

## The Wretched Of The Earth

Fanon's book, "The Wretched Of The Earth" like Foucault's "Discipline and Punish" question the basic assumptions that underlie society. Both books writers come from vastly different perspectives and this shapes what both authors see as the technologies that keep the populace in line. Foucault coming out of the French intellectual class sees technologies as prisons, family, mental institutions, and other institutions and cultural traits of French society. In contrast Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) born in Martinique into a lower middle class family of mixed race ancestry and receiving a conventional colonial education sees the technologies of control as being the white colonists of the third world. Fanon at first was a assimilationist thinking colonists and colonized should try to build a future together. But quickly Fanon's assimilationist illusions were destroyed by the gaze of metropolitan racism both in France and in the colonized world. He responded to the shattering of his neo-colonial identity, his white mask, with his first book, Black Skin, White Mask, written in 1952 at the age of twenty-seven and originally titled "An Essay for the Disalienation of Blacks." Fanon defined the colonial relationship as one of the non recognition of the colonized's humanity, his subjecthood, by the colonizer in order to justify his exploitation.

Fanon's next novel, "The Wretched Of The Earth" views the colonized world from the perspective of the colonized. Like Foucault's questioning of a disciplinary society Fanon questions the basic assumptions of colonialism. He questions whether violence is a tactic that should be employed to eliminate colonialism. He questions whether native intellectuals who have adopted western methods of thought and urge slow decolonization are in fact part of the same technology of control that the white world employs to exploit the colonized. He questions whether the colonized world should copy the west or develop a whole new set of values and ideas. In all these questionings of basic assumptions of colonialism Fanon exposes the methods of control the white world uses to hold down the colonies. Fanon calls for a radical break with colonial culture, rejecting a hypocritical European humanism for a pure revolutionary consciousness. He exalts violence as a necessary pre-condition for this rupture. Fanon supported the most extreme wing of the FLN, even opposing a negotiated transition to power.

His book though sees the relationship and methods of control in a simplistic light; he classifies whites, and native intellectuals who have adopted western values and tactics as enemies. He fails to see how these natives and even the white world are also victims who in what Foucault calls the stream of power and control are forced into their roles by a society which itself is forced into a role. Fanon also classifies many colonized people as mentally ill. In his last chapter he brings up countless cases of children, adults, and the elderly who have been driven mad by colonialism. In one instance he classifies two children who kill their white playmate with a knife as insane. In isolating these children classifying there disorders as insanity caused by colonialism he ironically is using the very thought systems and technologies that Foucault points out are symptomatic of the western disciplinary society.

Fanon's book filled with his anger at colonial oppression was influential to Black Panther members Newton and Seale . As students at Merrit College, in Oakland, they had organized a Soul Students' Advisory Council, which was the first group to demand that what became known as African-American studies be included in the school curriculum. They parted ways with the council when their proposal to bring a drilled and armed squad of ghetto youths onto campus, in commemoration of Malcolm X's birthday, the year after his assassination, was rejected. Seale and Newton's unwillingness to acquiesce to more moderate views was in large part influenced by Fanon's ideas of a true revolutionary consciousness. In retrospect Fanon's efforts to expose the colonial society were successful in eliminating

colonialism but not in eliminating the oppression taking place in the colonized world. Today the oppression of French colonialism in Algeria has been replaced by the violence of the civil war in Algeria, and the dictator of Algeria who has annulled popular elections, and the emergence of radical Islam which seeks to replace colonial repression with religious oppression. But this violence might be one of the lasting symptoms of France's colonial brutality which scarred the lives of Algerians and Algerian society; perverting people's sense of right and wrong freedom and discipline.