



MARXIAN DIALECTICS AND FRANZ FANON

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ABSTRACT

The main idea of the paper is to identify dialectical thought of Marxism in the works of Franz Fanon. There are many similarities between Marxian thought and Fanon thought. Marx and Fanon are radical and revolutionary. They are humanists. They focused on human alienation. They believe in dialectical progression. Fanon adapted the idea of class struggle from Marx. He tried to use Marxian theories to evolve a theory of the revolutionary class. He appropriated the dialectics of Marx in his works which are open to question. The dialectics of Marxism is visible in all of Fanon. He owes to Marxism which has been the matter of considerable dispute.

According to Fanon, a new society can be created by violence whereas Marx not by violence. Fanon believes that power grows out of barrel of a gun. Fanon regard violence as a means for bringing about a radical social, economic and political change in the society. Marxian violence is pragmatic, Fanonian violence is existential. Fanon glorified violence on more grounds than one and concludes that man finds his freedom through violence. Is Fanon a Marxist? Marxism means a model rather than a theory, and then Fanon is Marxist. A new world free from hunger, exploitation and equality are thoughts of Marxism then Fanon is certainly Marxist.

Key Words: dialectical, humanists, alienation, society, pragmatics

The main idea of the paper is to identify dialectical thought of Marxism in the works of Franz Fanon. There are many similarities between Marx's thought and Fanon thought. Marx and Fanon are radical and revolutionary. They are humanists. They focused on human alienation. They believe in dialectical progression. Fanon adapted the idea of class struggle from Marx. He tried to use Marxian theories to evolve a theory of the revolutionary class. He appropriated the dialectics of Marx in his works which are open to question. The dialectics of Marxism is visible in all of Fanon. He owes to Marxism which has been the matter of considerable dispute.s

After Marx, Fanon strongly believes that the class differences in Algeria are the creation of colonial domination and exploitation. He derives the humanism from Marx through Sartre. Fanon himself says, "Marxist analysis should always be slightly

stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem."(Fanon: 1967a, 31) .There are many points of similarities between Marx and Fanon. The aim of Fanon is not only to explain or defend or to justify the political ideals he holds but also to bring them into being. Marx negated the capitalism Where as Fanon negated colonialism. Their aim is not only to interpret the world but also to change it. They have a vision of an ideal world.

Fanon was a revolutionary. He elaborates the revolutionary practice for human realization of human emancipation from exploitation and alienation. Fanon gave a call to the peasantry and lumpen proletariat to adopt the means of revolutionary violence to end colonialism and regain freedom. Fanon says that in colonial society man can't enjoy a harmony between the essential self and the existential condition between colonial situations. Fanon holds the view that supreme goal

of man is freedom and the whole purpose of man's existence is to realize the supreme goal. He views that man is the maker of his own destiny and he is entirely his own creation. He says, "The Body of history does not determine a single one of my actions. I am my own foundation. (Fanon: 1967c, 231) Another idea of individual freedom in the thought of Fanon is social freedom. His political goal is not only freedom but also new humanism.

His humanism is clear from his concern for mankind. He has great faith in man. He writes on behalf of suffering humanity. He gives a new meaning of humanism when he writes, "We ought to uplift the people; we must develop their brains, fill them with ideas, change them and make them into human beings". (Fanon: 1967a, 139) He felt that Europe killed man. He wants to create the whole man whereas Europe failed to give such birth. The aim of Fanon is to restore true freedom to man to remove racial prejudices, promote understanding and love among and create a new humanism. Fanon expressed his view on art and culture of his ideal society. He says that the art must aim at promoting the ends of society.

Like Marx, Fanon is a humanist. He writes "Africa will not be free through the mechanical development of material forces, but it is the hand of the African and his brain that will set into motion and implement the Dialectics of the liberation of the continent." (Fanon: 1967, b, 173) His humanism is also clear from his belief in and concern for mankind. He has great faith in man. He writes on behalf of suffering humanity. He appeals to the Third world not to imitate Europe. The aim of Fanon is to remove racial prejudices, promote understanding and love among men and create a new humanism. He is a humanist because he wants to create a new society without exploitation and oppression. He believes that man is the prime agency of social change.

Fanon used the term alienation in three senses, First he identified it as inferiority complexes which appeared in the existential condition of individual. Second, when a black man tries to run away from his existential condition of blackness, he appeared to be alienated. Third, he identified a condition of neurosis. He is continuing the Marxian concept of alienation in his thought. The Marxian concept of alienation is evident in Fanon's treatment

of racial antagonisms of the colonial society. For Fanon, alienation is as much a structural feature as psychological. His alienation is closely tied to a moral and philosophical conception of human nature.

His first book *Black Skin, White Masks* the term 'alienation' occurs with any degree of frequency. In *The Wretched of Earth* and *A Dying Colonialism* it occurs hardly at all. He uses the term sparingly. He does not use the term openly, but he announces in his first book that the alienation is the subject of his study. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon is chiefly concerned with an analysis of how individuals of the colonial races become alienated under the domination of white colonial culture. They lose their identity. The Negro lives under the continuous pressure of the colonial value system. They believe that white is good and all the black is bad. He is dehumanized by the imposition of values. So he cannot be accepted by the white. He remains black and blackness. He is divided against him. This picture can be seen in existential terms. This isolated native living in a world of chaotic values. He is always the object of these forces that surround him.

The Negro should not regard his colour as a flaw and seek to achieve status within the white oriented structures. Fanon says, "We shall see another solution is possible. It implies a re – structuring of the world." (Fanon: 1967c, 31) It is in *The Wretched of the Earth* that this process of social change is really elaborated. In a limited sense Fanon's treatment of alienation follows a similar line of development to that of Marx, from humanism to sociality. The antagonisms of alienation are writ large in the antagonism between social classes.

Fanon says that the settlers town is a well – fed town, an easy-going town, its belly is always full of good things. "The settlers' town is a town of white people of foreigners. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat of shoes, of light. It is town of niggers and dirty Arabs. ." (Fanon: 1967c, 82) For Fanon the social categories of human alienation are found in the racial categories of colonial situation, Decolonization brings with it de-alienation. The force of decolonization can be further seen in Fanon's belief that Third world though its struggle can its struggle can humanize the whole planet.

Fanon says, "We must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set

a foot a new man" (Fanon: 1967a, 255). Fanon believes that primarily economic, colonial subjection is later rationalized in cultural, psychological and religious terms. By training Fanon was a psychiatrist. Fanon emphasizes the psychological and cultural aspects of alienation to the neglect of economic aspect. He hopes that colonizer introduces violence into the relationship between the settler the native. The colonizers exploit the material wealth of the colonized and dehumanize the native.

The disharmonious relations between the forces of production and the relations of production were maintained. Fanon says, "For the Negro who works on a sugar plantation there is only one solution to fight." (Fanon: 1967c, 224) The Marxian thoughts of revolution of humanism, of alienation of class and class conflict, of social change and of dialectical progressions are present in Fanon's analysis. Marx's theory of historical materialism contributed to the science of social relations. Fanon based his theory not on economic reality but on racial reality.

In his theory economic factor becomes in itself a super structure and racial factor is the foundation or base structure. The colonizer and the colonized are opposed as fundamental antagonistic categories. Zolberg noted that Fanon has not hesitated to stretch Marx "in order to encompass a colonial world where the relations of productions are themselves a super structure rooted in the relations of colonialism." (Zolberg:1966:60) Fanon divided the world in two compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. They are rich because they are white Marxian thoughts are solution to the colonial problem. Fanon theory or decolonization is always a violent phenomenon which comes into being after the collapse of colonialism.

According to Fanon, a new society can be created by violence whereas according to Marx not by violence. Fanon believes that power grows out of barrel of a gun. Fanon regard violence as a means for bringing about a radical social, economic and political change in the society. Marxian violence is pragmatic, Fanonian violence is existential. Fanon glorified violence on more grounds than one and concludes that man finds his freedom through violence. In *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon quotes passages from Engels' Anti-Dühring on theory of

violence, but only to repudiate it. Fanon writes that Engels did not understand that the "violent reaction of the colonized introduced a qualitatively new element" (Fanon: 1967a, 51). Fanon chooses the peasantry as most revolutionary class. He regards the peasant not only as conservative but reactionary. He chooses the peasantry as the most revolutionary class.

He believes that if lumpen –proletariat is used and guided properly; it can be an effective revolutionary force. Marx and Fanon are radical and revolutionary. They are humanists. They focused their attention on human alienation. They believe in dialectical progress. Marx interprets history in economic terms; Fanon interprets it in racial and colonial terms. Marx considers violence only as a means to an end whereas Fanon glorifies it as an end itself. Is Fanon a Marxist? Marxism means a model rather than a theory, and then Fanon is Marxist. A new world free from hunger, exploitation and equality are thoughts of Marxism then Fanon is certainly Marxist.

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