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## **The Changing Evaluations of Black Skin, White Masks throughout History**

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Prof. Dowling  
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*The Changing Evaluations of Black Skin, White Masks throughout History*

*Black Skin, White Masks*, produced in 1952 by Frantz Fanon is a foundational work in which he speaks out against the physical and psychological effects of colonialism in Africa and the African colonies and proposes a solution for widespread social oppression. At first, his work was not widely available and discussed outside of France but eventually marginalized groups saw metaphors in the psychological oppression he described and used his words to convey their own struggles. Though he spoke about one moment in time, the power in his work is the universal theme of tackling injustice and a multitude of groups used his work as a way to share and validate their own experience as a larger phenomenon.

One of Fanon's central contributions was the claim that colonialism resulted in a dependency and inferiority complex within the African population which stripped them of their culture, replacing it with European values and creating generations of people who vehemently pursued white values, creating mass pressure for generations of people to abandon their native languages and cultures. The solution? Decolonization, but according to Fanon it will never be done peacefully – it is a violent process and the African groups must unite into a national culture to fight back.

Despite his anti-colonialist messages which have remained constant since his book's publication in 1952, evaluations and criticisms of his work have evolved along with social, economic, and political changes in Europe and in the United States. From 1952 to 1960 his work was shrouded in obscurity from the global world and evaluations of Fanon were confined to the French world (as the book was not widely translated until 1962). However, the rise of the Civil

Rights Movement from 1960 to 1968 brought renewed interest and vigor to his work when it came to be seen as a black militant guide on how to succeed in achieving political freedom for African Americans. There, comparisons were made to how the Black middle class in the 1960s utilized their “white potential” and “whitened” their attitudes and behaviors in order to move up in the white-dominant world that was America. From to the 1990s onward, we see the first documentary *Black Skin, White Masks* by Isaac Julien, and contemporary readers, while dissenting on some of Fanon’s core opinions on promoting violence, developed new evaluations of Fanon’s work as a tool to analyze contemporary issues. Readers in these three time periods evaluated *Black Skin, White Masks* in a multitude of differentiating ways.

When *Black Skin, White Masks* was introduced in the 1950s, there was virtually no evaluation of his book outside of France. According to G. K. Grohs, a Senior Lecturer of Sociology at The University College in London, “his writings were at first confined to the French-speaking public, and even after their initial translation into English (published by *Presence africaine* [a literary magazine that began in 1947]) they remained almost unknown.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, J. E. Seigel, who was part of the history department at Princeton University echoed similar thoughts, stating that “recently, few Americans had heard of Frantz Fanon. His death in a Washington, D.C. hospital went practically unnoticed.”<sup>2</sup> While one may consider both of these sources as stating the same thing, one crucial observation about the first evaluations of Frantz Fanon outside of France is that his work has generated little visibility and impact within America and Europe. Even after the first comparison period from 1952 to 1960 when the first evaluations

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<sup>1</sup> G. K. Grohs, “Frantz Fanon and the African Revolution.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 4 no. 6 (December 1968), p. 543.

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Seigel, “On Frantz Fanon,” *The American Scholar* 38, no. 1 (Winter 1968-69), p. 84, hereafter cited as Seigel.

were given over a decade ago, critics such as Grohs and Seigel are apparently unaware of early French perspectives that came out when the book was published but in retrospect, early evaluations became visible in contemporary works.

In one such work, a 1995 documentary directed by Isaac Julien titled *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks*, showcased early reviews of his work by Maryse Condé, a literary critic and student at the Lycée Fénelon Sainte-Marie which is a private Catholic school and the University of Paris around 1955, a few years after Fanon's book was released. During the interview, she stated that when she read the book as a student, "many of [us] had been accepted to the best schools in Paris" and we were from "the West Indian bourgeoisie" as the "most intelligent and beautiful...it was impossible to recognize ourselves in the portraits Frantz Fanon gave of the Antillean people."<sup>3</sup> At this time she built herself up with her "mask" as detached from her collective identity as a black woman, which was especially noted when she identified herself as a West Indian bourgeoisie and a prestigious student which became two characteristics she used to psychologically separate herself from the rest of her race. As her and her friends read the book, she said that "we felt, as a group of mostly girls, that this book didn't represent our collective identity."<sup>4</sup> In short, her review was not too appreciative of Fanon, especially in regards to the idea that Fanon accused those in the French colonies as "being pathologically alienated, full of inferiority complexes, and incapable of accepting their race."<sup>5</sup> On the surface, her meaning is hard to describe but from my perspective of Fanon's ideologies, in the pursuit of prestigious academic success, of these group of men and women who pride themselves on being

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<sup>3</sup> Issac Julien. *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks*. Film Movement, 1996. 1 hr., 12 min. Online @ <https://lehman.kanopy.com/video/frantz-fanon>, hereafter cited as Fanon Film.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

smart and beautiful and possessing well-spoken French, a quintessential hallmark of reaching those qualities as a black woman or black man came from the fact that they had to “whiten” their identities and suppress their true selves, building the white mask to cover their black skin and find ways to separate themselves from the inferiority complexes that came with growing up black in a colonized world. This was the same realization that occurred to Fanon. At the age of 20, his veneer of whiteness was shattered and he had to soul-search on what it meant to be black.

But according to Fanon and his idea of the inferiority complex, underneath the black mask that Condé and many of her peers had, their sense of identity was so suppressed that their blatant refusal to accept his work was an indication of just how prevalent the psychological effects of colonialism were within her. Inferiority complexes and whitening are part of an immense sense of shame and suppression within the black man and woman; extending this to the present day. The lack of early evaluation is by design and this is considered evidence that the same blacks who came from the French colonies, who considered themselves the most prestigious and above their own race, were absolutely repulsed and ashamed at just the thought of writing about the phenomenon Frantz described. After all we can see from Condé that she and her college peers avoided the book; if we apply her perspective with the assumption that these students were the most likely amongst the colonized to write about their perspective based on their educational and socioeconomic status, we can find the root of why there are no early evaluations from the perspective of the colonized. Along with the fact that this was a topic of little interest for the outside world until the Civil Rights Movement, we can also see that early evaluations were not well-connected and visible outside of France, let alone within the country itself as if the same group of people who originally read his book refused to acknowledge it. In fact, in 1961 while he “lay dying in a Washington, D.C. hospital, his last work, *The Wretched of*

*the Earth*, appeared and received accolades in the French leftist press,”<sup>6</sup> further highlighting how his first book was overshadowed and too powerful to be accepted nearly a decade prior.

However, the lack of early evaluations began to change, particularly with the era of the Civil Rights Movement. From 1960 to 1968, *Black Skins, White Masks* is acknowledged outside of France as writers and critics in the United States took his book down a variety of paths. From using it as a black militant guide, to applying his concepts such as speaking pidgin affect African Americans, this time period represents how his work shifts from being used within the boundaries of France to being applied in major events of the time.

For example, William Harris, an “undergraduate English major at Central State University”<sup>7</sup> published *Manuals for Black Militants* evaluated *Black Skin, White Masks* and stated that this was one of three books that black militants were most likely to read. In his evaluation, he argued that the exploitation of blacks was a universal experience throughout the whole world, relatable to every black man, including African Americans. According to Harris, the “particular exploitation he [blacks] have received in the white world has made for an incredibly uniform reaction...In other words, ““wherever he goes, the exploited remains the exploited.””<sup>8</sup>

However, Harris goes deeper than simple universalities. He acknowledged that Fanons’ stated that the Antillean Negro is psychologically damaged and “sick,” especially since “the Antillean Negro has the collective [socially acquired] unconscious of Europe, i.e., a white

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<sup>6</sup> Seigel, p. 85.

<sup>7</sup> William Harris, “Manuals for Black Militants,” *The Antioch Review* 27 no. 3 (Autumn 1967), p. 408, hereafter cited as Harris.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

one...until one day, when he is about twenty, he realizes that he is a Negro.”<sup>9</sup> He takes this concept and applies it to African Americans, arguing that “their sickness (Fanon would say neurosis) is only an exaggeration of what many middle-class American Negroes have experienced. The neurosis is more extreme because the Antillean Negro can live in a dream world more completely than the U.S. Negro”<sup>10</sup> because place such as Martinique are essentially dream islands while African Americans live within a white world. In this regard, there is a “terrifying similarity between the black bourgeoisie of America and Martinique”<sup>11</sup> because both had to adopt white behaviors and attitudes to get ahead in life.

However, there is a subtle anger within Harris’s critique when he disagrees with Fanon’s idea that both blacks and whites should forget their history, to “forget that one was a slave in the past and that the other exploited the slave...and try to build a new world as brothers.”<sup>12</sup> One can see that while he does acknowledge Fanon’s contributions, he draws a line differentiating French colonialism and African American racism:

Maybe it is easier for a French intellectual to forgive the white man than it is for an American intellectual. From Fanon's description of the life of the French Negro, there isn't open conflict-it is the subterranean conflict of a "liberal" society. Maybe it is easier to forgive if someone in your family hasn't been lynched. Unlike the French Negro, the American Negro has the constant possibility of white violence. This condition makes for greater militancy in America. France produces Fanon, America produces LeRoi Jones [an African American writer who published aggressive, provocative works on the struggles of blacks in the United States].<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

He argued that Fanon can only say this because his conflict was not an “open-conflict,” whereas in America, the African Americans face the constant possibility of white violence and lynching. However, this is not correct because the fight to establish and deconstruct colonialism has been demonstrated as violent as well. The constant threat of lynching can be compared to the rape, genocide, and leeching of resources that are but a few of many atrocities within the African sphere. To this end, Harris’s pushback demonstrates a lack or omission of, historical knowledge, especially since colonialism was more widespread during his time rather than the present day. Regardless, this review is a splendid example of how his works rose from obscurity in France as a tool for African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement.

On the other hand, Harris is but one perspective in the quest to analyze how Fanon’s book was evaluated. Another perspective belongs to J. E. Seigel who was a history professor at Princeton University. He engages with *Black Skin, White Masks* by focusing on the idea that Fanon’s goal in the book was to overcome the schism between whites and blacks as a sign of reconciliation more than anything compared to Harris who takes a narrower interpretation, swayed by the Civil Rights Movement. While he gained inspiration from Leopold Senghor, the first president of Senegal who was also the creator of the idea of “négritude (which was an anti-colonist movement that was an attempt to return to African culture),” Seigel disagrees with Fanon that blacks should completely adopt the idea of going back to their roots to become more human because “it excludes at the start all those parts of man that the white world has appropriated for itself.”<sup>14</sup> Négritude is a response to the “truncating of humanity” and “blackness can become not a fractional humanity...[it must become] a form of fully human existence.”<sup>15</sup> He

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<sup>14</sup> J. E. Seigel, “On Frantz Fanon.” *The American Scholar* 38 no. 1 (Winter 1968-69), p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

further cautions that by pursuing *négritude* “the search for blackness degenerates into banal exoticism...to go native as much as you can, to become unrecognizable.”<sup>16</sup> As such, *negritude* is “antiracist racism that could only be a stage on the way to a higher consciousness.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, *negritude* is not the answer to regain black identity and win political, socioeconomic, and cultural freedom but a stepping stone.

At the same time, he argues that Fanon’s book was an attempt to reach out for the universal, though unlike William Harris who pointed out the universal as black oppression and suffering across the world, Seigel identified the universal as creating a race-less world by attempting to knock down the idea that the black man is biologically separate from whites and from humanity. In fact, Seigel thinks that the very idea of what it means to be black “is a creation of those who oppress him”<sup>18</sup>.

At this point, there are differentiating opinions as to whether blacks in America face greater oppression or the colonized in Martinique. Harris argued that:

At first, the Antillean Negroes seem "the sickest Negroes on earth," but after a while one realizes that their sickness (Fanon would say *neurosis*) is only an exaggeration of what many middle-class American Negroes have experienced. The *neurosis* is more extreme because the Antillean Negro can live in a dream world more completely than the U.S. Negro.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, Seigel argued the opposite, stating that in “France, the negro had no chance to test his identity or prove manhood...in America the Negro battles and is battled.”<sup>20</sup> As

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Harris, p. 415.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

such, “there are laws that, little by little, are invalidated under the Constitution. There are other laws that forbid certain forms of discrimination” which in turn, means that there is “the possibility of a meaningful struggle,”<sup>21</sup> an obvious reference to the Civil Rights Movement as a battleground and the medium in which blacks actually enjoy an advantage compared to blacks from the colonies.

As a result, most evaluations are made using the Civil Rights Movement as the background which shows that the scope and application that people take his work is still in a somewhat narrow focus. However, some evaluations, while still focusing on the Civil Rights Movement, take the time to walk lesser-known perspectives.

In another example using the Civil Rights Movement, Haig A. Bosmajian, a speech professor for the University of Washington, published “The Language of White Racism” which agreed with and focused on a singular chapter in Fanons’ book – “The Negro and Language.” Here, he extended the argument that just as whites talk down to blacks in Europe by speaking pidgin, the same principal “applies equally to white Americans”<sup>22</sup> talking down to African Americans. He stated that most whites talk down to blacks in “his automatic manner of classifying him, imprisoning him, primitivizing him, decivilizing him,” which in turn, “makes him angry”<sup>23</sup> because he is not being respected and treated equally.

While the reasons that speaking pidgin would be offensive to blacks may not immediately be obvious, G. K. Grohs, a Senior Lecturer in Sociology from The University

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Haig A. Bosmajian, “The Language of White Racism.” *College English* 31 no. 3 (December 1969), p. 269, hereafter cited as *The Language of White Racism*.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

College produced *Frantz Fanon and the African Revolution* and touched on how pidgin affects blacks. Through part of his analysis on the effects of speaking pidgin:

Good French, especially if perfectly pronounced, was in Martinique the criterion for a high social position. Therefore to study in France guaranteed not only a certain education but also the most important opening to social mobilisation. To speak like the French, to look like the French, became an obsession; and some Frenchmen's bad habit of speaking petit-negre, a kind of pidgin French, to all foreigners, even those who could speak a more elegant French than they could themselves, became a hurtful offence.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, as white Americans and Europeans talk down to blacks, blacks in turn faced pressure to perpetuate this stereotype. Through these interactions, Grohs identifies another form of oppression of blacks in America through language; people identifying African Americans with their name and occupation such as "a great Negro singer" or "a great black poet" or "a great Negro ball player."<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, whites used the term "negress," which Bosmajian stated was particularly offensive to blacks, yet they still used it. As such, the language of colonialism and the language of white racism is one in the same and perpetuate oppression whether white racism is applied in the United States or in France.

Unlike Harris who focused on domestic affairs in the United States or Bosmajian who focused on the language of racism (and colonialism), Grohs delved into Fanons' ideological concepts as they applied throughout the colonies in a more active approach; mainly, whether using violence to overcome colonialism is feasible. While there is agreement from Grohs that Fanons' work was pushed out of obscurity by the Civil Rights Movement, he does not agree with his argument that colonialism can only be defeated through violence. "In other countries [such as] Ghana, Tanzania, Sierra Leone where such groups were lacking" Grohs said, "no violence

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<sup>24</sup> G. K. Grohs, "Frantz Fanon and the African Revolution." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 4, no. 6 (December 1968), p. 544, hereafter cited as Grohs.

<sup>25</sup> *The Language of White Racism*, p. 270.

was necessary to achieve independence and to transform the colonial economy.”<sup>26</sup> In addition, he ties Fanons’ argument back to the largest contemporary event in this time period – Civil Rights, stating that “the outcome of much violent action in Europe and the U.S.A. in recent years has shown that violence as a means of revolution has to be viewed far more discriminately. It is time to think afresh about the roots, the efficiency, and the controllability of violence.”<sup>27</sup> This strikes the core of Fanons’ argument that decolonization is a violent struggle.

As we move past the Civil Rights Movement and onto contemporary evaluations from 1990 to the present day, critics and researchers no longer apply his work toward the Civil Rights Movement – his work is used to further the research, analysis, and evaluation of current world-wide problems around global inequality and racism and there is more pushback on Fanons’ treatment of women in the present day (and there are also more visible women critics which was difficult to locate in both the early and Civil Rights Era evaluations).

Within the contemporary period, there is immense value in both the directions critics evaluated his work and even the media in which his work is evaluated. One hallmark example is the creation of the Issac Juliens’ documentary, *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks* where he captured interviews with film critics and people who read his book in the inception years. This documentary, produced in 1996 provided a treasure-trove of primary sources on how his work was interpreted in the 1950s and in a more contemporary light; it is also the first movie to examine Frantz Fanon as a person and there is certainly a place allotted for the evaluation of *Black Skin, White Masks*. For example, Stuart Hall who was a cultural theorist put forth his explanation that Fanons’ unwavering inclination toward violence is because he saw the

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<sup>26</sup> Grohs, p. 555.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

“colonizer-colonized relationship...as a struggle to the death.”<sup>28</sup> He described a pivotal moment in Fanon’s life at the age of 27 when he studied medicine in Paris – a French child said he was frightened of him because of his skin color and that was when his “depersonalized self,” the imitative white mask of the colonizer shattered and underneath was nothing – he did not know what he was or what “self” he had to see the world with. Such is the meaning behind the “white mask,” as he grew up wearing a white mask for himself. In this example, he returned to his home and sat at his desk, his hands over his face in anguish which brings new perspective into any of the evaluations; through a new medium, the actors’ performances and their actions within the film itself acting out major pieces of *Black Skin, White Masks*. As such, one of the most significant critiques of this era comes from the revisiting of Fanon’s work by women from the perspective of a feminist critique. And as one can see throughout the early and Civil Rights evaluations, their evaluation is a breath of fresh air because there was still no acknowledgement of Fanon’s misogyny and very little acknowledgment of women in general. It will take a few more decades before we see the presence and perspective of women critics on Fanon.

The documentary also took the time to revisit Fanon’s argument that black women in particular perpetuated colonialism by desiring white men, particularly after Fanon evaluated *I Am a Martinican Woman* which reinforced his misogyny. Maryse Condé, a writer and critic from Pointe-à-Pitre who wrote extensively on colonialism said that Fanon’s critique was very unfair because he did not look at the historical context in which Mayotte Capécia married a white man over a black man. “The Martinician [man] is brutal and mean and [the] white man is an escape from brutality.”<sup>29</sup> In this quote, she is referring to escaping from abuse. “But Fanon [only] looks

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<sup>28</sup> Fanon Film.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

at her desire for whiteness...she can love a white man without representing her entire race and all black women.”<sup>30</sup> However, there is much more about inclusion to be discussed as contemporary evaluations feature no shortage.

Dr. Cheryl Duffus, a specialist in post-colonial literature and the Associate Professor of English Faculty Chair at Gardner-Webb University published “When One Drop Isn’t Enough: War as a Crucible of Racial Identity in the Novels of Mayotte Capécia” which criticizes Fanon’s perspective of *I Am a Martinican Woman* because he originally criticized Capécia as perpetuating the effects of colonialism. In her analysis, she begins by stating that “Frantz Fanon’s (in)famous attack on Mayotte Capécia as a “mudslinging storyteller” who betrays her race with a white man has been widely criticized as revealing a troubling gender bias in his seminal work, *Black Skins, White Masks*.”<sup>31</sup> She defended Capécia by stating that her actions “perfectly mirror the attitudes of her society, which valorizes whiteness and disparages blackness.”<sup>32</sup> In addition, she pushed back against Fanon, stating that in “*Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon relegates women to their traditional role in nationalism and community formation as maintainers of order through their reproductive capabilities. This limiting view of women is exactly what leads Mayotte and Isaure to leave their communities, but it is not exclusive to Fanon or Martinican society.”<sup>33</sup>

In Martinique, Duffus goes further interpreting Fanon’s anger toward the people of Martinique after the collapse of colonialism. For her a major shift occurred from “whitening” itself to the rejection of “postmodern “ambivalence; that which does not fit the community’s new

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Cheryl Duffus, “When One Drop Isn’t Enough: War as a Crucible of Racial Identity in the Novels of Mayotte Capécia.” *Callaloo* 4 no. 28 (2005), p. 1091, hereafter cited as Duffus.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 1092.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 1100.

standards must be expunged.”<sup>34</sup> This is vital because throughout the world, women are used as boundary markers in ethnic and national processes and men acknowledge that women’s sexual and marital choices can significantly disrupt the social order.<sup>35</sup> And if women such as Capecia are seen to use their power in such a way that does not benefit their own ethnic group or culture, Fanon accused her of “[willful] miscegenation in order to achieve higher social status [and it is] subversive and dangerous because it represents a choice to continue the patterns of slavery, and because it implies the rejection of black men.”<sup>36</sup> When we break down this word which the creation is both recent and pejorative, the word “miscegenation,” the first-half is “miscere,” meaning “to mix,” and “genus” which means “race” in Latin, Fanon believes that her actions constituted a “conspiracy against the black race.”<sup>37</sup> In fact, it was an attempt to replace “amalgamation” which was, at the time, “the most common term used to describe “race mixing”—[which] was a “poor word, since it properly refers to the union of metals with quicksilver.”<sup>38</sup>

Fanon believed that by marrying a white man and having children alongside imbibing a culture that resembles “white” but is not quite white in the post-colonialist era, Capecias’ “hybridity and sexual choices are subversive and transgressive of the community’s new identity and...the danger is that [she] will create an alternative community.” Duffus claims, “Since

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 1099.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 1100.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 1099.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Sussman, “The “Miscegenation” Troll,” *JSTOR*. Online @ <https://daily.jstor.org/the-miscegenation-troll/>.

Mayotte and Isaure do not bear "true" sons of the new, postwar community, their 'mistakes' and the threat they represent must be eliminated and silenced."<sup>39</sup> Through this, she evaluates his book alongside Mayotte Capecias' two books which is somewhat similar to Harris and how he classified his work as a militant guide, but different because Duffus is actively engaging with the material from three books and bringing them together while Harris simply found a similarity within his selection of books and evaluated them individually.

However, she points out a gap in his reasoning; when Fanon pursued a marriage with a European woman, "somehow, in Fanon's analysis, the man of color is not "whitening" his race by pursuing a white woman; his offspring are never referred to, but the offspring of women of color and their choice of partner define not only their racial identity but their community allegiance"<sup>40</sup> which further puts him in a hypocritical light.

Most contemporary evaluations offer much more than criticisms of his work and of how he treats women; they are used to explain the problems that are occurring in the present day which is one of the few similarities between the Civil Rights Era evaluations and the present-day evaluations.

In "Skin Complexion in the Twenty-First Century: The Impact of Colorism on African American Women," by Tayler Mathews and Glenn Johnson, they withhold their criticism and instead point to how men still exercise control over women today and how colorism affects black women with a special emphasis in the United States. Mathews, a researcher with a PhD in political science and Johnson, a political science professor at the University of Tennessee indirectly express their approval of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* by using his works to

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<sup>39</sup> Duffus, p. 1100.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 1099.

tackle contemporary phenomena and argue that skin complexion has a strong impact on the social, economic, and life prospects of African American women, adding that they are subject to oppression and control in the form of the skin preferences for African American men who both “consciously and subconsciously practice bias in relation to skin complexion.”<sup>41</sup> They argue that in times of colonialism, African men had limited ways to move up in a colonized world, focusing on coveting “language, white culture, and the white wife or sexual partner”<sup>42</sup> to prove to themselves that they are worthy of white love. As a result, Mathews and Johnson push the argument that African American women face the pressure of colorism which is connected to racism and colonialism and most of all, they “benefit from a male privilege that allows them esteem and authority over how African-American women view themselves. Again, American society places high importance on women’s physical appearance and it is an unfortunate fact that what is visually acceptable for women is controlled by the opinions of men.”<sup>43</sup> This is an indirect connection to how black women still try to use their lighter skin color to pass on or if that option is not available, physically alter their bodies such as skin bleaching or eyelid surgery which is in many ways, stems to the world of colonialism, and exists in America. In another respect which Mathews and Johnson are not aware of, their argument hints at another universality – that men were the judges of beauty and were the ones to designate the beauty of white to begin with and even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women still contend with this issue today.

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<sup>41</sup> Tayler J. Mathews and Glenn S. Johnson, “Skin Complexion in the Twenty-First Century: The Impact of Colorism on African American Women.” *Race, Gender & Class* 22 no. 1-2, p. 254.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Most of all, contemporary evaluations feature one distinguishing aspect that differentiates them from those of the past two periods; they use Fanons' work and apply it to new areas that have not been touched previously. In a literary review by Joyce Green who explores *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* by Glen Sean Coulthard and Taiaiake Alfred, she argues that they draw "on Frantz Fanons powerful anticolonial analysis... to analyze the historical and political experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada with settler state colonialism."<sup>44</sup> While she stated that their book is "directed at the Canadian colonial experience,"<sup>45</sup> their work applies for all settler states. Just as the Europeans carved up Africa, the Canadian government, much like American government under the pretense of Manifest Destiny took over indigenous lands and attempted to assimilate them into the culture of the settler as they indigenous peoples were forced to trade their land for security. Even now, the legacy of settler colonialism (much like traditional colonialism) created long-lasting impacts on the native population today. Now the Canadian government is heeding the calls and pushing the idea of "recognition," but in the end, just like colonialism, these policies are only self-serving to the settlers because such efforts of acknowledge are too little, too late with virtually no possibility that Native American lands will ever be returned. This is a splendid example of how his work is being used today which is in itself, a revealing evaluation as we see new material being produced and his concepts being applied beyond the scope of black and white.

The next source focused on another minority group - women who were directly involved in the struggle for decolonization as the female point of view has been traditionally neglected throughout the decades. This came from Professor Aaronette White, former Associate Professor

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<sup>44</sup> Joyce Green, "Review - Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition by Glen Sean Coulthard and Taiaiake Alfred." *Great Plains Quarterly* 36 no. 4 (Fall 2016), p. 327.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

of Psychology at the University of California: Santa Cruz until her death in 2012 with “All the Men Are Fighting for Freedom, All the Women Are Mourning Their Men, but Some of Us Carried Guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon’s Psychological Perspectives on War.” She explored whether Fanon was right that the path toward decolonization was through revolutionary violence.

While she did not directly make a stance on whether violence was right or wrong, she argued that “Fanon could not have known that encouraging colonized men to redirect their counter-violent urges [caused by colonialism] could spin out of control both during and after wars of independence,”<sup>46</sup> especially as women bore the brunt of violence on two fronts – from white and from black men, many of whom carried patriarchal ideologies that were not fully abandoned simply by being a revolutionary. In fact, she argued that his book was written from “an androcentric account that failed to explore patriarchal aspects of men’s colonized mentalities.”<sup>47</sup> Combined with “authoritarianism in military chains of command and the view that combat is so-called men’s work created sexual divisions of labor, hyper-masculine attitudes and practices, and a form of blind compliance that worked against the equal recognition of women soldiers.”<sup>48</sup> On top of that, “long-standing practices of sexual exploitation subjected women soldiers to human rights abuses by the enemy and their fellow comrades,”<sup>49</sup> which further highlights how Fanon “paid too little attention to the gendered psychological effects of

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<sup>46</sup> Aaronette M. White, “All the Men Are Fighting for Freedom, All the Women Are Mourning Their Men, but Some of Us Carried Guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon’s Psychological Perspectives on War,” 6 no. 32 (2007), p. 879.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 879-880.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 880.

colonization and revolutionary violence.”<sup>50</sup> As a result, she argued that he did not “fully capture the experiences of African women or African men in anticolonial struggles.”<sup>51</sup> Overall, this is an excellent source if one is looking for a fresh perspective on decolonization from the perspective of women’s struggles, especially since the 1996 documentary did not portray women as active combatants, but as couriers who used their veils and garments as ways to transport weaponry and fool their French occupiers in Algeria. This book destroys the stereotype that Algerian women are incapable of waging war.

His work also brought new life into one of the most modern day debates on whether the government should grant African Americans reparations from slavery and systematic mistreatment. According to Christopher Buck, an Associate Professor who teaches political science and government at St. Lawrence University, in *Blacks Skins, White Masks*, “Fanon also renounces the “right ... to claim reparation for the domestication of [his] ancestors,” since doing so would involve “remaining the slave of the Slavery that dehumanized [his] ancestors,”<sup>52</sup> turning into:

A vicious cycle in which the taking of material reparations appears to be a precondition for freedom, yet the claim for reparations appears to come at the cost of adoption of a constraining cultural identity. In other words, the process of attaining the material conditions necessary for radical freedom through slavery reparations can have the opposite effect of inhibiting freedom.<sup>53</sup>

In short, Buck argued that the idea of pursuing reparations is reasonable and would not morph into another form of oppression because the very idea of pursuing reparations would be to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 879.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Christopher Buck, “Sartre, Fanon, and the Case for Slavery Reparations,” *Sartre Studies International* 10 no. 2 (2004), p. 123.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

see “race as seriality” as that point of view “enables those who demand slavery reparations to emphasize both aspects of Fanon's "double realization": that not only are African Americans entitled to take reparations, but also that those who benefit from white privilege must pay.”<sup>54</sup> In this case, seeing race as seriality is an idea taken from Jean-Paul Sartre, a French anti-colonialist. While the idea of seriality comes in the form of a social construct such as a label, Buck states that when asking for reparations, it should not be on the basis of a physical quality such as being black, but being part of a shared experience of generational oppression and acknowledging the effects of colonialism and racism. By acknowledging the experience of oppression, rather than race, demands for reparation can be made while preventing African Americans from organize en-masse around their former identity as slaves. This shift conversations about reparations to a more forward-looking tone, rather than a return to the “tower of the past.”<sup>55</sup>

In summation, there are major shifts from how *Black Skins, White Masks* was evaluated as well as how people applied his work. From 1952 to 1960 where his book was read and barely acknowledged in France and even less so because the effects of colonialism probably pushed blacks away from writing, discussing, or even acknowledging Frantz Fanon's book to 1960 to 1968 where his work was pulled out of obscurity in the application of the Civil Rights Movement and then from 1990 to the present day where contemporary works open up their applications using the challenges we face today as a society from racism, social, and economic inequality to creating new material where books such as *Red Skins, White Masks* are introduced to create new connections where Coulthard and Alfred argue how Native Canadians and minorities across the globe suffer under new and post-colonialism, the applications of his work evolved dramatically.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

And most of all, his work will continue to bring forth a variety of perspectives which will continue to broaden the historiography of colonialism, both in the 1950s and in the decades to come where critics and researchers will apply his work in ways that go beyond the scope and findings of this project.

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