who recognized the author of *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* as one of the greatest French-speaking contemporary poets (Breton 97). Fanon's main theses, concerning the colonial alienation of conquered societies, the struggle for independence, the conditions for the creation of nation states, as well as the role of culture in the processes of independence, are part of a broader context of reflection on the colonial condition of Franco-Canadian society and the search for models to describe and precisely diagnose Quebec's situation. The assimilation or appropriation of Césaire's, Memmi's, and Fanon's thought by French-speaking intellectuals in Quebec takes place on the basis of a political and cultural metaphor where the problem of racial discrimination, so important for Fanon's reflections, becomes a much broader concept, referring to the whole processes of domination and subjugation in colonial and capitalist societies. As Sean Mills notes:

For a vision of a future postcolonial society, many radicals turned to the works of Frantz Fanon, finding in *The Wretched of the Earth* the means of reconciling their feelings of national alienation with their socialist convictions. Engagement with the book helped them articulate the necessity of resisting neo-nationalist narratives of modernization. (*The Empire Within* 30)

The best example of this peculiar cultural transfer would, of course, be Pierre Vallières' essay *Les nègres blancs d'Amérique* (1968), where the figure of the *nègre* becomes symbolic of Franco-Canadians culturally and economically

dominated by English-speaking society. In this context, it can be argued that Fanon's own theses were often reduced for the benefit of radical sovereigntist attitudes, as part of the legitimation of the use of force and violence in the liberation struggle (Mills, *The Empire Within* 32), leading to serious distortions of the Martinican's entire theory and conception. It should be noted here that this appropriation was often done consciously, as most French-speaking Quebec intellectuals stressed the need to adapt Fanon's theses, developed on the basis of observations of the real and practical situation of colonized societies in Martinique and Algeria, to the Quebec reality, in which the very concept of colonization is largely figurative (Mills, *The Empire Within* 34).¹¹ Additionally, as Ato Sekyi-Out demonstrates, misinterpretations of Fanon's analysis of violence in the anti-colonial struggle stem, beyond the very issue of a certain opportunistic reading of his works, from a misunderstanding of the style Fanon uses. According to Sekyi-Out, Fanon's comments on violence have often been understood as calls for violent action, whereas their true meaning is revealed when they are read as a "dramatic dialectical narrative" in which what is described is not the result of the author's own will, but rather is what must happen under conditions of colonial oppression (Sekyi-Out 4).

Fanon's interpretation of Quebec reality as the effect of colonial forces underlies the diagnoses made by *Parti pris* intellectuals about the state of Quebec literature during the Quiet Revolution. A key article in this regard, "Notre littérature de colonie," by Laurent Girouard, seems to be a direct transposition of Fanon's vision of culture presented at the Congress of Rome, which later became part of *The Wretched of the Earth*. Indeed, Girouard begins his text with the provocative assertion of the non-existence of any Franco-Canadian literature because at the same time there is no Franco-Canadian nation as an independent socio-political entity. In stating this, Girouard remains close to Fanon's assertion that the vitality of culture is closely linked to the existence of a self-determining nation capable of building basic state institutions. For Girouard, Quebec literature and, more broadly, Quebec culture, appears as an empty, artificial creation of identity alienation, a prosthesis to a true and independent culture that can only exist under conditions of complete freedom: "We have reached the last 'alienation' if we continue to believe that cultural life is possible for a minority people during the process of their linguistic assimilation. Culture is only viable for a free people" (31; our translation). Maintaining

11. It should be noted here that the aforementioned figurative nature of the term of colonization refers to the French-speaking population of Quebec, descended from the former inhabitants of New France, and not to the Indigenous People of the same areas, for whom the same term has a most material meaning.

his text on the borderline between an iconoclastic pamphlet and a historical analysis of literary development, Girouard accuses Quebec writers of completely conforming to models taken from the French classics and to the conservative requirements of the ideology dominating Quebec society until then, closely linked to the Catholic tradition but also to the political affiliation to the Canadian federation: "Every young quebecer (sic) knows at fifteen years old that he is guilty of wanting to assert himself, that authority comes from God, that Quebec is part of the great Canadian family" (32; our translation). Quebec's French-language literature to date thus appears to be the product of ideological indoctrination, the effect of which is detachment from true reality, defined, following Fanon, by closeness to the people:

However, the more we read about French stylists, the more we lost touch with our social milieu. My father was embarrassed by my sentences... my mother laughed. Our friends from the factories listened to us, dazed, we were now poor dumb. Our articles for the newspapers became hermetic. Everything was broken. We no longer spoke the same language as the people. (Girouard 33; our translation)

Certainly, the difference between Fanon's understanding of the relationship between the cultural elite and the people differs here from Girouard's perception. The former understood the people as the inhabitants of the countryside or, even more, as the lumpenproletariat, excluded by capitalism from the socio-economic circulation of development, while for the latter it means the working class using joul. Nevertheless, the main principle of the value of literature (or any product of intellectual labor) is for both of them based on its accessibility and usefulness to the lower, excluded parts of society. The role of the writer, in this sense, becomes to regain freedom, if only by force, and to reveal the truth about his own people:

Stripped down, vociferous, anarchistic, we came up against the absurdity of a Quebecer's life in "Great Canada." Everything had to be done. To conquer by force and assume our individual freedom, to forget the bad dream of our petty bourgeois culture, to invent an understandable and valid language. There remained only one solution, to write, write, write the whole truth about us and our country. (Girouard 33; our translation)

However, the function of literature thus formulated does not guarantee, according to Girouard, the emergence of great works that could become part of the universal, international cultural heritage of humanity. For the author of the text in question, as for Fanon, a truly valuable culture remains inseparable from the freedom of the whole nation:

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For Quebec writers, the chances of survival are problematic. They feel, they know, that their books are only an individual accident. Our colonialism condemns them to ramble on about intestinal problems. Cultural life here will only be possible when a literature emerges from a free community. (37; our translation)

By inextricably linking cultural issues with national concerns, Girouard's analysis seems to follow the line of thought set out by Fanon, even if the latter does not appear verbatim in the text. A similar line of thought, developing the diagnosis of Quebec's French-speaking society as colonized, appears in yet another text, this time by Pierre Lefebvre entitled "Psychisme et valeurs nationales," in which the reference to Fanon is already direct. In his article, Lefebvre focuses on the psychic (individual and social) consequences of colonization. This fact alone brings to mind Fanon's analysis of Martinique society, rooted in Fanon's psychiatric practice and presented in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Thus, like Fanon, Lefebvre focuses in his text on the linguistic oppression to which colonized societies are subjected and, importantly, the mental and cultural atrophy to which the latter are subjected. Certainly, with an eye to the situation of Franco-Canadians viewed as second-class citizens in Quebec of that era, the inferior status of the French language dominated by English, and the sclerotic Franco-Canadian culture mentioned by Girouard, Lefebvre emphasizes the paralysis suffered by any society dominated by a colonizer:

A national community which undergoes during several generations the effects of colonialism sees developing in its members psychological conflicts and tendencies which reduce the collective aptitude to progress ... Collectively, this may be expressed, as in the individual psyche, by various defense mechanisms. First of all, there is a marked inhibition of initiative and creativity, a kind of fatalistic apathy. The aggressive tension is internalized; it paralyzes the effort of thought. (16; our translation)

According to Lefebvre, one of the strongest forms of passive reaction of conquered societies is a pascistic attitude towards the surrounding reality, the image of which becomes dominated by references to the past and its glorification:

But in general, the colonized human community gives the impression of being stopped in time, preserved in formaldehyde, the image of an obsolete and inefficient society. All that remains of the past, all that has not been swept away by colonization, is invested with a kind of respect that is sometimes incongruous; the residual social structures, unsuited to the demands of an evolving way of life, persist despite everything. The dominated nation lives emotionally in the past. It is another way of refusing reality; it is a psychic defense promoted to the rank of trait of the national character. (Lefebvre 16; our translation)

Such a vision of the psycho-social effects of colonization is close to the conclusions Fanon presents in *The Wretched of the Earth* where, as we mentioned at the beginning of this text, Fanon indicates self-closure and attachment to tradition as typical defense mechanisms (Lefebvre even uses the same notion) while the independence of the state is shown as the main source of a new, lively and energetic culture, capable of creative artistic creation. Mentioning the sudden interest in these questions on the part of Western psychologists and sociologists, linked to the wave of decolonization of African countries in the early 1960s, Lefebvre, moreover, clearly emphasizes the main sources of inspiration for his own observations: "Frantz Fanon's vehement and deeply revealing book, and Jacques Berque's more articulate one, provided a comprehensive explanation of the psychic effects of colonialism and the values of decolonization" (15). By referring to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and to Berque's *Dépossession du monde*, published in 1964 (both essays appear in the article's bibliography), Lefebvre fits perfectly into the overall issue of the journal whose title is "Portrait du colonisé québécois" as well as into the narrative of *Parti pris* intellectuals who treat Fanon primarily as a representative of anti-colonial thought and a theorist of decolonization, abstracting from his origin or racial affiliation. It is thus a form of reductionist appropriation of Fanon's thought for the interests of a particular audience. At the same time, it may also be a form of symbolic transgression of racial issues, given that the search for analogies between French-speaking Quebec and other colonized societies takes place here on the level of broadly understood humanity, without racial divisions, where the common destiny of the colonized becomes a link between different countries, sometimes with completely different cultures, such as Ireland, Israel, Finland and other Scandinavian, Balkan, Asian or African states.¹² What

12. In another article, "De la damnation à la liberté," published in the same issue, Paul Chamberland states categorically: "Lorsque nous nous sentons, nous nous vivons comme colonisés, nous ne voulons pas signifier que notre situation est identique à celle de l'Algérie ou du Congo, mais que cette situation participe de traits communs avec ceux des pays colonisés; et ceci nous pouvons le vérifier sur des plans comme l'économique, le politique et le culturel" (84). The obvious reference to Fanon in the title of this article, as well as the direct references to *The Wretched of the Earth* present in Chamberland's text, go hand in hand with the much more political than cultural nature of the considerations contained therein. It is worth mentioning that the main theses of the diagnosis posed by Chamberland are completely analogous to those of Girouard and Lefebvre. In Chamberland's text, however, the question of the socialist revolution that Quebec should undergo in order to fully liberate itself and strike out for independence plays a much greater role. In Chamberland's, therefore, one can clearly see the combination of the decolonization question with the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle.

unites all these socio-political areas, affected to a greater or lesser extent by various forms of colonization or external occupation, is the quest for self-determination as separate, independent states. Like Fanon, Lefebvre sees nationalist aspirations as a necessary stage in the development of independent nations, which should then, in his opinion, open themselves to international cooperation, thus avoiding antagonism or conflict. According to Lefebvre, a key role in the creation, strengthening and consolidation of the national consciousness of a given society is played by its language, its defense and development, which depend to a great extent on literature:

It is singularly significant that the rejection of a colonial domination almost always begins with an effort to revalorize the language of the group. This can go as far as a somewhat artificial reinvention of a disappeared language. Examples: Ireland and Israel. But always, it is the poets, the linguists who will try to reconstitute the linguistic heritage. All the nations of Europe before reaching independence since the liberating shock of the French Revolution have followed this evolution. Nations that had disappeared in the sleep of history suddenly surfaced, based on a literary movement that must have seemed quite insignificant at the beginning. This was the case with Finland, Norway, Iceland and the Balkan nations. The same process can be found among the ancient peoples of Asia. Prisoner of its linguistic abundance, Africa also seeks to identify itself by modernizing residual idioms. (17; our translation)

Probably in reference to the debate known as “La Querelle du joul” over the use of the Montreal working class sociolect in literature, and more broadly to the discussion of the status and function of the Quebec variety of French within the Canadian federation (Laur), Lefebvre here defines the role of the writer in the emerging Quebec of the 1960s. As the above quote implies, this is to consist in the rediscovery, revalorization, and legitimization of the local language that constitutes the main glue of the cultural community of individual peoples striving for freedom and self-determination. All this on the way to the creation of a global but multinational human community that would be able to avoid the threat of cultural homogenization that Lefebvre sees in the increasingly rapid development of communication technologies in that era.

In the approach of the authors associated with the *Parti pris*, Fanon’s thought is harnessed to a revolutionary narrative aimed at creating an intellectual, cultural, and political framework for a new Quebec society that would be able to break away from the Franco-Canadian identity that was considered outdated and, above all, untrue. Psychological, socio-cultural, and economic diagnoses borrowed from Fanon and other decolonization theorists are used here in an elaborate argument that seeks to establish the foundations for the new

community that Quebec society would become after a revolution, both mental and economic and class-based, leading to a new independent nation and state. It is in the construction of the latter two that literature and the writer himself, as a member of society, is supposed to help. At the same time, the intellectuals associated with the *Parti pris* do not promote the concept of a directly engaged literature whose only matter would be the struggle for national liberation. Rather, in Girouard's and Lefebvre's texts, literature is part of a broader project in which the separate fields (politics, economics, and culture) have their own tasks and areas of action, contributing to the common goal of a free, independent, and anti-capitalist Quebec.

Fanon and Black Montreal of the 1960s

The issues of new community and identity affirmation, so important for *Parti pris* intellectuals, played a large role in the discussions among the Black minority living in Quebec and especially Montreal in the 1960s. Relatively sparse, mostly English-speaking, and composed mainly of descendants of former slaves and immigrants from Africa and, to a large extent, the Caribbean, this minority faced the same problems as African-Americans in the United States at that time, i.e., intolerance and racial prejudice translated into informal racial segregation, lower social status, and fewer opportunities for social advancement (Austin 14 and 56). Influenced by the activities of liberation movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power as well as the international situation, mainly decolonization in Africa, members of the Black community living in Montreal would also attempt to redefine their place in Quebec social life, touching on identity, political, and cultural issues. The thickening atmosphere of revolt against racial oppression would mobilize some members of Montreal's Black intelligentsia into action, which would translate, among other things, into the organization of meetings with leading theorists in the struggle for Black equality, the aforementioned 1968 Congress of Black Writers, and the occupation of part of the former Sir George Williams University (now Concordia). As David Austin states, in the 1960s, "[t]he city became a 'Mecca' for Black and Caribbean students and a center for revolutionary thought" (14), while both events appear as symbols of this social turmoil. It is within the framework of the Congress of Black Writers that Fanon's thought appears prominently on the intellectual map of English-speaking Montreal, in keeping with the spirit of the era and the socio-cultural transformations taking place among members of the Black minority living in the city. Two participants and speakers at the Congress, James Forman and Stokely Carmichael, devote their entire speech and a large part of it, respectively, to the person of Fanon. In doing so, they make Fanon

one of the main focal points of the debates that accompany their speeches and one of the central, though absent, figures of Congress.

It is worth mentioning that at the very beginning of his speech, entitled “Frantz Fanon and the Third World,” Forman pays tribute to the Martinique author, whose portrait adorns the meeting room’s wall, putting him on a par with other great revolutionary and activist figures of those years, such as Che Guevara, Malcolm X or Martin Luther King. Forman even asks the assembled audience to observe a minute of silence in memory of these late heroes. After this symbolic gesture, Forman moves to the heart of his paper, which is based entirely on Fanon’s theses and aims at a profound critique of such forms of struggle for independence that bypass the issue of socialist revolution. The latter Forman presents, like Chamberland, as the only possible path to the true emancipation of colonized societies. Any social and economic changes in countries affected by colonization or any other form of domination must, according to the speaker, be based on the overthrow of the existing class system, in which the bourgeoisie is the group holding power and deriving all economic benefits. Criticizing the situation that prevailed at that time in the young, recently independent African states where the colonizers were replaced by new local elites, Forman inscribes the decolonization processes into a broadly defined anti-imperialist struggle, the only one that could bring about real change for the oppressed people. In doing so, he sets Fanon as an example of suitably deep political commitment and consciousness: “Frantz Fanon fought and died for revolutionary socialism throughout the Third World, especially in Africa ... He preached against narrowness and pitfalls of a purely nationalist revolution that won a flag, a new style of dress, and underneath the dregs of humanity remained the same” (Forman 204).

Unlike the authors associated with the *Parti pris*, Forman places a great deal of emphasis on the racial question, which he lumps together with other forms of oppression against which the revolutionary struggle is to be waged: “Racism, capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism dominate the lives of the people of the Third World—the people of Africa, Asia, Latin America –black people in the United States, and other colonized minorities that also live in the United States” (204). By making a direct reference to Fanon’s speech at the 1956 Paris Congress (on the relationship between racism and colonization), Forman performs a de facto rhetorical device that allows him to go beyond the spectrum of references to *The Wretched of the Earth*, where racial issues are practically absent (replaced by issues of imperialist exploitation), and to return to the first stage of the development of Fanon’s thought focused on the psychological consequences of racial discrimination. Forman distributes the accents in such a way as to extract from Fanon’s theses those that best fit the interests of the group he represents, right to the very end of the speech citing

the aforementioned quartet of concepts (racism, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism) as inseparable.

In his vision of an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist revolution, Forman makes a certain amalgam where African countries and the African-American diaspora are one. In the spirit of Pan-Africanism, Forman extends Fanon's diagnosis of independent African states to the entire Black community of the world, pointing out as its greatest threat the lack of a clear ideology that would allow all nations and the entire Black community of the world to fight for their own interests and at the same time build a transnational unity:

We see the black world divided on the question of ideology. Throughout Africa, the lack of ideology does divide people against people and ensures opportunism by certain leaders. Inside the United States, this is a paramount problem where the most technologically advanced group of black people are struggling in various ways for liberation. This advance is being checked through the lack of ideology among other things. (207)

Faced with disillusionment with the new order following the decolonization of Africa, where the new bourgeois power elites are practicing a new form of colonialism through the further exploitation of their countries, Forman advocates a form of revolution that would aim to privilege the lowest classes (workers, farmers, and the poor). He thus remains a radical Marxist, while proposing a very specific task for intellectuals, artists, people of culture, and writers, namely, direct involvement in struggle and revolution: "Fanon was a man of action, an activist, a militant. His life was engaged in the struggle against injustice. It is not just sufficient for the revolutionary artist to preach against injustice. He must become activated in an organization, in a group, in a political party, in revolutionary movements that are seeking to change injustices, seeking to bring about social change" (207). Unlike *Parti pris*, then, Forman proclaims the necessity for people of culture to become involved in political activity in spite of themselves, setting the example of Fanon, who wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* after he had already learned that he was suffering from leukemia. For Forman, such an attitude, committed to a cause, exemplifies a writer, but also a literature that is written with the community and its problems in mind: "He felt that his greatest contribution, knowing that he had leukemia, knowing that he would die, would be to wage an ideological struggle that would serve to live on and that was the essence of *The Wretched of the Earth*. This ideological struggle that he waged is of particular importance to us as black artists and writers" (207).

The creation of ideological foundations for new societies, for a new humanity that would be born out of revolution, thus becomes, following Fanon's example, the main and highest goal of intellectual and artistic work. Yet apart from

the references to revolutionary Marxist slogans (rebellion against the power of the bourgeoisie), Forman does not specify what the ideological struggle he emphasizes would consist in. Carmichael's speech, entitled "Black Power in the USA," in which references to Fanon are equally numerous, appears as a deepening and elaboration of Forman's claims.

Like his predecessor (Carmichael speaks just after Forman), the then Honorary Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party advocates the struggle against racism, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism: "[...] we have to state clearly what our fight is. Our fight is against racism and capitalism, and certainly imperialism, which is the highest stage of capitalism" (217). At the same time, as in Forman's, racial issues become central to Carmichael's argument in which a distinction is made between two distinct concepts: exploitation, which affects different groups of people regardless of skin color, and colonialism, of which racism becomes one of the main elements:

[T]here are two types of oppression in the world: there is exploitation and there is colonization. ... I want to go into it more deeply because I think when one talks about exploitation, the question of race is not present. One just talks about a group of people who are economically taking advantage of another group. But when one talks about colonization, the question of race comes into play because in colonization it is one race that seeks to dominate an entire other race. ... Brother Fanon wrote a book called *The Wretched of the Earth* and he said, in essence, that the Third World was the wretched of the earth. But of the Third World, the most damned happens to be the black man. ... Wherever the black man is found he is on the bottom of the ladder. (213-214)

Carmichael thus situates Blacks at the heart of the revolutionary struggle by recognizing that they are the primary victims of oppression. He thus focuses no longer on the global struggle against imperialism itself, but on the struggle against Black imperialism as a distinct group or community. Referring to Forman's take on the lack of ideology as the main affliction of Black people, he moves away from the question of class domination and moves on to symbolic issues. Carmichael understands the lack of ideology not only as the weakness of Black commitment to the ideas of socialist revolution, but as a general cultural weakness of Blacks, deprived of their heritage by the colonial system, which distinguishes them from white victims of economic exploitation:

There are in fact poor white people in the United States. They are exploited, that is to say they are economically deprived of some wealth in the United States. But those white people have their culture, their history, their language, and their value system. These things have not been stripped from them. But that is not

From Paris and Rome to Quebec -
Reading Fanon in Radical Montreal Intellectual Circles of the 1960s

true for black people living in the United States. We have been stripped of our culture, our language, our history, our value system, our way of life. We are in fact what Fanon called dehumanized. We are dehumanized ... And that is the effect of the process of colonization. (214)

Under the conditions of Black deculturation thus defined, the primary task for Black intellectuals, according to Carmichael, would be to become fully engaged in action through their own liberation from cultural alienation (that is, liberation from the influence of White culture), the revalorization of their own social group, and a better understanding of the cultural wounds inflicted on Blacks, with a view to creating a great community on that basis:

it is necessary for Africans (and I make no distinctions between Africans living on the continent or Africans living abroad), there is a necessity for Africans to begin to understand the culture that has been plundered, purposely and maliciously, by white Western society, and it is a necessity for us to pick up that culture and begin to use it as a unifying tool because a culture is a cohesive force for a people. (215)

In fact, in this passage, Carmichael is closer to Pan-African discourse or at least to the demands of the “négritude” movement than to Fanon. Indeed, it was intellectuals such as Jean Price-Mars, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Aimé Césaire who fostered visions of some imagined unity uniting all Black societies of the world around a spiritual belonging to an abstractly understood Africa (Murphy 32). Fanon, who was alien to such concepts from the very beginning, found them too vague and unsuited to the realities of colonized societies at the time. What connects Carmichael’s vision with some of Fanon’s reflections is his desire to create his own universe of Black culture, independent from the White world, with its own references, myths, heroes, concepts, and vision of reality. Here, in turn, Carmichael assigns a central role to Black writers:

the black writer must begin to redefine for the African whom our heroes are. We no longer need white cowboys. We need Kwame Nkrumahs, Sekou Toures, Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, LeRoi Jones, Rap Brown. ... It is the job, then, of the black writer to do this. And the black writer must begin to redefine it and not in a concept of Western society but in an African concept that means it is not wholly intellectual but rather quite emotional. (225)¹³

13. Cf. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 98-99. The last sentence of the quote simultaneously brings Carmichael closer to Senghor and his controversial distinction

What is at stake here, then, is a great project of cultural renewal, which would be one of the bases for the liberation struggle and which would give the oppressed a new language, and thus a new vision of the world and of man. Carmichael does not shy away from more radical statements, according to which the role of the writer is to prepare the ground for a ruthless revolutionary struggle by bringing to light and sharpening the lines of demarcation between the allies and enemies of the revolution:

That is the job of writers. They must instill in our people a will to fight to the death. It is a question of either we win or we die. ... The paradoxes must be clear and the contradictions must be heightened, because in heightening contradictions you prepare the ground for revolutionary warfare ... It is the job, then, of the black writer to work to heighten the contradictions ... Let's polarize the forces. Let's polarize them ... so that there is a choice: either you fight with us or you fight with them. (225)

Carmichael's vision of the writer and intellectual is based on the issues of de-alienation, liberation from the yoke of culture imposed by the Whites, the creation of one's own system of values, and the preparation of society for the socialist revolution. Issues of nationality, so important to Fanon, recede into the background, giving way to issues of community and identity. By focusing on what, quite abstractly, would constitute the general cultural framework of a worldwide Black community, Carmichael moves away from the point of view Fanon takes in *The Wretched of the Earth*, apart from the very subject of violence in political struggle, to which he devotes the second part of his speech. As for the cultural issue, his fundamentally Pan-Africanist discourse seems to draw revolutionary energy and fervor from the cited essay and to appropriate the very prestige of the Martinican in order to legitimize his own arguments and demands, which are de facto a kind of amalgam of concepts drawn from different strands and sources of Black cultural renewal discourse.

In Forman's and Carmichael's terms, Fanon becomes a certain symbolic figure of both the political activist and the intellectual-writer, committed to the creation of a new order of things in which the Black man would have his rightful place. While for *Parti pris* he is a symbol of the worldwide struggle against all manifestations of colonialism and domination, as well as a penetrating analyst of the psyche of the colonized and a champion of the cause of national independence, for Forman and Carmichael he remains intimately connected to racial issues as a warrior-model for Black writers. The linking element between

between Western culture, based on reason, and Black culture, supposedly rooted in the irrational, impulsive, and emotional (Bachir 124).

these two readings of Fanon is certainly the question of basing the revolutionary struggle on the people/lowest strata of society, and at the same time the idea of the closeness of intellectuals or writers to these very sections of society. The Enlightenment or positivist vision of the writer as one who works at the grassroots trying to understand and support society in its quest for self-awareness, self-determination, and freedom remains common to both *Parti pris*, to Forman and Carmichael, and to Fanon himself. Another element common to all of the aforementioned is also the issue of language, or more broadly, the entire conceptual universe that breakout societies should use after the process of disalienation and decolonization, which foreshadows later considerations of the nature of postcolonial cultures (Spivak 271-313).

Reflecting on the impact of Fanon's reception in Canada, several issues must be mentioned, divided into the francophone sphere, the anglophone sphere, and the question of indigenous peoples.

On the francophone side, in addition to the already discussed issue of theorizing the condition of Quebec as a colonized society, it is worth highlighting here the role that Fanon's work, but also Césaire's, played in bringing Haitian and Quebec intellectuals together. The aforementioned meetings at Le Perchoir d'Haïti and the intellectual debates around the revolutionary theses of the two Martiniqueans work federally, thus paving the way for an even greater presence of the Haitian community in the intellectual life of Quebec. In the wave of changes associated with the Quiet Revolution, the Quebec administration would open the doors of newly established francophone universities to well-educated and fluent French-speaking Haitian intellectuals, hiring them for research and teaching positions. Georges Anglade, geographer, or Émile Ollivier, sociologist and writer are just examples of this presence which, as Franz Voltaire, the founder of the Centre international de documentation et d'information Haïtienne, Caribéenne et Afro-canadienne (CIDIHCA) in Montreal states, "brought a different sensibility during a great moment of identity affirmation in Quebec" (qtd. in Gelper; our translation). Without forgetting the impact of the political conjuncture of the time, which had a decisive influence on the adaptation of the Haitians and their acclimatization in the Quebec society of that era, Fanon's symbolic role as an intercultural link and common point of reference seems to have been extremely important for the formation of intellectual affinities between the new arrivals from the Caribbean and their new social environment, which, from the 1980s onwards, would become more open to ethnic and cultural diversity, including a greater awareness of the Caribbean minority's presence in Quebec, ultimately marked most visibly, though not without controversial elements, by the success of Dany Laferrière's writing.

On the anglophone side, events related to the Congress and the Sir George Williams affair would translate into a greater consolidation of the

Black community present in Quebec. This would become apparent through the creation of new organizations such as the Black Coalition of Quebec or new newspapers such as *Uhuru* and *The Black Voice* (Austin 242). The protests in the streets of Montreal would also reverberate throughout the Caribbean, especially Trinidad. The spirit of the Fanonian theses, aroused during the congressional debates, thus led to concrete actions and changes that were part of a broader trend that one could venture to call the "Montreal renaissance" and which was strongly associated, among other things, with left-wing radical socio-political activism, with vigilant observation on the part of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (the Quebec offshoot of the League for Socialist Action). One of the main actors in these events, Roosevelt "Rosie" Douglas, would be accused of leading the protests, sentenced to 18 months in prison, and eventually expelled from Canada to his native Dominica, where he would become an important political player, one of the island's main proponents of full independence, and the country's prime minister in the early 21st century. Another important figure to highlight in the context of the strengthening of Black Power movements in Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s would be Ato Sekyi-Out, already mentioned above as a reader of Fanon's work. Upon arriving in Canada, Sekyi-Out would earn a doctorate at the University of Toronto, subsequently becoming one of the leading interpreters of Fanon's thought in Canada, and thus, one of the main theorists of the struggle of Canadian Black activists for equality.

Interestingly, the evaluation of the actions of radical Black activists, including the analysis of their reading of Fanon, would become the subject of in-depth debates in political and academic circles from the 1970s onwards, triggered by the publication of Robin Winks's *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (1971). The polemics between liberal historians like Winks, critical of the overly emotional and opportunistic reading of Fanon by radical circles, and a new generation of intellectuals, represented for example by George Elliot Clarke, allow Daniel McNeil to coin the term "children of Frantz Fanon" to describe some Canadian scholars, thinkers, and artists, whom he characterizes as "'honest intellectuals' born circa 1952 (the first publication of Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs*) and 1961 (the original publication of Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre*), who challenged profiteers and schemers when they raced for positions and pensions in the early days of neoliberal multiculturalism in the 1980s and 1990s" (24). McNeil's work thus demonstrates how important questions of the interpretation of Fanon's thought in Canada are to understanding the dynamics of Black leftist trends and actions in this country.

Finally, it is impossible to ignore another area in which Fanon's work founded new audiences, namely what is known as the Red Power movement, and within it the socio-political commitment of Indigenous activists to the recognition

of the rights of their communities around the world, including in Canada.¹⁴ As Glen Coulthard shows in his book *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014), the conceptual apparatus developed by Fanon became the source of a new language of political contestation used by Indigenous internationalists in critically analyzing their own colonial situations (2014).

The question of Fanon's affiliation with the Caribbean is certainly marginal in the reflections of the intellectuals mentioned in this article. They treat Martinique, the French West Indies, or the Caribbean as a whole primarily as examples of broader and global dynamics of colonization and decolonization movements. However, Fanon's influence on the independence movement in French-speaking Quebec circles brings the Caribbean closer to a Franco-Quebecois society that is so different and yet so close to them. In addition, the tribute paid to the author of *The Wretched of the Earth* by some of the leading figures of the Black Power movement during the 1968 Congress of Black Writers would influence greater consolidation of the Caribbean portion of the Black minority living in Montreal. Fanon's symbolic presence in the consciousness of both Franco-Quebecois and Black anglophones in Montreal seems to prepare the ground for further reflections on the identity belonging of Caribbean immigrants in Canada. The cultural, linguistic, historical, and political diversity of individual Caribbean countries would play an important role in these discussions, perhaps inhibiting to some extent the entrenchment of such generalizing concepts as Caribbean-Canadian identity in the Canadian consciousness. Such an attitude, however, remains consistent with Fanon's central theses, for whom belonging to Martinique and concern for the future of his country were ultimately the deepest motives for action and socio-political engagement on behalf of Algeria and, more broadly, all colonized societies.

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14. The scope of this article does not allow for a broader discussion of the issue mentioned here. For further information on contacts between Black Power and Indigenous, Canadian activists, see: Scott Rutherford, *Canada's Other Red Scale: Indigenous Protests and Colonial Encounters during the Global Sixties*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020.

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