

# 'Can You Justify Your Existence Then? Just a Little?': The Psychological Convergence of Sartre and Fanon

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She sings. So two of them are saved: the Jew and the Negress.  
Maybe they thought they were lost irrevocably, drowned in  
existence. . . . They are a little like dead people for me;  
they have washed themselves of the sin of existing. Not completely  
of course, but as much as any man can. . . . The Negress sings.  
Can you justify your existence then? Just a little?

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*

In the very last pages of Sartre's novel *Nausea*, Antoine Roquentin sits in a small café awaiting his train to Paris. While engaged in his solitary thoughts, the old phonograph player comes to life with the sounds of 'Some of These Days.' The music transfixes Antoine; in fact, he has its scratchy melody played a second time. Listening to the recording, Antoine's mind drifts as he imagines the song's author at his piano suffering in the stifling summer heat of a darkened room in New York City. The artist has merely a vague 'ghost' of a tune in his head, but in this anguished scene, a song is born. And, at that moment, Antoine has a sudden realization. He believes that each is saved: the Jew whom he imagines to have toiled in sweat to write the song, and the Negro singer who belted out the fabled tune. Each has, in his own way, justified his existence – one as a song writer, the other as a singer.

Yet, Antoine is wrong; it is the singer, Sophie Tucker, who is Jewish, and the songwriter, Sheldon Brooks, who is a Negro.<sup>1</sup> This vignette is but a small part of Sartre's novel, but it is telling. In writing the story has Sartre succumbed, perhaps unknowingly, to the very act, the very stereotypical determinism that characterizes his account of anti-Semitism? Has he seen the world through the eyes of the 'European' that he is, and determined that only an intelligent Jew could write a song and only the body of a rhythmically gifted Negro could deliver it? Or, is it Sartre's subtle way of showing us the ease within which one seeks to justify their existence in the role of the anti-Semite or, for that matter, the colonizer?

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If the ending of *Nausea* points to a paradox, then we should also be aware that while Sartre's novel erroneously juxtaposes racial identity, he is, at the same time, the highly acclaimed author of *Anti-Semite and Jew* (Sartre, 1948c). His penetrating and lucid account of the plight of the European Jews, especially those returning to France after World War II, is a hallmark upon which to judge both the psychology of the anti-Semite and, in an even more disturbing way, the controversial behavior of the Jew himself. Sartre's thought is not, however, limited only to anti-Semitism; it carries over to all forms of racism including the anti-colonial works of Frantz Fanon. The question of racism does not affect the Jew alone, and through his writings, most notably the psychological/phenomenological *exposé* of the colonizer and the colonized in *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon, 1967), Fanon has come to be known as one of the intellectual leaders of Negro identity. As Homi Bhabha (1987: 118–124) suggests, *Black Skin, White Masks* must be read as Fanon's attempt to privilege the discussion of the individual and its psychic dimension in order to provide a basis, a foundation, and a structure upon which that individual, once psychologically cognizant of the situation she has been thrust into and freed of the concomitant psycho-somatic restraints of colonialism, can assume a position within a collective whole of the masses capable of transcending the ambiguity that is the colonial experience for the sole purpose of achieving the one thing Fanon desires above all else: action. In this sense, Fanon is adhering to a Marxian tenet whereby a theory is only capable of gripping the masses when it becomes radical, which is what Fanon is driving at in his later work, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon, 2004). But, in order to be radical the 'root of the matter,' as Marx terms it, must be grasped. For *man*, according to Marx, the root of the matter is *man* himself (1975: 182). This is the importance *Black Skin, White Masks* assumes for Fanon.

In recent years, much scholarly work has emerged discussing the relationship between Sartre and Fanon, and while this paper is not specifically about their personal relationship, a few words are in order. Sartre and Fanon met several times during a very short period in 1961, and admired each other both personally and intellectually. The majority of the time they spent together was in Rome immediately before Sartre wrote his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and only months before Fanon's death from granulocytic leukemia. The intellectual relationship appears to have been an intense one, at least according to de Beauvoir's (1964: 592) account who described Fanon as possessing 'a razor-sharp intelligence, intensely alive, [and] endowed with a grim sense of humor.'<sup>2</sup> They spent the hours afforded to them in deep political discussion until de Beauvoir suggested that Sartre was in need of rest. This evoked an immediate response of indignation on the part of Fanon, since he wanted to keep the discussion going well past the early morning hours. Even so, Fanon told Claude Lanzmann that he would gladly pay twenty thousand francs a day for two straight weeks of Sartre's time (1964: 592–597). More importantly, Fanon, who has been described as *un écorché vif* (Macey, 2000: 119), chided Sartre on his failure to expiate the crime of the Algerian situation, or to sufficiently adopt a means of action such as martyrdom.<sup>3</sup> As de Beauvoir says, 'he lived in a different world from ours' (1964: 596). In the end, Sartre could only affirm his solidarity with the Algerian people, but as a Frenchman.

Much work has been done in this area especially with regard to Sartre's preface on violence in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Yet, most overlook how important Sartre was in providing a psychoanalytic basis for Fanon's work.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Jonathan Judaken's recent book, *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question* (2006), focuses the discussion around colonial racism and specifically deals with Sartre's study of negritude in *Orphée Noir*. Fanon's subsequent disquietude with Sartre's analysis is, however, the only time Judaken mentions *Black Skin, White Masks*. In this paper I will argue that Fanon's psychoanalytic portrayal of the colonized and colonizer owes its origin to Sartre's own utilization of a psychoanalytic analysis to unmask the character qualities of the anti-Semite as well as the Jew. This exchange of psychological modes of analysis is, moreover, all the more striking when one notes that, despite Sartre's well-known disdain for traditional forms of psychoanalysis,

he turned to that method to describe the psychological attributes of anti-Semitism along with the psychic structure of the Jew. Likewise, and even though he was a trained psychologist, Fanon expressed little affinity for the techniques of psychoanalysis; yet, as we have pointed out, it was this method that Fanon adopted to illuminate the inner psychic experience of colonialism.

There is an additional, yet subtle, element that unites Sartre's discussion with that of Fanon. Sartre endeavors to psychologically justify the existence of the characters he describes in a manner that seems to magnify or exaggerate one form of behavior at the expense of another; all in the hope of making clear what is deemed odious or estimable. I will argue that Fanon utilizes the same mechanism to understand and expose the psychologically ruinous effects of colonial racism whose characters also endeavor falsely to justify their lives just as Sartre's. But, I will also argue that Fanon oftentimes takes Sartre's nascent ideas and elaborates or allows them to grow to a far greater degree than Sartre originally propounded. It remains, however, that Sartre's psychologically 'damaged' characters form a basis upon which Fanon develops his equally prescient yet equally damaged colonizer and colonized.

### **The structure: *Anti-Semite and Jew – Black Skin, White Masks***

The overall structure of *Anti-Semite and Jew* provides its first clue to Sartre's thinking. Two long untitled chapters, which I will refer to as 'Anti-Semite' (Chapter 1) and 'Inauthentic/Authentic Jew' (Chapter 3) are punctuated by an extremely short text that I will call 'Democrat' (Chapter 2).<sup>5</sup> A fourth and concluding chapter that I will label 'Socialism' proposes a revolutionary solution to the Jewish question. Sartre structures his book in this manner to indicate, as if in a theatrical production, the three main characters of his *mise en scène*. Each character represents or symbolizes a category of subjective behavior: the anti-Semite and the Jew together with the Jew's *Doppelgänger* 'phantom personality' caught in the struggle between assimilation and its concomitant inauthenticity and the fearful unknown of authenticity. For reasons that will become clear, neither the anti-Semite nor the inauthentic Jew can truly separate himself from the metaphorical role he plays. In this sense, the beliefs each adopts and the actions each undertakes create characters that are incapable of a process of introspection or self-reflection that would allow them to truly understand themselves. In stark contrast is the authentic Jew whose behavior Sartre sees as the only avenue to freedom available to the Jew; yet, as we shall see, this character may be the most problematical of all.

Fanon structures his work in an entirely different manner from Sartre. *Black Skin, White Masks* is divided into eight chapters, which on the surface, at least, appears not to align with Sartre's characters. However, we can easily equate Sartre's anti-Semite with Fanon's colonizer, Sartre's Jew with Fanon's colonized, and we can further delineate the Jew and the colonized into authentic and inauthentic sub groups. One further topic needs some explanation: Fanon begins his discussion with the importance of language, a topic that Sartre seems to ignore. As I will show, however, while language is instrumental to Fanon's overall thesis, and even though it percolates below the surface of Sartre's text, it also plays an essential role for the latter's argument. With the overall structure utilized by both Sartre and Fanon in mind, let us move to a discussion of Sartre's anti-Semite.

### **Sartre's psychological descriptions**

The anti-Semite chapter begins with an attempt to psychologically define the subject at hand. Whatever an anti-Semite is, Sartre believes he does not just possess opinions concerning Jews. Rather, Sartre refuses, '... to characterize as opinions a doctrine that is aimed directly at particular persons and that seeks to suppress their rights or to exterminate them' (Sartre, 1948c: 9). How then does Sartre conceive of the anti-Semite? First of all, Sartre believes that anti-Semitism is a passion, an emotion,

and in order to understand what Sartre has in mind by his use of the term passion we must look to his earlier work, *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory* (Sartre, 1948b). Sartre's phenomenological explication of emotions begins with the premise that emotional consciousness is first and foremost unreflective. As such, emotional consciousness is consciousness of the world the result of which is that the person who is afraid, is afraid of *something*. The subject affected by something and the affected object are inseparably bound in a symbiotic relationship. In other words, each of us perceives the world through our acts, and emotions are merely a certain manner of apprehending the world in which we live. What Sartre is developing is not a notion of unreflective action constantly engaged in a metastable relationship with reflective action, or from the world to the individual. On the contrary, Sartre believes that an operation on the universe is carried out without the subject ever leaving the unreflected mode. Thus, action is spontaneous, unreflective consciousness that constitutes a certain existential level in the world. It is, therefore, not necessary to be conscious of the self acting in the world. Rather, unreflected behavior or action is not conscious behavior at all; it is conscious of itself only non-thetically, and its way of being thetically conscious of itself is to transcend itself and to seize upon the world as a quality of things. This quality of things is not, however, 'furrowed with strict and narrow paths which lead to one or the other determined end, that is, to the appearance of a created object' (Sartre, 1948b: 57). In Sartre's thinking the path of life is littered with difficulties, which means that emotions are transformative mechanisms allowing one to cope with the difficulty. When the difficulty in the world becomes overpowering, life itself becomes too difficult; yet, even though we must act, all pathways seem barred to us. As a result, we endeavor to alter the world and live 'as if the connection between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by *magic*' (Sartre, 1948b: 59). This process that Sartre calls magic is neither a reflective attitude nor is it conscious of itself. By changing our behavior, in phenomenological terms our intention, we apprehend an old object in a different way such that it becomes a new object for us. This is not to say that the end the emotional behavior seeks is to act upon the object through the agency of a particular means; rather, 'it seeks by itself to confer upon the object, and without modifying it in its actual structure, another quality, a lesser existence, or a lesser presence ...' (Sartre, 1948b: 60–61). The emotionally driven body directed by consciousness seeks to change its relation with the world in order that the world may change for it. While this is a modified, transformed world, at the same time the emotion does not turn inward, but keeps feeding on the emotive object. This 'degraded' consciousness only deceives itself and eventually becomes its own prisoner.

This brief but important discussion of Sartre's concept of emotions or passions is essential, since the act of being an anti-Semite cannot be based on experience if it resides in the passions. A predisposition towards hatred is not only fundamental to the very being of the anti-Semite, it is primordial. In his passion the anti-Semite adopts a subjective position that necessarily preconceives an 'idea' of the Jew as to the latter's nature as well as to his role in society. Anti-Semitism, then, must be seen as the total and free choice of oneself; it is not the outgrowth of some external force. But, the anti-Semite also exists on a universal level. By this I mean not only is the anti-Semite controlled by his passion, but this passion also controls his world view. The anti-Semite, driven by his psychologically generated drives, projects those passions onto the world and all those who inhabit it. Consequently, the anti-Semite adopts a 'syncretic' outlook that is always already present in all circumstances.

Sartre probes this syncretic outlook and finds that the anti-Semite possesses a basic fear not only of himself, but for the truth as well. This fear emanates from the form of truth itself with its ever malleable character of indeterminate approximation. In contrast, the anti-Semite needs impenetrability. Founded on passion alone, the anti-Semite's convictions rule out reason and rationality. The anti-Semite freely chooses hate because hate is faith. What Sartre has in mind here is a concern with the relationship of bad faith to faith itself. In other words, when evidence is presented, the person of bad faith resigns himself in advance to not being convinced by such

evidence. In this mode of thinking there is no reflective, voluntary decision, but a spontaneous determination of one's being. Having rejected reason and experience, the anti-Semite 'flees himself.' In other words, the anti-Semite feels no compulsion to look within himself for his personality; his being lies entirely outside of himself, and, as a result, the anti-Semite runs away from the very awareness of himself as a person. Sartre's psychological argument leads him to question where among the masses in society does the anti-Semite lurk?

Sartre's response is complex and problematical. The anti-Semite inhabits the anonymous crowd. They belong to the lower middle classes of the towns and rural districts. They work in mundane jobs as functionaries, office clerks, and small businessmen who possess nothing. These people of no property or power can only gain power through their perverse treatment of the Jews who are viewed as having everything. Indeed, the anti-Semite views the Jew as taking over, and in Sartre's writing the conquest is nothing less than France itself. Much like the young couple who join the exclusive, local country club in order to establish their identity, and to announce to others: 'We have arrived,' the anti-Semite affirms his existence as a member of what Sartre describes as the elite, by treating the Jew as inferior. Yet, an ambiguity exists in Sartre's thought. With a nod to Marx, Sartre also describes the anti-Semite as a member of the bourgeois class and even goes so far as to proclaim that there are no anti-Semites among those who produce, or, in other words, the working class. This line of argument appears to ignore the fact that it is incongruous to be both a member of the bourgeois class and a person of no property or possessions. Moreover, it is questionable to espouse a position that no anti-Semites are members of the working class. This is, as we shall see, a position that is rightfully ignored by Fanon who adopts a very different approach to the class oriented genealogy of racism than did Sartre.<sup>6</sup>

Leaving aside, for the moment, any discussion of Marxist philosophy, Sartre recognizes the important paradoxical dependence the anti-Semite has for the Jew in order to sustain the life he has chosen. Without the Jew the anti-Semite must look to another cause or hatred rather than to look within himself. The anti-Semite creates the Jew, and, as Sartre explains, 'far from experience producing his idea of the Jew, it was the latter which explained his experience. If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him' (Sartre, 1948c: 13). In his analysis, Sartre spends considerable time formulating the 'person' or identity of the anti-Semite: his character, his social status, his thoughts, and his habits. In short, anti-Semitism forms a spider's web that envelops an entire personality the effect of which is to transform the question of 'who is a Jew' into the more serious question of 'what have you made of the Jews'? (Sartre, 1948c: 69). Fanon, as we shall see later, asks the same question. One is, accordingly, an anti-Semite, or one is not. There is no middle ground.

There can be no middle ground for Sartre for the simple reason that the anti-Semite views the Jew as evil. In order to sustain his world view, the anti-Semite renounces all expectations that the Jew will reform himself and conduct his life in a so-called reasonable manner (reasonable, that is, to the anti-Semite). This impossible goal gives way to a metaphysical principle that there is an inherent drive within the Jew to do evil. But in case one asks, if the Jew can do evil surely he can do good as well. The anti-Semite, Sartre declares, declines our entreaty by indicating: 'The Jew is free *to do evil*, not good; he has only so much free will as is necessary for him to take full responsibility for the crimes of which he is the author; he does not have enough to be able to achieve a reformation' (Sartre, 1948c: 39). As the master fought the slave in a duel to the death, so the anti-Semite sees the Jew as one to be annihilated. Sartre's establishment of the anti-Semite's Manichaeism will later prove essential to Fanon's argument, but for now let us merely reiterate the central importance of this thought in Sartre's development of the anti-Semite psychology.

There is one more critical area for Sartre in his discussion of the anti-Semite's character. Here, Sartre explicitly touches on the domain of psychoanalysis to insist that the anti-Semite's hatred of the Jews masks a profound unconscious sexual attraction towards these very same people. Sartre

believes that this sexual attraction, this curiosity with evil incarnate, represents a basic form of sadism. While Sartre fails to fully develop this thesis in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Fanon will formulate a more robust psychoanalytic account of the colonizer's repressed sexual desire for the very people he has subjugated: the colonized.

In summary, Sartre paints a portrait of the anti-Semite as defined by his passion and not his reason. Like Antigone in Sophocles' play of the same name, emotion alone rules the anti-Semite and his world view. His fear is of himself, but inherent within that fear resides a fear of the Other and for the anti-Semite the Other is the Jew. This fear of the Other emerges for the anti-Semite in his Manichean attitude of good and evil. Not without controversy, the anti-Semite is the ordinary, mundane, middle-class bourgeois next door who unknowingly harbors a profound sexual desire for the one he hates. This desire, ensconced in a pre-reflective non-thetic attitude, finds its outlet in the anti-Semite's sadistic behavior. The anti-Semite views the Jew as a device, a means to ensure one's own existence; an existence that has, as Sartre points out, 'the impenetrability of stone' (Sartre, 1948c: 53).

In contrast to the anti-Semite, Sartre's discussion of the Jew separates the character into two schizophrenic parts, or really more like one person with, as Sartre says, a phantom personality: the inauthentic and the authentic Jew. As he did with the anti-Semite, Sartre endeavors to define the character of the Jew, but not in the sense of any 'human nature.' Rather, Sartre begins his description by telling us that to define a man is to understand the 'situation' one finds oneself to be in (Sartre, 1948c: 59).<sup>7</sup> This syncretic approach, which we have seen before, asks how one chooses to be in a situation. It is important to understand that, for Sartre, one chooses one's situation, it is not chosen for one; yet, a commonality of restrictions and limitations exists in all situations that conditions and defines human existence (Sartre, 1948c: 60). Thus, in order to know the Jew, Sartre must inquire into the situation surrounding the Jew.

In seeking to discover the situation of the Jew, Sartre first indicates that the Jew can neither be defined by race alone nor exclusively by his religion. At one time a seemingly monolithic community, the Jews' dispersal deprived them of a concreteness indicative of a national, historical, and religious community (Sartre, 1948c: 66).<sup>8</sup> This apparent lack of history tears away, it erodes any foundational origin, and eventually leads to abstraction. How then does Sartre proceed in his description? Again, he looks to the idea of situation. The Jew shares a bond through a common situation that looks at them and defines them as Jews within the community. In essence, the Other defines what a Jew is or is not in any society. Yet the Jew considers himself the same as all others; his language, his interests, his opinions, and his politics are those of the community. They are not necessarily Jewish. This possession of a personality just like everyone else coupled with being Jewish amounts, for Sartre, to a doubling of the fundamental relationship with the Other. The consequences are an overdetermined Jew, and a Jew who is not free to be a Jew.

The cost to the overdetermined Jew is far reaching. The Jew, determined by the Other as an intruder into society with no historical grounding based on nation, land, religion, or material interest and premised only on an identity of situation, must remain isolated. As Sartre remarks, 'if he does not consent, he is insulted. But if he consents, he is no more readily assimilated on this account; he is tolerated – and always with a distrust that drives him on each occasion to "prove himself"' (Sartre, 1948c: 85). The non-Jew, on the other hand, has no need for such proof. This ever present obligation to prove himself delivers the Jew into a situation of psychological guilt: if he does not do more than anyone else he is guilty, likewise if he does less he is equally guilty. The dilemma presented causes the 'Jew . . . to be thrown into – to be abandoned to – the situation of a Jew; and at the same time it is to be responsible in and through one's person for the destiny and the very nature of the Jewish people' (Sartre, 1948c: 89). The concatenation between abandonment and responsibility further delineates the Jews' freedom within the natural limits of the situation. The choice afforded for human freedom within these limits is either authenticity or its opposite, inauthenticity.

The inauthentic Jew is the one who has chosen an ‘avenue of flight’; he is, more specifically, the Jew that other men decide is a Jew, and who has determined to run away from an unsupportable situation. But we must seek to know more about the ‘what’ of the inauthentic Jew. Sartre again relies on psychoanalysis to speak of a ‘Jewish complex’, or, as he alternatively phrases it, an inferiority complex. As we shall see, Fanon will also expound upon an inferiority complex endemic to the colonizer as well as the colonized. This complex is created by the Jew when he chooses to live his life in an inauthentic manner. In essence, the anti-Semite emerges victorious; the inauthentic Jew fears acting or being perceived as a Jew. He has, in actuality, overdetermined himself from the inside. The self-reflection accompanying the inauthentic Jew causes him to constantly view himself in the eyes of the Other; yet, this detached contemplation of another only results in the inauthentic Jew being detached from himself. Yet he knows that his detachment can only prove effective if recognized by another. Assimilation is, therefore, the only answer in such situations. To assimilate oneself is to cultivate oneself in order to destroy the Jew inside: ‘If he wishes to slip in everywhere, it is because he cannot be at rest as long as there remains a single place which resists him and which, by resisting him, makes him a Jew in his own eyes’ (Sartre, 1948c: 98). To assimilate is the desire to belong to some society that is ‘other’ to oneself, but not unlike the colonized for Fanon, the realization of the Jews’ desire rests on an unstable foundation. Through every door that opens to him, he is still received as a Jew. Even though the Jew is aware of his situation, to acknowledge his circumstances would spell failure in his eyes. In concealing the truth from the one person who matters most – himself – the inauthentic Jew acts in bad faith.

This bad faith leads to a paradox for the inauthentic Jew: on the one hand, he wants to lose himself in a secular world, while on the other hand, he remains fixed in a Jewish setting. The paradox brings with it unfortunate consequences as the Jew continually endeavors to justify his existence and in the process affirm himself by abandoning his Jewishness, he flees his fellow Jews and makes himself an anti-Semite.<sup>9</sup> For Sartre, ‘what stamps the inauthentic Jew is precisely this perpetual oscillation between pride and a sense of inferiority, between the voluntary and the passionate negation of the traits of his race and the mystical and carnal participation in the Jewish reality’ (Sartre, 1948c: 107). For some inauthentic Jews the cost of this ineluctable situation is masochism. This desire to be treated as an object represents an escape for the inauthentic Jew who fails to recognize that true authenticity expresses itself not in passivity, but in revolt.

For the inauthentic Jew, the desire to be treated as an object manifests itself in the physical body. Sartre regards the sole identifying facet of the Jew as physical – the black and curly beard, the slightly hooked nose, and protruding ears. The anti-Semite seizes upon these facts and transforms it into a myth: he believes himself capable of detecting a Jew at a mere glance. The inauthentic Jew reacts to this myth by denying his body; he refuses to look upon it as a source of vitality or spirit. The elegance, the grace, and the style assumed by the anti-Semite finds negation in the inauthentic Jew. The Jews’ universal, rationalized man transposes itself into a universal and rationalized body; his body is a mere instrumentality and nothing more. Fanon, as will become clear, sees the body as essential to understanding the colonial experience, which is, he believes, ‘epidermalized’ as an inscription of race upon the flesh.

Sartre’s inauthentic Jew is a haunted man condemned to a false situation based on his choice of an artificial, phantom identity. Deprived of any metaphysical sense by hostile surroundings, he is driven to what Sartre refers to as a ‘rationalism of despair’ (Sartre, 1948c: 135). Alienated even from his own body, the inauthentic Jew flees not only others, but himself as well. What is the cure for such behavior? Obviously authenticity, but what does that mean? Here Sartre is quick to come to the point. Authenticity ‘consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate’ (Sartre, 1948c: 90). For Sartre, authenticity is achieved by choosing

oneself as a Jew, by realizing and coming to terms with one's situation, by abandoning the idea of universal man, by willing oneself into history as a damned creature, and by ceasing to run away from oneself. For his naïve monism, he substitutes a social pluralism; for his desire for assimilation, he recognizes himself as one who stands apart, scorned, distrusted, and proscribed. Only through the acceptance of his unlivable situation can the authentic Jew derive power from his humiliation, and only through praxis – the abandonment of his passivity – can he strip away the power and the virulence of the anti-Semite. In short, the authentic Jew makes himself a Jew, 'in the face of all and against all' (Sartre, 1948c: 90)

Sartre's description of the authentic Jew is not, however, without its problems. At first glance, Sartre seems to call for the authentic Jew to assume a rather draconian ontological status that literally provides for 'no exit.' While the authentic Jew is an archetype of the suffering that lies, Sartre believes, at the very basis of the human condition, his only recourse, his only redemption appears to be in the form of a martyr. Moreover, in order to overcome this negativity and assume a positive construct, Sartre believes the only avenue of escape for the authentic Jew is as a universalizing revolutionary.<sup>10</sup> Yet, what Sartre is really pointing to is a Jew who ceases to be passive; it is only through praxis that the Jew can eliminate all power and all hate from the anti-Semite. Sartre's entire notion of action as a 'cure' for the inauthenticity of the Jew will also prove to be the road to freedom for Fanon. While authenticity may be a lonely route for both Sartre and Fanon, it is a road paved with action.

The Sartrean account of the anti-Semite and the inauthentic Jew has shown us two character traits whose actions are joined by one concept: bad faith. They are, at the same time, lives with no true capacity for self-reflection, and no ability to confront their situation and overcome it. Rather, these characters 'flee' their world, a world which is not, as we have seen, 'furrowed with strict and narrow paths.' On the contrary, the path of life is, in actuality, a minefield where survival requires the human emotions to become transformative mechanisms allowing one to otherwise cope with unsettling possibilities. In our coping we endeavor to alter the world and live a life of magic where all connections between objects and their potentialities are not determined in some manner. In that magic, the anti-Semite transforms the Jew not in his actual physical structure, but to a lesser quality, to a lesser existence, and to a lesser presence. With an understanding of Sartre's psychological description of the anti-Semite and the Jew, let us turn now to see how Fanon describes his characters.

## Fanon's psychological descriptions

As we have alluded to previously, Fanon begins his psychoanalytical account with a discussion of language for the simple reason that, for Fanon, language is constitutive. That is to say, when the colonizer imposes his language on the colonized an inferiority complex is inflicted upon the very being of those who are subjugated. It is important to note, as we have discussed already, that Sartre also believes the inauthentic Jew suffers from an inferiority complex imposed at the hands of the anti-Semite. Here Fanon utilizes a Sartrean notion of the 'Jewish Complex' and applies it as a 'Colonized Complex.' Language is more than just a series of phonemes or signifiers; it symbolically represents a culture, a history, and an origin – an entire genealogy. Language is the life blood; it informs a world view, and it plays a similar role for Sartre as it does for Fanon. Fanon argues that 'every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation' (Fanon, 1967: 18). For the colonized, robbed of his native language, a separation or dislocation occurs that only reinforces an inferiority complex. In effect, the colonizer is really saying that the colonized do not possess a language worthy of maintaining. And if this is so, in the eyes of the colonizer(ed) the colonized have no history, no culture, and no origin of value.



The imposition of a language is nothing less than the manifestation of a European concept of the Negro that is fixed and determined. Thus Fanon starts with language, since it permeates all subjectivity; it is the origin of the human self who, without language, would be reduced to a form of Hegelian ‘sense certainty,’ and could never express or articulate the emotions, passions, and drives associated with his very existence. In this sense, language is common to us all; it is owned by the anti-Semite as well as the colonizer, it is shared equally by the Jew and the colonized, and it is, for Fanon, the point of departure *par excellence*. And it is this origin of language that allows the colonizer and the anti-Semite to establish hegemony over the colonized and the Jew.

As has been pointed out, Sartre does not take a direct position on language in *anti-Semite and Jew* even though we have seen how it plays a constitutive role in Fanon’s analysis. I contend, however, that just like Fanon it is difficult to see how the anti-Semite could ever be constituted otherwise than through language. Without it, how could the anti-Semite give expression to his drives, to his passions, to his hate, and to his metaphysical, Manichean doctrine of evil? In fact, in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1956) Sartre provides a sketch of the importance language plays in the concept of subjectivity. Language is, Sartre believes, the fact that subjectivity experiences itself as an object for the Other. And in that experience Sartre declares: ‘I am language’ (Sartre, 1956: 485). Language, for Sartre, encompasses not only the spoken word, but all the phenomena of expression; thus, in whatever one does, in whatever one may conceive and execute, ‘I am what I say’ (Sartre, 1956: 486). In this sense, language is not only fundamental for Sartre, it too is constitutive. While the anti-Semite may not be forced to learn a new language, he uses language and speech to not only dominate the Jew, but to further enhance his own racist beliefs. The Jew, on the other hand, could be said to be stripped of his native language, the language of the Hebrew Bible. In order to assimilate, the Jew is forced to give up the trappings of his inherited social identity and assume the costume of the culture and society he wishes to join. As Fanon points out, once stripped of his native language, the colonized are forced to adopt the culture of the colonizer – better to have a borrowed culture than to have no culture at all. But, what the colonized seeks as he renounces his blackness through the mastery of the foreigner’s language is a whiteness that bestows power upon the possessor. The same notion applies to the assimilated Jew who must give up his language in order to be accepted. This projective identification is what Fanon and Sartre will deal with in the inauthentic variety of Jew and colonized. With an understanding that language is the primary agent of colonialism and its attendant racism, let us move to a discussion of Fanon’s colonized.

Early in the chapters of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon centers his argument on the idea of love. This does not, however, involve just any kind of love, but love between someone who is white and someone who is black. It is within these relationships that we see the formative structure of Fanon’s colonized. Fanon presents us with a Sartrean-like Manichean world of his own; only his is a world of two dichotomies: one black and one white, one inferior and one superior. But, for the present, it is his concept of superiority that is important for our purposes. Fanon believes that the colonizer’s subjugation of the colonized creates a certain existential guilt that is repressed and subsequently emerges as a pervasive tone or attitude of superiority. This superiority on the part of the colonizer is, Fanon believes, a neurotic response to the guilt of enslavement. Neurosis, in Freudian terms, occurs when drives within the ego are incapable of connecting with their object and seek another avenue of expression. In this sense, Fanon and Sartre are talking about similar phenomena. Although Fanon’s psychoanalytic description is, as we have seen, far more developed than Sartre’s, when Sartre explains that the anti-Semite is moved by passions he is really talking about emotions and drives. In Sartre’s description of ‘passions,’ he states that ordinary hate is associated with a provocation – you hit me, I hit you – but the anti-Semite experiences no such outward insult. Rather, the anti-Semite’s hate ‘precedes the facts that are supposed to call it forth’ (Sartre, 1948c: 17). This is the same as Fanon’s neurotic behavior with all of its psychoanalytic

underpinnings. The anti-Semite's neurotic attitude toward the Jew can be seen, therefore, as a manifestation of a desire for superiority and domination just as the colonizer's neurosis causes his misdirected drives to establish an attitude of superiority over the colonized.

Fanon's Manichaeism also parallels Sartre's view in one additional key element. As we discussed with Sartre, fear plays a significant role in the psychological make-up of the anti-Semite. Fanon agrees with Sartre's position and declares the Negro a phobogenic object. Quite simply whites fear the Negro, which is graphically brought to light as Fanon describes his encounter with a small boy on a cold Paris train:

'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!' Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible [...] The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering because it is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger ... (Fanon, 1967: 113–114)

Just as it did for Sartre, this irrational fear of Negroes helps to define the colonizer's attitude toward the colonized. What one generally fears one must either flee or subjugate. For the anti-Semite, as well as the colonizer, it is not possible to flee the object; it is only possible to eradicate it. The justification for the colonizer is the same as the anti-Semite: both cast the object as evil with no possibility of good, and no chance for redemption. Under these circumstances, annihilation is the only alternative.

Fanon further develops his phobogenic theme by indicating that the Negro, the object of fear in the phobic, is overdetermined. His psychoanalytic analysis is the following: since phobias are a neurosis characterized by a fear of an object (here the colonized), one must go back to determine the trauma that caused the phobia initially. The object emanated from some place and time, and as Fanon states:

For the object, naturally, need not be there, it is enough that somewhere it *exist*: It is a possibility. This object is endowed with evil intentions and with all the attributes of a malefic power. In the phobic, affect has a priority that defies all rational thinking. (Fanon, 1967: 155)

The overdetermined object does not just appear *ex nihilo*. In some situation it has previously provoked an effect. The phobia is, therefore, the latent presence of that effect. As such, the object arouses such fear in the phobic because the object represents sexual arousal in the form of abuses, 'immoral acts, and shameful things' (Fanon, 1967: 156). While the Jew is feared because of his potential for acquisitiveness, the Negro is feared for his acquisitiveness at the genital level. In this sense, Fanon points out that when a white man hates a black man, he is yielding to a feeling of impotence or sexual inferiority. The phobic, who views the Negro as a penis, visits his hate upon the object as a form of sexual revenge. If the white colonizer defines the Negro as the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions, then Fanon cast the phobic's revulsion of the Negro, again in psychoanalytic terms, as an inversion of the ego in the form of a basic defense mechanism. For the colonizer, the fear of rape at the hands of the colonized is, in reality, a cry to be raped. For Fanon, therefore, there is a desire residing at the level of the unconscious to partake in a sexual relation, since as Fanon points out, '... the Negrophobic woman is in fact nothing but a putative sexual partner – just as the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual' (Fanon, 1967: 156). Sartre's notion of unreflective, non-thetic desire for the hated object is rooted in the psyche of the colonizer as well. Whatever the primary cause of the phobic's fear, suffice it to say that Sartre's influence is certainly present in the argument: each portrays the phobic – the anti-Semite and colonizer – in similar terms, even if the object of their hate differs. Here, Fanon supports Sartre's view even though Fanon's argument

builds upon Sartre's original position, and eventually progresses to a far more complex and richer end point than did Sartre's portrayal.

While we have compared Fanon's colonizer to three of the character qualities used by Sartre to describe the anti-Semite: the colonizer's passion, the colonizer's Manichean attitude born out of fear, and the colonizer's psychological/psychoanalytic construction, we have yet to engage in a discussion of where the colonizer came from. As we have seen, Sartre places the anti-Semite squarely within the bourgeois class. For his part, Fanon does not directly confront Sartre's viewpoint; rather, Fanon approaches the subject of the colonizer's origin by entering into a dialogue with a very different writer on the colonial experience, Dominique-Octave Mannoni.

Fanon's engagement with Mannoni centers on the latter's book, *Prospero and Caliban* (Mannoni, 1964), and it is with the content of this book that Fanon directly confronts a theme we first encountered with Sartre. Fanon believes that a society is either racist or it is not. Moreover, for Fanon, there is no difference between one type of racism and another; anti-Semitism is just as pernicious as colonialism. Although this universal quality of racism is a position that Sartre alludes to in his essay, he more than qualifies it with his notion of class distinction. Fanon is, on the other hand, pointing us in a different direction. Here, he is in the throes of discrediting Mannoni's thesis, which has overtones similar to Sartre's polemic. Mannoni argues that Europe's 'best representatives' are not responsible for colonial racism – as if to say Europe's worst representatives have formed some evil cabal, which has run amok in distant, foreign lands. We will remember Sartre's claim that few if any anti-Semites are to be found in the working classes, but Fanon steers clear of these class oriented distinctions and takes a much more over-arching approach. Mannoni's position leads Fanon to argue that Europe has a racist structure, and that it is the racist who creates his inferior. This, as Fanon rightly acknowledges, harkens back to Sartre's position: 'The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew: that is the simple truth from which we must start. . . . It is the anti-Semite who *makes* the Jew' (Sartre, 1948c: 69). Fanon's position is directly related to Sartre's ontological argument and further correlates our anti-Semite character with that of the colonizer without restrictively adhering to class distinctions. While Fanon relies on Sartre's position, he does so by sidestepping the 'Marxist philosophy' promulgated by Sartre. By adopting a universal approach, Fanon lays blame on an entire culture and not just one class within that culture. This is an important point for Fanon, since a language, a culture, and a history do not just belong to a single class, especially in a class oriented society. For Fanon, the entire structure of society is identified with the colonizer, not just the bourgeoisie.

As we have seen, Fanon's colonizer fairly resembles its twin, the anti-Semite – perhaps not identically, but at least fraternally. Both share a common passion, a similar world view, a fear not only of themselves but of the Other that finds its form in a Manichean expression of evil. But do the Jew and the colonized share an equally common heritage?

How does Fanon see the colonized playing out his role? Initially, we should remember that Sartre places the Jew into a situation; or rather the Jew chooses that situation for himself. This is a key element of Sartre's understanding and is important for Fanon's argument in a similar, yet different sense. Fanon believes that the colonized, just like the Jew, is enslaved to his inferiority. This psychologically induced behavior manifests itself in a 'complete situational neurosis' (Fanon, 1967: 60). In other words, the situation that the colonized finds himself in, namely colonialism, is a situation that:

In the man of color there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence. [...] the Negro, having been made inferior, proceeds from humiliating insecurity through strongly voiced self-accusation to despair. The attitude of the black man toward the white, or toward his own race, often duplicates almost completely, a constellation of delirium, frequently bordering on the region of the pathological. (Fanon, 1967: 60)

While we can see that Fanon's description of the effects of the situation of the colonized and the Jew is similar, there is one glaring difference. For Sartre, the Jew chooses his situation; for Fanon, the colonized has it chosen for him. Fanon sees the imposed situation as a traumatic experience, which is repressed in the collective unconscious of the colonized subject and eventually results in neurosis. This neurotic inferiority causes the colonized to run away, or, to borrow Sartre's expression, to seek an avenue of flight – a flight from himself, his fellow Negroes, and, as we shall see, a flight into the inauthentic world of the colonizer.

Fanon talks about the black man who, raised under the yoke of colonialism, seeks to disavow his blackness by donning the robes of the white world. And, as we discussed, the black man, robbed of his language, his culture, and his history, seeks that white world in the colonizer's home. Fanon, much like Sartre, describes several instances of inauthentic behavior, but I believe the story of Jean Veneuse is apropos to our discussion for several reasons. First, Jean is a Negro born in the colonies, but residing in France. Secondly, he is well read and well educated, he is an intellectual, but he is abandoned in a white world that neither assimilates him nor lets him pass unnoticed. He is described as an anxious man who cannot escape his body. Yet, Jean is in love; it is just that his love has a complication; André is white. Jean broods over his love, he needs authorization, he needs approval to marry his love; Jean needs a white man to say, 'take my sister' (Fanon, 1967: 68). When asked, the white man consents with one stipulation: from that moment on Jean is not black, he is just 'extremely brown' (Fanon, 1967: 69). After winning his desired approval, Jean says *adieu* to his Negro friends; he no longer wishes to be a Negro. But Jean is not white, and even though Fanon does not say so one suspects that he will be invited, like the inauthentic Jew, to cross the threshold as the door is opened, but once inside he will still be treated as a Negro. Jean, a man of the colonies who, much like the inauthentic Jew, possesses no history, no culture, no land, and no material interest to call his own, must and will remain isolated. Jean, just like the inauthentic Jew, knows his position and according to Fanon it is a false one. In a word, he is as inauthentic as Sartre's Jew.

The question for Jean Veneuse is, of course, why? Fanon describes Jean as an orphan, abandoned by his mother and sent to a boarding school in the country of the colonizer. Unable to be accepted into his adopted society because of the color of his skin, Jean instead befriends books. But still Jean wants nothing more than to be accepted, to prove to the others that he is a man, to prove to others that he is equal. Yet, Fanon describes this desire as false and as an appeasement for permission of the Other. The Other who, in effect, determines Jean Veneuse is very much similar to the Other who determines the inauthentic Jew, but with a twist. For Sartre, the Other is the anti-Semite; for Fanon, there is an Other – the colonizer – but the Negro must undergo a radical new step. Jean Veneuse is not only determined by the Other, he is also determined by the very fact of his blackness. Fanon (1967: 112) refers to a triple person: a person as a subject, a person as an object, and a person because he is black. Jean Veneuse is truly a triple person who chooses to run away from himself and from his situation. In fact, much like the inauthentic Jew, Jean chooses to negate his own body, his own blackness.

If Jean Veneuse represents the inauthentic colonized how, then, does Fanon see the truly authentic Negro? Although disdain follows him everywhere in the white world, Fanon declares, much like the authentic Jew, that the Negro should embrace the stereotypes that the white world has created:

What! When it was I who had every reason to hate, to despise, I was rejected? When I should have been begged, implored, I was denied the slightest recognition? I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an *inborn complex*, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known. (Fanon, 1967: 115)

Fanon's declaration emboldens him to further assert that the authentic Negro is a Negro who is, 'backward, simple, free in [his] behavior. That is because for [him] the body is not something

opposed to what you call the mind' (Fanon, 1967: 126). Moreover, 'The white man was wrong, I was not a primitive, not even a half-man, I belonged to a race. . . I put the white man back into his place; growing bolder, I jostled him and told him point-blank, "Get used to me, I am not getting used to anyone"' (Fanon, 1967: 130–131). If the authentic Jew happened to be black, these would be his words. For Fanon, as well as for Sartre, authenticity requires one to rise above an absurd situation and to find value in what others have determined to be bad, and this can only be accomplished through action. But at this point our two social theorists appear to diverge, if only for a moment. For Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, authenticity means essentially to recognize oneself as a Negro and ask others to recognize that fact. While Sartre may believe that the authentic Jew must do the same, the difference lies in the harshness or severity of the process one must undertake to achieve the solution. On the one hand, the authentic Jew must forever recognize himself as scorned, distrusted, and proscribed. On the other hand, through the mutual recognition of the Other, Fanon seems to envision a sense of a future that does not involve a Sartrean notion of recognition based on the eternal damnation of the Other. In other words, Fanon provides for a more realistic 'exit' than does Sartre. Yet, this undoubtedly changes with Fanon's writing of *Wretched of the Earth*, and Sartre's polemical introduction to this work, where action through violence assumes a far greater role.

## Conclusion

While the fate of the characters described by Sartre and Fanon is undoubtedly an on-going affair, it is, perhaps, fair to say at least for Fanon – but probably for Sartre as well – that once the 'cloud' of colonialism is lifted and the colonized are able to see their true existence within the situation they have been thrust into, only then will they be able to strike the shroud of oppression that envelops their psyche. Only at this point – the point of self-understanding – will the colonized be able to take up the struggle for freedom and only through action will the struggle be fought and won. But, as Fanon points out, the first step is a psychoanalytic analysis, since 'only a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the complex' (Fanon, 1967: 10) that is both racism and colonialism. Like Fanon, Sartre also sees praxis as the only method, the only point of departure to authenticity. Without it, the Jew will lose his identity in an assimilated world that recognizes the person, but refuses to see the Jew. Yet, one retains a certain feeling that at least some of the characters described by Sartre and Fanon will forever cling to their beliefs, unable or, perhaps, unwilling to confront the truth of their emotions. For these characters, the anti-Semite and the colonizer, one envisions them much like one recalls Roquentin in the small café lost in thought while listening to 'Some of These Days.' These characters' beliefs, their subjective positions, prove false; they are, unlike the singer and the song writer, unable to wash themselves of the sin of existing in order to justify their existence – even just a little. And, as Sartre points out elsewhere: 'it's so difficult just to live without being *in any way* justified' (Sartre, 1984: 65).

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## Notes

1. It is interesting to note that Sartre corrected his 'mistake' in his short story, *The Childhood of a Leader* (Sartre, 1948a), which should be read in conjunction with *Anti-Semite and Jew*. In fact, the short story is, more or less, a fictionalized account of chapter one of *Anti-Semite and Jew*. I should also point out that in

his war diaries Sartre declares that Antoine Roquentin and Mathieu (from *The Age of Reason*) ‘are me.’ The only difference is, as Sartre explains, he wrote Antoine’s story. As such, Antoine’s ‘mistake’ can and should be attributed to Sartre (Sartre, 1984: 338). Throughout this paper I adopt the language used by the particular author when referring to specific ethnic groups of people.

2. The account that de Beauvoir provides is, perhaps, the only firsthand detailed description of the events between these two men, and is generally relied upon by Fanon’s biographers such as David Macey (Macey, 2000) and Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan (Bulhan, 1985).
3. David Macey is quoting from Édouard Glissant (Glissant, 1961: 38).
4. Several scholars have addressed the issue of violence in Sartre and Fanon including Ron Santoni (Santoni, 2003), Judith Butler (Butler, 2006), and Nicolas de Warren (de Warren, 2006). Among those who have taken up the discussion of the relationship between Sartre and Fanon in a more general context are the following: Aside from Judaken’s book, in historical works certainly Annie Cohen-Solal’s biography of Sartre (Cohen-Solal, 1987) is also of interest, but it is not intended to discuss Sartre’s philosophical positions, and, in fact, concentrates on Sartre’s preface to *Wretched of the Earth* while never mentioning *Black Skin, White Masks*. Other authors have written about the relationship but have centered their discussion on specific concerns. For example, Kathryn Gines (Gines, 2003) focuses on the concept of race and whether that concept should be retained once race consciousness is attained. Azzedine Haddour (Haddour, 2005) deals with Sartre’s political solution and the concept of negritude. In her discussion she does address the influence Sartre exerted on Fanon, but it is limited to Sartre’s position regarding the Jews who, in Sartre’s mind, must either live as French Jews or found their own state (the two are not mutually exclusive). This, Haddour points out, is used by Fanon to propose an assimilationist discourse into ‘Frenchness’ in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and an anti-colonial and revolutionary nationalism in *Wretched of the Earth*. While Lewis Gordon, in both his *Bad Faith and Antiracism* (Gordon, 1995b) and *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man* (Gordon, 1995a), provides an interesting account of Sartre’s and Fanon’s relationship ‘as a consequence of shared and sometimes co-extensive concerns,’ – a position I would readily agree with – he only points to *Anti-Semite and Jew* three times in the latter text with the main reference labeling Sartre’s conclusion that it is the anti-Semite who makes the Jew as blatantly false. Rather, Gordon argues that ‘what the anti-Semite makes or, in phenomenological language, constitutes is the pejorative conception of being Jewish’ (Gordon, 1995a, 27). Likewise, biographers of Fanon also acknowledge Sartre’s influence including Emmanuel Hansen (Hansen, 1977: 29), and David Macey (Macey, 2000: 163–164). But, here again the influence is stated as obvious without an in-depth discussion.
5. The chapter I call ‘Democrat’ is, indeed, just four pages in length. Essentially, Sartre believes the Democrat universalizes all of humanity, and, thus, recognizes neither distinction nor origin. In other words, there is no Jew, no Arab, and no Negro; there are just physical bodies that in a collective make up human nature. As such, Sartre feels the Democrat is a ‘feeble protector’ for the simple reason that in defending the Jews, the Democrat saves the man and annihilates the Jew (Sartre, 1948c: 55–57). The solution to the problem of anti-Semitism, for the Democrat, is assimilation, which both Sartre and Fanon reject. I have chosen not to include a discussion of the Democrat as a separate ‘character’ in the body of this paper, since Sartre’s discussion is so brief and Fanon did not specifically take up the issue in his work.
6. Max Scheler uses almost identical language to describe Nietzsche’s notion of *ressentiment*: In present-day society, resentment is by no means active in the industrial proletariat [i.e., the working class] (except when it has been infected by the resentment of certain ‘leader’ types), but rather in the disappearing class of artisans, in the petty bourgeoisie, and among small officials (Scheler, 1961: 66).
7. Sartre understands the ‘situation’ as ‘a middle term between the essentialization of the Jew through the notion of race, as biological and fixed, and an abstract nature that forecloses concrete specificity’ (Marcano, 2003: 219). As such, the situation discloses the contingency of race and, at the same time, provides a foundation for the construction of the Jew.
8. To say that Jews lack a history and a culture merely because they have been dispersed seems to be problematical. Perhaps, Sartre is echoing the times in which he wrote *Anti-Semite and Jew* when the battle for a Jewish homeland was in full discussion. This would, however, disregard the entire history of the Jewish people from the time of the Old Testament to the present day.

9. Fanon describes, to a lesser degree than Sartre, a similar effect on a colonized Antillean who returns from France only to ‘forget’ his roots. In the story, the country boy returns from France to his father’s farm only to pretend that he does not know what a particular farm implement is used for. The father miraculously restores his son’s memory by dropping the implement on the boy’s foot (Fanon, 1967: 23–24).
10. Sartre is clear about the choices open to the Jew: ‘We have created this variety of men who have no meaning except as artificial products of a capitalist (or feudal) society, whose only reason for existing is to serve as scapegoat for a still prelogical community – this species that bears witness for essential humanity better than any other because it was born of secondary reactions within the body of humanity – this quintessence of man, disgraced, uprooted, destined from the start to either inauthenticity or martyrdom’ (Sartre, 1948c: 135–136).

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