

COLONIALISM AND REVOLUTION

Fanon Meets Bourdieu

But above all I wanted to get away from speculation—at that time [1960s], the works of Frantz Fanon, especially *The Wretched of the Earth*, were the latest fashion, and they struck me as being false and dangerous.

— BOURDIEU, “FIELDWORK IN PHILOSOPHY”

What Fanon says corresponds to nothing. It is even dangerous to make the Algerians believe the things he says. This would bring them to a utopia. And I think these men [Sartre and Fanon] contributed to what Algeria became because they told stories to Algerians who often did not know their own country any more than the French who spoke about it, and, therefore, the Algerians retained a completely unrealistic utopian illusion of Algeria. . . . The texts of Fanon and Sartre are frightening for their irresponsibility. You would have to be a megalomaniac to think you could say just any such nonsense.

— BOURDIEU, INTERVIEW IN LE SUEUR, *UNCIVIL WAR*

Bourdieu's stance toward Marxism becomes more hostile as we move from Marx to Gramsci and now to Fanon. Bourdieu is prepared to acknowledge the insights of Karl Marx and, indeed, so many of his ideas find an echo in the writings of Marx. As I have already suggested, his theory of cultural

domination can be seen as an extension of Marx's political economy from material to symbolic goods. While Bourdieu wants to distance himself from his counterpart in the Marxist tradition, he nonetheless shows a grudging respect by turning Gramsci against Gramsci.

When it comes to Frantz Fanon, the gloves are off, as we see in the rare quotations above, taken from two interviews. I have found no other explicit commentary on Fanon in Bourdieu's works. As with other Marxists, once we allow Fanon to respond, we see both astonishing parallels and glaring divergences. Bourdieu's enmity toward Fanon—there is no evidence that Fanon even knew Bourdieu—is perhaps all the deeper because their lives in Algeria overlapped. But they were worlds apart: the one a scientific observer from the metropolis sympathetic to the plight of the colonized, attempting to give them dignity by recognizing their distinctive traditions; the other a psychiatrist from Martinique trained in France and dealing directly with victims of violence on both sides of the colonial divide. The one was attached to the university and ventured into communities as research sites, while the other worked in a psychiatric hospital before committing himself to the liberation movement (the FLN).

Still, the enmity is especially interesting, given how similar are their accounts of colonialism and its effects, namely those found in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* ([1961] 1963) and Bourdieu's less-well-known works written while he was in Algeria or soon thereafter—*The Sociology of Algeria* (1958), *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie* (*Work and Workers in Algeria*, 1963, written with Alain Darbel, Jean-Pierre Rivet, and Claude Seibel), and *Le déracinement* (*The Uprooting*, 1964, written with Abdelmalek Sayad).¹ Certainly, the two writers refract their writings through different theoretical lenses—modernization theory and Third World Marxism—which reflect serious disagreements, but it surely cannot account for Bourdieu's venomous hostility, especially as within his modernization theory there is more than a whiff of Marxism.

We need to look elsewhere for the source of Bourdieu's contempt for Fanon, namely their places in the French political and intellectual scene. The two men were not only located on different sides of the color line within the political field of war-torn Algeria, but, just as significantly, they occupied opposed positions within the French political field—overlapping with, but distinct from, the Algerian political field. When Bourdieu moved back to France, he entered a very different intellectual world—that of the metropolis rather than the colony. There, despite his sympathies for the colonized, he positioned himself in opposition to the Third Worldism associated with

Sartre and expressed most vividly in the writings of Fanon. We must not forget that the Algerian question created a near civil war within France itself, with positions ranging all the way from fervent defense of the anticolonial revolution to uncompromising support for the settler regime. Indeed, the extremes were organized militarily within France. Bourdieu vacillated in the middle. As soon as he was associated with Sartre's antagonist, Raymond Aron, he did not take the side of Fanon and Sartre.

It is significant, then, that with immersion in the French political field, Bourdieu breaks with his own apocalyptic writings on Algeria to offer a completely different rendering of Algerian society. His best-known Algerian writings are not the early ones but the heavily theorized treatises *An Outline of a Theory of Practice* ([1972] 1977) and the subsequent version, *The Logic of Practice* ([1980] 1990). Based on a timeless, context-free construction of the rural Kabyle²—an anthropological mythology if ever there were one—it is here that Bourdieu develops the concepts of symbolic capital, habitus, doxa, and misrecognition, which are then used to paint France in functionalist colors. Here lies Bourdieu's brilliance (and, one might say, his limitations)—to take the elementary forms of a fabricated Kabyle social life as the building blocks for studying advanced capitalism. What differentiates the latter from the former is the coexistence of differentiated fields—a notion notably absent in his writings on the Kabyle.

Physical violence is, thereby, relegated to the colony, while *symbolic* violence is pinned to the metropolis—but, ironically, through the extrapolation of a self-reproducing, harmonious, autochthonous Kabyle society. At the same time, Bourdieu's analysis of France exhibits uncanny parallels with Fanon's first book, *Black Skin, White Masks* ([1952] 1967), which describes the symbolic violence of the French racial order. But where Fanon stresses the *psychoanalysis* of internalized oppression in the context of the French racial order, Bourdieu undertakes the *socio-analysis* of "distinction," supported by the undeveloped psychology of habitus. Equally important, however, is their inverse trajectory: Fanon moves from symbolic violence to social revolution, whereas Bourdieu moves in the opposite direction, from social revolution to symbolic violence.

This, then, is how I will construct Fanon's calm response to Bourdieu's violent denunciations. I begin with their early careers—from margin to center to margin—and from there explore their parallel accounts of colonialism, showing how they inflect those accounts with different theories, before finally comparing their reverse trajectories that culmi-

nate in Bourdieu's *critical pessimism* with regard to symbolic violence in France and Fanon's *revolutionary optimism* with regard to colonial violence in Algeria.

CONVERGENT BIOGRAPHIES: FROM MARGIN TO CENTER TO MARGIN

Bourdieu and Fanon overlapped in Algeria, during the period of intensive struggles for national liberation (1954–62). Bourdieu arrived in 1955 to do his military service, whereupon he became absorbed by the fate of the Algerian people. He stayed on, taking a position at the University of Algiers, turned from philosophy to ethnology and sociology, and dived into research on all facets of the life of the colonized. Wading into war zones with his research assistants, he became a chronicler and witness to colonial subjugation and the evolving struggles. By 1960 his presence had become politically untenable and he left Algeria for France, where he embarked on his illustrious career as a sociologist, indelibly marked by his Algerian experiences.

Fanon arrived in Algeria in 1953, two years before Bourdieu, also from France, where he had recently completed a degree in medicine and psychiatry. In Algeria, he was appointed head of the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital and through his patients he vicariously experienced the traumas of colonial violence. He concluded that psychiatry was no solution to the suffering and so he became involved in the liberation struggle, leading to his expulsion from Algeria in 1956. He went to Tunis, where he continued his psychiatric work, and then to Accra, where he became a roving ambassador for the FLN in different parts of North and West Africa. He died of leukemia in 1961, just before Algeria achieved independence but not before he had finished *The Wretched of the Earth*, the bible of liberation movements across the world.

In their different ways, both Bourdieu and Fanon were well prepared to develop original interpretations of their Algerian experiences. They both made the uncomfortable journey from periphery to center. Bourdieu grew up in a small village in the Béarn, where his father graduated from sharecropper to postal employee. Only Bourdieu's brilliance and the support of his teachers took him all the way to the École Normale Supérieure. Fanon grew up in Martinique in a Creole family with middle-class aspirations, before entering the Free French Army in 1943. He served in North Africa, witnessing colonial oppression of a sort he had never seen before, and then in eastern France, where he discovered the meaning of metropolitan racism. He was

back in France in 1946, studying to be a doctor in Lyon. Both Bourdieu and Fanon had bitter experiences of marginalization in France: the one based on class, which Bourdieu describes in *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*, and the other based on race, which Fanon exposed in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Both were well equipped to be horrified by the abominations of settler colonialism, although their race and political propensities would position them differently within the colonial order.

The reverse transition from center to periphery, from France to Algeria, demanded a wholesale reorientation of the schemes of understanding they had acquired in their formal training in France. They both converged on a sociology of colonialism—Bourdieu from philosophy that he found too removed from the brutality of French colonialism and Fanon from psychiatry that couldn't grasp the structural features of colonial domination. Their accounts of colonialism are remarkably similar.

SEVEN THESES ON COLONIALISM: BOURDIEU EQUALS FANON

Notwithstanding their convergent trajectories from periphery to center and then from center back to periphery, given their divergent positions and dispositions, one would expect Bourdieu the French normalien philosopher and Fanon the Martiniquan psychiatrist to have clashing understandings of the colonial condition. Such an expectation of divergence is only intensified if one takes into account Bourdieu's later denunciation of Fanon's writings as "speculative," "irresponsible," and "dangerous." It is all the more interesting, therefore, to discover striking parallels in their analyses of colonial domination, anticolonial struggles, and the supersession of colonialism. As evidence, let me draw on two texts, both written in 1961, one year before Algeria's independence—Bourdieu's "Revolution Within the Revolution"³ and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

1

Colonialism is a system of domination held together by violence. In his familiar evocative way, Fanon writes,

Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons. ([1961] 1963, 36)

Bourdieu is equally clear:

Indeed, the war plainly revealed the true basis for the colonial order: the relation, backed by force, which allows the dominant caste to keep the dominated caste in a position of inferiority. ([1961] 1962, 146)

Bourdieu avoids the concept of race, reluctant to use it in his analysis not only of colonialism but also of French society, where he is far more comfortable deploying class as his critical concept.

2

The colonial situation is fundamentally one of segregation of colonizers from colonized. In Fanon's terms, colonialism follows the principle of "reciprocal exclusivity," admitting of no compromise:

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous. ([1961] 1963, 38–39)

For Bourdieu, too, segregation defines colonialism:

In short, when carried along by its own internal logic, the colonial system tends to develop all the consequences implied at the time of its founding—the complete separation of the social castes. ([1961] 1962, 146)

Bourdieu continues to use the term *caste* rather than *race* to grasp the structural character of colonialism, missing thereby the specificity of race that remains central in Fanon's writings.

3

Colonialism dehumanizes the colonized, demanding its reversal. Parallels in their description of colonial domination appear in their accounts of the subjective experience of colonialism. Fanon writes,

[Colonialism] dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly turns him into an animal. . . . [The native] knows that he is not an animal, and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity, that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory. ([1961] 1963, 42–43)

Similarly, Bourdieu ([1961] 1962, 151) writes that “respect and dignity” are the first demand of the dominated, because they have experienced colonialism as “humiliation or alienation.” Echoing Fanon, he writes,

The colonial situation thus creates the “contemptible” person at the same time that it creates the contemptuous attitude; but it creates in turn a spirit of revolt against this contempt; and so the tension that is tearing the whole society to pieces keeps on increasing. (134)

4

Colonialism uses its domination to dispossess the peasantry of their land. Both Fanon and Bourdieu concentrate on the destruction of the peasantry through the expropriation of land, the very foundation of their existence. Fanon writes,

For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity. ([1961] 1963, 44)

Here is Bourdieu’s parallel assessment of the centrality of land:

The peasant can exist only when rooted to the land, the land where he was born, which he received from his parents and to which he is attached by his habits and his memories. Once he has been uprooted there is a good chance that he will cease to exist as a peasant, that the instinctive and irrational passion which binds him to his peasant existence will die within him. ([1961] 1962, 172)

While land is key in both, Bourdieu and Sayad’s (1964) analysis in *The Uprooting* is far richer. There they study the resettlement camps created during the Algerian war, the result of forced removals conducted in the name of protecting the colonized from the national liberation movement,

though clearly aimed at flushing it out of the rural areas by denying it the support of the people.

5

Only through revolution can the colonial order be overthrown. Fanon here stresses the importance of absolute violence. The order is held together by violence and therefore has to be overthrown through violence. This is how he puts it:

The native who decides to put the program into practice, and to become its moving force, is ready for violence at all times. From birth it is clear to him that this narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called into question by absolute violence. ([1961] 1963, 37)

Although Bourdieu’s idea of a caste system perhaps implies a more harmonious order than Fanon’s racial order, he also has no doubt that the colonial system sows the seeds of its own destruction—a “great upheaval,” in which “the great mass of peasants . . . have been carried along in the whirlwind of violence which is sweeping away even the vestiges of the past” (Bourdieu [1961] 1962, 188). Only revolution can achieve the end of colonialism:

That only a revolution can abolish the colonial system, that any changes to be made must be subject to the law of all or nothing, are facts now consciously realized, even if only confusedly, just as much by members of the dominant society as by the members of the dominated society. . . . Thus it must be granted that the primary and indeed the sole radical challenge to the system was the one that system itself engendered; the revolt against the principles on which it was founded. (146)

6

The anticolonial revolution transforms consciousness, liquidating all forms of localism to build national solidarity. For Fanon, violence has a cathartic and unifying effect:

We have said that the native’s violence unifies the people. . . . Violence is in action all-inclusive and national. It follows that it is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism. . . . At

the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect. ([1961] 1963, 94)

In Bourdieu's language, the war dissolves "false solicitude." Attempts at conciliation and all forms of concessions are merely tactics of the dominant to hold on to their power: "Attempts at trickery or subterfuge are at once revealed in their true light. The war helped to bring about a heightened awareness" (Bourdieu [1961] 1962, 153). Repression and war led to the spiraling of hostilities and the deepening of the schism between the two sides. The war became a cultural agent, dissolving resignation. It replaced symbolic refusal of colonial domination, for example, in the insistent wearing of the veil—what Bourdieu calls traditional traditionalism—with aggressive demands for rights to welfare and education. Pride, he says, replaces shame:

The feeling of being engaged in a common adventure, of being subject to a common destiny, of confronting the same adversary, of sharing the same preoccupations, the same sufferings and the same aspirations, widened and deepened the sentiment of solidarity, a sentiment which was undergoing at the same time a veritable transformation as the idea of fraternity tended to lose any ethnical or religious coloration and became synonymous with national solidarity. (162)

This is the "revolution within the revolution," the revolutionary transformation of consciousness, the substitution of an assertive solidarity for a resentful deference. How different is this revolution within the revolution from Fanon's account of the national liberation struggle?⁴

7

The anticolonial revolution leads either to socialism or barbarism. Fanon recognizes two paths out of colonialism: either national liberation based on peasant revolution leading to a socialist participatory democracy, or the taking of a national bourgeois road that will bring progressive degradation of the political order, ending in dictatorship and repression:

The bourgeois leaders of underdeveloped countries imprison national consciousness in sterile formalism. It is only when men and women are included on a vast scale in enlightened and fruitful work

that form and body are given to that consciousness. . . . Otherwise there is anarchy, repression, and the resurgence of tribal parties and federalism. ([1961] 1963, 204–5)

Bourdieu, too, discovers a fork in the postcolonial road: socialism or chaos, which is not that dissimilar to Fanon's socialism or dictatorship.

A society which has been so greatly revolutionized demands that revolutionary solutions be devised to meet its problems. It will insist that a way be found to mobilize these masses who have been freed from the traditional disciplines and thrown into a chaotic, disillusioned world, by holding up before them a collective ideal, the building of a harmonious social order and the development of a modern economy capable of assuring employment and a decent standard of living for all. Algeria contains such explosive forces that it could well be that there now remains only a choice between chaos and an original form of socialism that will have been carefully designed to meet the needs of the actual situation. (Bourdieu [1961] 1962, 192–93)⁵

Both allow for the possibility of socialism, but for Fanon it is a long historical project, whereas for Bourdieu it is a spontaneous occurrence.

The two critics of colonialism converge to a surprising degree in their assessment of colonialism and its denouement. If Fanon was "speculative," "dangerous," and "irresponsible," then surely Bourdieu was no less so. The main difference, one might surmise, is that Fanon did not live to change his mind. But if he would have changed his mind, it is unlikely he would have followed Bourdieu. For, investigating further, we can see that their common understandings are located within very different theoretical-political frameworks—the one is a dissident within modernization theory and the other a dissident within Marxism.

BOURDIEU: BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Perhaps it is surprising to associate Bourdieu with modernization theory, given his concern with colonial domination. Nonetheless, there are close parallels with Durkheim's ([1893] 1984) Manichean worlds of mechanical and organic solidarity. At one extreme, Bourdieu constructs a harmonious order of self-reproduction through rituals of gift exchange and life cycle, and the unconscious reproduction of masculine domination as expressed

in the division of the Kabyle house. This order, unsullied by colonialism, is dominated by a strong collective consciousness. The romantic redemption of ethnic culture has been defended by Bourdieu and his followers as reversing the contempt of colonialism for the culture of its subjects. Paul Silverstein (2004) refers to this as a structural nostalgia that can be a weapon in an anticolonial struggle.⁶ More curious, it is from this vision of “traditional” society that Bourdieu draws many of his concepts—habitus, symbolic violence, misrecognition—to analyze French society.

Very different from this harmonious order was modern Algeria, beset by colonialism that created a stable but potentially revolutionary working class, a disoriented subproletariat, and a dispossessed peasantry. Here we find Durkheim’s ([1893] 1984, Book III, chapter 1) abnormal forms of the division of labor that generate disorganization and conflict. On the one hand, there is the forced division of labor and the imposition of unequal conditions on the colonized, depriving them of opportunities for advancement and, indeed, leading to the anticolonial struggle. On the other hand, there is the anomic division of labor expressed in “allodoxia,” the confusion of those caught between two opposed worlds—resulting in what Bourdieu would later call the “split habitus”—generating outbursts of irrational, messianic behavior:

All these contradictions affect the inner nature of “the man between two worlds”—the intellectual, the man who formerly worked in France, the city dweller—is exposed to the conflicts created by the weakening of the traditional systems of sanctions and by the development of a double set of moral standards. . . . This man, cast between two worlds and rejected by both, lives a sort of double inner life, is a prey to frustration and inner conflict, with the result that he is constantly being tempted to adopt either an attitude of uneasy overidentification or one of rebellious negativism. (Bourdieu [1961] 1962, 142–4)

These ideas of cultural lag—incomplete adaptation to modernity or being caught between the old and the new—lie at the core of the 1960s modernization theory of Clifford Geertz, Alex Inkeles, and Edward Shils, not to mention Talcott Parsons’s pattern variables.⁷ To explain the plight of the so-called new nations and the impediments to “modernity,” these authors invoked the heavy weight of tradition and primordial attachments (kinship, tribe, religion) that were plunging countries into anomie. Bourdieu, no less than they, provides precious little evidence to back up his claims.⁸

More original is Bourdieu’s adaptation of Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Drawing on Husserl’s philosophy of time, Bourdieu ([1963] 1979) argues that modernity is an orientation to a rationally planned future, whereas tradition is encased by the repetition of the same patterns. He pins modernity onto the Algerian working class, which has the stability to think rationally and imaginatively about future alternatives, as opposed to the peasantry, which is stuck in an eternal present, what he calls a *traditional traditionalism*. The unstable, marginal, semi-employed or unemployed urban “subproletariat” and the rural proletariat displaced from their lands into resettlement camps live from hand to mouth. They exhibit a *traditionalism of despair*, oriented to the here and now but cognizant of alternative futures that they are denied.

Curiously, this leads Bourdieu, via Durkheimian notions of anomie, to the orthodox Marxist position that the Algerian working class, because it is rooted in stable employment, is revolutionary—in contrast to the uprooted peasantry or urban subproletariat who can only break out into spontaneous, senseless revolt:

On the one hand, there is the revolt of emotion, the uncertain and incoherent expression of a condition characterized by uncertainty and incoherence; on the other hand, there is revolutionary radicalism, springing from the systematic consideration of reality. These two attitudes correspond to two types of material conditions of existence: on the one hand the sub-proletarians of the towns and the uprooted peasants whose whole existence is constraint and arbitrariness; on the other hand the regular workers of the modern sector, provided with the minimum of security and guarantees which allow aspirations and opinions to be put into perspective. Disorganization of daily conduct prohibits the formation of the system of rational projects and forecasts of which the revolutionary consciousness is one aspect. (Bourdieu [1963] 1979, 62)

The uprooted may be a “force for revolution” but not a “revolutionary force” that self-consciously promotes and rationally organizes the transformation of society. The latter possibility is reserved for the working class:

To those who have the “privilege” of undergoing permanent and “rational” exploitation and of enjoying the corresponding advantages also belongs the privilege of a truly revolutionary consciousness. This

realistic aiming at the future [*l'avenir*] is only accessible to those who have the means to confront the present and to look for ways of beginning to implement their hopes, instead of giving way to resigned surrender or to the magical impatience of those who are too crushed by the present to be able to look to anything other than a utopian future [*un futur*], an immediate, magical negation of the present. (63)

What a contrast to the French working class depicted in *Distinction* or *Pascalian Meditations*, whose members are driven by necessity, symbolically dominated and misrecognizing their conditions of existence. Bourdieu never explains this most obvious paradox. What is the source of the difference? Does it lie in the political structures of the two countries—the effects of symbolic as opposed to colonial violence—or does it lie in Bourdieu's positions in the political-intellectual fields of the two countries? A comparison with Fanon sheds light on both possibilities.

FANON: BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

If Bourdieu analyzes Algeria through the opposed lenses of modernity and tradition, Fanon sees Algeria through the prism of capitalism and socialism; if Bourdieu analyzes Algeria from the standpoint of a romantic past, Fanon sees Algeria from the vantage of a romantic future. They meet on the terrain of the present.

For Fanon, colonialism was a space of struggles. National independence is a struggle against the colonial power, Gramsci's *war of movement* conducted with violence, but it is also a struggle over the direction of post-coloniality, a *war of position* within the colonized. It is a struggle for hegemony between, on the one hand, the followers of the national bourgeoisie who want nothing more than to *replace* the colonizers and, on the other hand, the militants of the national liberation movement who want to *transform* the class structure.⁹ The war of position for the future exists uneasily alongside the anticolonial war of movement, but if the latter pushes the former aside and the denouement of colonialism is left to look after itself, democratic socialism will never be victorious. So argues Fanon.

Bourdieu not only failed to separate the two moments of the anti-colonial revolution, but he also did not pay sufficient attention to class as a potential political force. Fanon, again unknowingly following the footsteps of Gramsci, examined the balance of class forces behind the reformist national bourgeoisie and the revolutionary national liberation movement. At the heart of the national bourgeoisie lay traders, merchants, and small cap-

italists, together with their intellectuals recruited from teachers, civil servants, lawyers, nurses, and other professionals. The national bourgeoisie also had the support of the albeit-small colonial working class, which in Fanon's view was pampered and parasitic. It is here that Bourdieu and Fanon diverge dramatically: relative stability of the working class for Bourdieu meant revolutionary potential, while for Fanon it meant reformism.¹⁰

For Fanon, the revolutionary struggle depended on the dispossessed peasantry, because the latter had nothing to lose. Bourdieu considered this to be "pretentious foolishness" (cited in Le Sueur 2001, 284). The peasantry was "overwhelmed by the war, by the concentration camps, and by the mass deportations," and so to claim that it was revolutionary was "completely idiotic" (284). Bourdieu attempted to put the picture right with his book *The Uprooting*, written with Abdelmalek Sayad (1964), which dealt with the crisis of the displaced peasantry. Fanon was not as ignorant as Bourdieu made out, as he had done his own fieldwork among the Kabyle (Macey 2000, 234–36). He considered instinctive rebelliousness to come precisely from the expropriation of land, which Bourdieu had himself recognized as the source of "revolutionary chiliasm and magical utopias" ([1963] 1979, 70).

The more substantial difference between them comes with the next step in Fanon's argument. For the peasantry to be a revolutionary force, its volcanic energy had to be disciplined by intellectuals. They would be in plentiful supply—radicals expelled from the towns for exposing the venality of the native elites. Opposed to the bourgeois road, they would join the peasantry to forge a revolutionary movement. To Bourdieu, the idea of symbiosis between intellectuals and peasantry is a fantasy of the intellectual that not only cannot work but is also dangerous and irresponsible. One sees here the source of his animus against the myth of the "organic intellectual." It is very different from Bourdieu's own position as an engaged intellectual supporting the colonized from a healthy, objective distance.

Be that as it may, Fanon continues his analysis of the balance of class forces. There are two projects vying for the support of the colonized classes: the national bourgeois road centered on the native bourgeoisie and the working class, and the national liberation movement centered on the peasantry embracing and embraced by radical intellectuals. Fanon asks which of these two projects will succeed in winning the support of vacillating classes: on the one hand, traditional leaders in the countryside who are reformist by nature, a screen for the colonizers, but who are also accountable to their ever more militant followers, and on the other hand, the urban lumpenproletariat, recently uprooted from their villages, a volatile group easily manipulated

by leaders with but the smallest concessions. The colonizers play their own role in shaping the balance between these two tendencies, and when they see the writing on the wall, they throw their weight behind the less threatening national bourgeoisie.

This analysis of the future, so alien to Bourdieu's backward-looking sociology, continues with Fanon's pessimistic but prophetic anticipations. Should the national bourgeoisie win the struggle for leadership of the anti-colonial movement and come to power, they will not be able to build a true hegemony, which would require resources that they do not possess. They will become a dominated bourgeoisie—dominated by the metropolitan bourgeoisie—only capable of becoming an imitative and parasitical class, compensating for its backwardness with conspicuous consumption and the reversion to tribalism and racism:

Because it is bereft of ideas, because it lives to itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that nation, the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of the manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe. (Fanon [1961] 1963, 154)

The national bourgeoisie starts out by copying Western institutions—political constitutions and outward manifestations of its economy—but degenerates from a multiparty democracy to a one-party state and then to a one-man dictatorship. Fanon expressed vividly what would indeed come to pass in postcolonial Africa. This was no empty speculation; it was how things turned out.

By painting the national bourgeois road in such dire colors, Fanon hopes to convince us that the only progressive road is that of national liberation—the revolutionary transformation of the class structure and the realization of a participatory socialism. But how feasible was this? Even if the revolutionary forces won hegemony, could they bring about Fanon's participatory socialism? Leaving aside colonial legacies that cannot be simply swept aside—the argument of Bourdieu and others—what about international forces? Fanon rather optimistically argued that postcolonial Africa can insist on and enforce reparations from Western capitalism, because the latter needs what Africa has to offer—not just its natural resources but also its consumer markets. Fanon was naive about the possibilities of participa-

tory socialism, but the naïveté sprang from a desperation that saw the pitfalls of the national bourgeoisie.

Both Bourdieu and Fanon have a fascination with the peasantry and deploy that fascination for a critical analysis of contemporary societies. Bourdieu creates a romantic anthropology of the Algerian peasantry that becomes the basis for his functionalist analysis of symbolic violence in French society. Fanon has his own romance, projecting the peasantry as a revolutionary class that will usher in participatory socialism. It is a romance inspired by what he sees as the degeneration of postcolonial Africa if it follows the national bourgeois road.

BETWEEN REVOLUTIONARY OPTIMISM AND CRITICAL PESSIMISM

The conversation between Fanon and Bourdieu shows how theoretical influences circulate between colony and metropolis, but especially the influence of the colony on the metropolis. Nor are these isolated examples. Some of the great French intellectuals were shaped by experiences in colonial Africa—Foucault spent two formative years in Tunisia; Derrida and Camus grew up in Algeria—and the Algerian question continues to exert a powerful influence on French intellectual life, even now, more than fifty years after independence.

Thus, the conversation between Fanon and Bourdieu becomes more interesting if we extend it backward and forward in time beyond the Algerian experience to examine the theoretical effects of their personal trajectories between colony and metropolis. Here, we see a striking and unexpected convergence in their understandings of French society, especially if placed in the frame of colonialism. The very notion of symbolic violence, at the center of Bourdieu's sociology of France, implies a contrast with the material violence of colonialism, especially Algerian settler colonialism. Symbolic violence works through the habitus—the cumulative introjection of social structure into the human psyche and the inscription of social structure onto the body.

The parallels with Fanon are uncanny. *Black Skin, White Masks*, based on Fanon's experience of metropolitan racism, is a psychoanalytical understanding of the social-psychological dynamics of racial domination in which the colonized internalize the social structure and wrestle to find their place in that structure. It is a futile and rebuffed aspiration for interracial sexual liaisons and exaggerated efforts to be the perfect French citizen that make them targets of mockery, deepening their sense of inferiority. This is

not the material violence of colonialism but the deeper symbolic violence of metropolitan racial domination. For Fanon, as indeed for Bourdieu, there is simply no effective response to symbolic violence, and so both end up with a critical pessimism with respect to France, which contrasts so vividly with the revolutionary optimism they both exhibit in Algeria.

The parallels become more even intriguing if one probes Bourdieu's great book of symbolic violence—*Distinction*. Here, the dominant classes are blessed with cultural capital, some more than others, and the dominated classes are bereft of such capital, but the middle classes—the petite bourgeoisie—are the great pretenders, aspiring to legitimate culture, overconforming in their attempt to emulate the class to which they don't belong. The petit bourgeois is indeed the bourgeois "writ small":

Even his bodily hexis, which expresses his whole objective relation to the social world, is that of a man who had to make himself small to pass through the strait gate which leads to the bourgeoisie: strict and sober, discreet and severe, in his dress, his speech, his gestures and his whole bearing, he always lacks something in stature, breadth, substance, largesse. (Bourdieu [1979] 1984, 338)

Bourdieu's contempt for the petite bourgeoisie who seek admission to an inaccessible world is strikingly parallel to Fanon's contempt for blacks who try to "whiten" themselves in order to assimilate into white society. Fanon is writing not about the working class but about members of the black middle classes, like himself, who emigrated to France as professionals of one sort or another. It is as if their own histories of exclusion, seared into their psyches, led the one (Bourdieu) to be a self-hating petit bourgeois and the other (Fanon) a self-hating black. This might also explain the venom behind Fanon's denunciation of the colonial national bourgeoisie as an imitative bourgeoisie, just as it might also explain Bourdieu's hostility to Fanon, whose revolutionary ardor is the intellectual's attempt to escape his habitus, to jump out of his skin.

There is, however, a profound asymmetry in the trajectories of these two intellectuals. Whereas Fanon starts out in France as a critical pessimist to become a revolutionary optimist in Algeria based on a romantic radical vision of the peasantry, Bourdieu starts out in Algeria as a revolutionary optimist to become a critical pessimist in France, deploying features of a romantic conservative vision of the peasantry. Each reacts against his previous experience. Fanon leaves behind the symbolic violence of racism in France

primed to participate in revolutionary catharsis against colonial violence. Equally, Bourdieu is all too ready to abandon his equivocal revolutionary optimism, so that when he enters France he rejects Third World Marxism and adopts a critical pessimism based on another form of violence—symbolic violence. Toward the end of his life he breaks out of his critical pessimism by joining the calumniated working class, attacking the symbolic order associated with neoliberalism and forging new bonds with African intellectuals—a return of the repressed but without theoretical warrant.