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Frantz Fanon's revolutionary contribution.

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FRANTZ FANON'S REVOLUTIONARY CONTRIBUTION: AN ATTITUDE OF DECOLONIALITY AS CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR SOCIAL WORK

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There are many reasons why Frantz Fanon's work is relevant today. Given ongoing Coloniality evident in global power asymmetries and neoliberal economic arrangements with grave levels of global (and within-state) inequality, Fanon's characterisation of racist colonisation, oppressive power relationships and their intrapsychic impact, remain relevant. His work confronted the brutal asymmetrical power relationships of colonialism, critically interrogating these on levels of the psychological, social, material, cultural and political. As a post-colonial critique, his work brings together many philosophical, psychological and cultural theories with personal anecdotes and illustrations from practice relevant to the colonial context. The impact of oppressive racist power relationships exerts a similar impact today as during the colonial era, from the perspective both of the similarity of these dynamics and through intergenerational transmission of collective trauma. With respect to the nature of ongoing Coloniality, race-, class- and gender-based socioeconomic inequality, intersections of oppression, and institutional and structural racism, it is argued here that among Fanon's many propositions, in particular, psychopolitics and sociogeny; the impact of colonisation; internalised oppression; negritude; disalienation and liberation; the importance of affect; and an attitude of Decoloniality, provide rich ground for liberatory and conscientising encounters in an environment of critical pedagogy, especially in social work.

As Fanon says: "But the war goes on; and we will have to bind up for years to come the many, sometimes inefaceable, wounds that the colonialist onslaught has inflicted on our people"

INTRODUCTION

"But the war goes on; and we will have to bind up for years to come the many, sometimes inefaceable, wounds that the colonialist onslaught has inflicted on our people" (Fanon, 1963, p. 249).

There are many reasons why Frantz Fanon's work is relevant to social work today. He wrote in a very specific socio-historical period, but given ongoing Coloniality evident in global power asymmetries and neo-liberal economic arrangements with grave levels of global (and within-state) inequality, Fanon's (1986) characterisation of racist colonisation, oppressive power

relationships and their intra-psychic impact, remain relevant. Fanon acknowledges the rootedness of his own work in his temporal context and states in *Black skins white masks* that "The architecture of [his] work is rooted in the temporal. Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time" (Fanon, 1986, p. 5). However, as a Martinican living in Algeria and working as a psychiatrist, his work as a postcolonial theorist is said to be as important and relevant today as it was during the 1950s and 1960s (Gibson, 2011; Geoghan, 2012).

His work confronted the brutal asymmetrical power relationships of colonialism, critically interrogating these on levels of the psychological, social, material, cultural and political. Fanon's (1986) politics and struggle was "not that of socialism against capitalism but that of poor against rich and, at some level, the derided racial category of 'blackness' against that of 'whiteness', African culture versus European" (Hook, 2004, p.123). As a post-colonial critique, his work brings together many philosophical, psychological and cultural theories with personal anecdotes and illustrations from practice relevant to the colonial context. In so doing, Fanon lays bare the "forms of discrimination and disempowerment that would have otherwise remained effectively invisible, indiscernible, 'naturalised' within a society" (Hook, 2004, p. 123).

The impact of oppressive racist power relationships exerts a similar impact today as during the colonial era, from the perspective both of the similarity of these dynamics and through intergenerational transmission of collective trauma (Hoosain, 2018; Hilton, 2012; Masson and Harms-Smith, 2020). Fanon's key texts, all of a liberatory, anti-colonial and revolutionary nature, included *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952 translated into English in 1967,1968); *A Dying Colonialism* (1959 translated into English in 1965); *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961, translated into English in 1963) and *Toward the African Revolution* (1964, translated into English in 1969).

Fanon starts *Black Skin White Masks* (1986, p.1) with a quotation from Cesaire (1972), the anti-colonial theorist and his former teacher: "I am talking of millions of men [sic] who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement." His work is described as seminal, a key text, a bible of the anti-colonial liberation movements, a theory of the psychic life of colonial man [sic], and one of the most important contributions to anti-colonial studies, liberation and revolutionary social change (McCulloch, 2002; Burawoy, 2011; Flores-Rodríguez & Jordan, 2012; Guegan, 2015). When regarded in this way, his work clearly has an extensive reach, both contextually, politically and philosophically.

When considering critical pedagogy as an important project of liberatory education in social work, its value in providing experiential learning for social work students for their work with people at all levels of practice, is immense. McLaren (2002, p. 69) argues that the position of critical theorists is that people are “essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege”, and that the critical educator engages with theories that see societal problems as relating to the interaction between individual struggles those of the social structure (McLaren, 2002), for the critical social work practitioner, it is therefore those emancipatory experiences in the ‘classroom’ context that inform the strategies and content of what is required in the context of practice. With respect to the oppressive nature of ongoing coloniality, race-, class-, and gender-based socio-economic inequality, intersections of oppression, and institutional and structural racism, it is argued here that Fanon’s many propositions provide a rich and valuable resource for critical engagement with these conditions. These include for example psychopolitics and sociogeny; the impact of colonisation; internalised oppression; negritude; disalienation and liberation; the importance of affect; and an attitude of decoloniality, provide rich ground for liberatory and conscientizing encounters in an environment of critical pedagogy and critical social work.

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Frantz Omar Fanon was born on the 20th of July 1925 in Fort de France, Martinique. Bulhan (2004, p. 15) states that Fanon was “inextricably bound to the social dialectic he studied and sought to transform”. His own lived experience as a colonial subject in Martinique and later France and Algeria, encountering the destructive and dehumanising racism of colonialism and the psychological trauma of denigration of identity, language and culture, provoked a consciousness that a “comprehensive understanding of racist trauma under colonialism is unthinkable without attention to psychological *and* political processes” (Desai, 2014, p. 64). Having grown up in Martinique with a strong French identity, Fanon’s family the World War II period was transformative. Experiencing severe anti-black racism by the occupying French soldiers, he later, together with other Caribbean volunteers for France experienced “personal humiliation and disillusionment” on the ships transporting them to North Africa. As Antillean soldiers in Casablanca they were treated by local white settlers as wild savages or at best domesticated servants (Bulhan, 2004).

Fanon was also influenced by the philosophy of negritude and the challenge of Aime Cesaire (who had also been one of his school teachers); namely, “Black was not only beautiful, he

declared, but the heart of such darkness - Africa - was also its majestic center at which aesthetic and spiritual emancipation awaits" (Gordon, 2015, p. 11). Fanon, at seventeen, driven by his commitment to liberty for all, joined the French army to fight in Algeria, "witnessing colonial oppression of a sort he had never seen before, and then in Eastern France where he discovered the meaning of metropolitan racism" (Burawoy, 2011, p. 3) in the sense that he encountered racist disregard for his French status as a Martinican and interiorization as a black man. Having experienced such racist humiliation and indignity for black soldiers fighting for France, Fanon turned to radical politics after his return to Martinique (Gordon, 2015).

It is however the period when he returned to France to study medicine and psychiatry in Lyon, France, that he encountered what is described as traumatogenic racialisation through alienation and inferiorisation as a colonial subject (Burman, 2016). These experiences led him to reflect on and investigate the pathologies of colonized-coloniser encounters and racist structures (Desai, 2014) using individual psychological analyses within the context of socio-political structures (Desai, 2014; Hook, 2004). The work that would later become his book *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*, published in 1952 when he was 27 years old, was initially proposed as the content of his thesis. However, this was turned down by his doctoral supervisor and so he went on to produce his new thesis on "Mental Illness and Psychiatric Syndromes in Hereditary Cerebral Spinal Degeneration" within two weeks (Gordon, 2015).

Fanon arrived in Algeria in 1953 after accepting a position as a Psychiatrist at the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric hospital, at a time when it was beginning to engage in the violent anti-colonial struggle and revolution against France. His role at the hospital was such that he became head where he encountered the lived experiences of patients in the hospital and it is said that "through his patients he vicariously experiences the traumas of colonial violence" (Burawoy, 2011, p.3). His exposure to the oppressive inequality and racist treatment of the Algerian people by the French and their brutal and repressive response to the uprisings, led him to support the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) from 1954 and later resign his post as psychiatrist in 1956 to join the liberation struggle and become one of its leading figures (Sardar, 2008). He is said to have chosen to fight injustice, and "viewed the revolutionary insurrection in Algeria as the logical consequence of an attempt to oppress, decerebralise and alienate an entire people" (Lamri, 2019, p.1). After his expulsion from Algeria in 1956 he left for Tunis to continue his psychiatric work and become an ambassador for the FLN in various parts of North and West Africa. He died of leukemia in 1961, before Algeria's independence.

KEY TRANSFORMATIVE AND CRITICAL CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

There are many reasons for claiming the importance of Fanon's work today. Among the contributions of his work to liberatory and critical anti-racist praxis, is its psychopolitical emphasis. This emphasis provides a psychological analysis of the political which explores the significance of the socio-political and departs from traditional western psychoanalytical perspectives (McCulloch, 1983; Hook, 2004). Fanon foregrounds questions such as "cultural dispossession, colonial violence, racism and racial identity" (Hook, 2004, p. 123).

The nature of colonisation and coloniality as a form of racist brutalization, is described by Fanon as being related to the way in which it was a "systematic negation of the other and a frenzied determination to deny any attribute of humanity to millions of people" (Fanon, 1963, p. 82). The relationship between the colonizer and the colonised is one of domination and negation of humanity of the colonized (Fanon, 1963, p. 195).

Fanon provides a descriptive analysis, using a phenomenological approach which includes socio-politic realities, describing his own lived experiences as well as those of his patients. He is influenced by a large number of theorists including Sartre, Hegel, Marx, His analysis exposes and addresses the problems of racist colonialism and the way in which structural dominance is maintained through the racist structures of Europe (Sardar, 2008); it emphasises the need for continuous action to transcend the reality of the inhumanity of racist exploitation; it warns of complacency against the "European unconscious ... and the idea of progress where everyone climbs up towards whiteness and light and is engulfed by a single, monolithic notion of what it means to be human" (Sardar, 2008, p. xix); and it provides mechanisms for the achievement of humanisation and decoloniality through resistance against structurally determined internalised and material oppression.

Psychopolitics and sociogeny

Fanon's (1986) contribution to understanding, resisting and challenging the brutality of racist colonialism that was, and continues to be, imposed on 'black'¹ people, lies in his resolution of the

¹ Aimée Césaire was a celebrated anti-colonial Martinican philosopher, writer, politician and revolutionary and regarded as one of the foremost French poets of the 20th century. He was a friend and mentor of Fanon's. His book, *Discourse on Colonialism* is regarded as seminal in relation to *negritude* (Hobbs, 2018). This work presented the horrors and brutality of colonialism, and the role of negritude, surrealism and a revised form of Marxism in the achievement of humanisation.

dichotomy between the psychological and the political. Fanon (1986) explains that the struggles of 'black'² people are far better explained by a socio-political framework than by individual psychological factors and goes on to introduce the idea of sociogeny – that which is to be found between approaches of the specific individual and the structural or political. The psycho-political framework should be “with reference to violence, power and subordination” (Hook, 2004, p. 85). Fanon’s (1986) work demonstrates how the human psyche is closely linked to sociopolitical and historical forces. Not only does Fanon’s psychopolitics mean that psychology should be expanded to explore the political, but “a second route of psychopolitics lies in employing psychological concepts and explanations to describe and illustrate the workings of power” (Hook, 2004, p.115)

In order to understand the alienation and oppression of the black colonised person, Fanon (1986) proposes a sociogenic approach, which he describes as that which lies between the phylogenic (study of a species’ evolutionary development as a whole) and ontogenic approaches (the focus on the individual, specific experience). He maintains that Freud’s psychoanalysis was such an attempt to substitute the phylogenic approach with an ontogenetic, individual perspective. However, he argues that neither of these positions is adequate, and argues that “It will be seen that the black man’s alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny ... let us say that this is a question of a sociodiagnostic” (Fanon, 1986, p. 4).

The dichotomy of agency and structure is therefore dealt with by a sociogenic approach. It is no longer necessary to adopt an either/or approach to social change and liberation from oppressive power relationships, as the ‘sociodiagnostic’ or sociogenic position of understanding provides for the interaction between the individual and the structural. Gordon (2005, p. 2) explains that “the sociogenic pertains to what emerges from the social world, the intersubjective world of culture, history, language, economics” that is brought about by human beings. It is these social structures that are the cause of the internal conflict (Fanon, 1986, p. 75).

Impact of Colonisation

² The use of racialised categories are used in keeping with Fanon’s writing. However, the terms are placed in single quotation marks to acknowledge that ‘race’ and its labels are contested and constructed terms. Furthermore, Fanon’s writing is gendered as masculine, and where this is evident in direct quotations, it is denoted as such by the insertion of [sic] to denote the author’s disagreement with the style.

Fanon (1986) demonstrates that 'the colonial encounter is unprecedented: the epistemic, cultural, psychic and physical violence of colonialism makes for a unique type of historical trauma' (Hook, 2012, p. 17). The colonised therefore became psychologically, physically and materially dehumanised through colonisation. This was achieved through violent colonial conquest which included annexure of land and people, together with "hypocritical Euro-centricity that justified the negation of the Other, thus alienating the mind and spirit" (Guegan, 2015, p. 169). Fanon (1963, p. 249) therefore argued that "Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality, who am I?"

Wa 'Thiongo (1986) similarly describes the most important area of colonisation as that of the control of "the mental universe of the colonised", which meant the destruction and undervaluing of their language and culture, and of how they perceived themselves. This meant the "destruction and deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser" (Wa'Thiongo, 1986, p.16).

That the domination and exploitation of colonisation was achieved through violence is regarded by Burawoy (2011) as the first of his 'theses on colonialism', which analyse the domination of colonialism, the struggles against it and its overthrow. He states that for Fanon, in *Black skin white masks* (1963), the colonial is characterised by segregation, dehumanisation and dispossession of land and that it is only through revolution which transforms consciousness and builds solidarity that the colonial order can be overthrown.

It is useful however, to explore the difference between colonialism and Coloniality. Maldonado-Torres (2017) maintains that colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. It is this Coloniality, as ongoing relations of power asymmetry, that remains present and ubiquitous in the world today.

Internalised oppression

Burawoy (2011, p. 13) argues that the idea of internalised oppression relates to a "psychoanalytical understanding of the internal dynamics of racial domination in which the

colonized internalizes the social structure and wrestles to find his or her place in that structure". It is important, however, to note that Fanon's understanding of the development of a so-called 'inferiority complex' resulting from racialization is not an internal, pathological process arising from within the racialized individual but rather as "a pathologizing forces that, while they infect black bodies, do not come from within them, but are rather produced and circulated in the situation of colonial racism" (Whitney, 2015, p. 50).

Internalisation of oppression and racialisation is a process engaging both intrapsychic and socio-political processes. The dynamics through which colonial oppressors exert dominating and subordinating power is through the restriction of material resources and "by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves" (Prilleltensky and Gonick, 1996, p.130). Oppression at the intrapsychic level is therefore interlinked and affected by the structural and political forces at the interpersonal level, exacerbated by the use of force when attempts are made to challenge authority (Prilleltensky and Gonick, 1996).

Internalization is furthermore said to occur not only at an individual level, but also with respect to the colonised country collectively. Sadar (2008, p. ix) argues in the forward to *Black skin white masks* that the colonial context of struggle meant that a colonised country had "lost its own cultural bearings and internalized the idea of the inherent superiority of the colonizing culture." This may be seen as a form of genuflection to such Western/American/European cultures. Much work around particularly epistemic decoloniality relates to for example positioning Africa as the centre and 'provincialising' or 'indigenising' Europe' as a strategy to reclaim histories and narratives of the previously colonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This is not a process of rejection of all that is western, and as this process unfolds and the richness of culture, history and language is embraced and celebrated, that which is of value should be chosen and incorporated.

Negritude

Although Fanon at times acknowledged the importance of negritude as a movement as a "subjectively necessary counter to the psychologically damaging influence of colonial deculturation" (McCulloch, 2002, p. 50), he also dismissed it as a social force because it inadequately addresses the material conditions of social and economic inequality. He is also said to have been ambivalent towards the movement, as he disagreed with it as a response to the problems of black identity, as racialisation had been imposed by the colonial order (McCulloch, 1983). However, later in his writing, in *Wretched of the earth*, he acknowledged that the

reclaiming of a “worthwhile historical past” and national culture was important, especially for black intellectuals (McCulloch, 2002). In keeping with his sociogenic approach, the value of negritude is to be found both for the psychological struggle of colonial subjugation as well as for the solidarity that promotes the demands for structural social change (McCulloch, 2002).

Fanon’s (1963) view described in *The wretched of the earth*, about the value of the negritude movement is that it has a rehabilitative function to claiming historical national culture as a way of providing hope for a national culture in the future. Fanon argues that it also important for achieving “psycho-affective equilibrium” (McCulloch, 2002, p. 49). Fanon therefore seems to have supported the philosophy of negritude for its temporary therapeutic value. This includes the importance of reclaiming narratives and rewriting history to counter that which was imposed by colonising nations.

In colonizer/colonized situations, it is argued as part such a therapeutic phase, the subjugated group develops an “essentialist identity to promote group pride and unity, to advance and achieve specific, socio-political goals, and to foster healing” (Spivak, 2006, cited by Nielson, 2011, p. 372). Fanon, problematising negritude for its essentialising blackness, is able to reject these essentialized notions and agree with the central aspects of Césaire’s Negritude, which include “the development and continued fostering of a positive, black, social identity, a non-repetitive ‘return’ to and ongoing reappropriation of African values, and a revolutionary call to decolonization” (Nielson, 2011, p. 372).

Fanon (1963) towards the end of *Wretched of the earth* writes about the importance of the embrace of culture in such processes. He argues that the struggle for liberation and emancipation from dehumanising colonial oppression, cannot be successfully achieved, “save in the expression of exceptionally rich forms of culture...[and that] the future of national culture and its riches are equally also part and parcel of the values which have ordained the struggle for freedom” (Fanon, 1963, p. 246).

Disalienation and liberation

Fanon (1986), in his introduction to *Black skin white masks* explains the importance of the recognition of both social and economic realities in the process of disalienation. He argues against the existence of an inferiority complex situated and produced internally within the psyche of a black person. He writes that the so-called inferiority complex arises from both the external reality of economic oppression as well as its psychological internalisation, that “the

effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization or, better, the epidermalization— of this inferiority” (Fanon, 1986, p. 4). Wynter (1999, p. 12) argues that what must then be understood is that the internal psychological condition of inferiority arises from material realities and that “the second part of the process [i.e. internalisation] is no less objectively structured, even where subjectively experienced, than is the first [i.e. economic]” (Wynter, 1999, p. 12).

As described in the section on sociogenic analysis, this alienation of the ‘black’ person is not only an individual problem and cannot be explained in only psychoanalytic (or ontogenetic) terms (Wynter, 1999). The ‘black’ person will therefore be able to achieve liberation only if war may be waged at two levels - at the material and structural level manifested in the socioeconomic, and at the level of the sociogenic (Fanon, 1986). Because each level has historically impacted and shaped the other, Wynter (1999, p. 13) argues that resolution at only one level would be incomplete and that “a solution will have to be supplied both at the objective level of the socioeconomic, as well as at the level of subjective experience, of consciousness, and therefore, of identity”.

Fanon (1963) emphasises the depth of struggle of alienation at the level of racist economic exploitation in *Black skin white masks*. He compares the alienation experienced by for example a black doctor at an ‘almost intellectual level’ where he regards European culture as a means of being rid of his racialisation, with that of a black person who is “a victim of a system based on the exploitation of a given race by another, on the contempt in which a given branch of humanity is held by a form of civilization that pretends to superiority” (Fanon, 1963, p. 224). It is this depth of alienation that must be struggled against through a “refusal to accept the present as definitive” (Fanon, 1963, p. 226) in order to achieve disalienation and true liberation

Importance of affect in experiences of racialised oppression and racism

Ideas about the micro and structural onslaught and aggression of racism and particularly colonial racism, frequently elide the depth of psychic pain and deep affective injury (Charania, 2019).

Fanon (1986; 1963) himself frequently expresses his own anger and in this regard Sadar (2008) states that “This anger is not a spontaneous phenomenon. It is no gut reaction, or some recently discovered passion for justice and equity. Rather, it is an anger borne out of grinding experience, painfully long self-analysis, and even longer thought and reflection.”

Colonisation and post-colonial racism and dehumanisation as powerful forms of damage an intrapsychic level is experienced at both a cognitive and affective level. Hage (2012) argues that Fanon's theory was grounded on the inclusion of the affective dimension in the analysis of the psychological and political. These experiences impact on the psyche of both the individual and the collective. Fanon, in his psychoanalytical positioning, argues that these racialising and racist experiences which accompany the negation of being, occur so overtly and at such conscious levels, that they do not find relief through the usual western 'white' psychological mechanisms of suppression into the unconscious through neuroses (Fanon, 1986). It is evident therefore that experiencing and recalling such oppressive racism will of necessity occur at both a cognitive and affective level, and thus be accompanied by strong emotions.

Fanon (1986) argues that psychopathology in the colonised person is a product of their particular socio-cultural reality that results from the colonial experience of racialisation, inferiorisation and negation of being. The hyper-arousal or affective erethism that may manifest, are part of the response to this culturally induced situation. He explains the development of inferiorisation and negation of being, through alienation from the self, as being related to the world of postulates and propositions. These confront the 'black' child and adult "that slowly and subtly - with the help of books, newspapers, schools and their texts, advertisements, films, radio - work their way into one's mind and shape one's view of the world of the group to which one belongs. In the Antilles, that view of the world is white because no black voice exists" (Fanon, 1986, p. 118). This colonial racialisation and inferiorisation thus gives rise to a deep psychic pain of otherness and dehumanisation at both an individual and collective level.

Zembylas (2012, p. 116) maintains that Fanon provides a most powerful depiction of racializing and racist embodiment and affectivity, and cites Srivastava (2008) in arguing that such accounts expose the "deep emotional undercurrents and foundations of racial conflict". Hook (2005) too highlights the role of the affective, and argues that colonisation and racialisation are phenomena that are as political as they are affective, discursive, psychological, and ideological. These affective states in the current context, are often contested and challenged by dominant groups as too emotional (Essed, 1991, p. 282)

Importance of an Attitude of Decoloniality

Fanon (1986) argues that the collective unconscious and attitudes are not formed by cerebral heredity, but are acquired by cultural imposition collectively – and in the case of the colonised,

the denigration of all that is 'black' and an extolling of all that is 'white' and European: "...the collective unconscious, without our having to fall back on the genes, is purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group (Fanon, 1986, p.145). This attitude is therefore not a psychological reaction that develops within the individual alone, but as Maldonado-Torres (2017, p 434) argues, arises from structural conditions and power struggles: "for Fanon, social structures both reflect and reinforce collective attitudes, both of which play a role in the formation of subjectivity." This subjectivity is therefore reflective of an attitude of Coloniality, imposed by the structural forces of inferiorisation and materiality in which the individual and the collective find themselves.

It is from this perspective of both the subjective, internal disposition as well as the collective response to structural realities, that Fanon (1986) stresses the importance of 'attitude' as a means to achieve liberation from all that is imposed onto the psyche of the colonised. In fact, Fanon appeals for a development of an Attitude of Decoloniality rather than a focus on a method or strategy for achieving transformation and liberation from coloniality (Fanon, 1968; Maldonado-Torres, 2017).

This attitude of Decoloniality, which arises through both action and reflection, is demonstrated by Fanon (1963), who shows the importance of both action and intellectual reflection through his witnessing of and direct involvement in the anti-colonial struggle, and in his writings (Guegan, 2015). Freire (1972) similarly describes this circular process of action, reflection and action as praxis and essential for the development of critical conscientisation in order for liberation and humanisation can be achieved.

FACILITATION OF EMANCIPATORY TRANSFORMATION IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The importance of Fanon's (1986; 1963) work as a holistic approach to work with people living in conditions of socio-economic inequality, hardship, and oppressive, racist social structures, cannot be overemphasised. The applicability and strength of Fanon's work is to be found in the sociogenic or psycho-political emphasis: it is neither only the individual intrapsychic, nor only the political context that is deemed crucial to understanding – it is the interplay between both (Hook, 2004; McCulloch, 2002). The dichotomy of agency and structure; micro and macro or clinical and structural approaches is eliminated as the practitioner is guided to a critical understanding and consciousness of both the political context and psychological dynamics of the person and the collective.

In the South African context more specifically, social work is indicted with a general focus, historically, on status quo maintenance and colonising knowledge and practice (Harms Smith, 2014). The Apartheid era acted as a silencing of those social work voices that challenged and resisted, “contributing to the ongoing colonising nature of social work itself” (Harms-Smith and Nathane, 2018, p.15). Despite a transformation of the welfare system towards a developmental approach after the end of the liberation struggle and transition to democracy, ongoing inequality stratified by race, transformative and liberating social work has been constrained by neoliberal economic policies (Sewpaul, 2006)

It is also argued that so-called ‘indigenisation’ and Africanisation merely obfuscate the underlying conservative and colonial nature of knowledge generally (Mbember, 2015), and social work knowledge and discourse specifically (Harms-Smith and Nathane, 2018; Mathebane and Sekudu, 2017); “What is required is a transformed curriculum committed to a position of decoloniality” (Harms-Smith and Nathane, 2018, p.15).

Taking into account ideologies underlying and supporting social work, as well as the historical complicity of social work with conservative and oppressive practices (Smith, 2008; Harms Smith, 2013), social work knowledge and discourse may be described as being positioned on a continuum from domesticating, oppressive and colonising, through to revolutionary, radical and anti-colonial (See Figure 1 below).

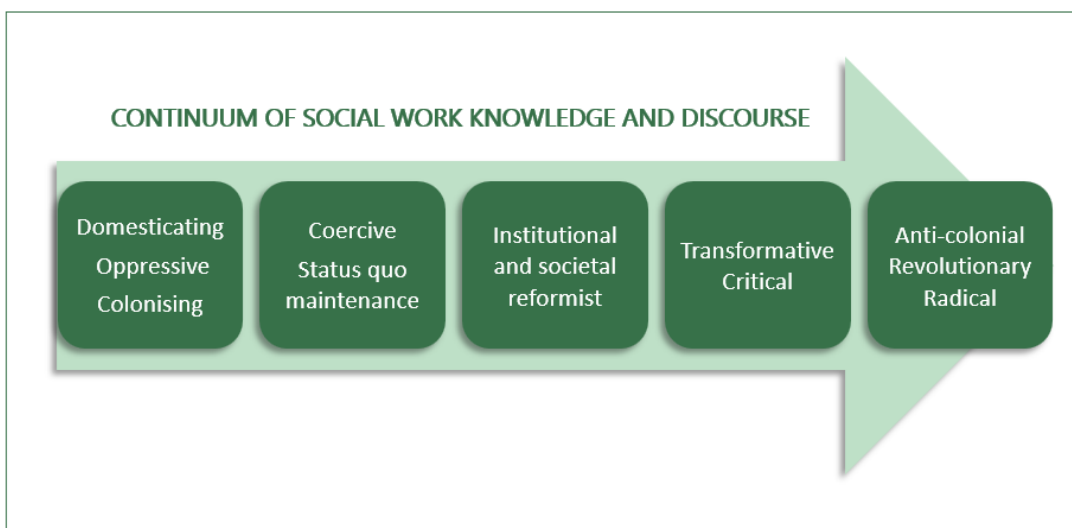


Figure One: Continuum of social work knowledge and discourse (Harms-Smith, 2013)

It is crucial therefore that as students are prepared for social work practice through the theory and discourse of their curriculum, that they are exposed to appropriate critical and anti-colonial

content (Harms-Smith and Nathane, 2018), not only at a cognitive but also at an experiential level. However, where students themselves live within a post-colonial context and realities of socio-economic inequality and intergenerational transmission of collective trauma, they will need to work through issues of Coloniality and internalised oppression (Smith, 2008; Harms-Smith and Nathane, 2018). Developing an attitude of Decoloniality (Fanon, 1968) is therefore critical. Using Fanon's concepts to engage with individuals, families or communities therefore enables social work practice that has the potential to be transformative, decolonising and liberatory. However, it is social work students themselves that need to experience the development of an attitude of decoloniality; critical conscientisation about their own internalised oppression and other materialist/structural? oppression at all levels; explore racism and anti-racist positions; explore the mutuality of intrapersonal and structural dynamics; and reclaim narratives, cultural histories and languages as a means of centring the local (African-centred).

Sociogenic analysis

A focus on internalised oppression and 'colonisation of the mind' must of necessity also pay attention to the material reality of oppressive socio-economic structures. Such efforts must include work towards change in these conditions. Working on a project for example, of community development in the context of material conditions of severe poverty, cannot therefore engage only with people's attitudes and behaviours. Working towards facilitating the development of a critical consciousness and understanding of the conditions in which people live, is insufficient if there are no projects of advocacy that challenge injustice perpetuated for example by local government.

Students, during their field placements, often encounter the realities of gross, socio-economic inequality and suffering of whole communities living in so-called informal settlement areas (not formal housing but small plots of allocated land with basic sewerage services and perhaps a running tap at every fifth plot), and are therefore often impelled to explore socio-economic and structural factors contributing to these conditions beyond the individualist, intra-personal explanations of the causes of problems. Fanon's sociogenic analysis serves them well in developing understanding of these contexts.

Reclaiming historical narratives and celebrating cultural practices and languages

Black consciousness and negritude, seen as part of a process of reclaiming cultures, narratives, histories and language as well as dignity and pride, are an important part of critical Decoloniality

work both in social work education, as well as in practice. For any individual, group or community struggling with dynamics of oppression and racism, the development of pride and celebration of culture is crucial. The imposition of western universalism and inferiorisation of culture, is wholly implicated in the dynamics of oppression and racism. In post-colonial contexts, where western culture and language remain dominant, and local cultural practices and languages are repressed, this becomes important anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice. As part of developing an attitude of Decoloniality, cultural practices, histories and languages that are seen to be 'indigenous' should be reframed as valid, with the imposed cultural practices and languages reframed as being indigenous to contexts of origin (Ndlove-Gatsheni, 2018). Emancipatory social work education, if it is to facilitate an attitude of Decoloniality within social work students, and in turn within the communities where they intervene, requires the celebration and embracing of culture. There should however be caution in such efforts at reclaiming culture and histories not to be framed as 'indigenisation', 'celebration of diversity' and 'cultural competence' which provide a liberal mask for dominance, 'othering' and racism (Pon, 2009). In post-colonial contexts where Western knowledge systems have been imposed, denigrating local culture, traditions and histories, these narratives must be reclaimed and centred, in order for these to take central positions within these societal contexts. It is only after such a process of Decoloniality that external, Euro-centric and Western influences should be re-incorporated (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

The role of language, as a bearer of culture, is exceptionally important. Where educators, for example, are not fluent in first languages of students, higher education institution language communication policies, such as proficiency of educators in such languages or presence of interpreters in the classroom setting, may need to be revisited. Failing adequate arrangements, there should be discussions around these issues.

The importance of engaging with the affective

Critical interventions around oppression, internalised racism and inferiority that seek to facilitate an attitude of Decoloniality, will of necessity connect with the emotional aspects attached to these issues. Zembylas (2012, p.117) describes the need to acknowledge and explore the "emotional undercurrents and foundations of race and racism, and develop pedagogical strategies to unearth the powerful affective component in the ubiquitous manifestations of racial practices". Especially in the presence of institutional racism, the encouragement of discussion and development of consciousness may be resisted and denied among 'white' students or

community members and elicit strong emotions. Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue that a pedagogy of discomfort is required in order to explore the emotional aspects of racism, whether in the role of the recipient or perpetrator of racism.

It is imperative that 'black' students or community members are able to express the depth of psychic pain and anger that is part of their daily living and experience. Any process of working towards Decoloniality or anti-racism must include attention to the affective dimensions of the experience of being in the position of the oppressed and the oppressor. In the South African context, where historic colonial and apartheid oppression divided communities according to categorisations of colour, all those categorised as not being 'white' were structurally and institutionally discriminated against. While there is thus an ongoing need for the celebration of cultural diversity, this does not achieve to anti-racism (Nylund, 2006; Pon, 2009)

During class discussion and individual and group activities, the value of personal individual reflection and then sharing in a group context, of early experiences of discrimination and racism lead to emotional self-disclosures. Students discover the validity of anger at their own experiences of racist oppression and racially stratified socio-economic inequality. Rather than having to minimise, control and 'soften' their own emotional responses, these kinds of exercises allow for a cathartic expression of what is often repressed emotional pain (Smith, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Working towards Decoloniality beyond the context of social work education, means that conscientisation, resistance and challenge of oppressions arising from ongoing Coloniality of power; political conflict; the impact of global neoliberalism; right wing conservatism and racism should be ongoing. Social work ideals around social justice, human and non-human animal dignity, care for the planet and the belief that a better world is possible, must be sustained and it is for this reason that a pedagogy of hope must be retained.

The revolutionary potential of Fanon's work as a critical theorist for a critical pedagogy of hope lies in its contextual and temporal relevance – for post-colonial and socially unjust contexts. Interrogating and engaging with some of his thinking, offers important material for students' own journeys through the consequences and impact of historical colonisation and ongoing coloniality – in their roles and identities as oppressors and oppressed, privileged and disadvantaged. These opportunities for engagement at a cognitive and affective level, offer experiences of liberatory education. The dynamics of historic colonial racism evident in ongoing

power asymmetries of Coloniality which extend beyond but include those related to race, demand interrogation, resistance and challenge. As stated by Freire (1972), no education is neutral and so it is with critical pedagogy, that students may be introduced to conscientisation around dynamics and processes of oppressive power relationships, Decoloniality, and liberation from personal and collective oppression. In so doing, these students may be equipped to intervene in similar contexts. With Decoloniality currently being a global imperative, neglecting Fanon in social work education would mean that social work finds itself on the domesticating, oppressive and colonising side of the continuum of knowledge, discourse and practice, while it is called upon to provide hope and strategies for radical and even revolutionary change. Fanon urged generations to come, to strive towards humanisation and liberation and argued that “each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it” (1963, p.206). It is the discovery and working towards fulfilment of this mission that is essential for relevant and transformative social work.

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