



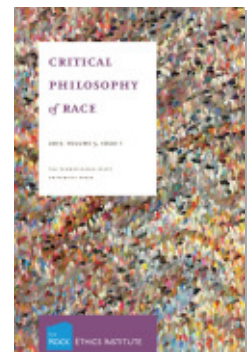
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Snow-Blind in a Blizzard of Their Own Making: Bodies of Structural Harmony and White Male Negrophobes in the Work of Frantz Fanon

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Critical Philosophy of Race, Volume 5, Issue 1, 2017, pp. 91-113 (Article)



Published by Penn State University Press

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**SNOW-BLIND IN A  
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*Bodies of Structural  
Harmony and White Male  
Negrophobes in the Work  
of Frantz Fanon*

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**CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF RACE,**  
**VOL. 5, NO. 1, 2017**  
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**Abstract**

Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* is an analysis of lived experience, experiences supported or inhibited by our group, and individual interactions with the world. Present in the text is an accounting of the lived experiences of Negrophobic white males. Fanon argues that Negrophobic white males live their bodies and their worlds inauthentically, as improperly limited possibilities. He finds that the Negrophobic white male's body operates as a body of "structural harmony." The Negrophobe tries to use his interactions with others to delude himself into believing that his body is the pinnacle of agency. The Negrophobe is troubled by guilt. Projecting, what he sees as, his socially acceptable characteristics onto fellow white males and projecting, what he sees as, his socially unacceptable characteristics onto black males allows the Negrophobic white male to perpetuate the lie that he is the pinnacle of innocence. Removing this mythical blackness into the background of his world would allow the Negrophobe to exist in a world that is all white. He would be white. All of the Other people in this world would be white. And, they would all be innocent.

In this world the prevalence of whiteness would mean that the Negrophobe and his guilt could not be seen because everyone would be suffering from snow-blindness.

**Keywords:** Race and racism, bad faith, Frantz Fanon, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre

### **Bodies of Structural Harmony**

Frantz Fanon describes bodies of structural harmony, “In other words, there is a certain structural harmony, a sum of the individual and of the constructions through which he goes at every stage of the psychotic behavior.”<sup>1</sup> He conceptualizes bodies of structural harmony as a defense mechanism employed by white Negrophobic males against the guilt that white society instills in all of its members.<sup>2</sup> Fanon argues that some pathologies persist via the creation of, and adherence to, a fantastical self-image. Bodies of structural harmony are articulated when a body—as a means of fleeing its anxiety—uses itself, time, the objects in its world (e.g. things and other bodies), and the dynamics of its society to falsely imagine itself as the apex of an aspect of existence. Under the spell of a delusion, the Negrophobe assigns his body absolute virility. He then impregnates the bodies of similar others—the bodies of those that he finds similar to himself, the bodies of other white males—with the same characteristics. The resulting harmony between bodies serves as evidence of his delusion.

This illusion is delicate. Fanon defines the white world as a “rigified” world,<sup>3</sup> and he says “The white man is sealed in his whiteness.”<sup>4</sup> With bodies of structural harmony the Negrophobe deliriously interprets his body as the pinnacle of virility. So, the appearance of a body greater than his, a body that exhibits greater agency, hinders the Negrophobe’s ability to “seal” or “close” his body, to see his body as the zenith of possibility. Confrontation with a body of greater agency destroys the Negrophobe’s delusional world “[The] Negro, because of his body, impedes the closing of the postural schema of the [Negrophobe]—at the point, naturally, at which the black man makes his entry into the phenomenal world of the [Negrophobe].”<sup>5</sup> What are the foundations of this fragile, delusional harmony and its destruction?

Frantz Fanon’s work provides important answers to important questions. But, in some cases, a fully developed answer is not immediately linked to the question that birthed it. He writes “This is not the place in which to state the conclusions I drew from studying the influence

exerted on the body by the appearance of another body.”<sup>6</sup> A more accurate phrasing would be “This is not the place in which to state the conclusions I drew from studying the influence exerted on *bodies* by the appearance of other *bodies*.” Rather than a criticism of Fanon’s translator, this new phrasing of my own making is intended to reflect the vast scope of Fanon’s analysis of socio-existential dynamics. Fanon examines how race, sex, sexuality, gender, nationality, and other dynamics produce bodies. And, he examines how various bodies react to the appearance of various other bodies. At the forefront of his analysis are the reactions of masculine, heterosexual, black, male bodies to the appearance of other bodies. Central to this primary analysis is an analysis of the reactions of white male bodies.

Fanon highlights the lived experience of two types of white males: racist white males and non-racist white males. The former project what they see as their own negative characteristics onto racial others as a means of imagining themselves to be the pinnacle of innocence and virility. The latter do not. Chapter six of *Black Skin, White Masks*, “The Negro and Psychopathology,” provides a statement about white psychopathology (i.e., the origins of the Negrophobe). Human beings come into this world with natural drives (e.g., sexual drives, desire for freedom, etc.). But, white society, in an effort to maintain its economic imperatives and achieve social control, uses socially constructed anxieties such as the Oedipus complex to make all of its members feel guilty about these natural drives. To defend themselves against this guilt, many of the members (white and black) of white society project their natural drives onto blackness. These same members infuse their own bodies and the bodies that they find similar to their own bodies with innocence. This process is problematic for the Negrophobe because the Negrophobe wants to view himself as the pinnacle of virility and innocence. This means that the Negrophobe must discharge his own weakness and guilt. Non-normative sexual impulses are a source of guilt. So, the Negrophobe projects all non-normative sexual impulses onto a mythical blackness, the blackness of his white imagination, a blackness that is far removed from the real lived experiences of black people. But, in the white world, non-normative sexual impulses are signs of virility. Making black males the sole reservoir of non-normative sexual drives means that, in the eyes of the Negrophobe, the black male is the pinnacle of virility. However, the Negrophobe can maintain both his sense of innocence and his sense of being the zenith of virility by adjusting mythical blackness’ position in his existential world.<sup>7</sup>

Fanon shows how structural harmony acts as a defense mechanism against individually and socially induced guilt. However, he does not explain the specific existential dynamics underlying structural harmony. For Fanon, existence develops in the context of possibility. He seeks to help people “take cognizance of a possibility of existence. . . . [The human being], once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, will [be] in a position to *choose* action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of conflict—that is, toward the social structures.”<sup>8</sup> An important existential question in respect to structural harmony is “How does the Negrophobe use structural harmony to flee his possibilities of acting or not acting in respect to the social structure that is responsible for his situation?”

This question can best be answered in respect to Fanon’s approach to praxis. Fanon writes that praxis demands a “total understanding.”<sup>9</sup> And, scholars have highlighted Fanon’s emphasis on the importance of the interaction of the individual and social dimensions to praxis.<sup>10</sup> However, Fanon’s framing of existence in terms of the possibility of choosing from a number of possible actions shows that possibility is a third, and necessary aspect, of a “total understanding.” The Negrophobe’s lived experience is an explicit relationship to possibility. Fanon identifies the mythical notion of blackness that emerges in the imagination of all Negrohobbes “the Negro represents the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions.”<sup>11</sup> For the Negrophobe, the Negro is the embodiment of sin. In the Negrophobe’s world, innocence is the only possibility for whiteness, and sin is the only possibility for blackness.<sup>12</sup> In the Negrophobe’s world, it is impossible for him, or those like him, to sin. What are the existential underpinnings of this imagined condition?

*Black Skin, White Masks* has a phenomenological focus. Fanon’s conceptualization of phenomenology hinges upon “[finding the] meaning” of human actions; he believes that an individual’s interactions with others provide the “value-making superstructure [that informs that individual’s] whole vision of the world.”<sup>13</sup> A person’s phenomenological experiences can shape and be shaped by his interactions with culture and others.

In Fanon’s work, “lived experience” occurs via the body, the world, and time. The Fanonian body is conceptualized, as in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as a corporeal (i.e., “postural”) schema,<sup>14</sup> not a physical body, but a record of one’s experiences.<sup>15</sup> More specifically, a corporeal schema is a phenomenal body, a system that defines the possibilities of the individual.<sup>16</sup> The world is conceptualized as a “phenomenal world,” which

Merleau-Ponty defines as “the field of our experience”<sup>17</sup> and “a collection of things which emerge from a background of formlessness by presenting themselves to our body as ‘to be touched’, ‘to be taken’, ‘to be climbed over’.”<sup>18, 19</sup>

Fanon has a very clear statement on time. He writes,

The architecture of this work is rooted in the temporal. Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time. Ideally, the present will always contribute to the building of the [future of the people in question] . . . [a future connected] to the present to the extent that [these people] consider the present as something to be exceeded.<sup>20</sup>

Merleau-Ponty argues that an authentic articulation of the world requires a body that “[draws] together all [the objects of its world] in its one grip.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Fanon argues that the actor must shape his environment in a manner that is not predetermined; the actor must “make a meaning for [himself].”<sup>22</sup> However, some people seal their bodies in an effort to avoid the power of change that accompanies freedom.

Fanon also argues that the white world and the Negrophobe make all sin, white sin included, into a black thing. This bestows upon the Negrophobe the crown of innocence, leaving black people with a crown of thorns. Whiteness stands as the impossibility of any possibility. The modern world, “the white world,” is inauthentic. It is pre-determined through its Manichean nature; whiteness and blackness are its two opposite poles.<sup>23</sup> In this world “Everything is anticipated, thought out, demonstrated, made the most of.”<sup>24</sup> In this world, the white man is everywhere. At the individual level, the Negrophobe’s intransigence, his “total inability to liquidate the past once and for all,”<sup>25</sup> is the origin of his contributions to the white world.<sup>26</sup>

Surveying the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, and Fanon, Lewis R. Gordon argues that the existentialist approach entails framing “the lived body [as] the subject of agency”:<sup>27</sup> the individual lives his freedom as “embodied meaning.” In Fanon’s work, this approach revolves around authentic and inauthentic embodiment.<sup>28</sup> The authentic body is lived as unknown, open to possibility, while the inauthentic body is completely known.<sup>29</sup> Reading Fanon, Lewis Gordon finds that the white world is an “antiblack world.” In this world, it is bad to be black,

and the very best thing to be is a white masculine male.<sup>30</sup> This is the world in which the Negrophobe maintains his inauthentic body, and he uses bad faith to support his antiblack racism.

Human beings are free: we have choice as to how we will interact with the world. Yet, sometimes we deny our freedom. Such denials are acts of bad faith. Sartre defines bad faith as the practice of “hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth [in a situation wherein] it is from myself that I am hiding the truth.”<sup>31</sup> Bad faith is an attempt to evade the burdens of freedom.<sup>32</sup> Gordon states that the Negrophobe’s “racism is a form of lying about oneself and others that is nurtured and encouraged by the very institutions of racist society.”<sup>33</sup> This lie “[permeates] daily life,” deifying the Negrophobe, creating an antiblack world. Fanon adheres to this perspective.

Fanon exposes the individual and social motivations for antiblack racism. For Negrophobes (i.e., “duping [white men]”) racial oppression is a bad faith act that uses the defense mechanism of projection to obscure guilt: guilt concerning their possession of sexual impulses that society deems deviant, guilt concerning their own complicity in the ways in which this society oppresses them and people of color, and guilt due to their own hostility towards capitalist society. For capitalist society, racial oppression is a means of gathering resources and siphoning off the hostility towards capitalist society held by its members, including those who have been snowed in whiteness.

Fanon’s analysis of race has not “[played] a prominent role in discussions of whiteness”;<sup>34</sup> his take on the processes that lead to Negrophobia and its results, including the “dehumanization of whites,” have been ignored. Due to the different ways in which blacks and whites live their bodies, white bodily experiences cannot be directly interpreted through the lens that Fanon provides for black bodily experiences.<sup>35</sup> This is especially true given the Negrophobe’s ambivalent relationship with the black male body,<sup>36</sup> and since “for the Negrophobe, the black is not a symbol of certain negative realities. The black is those negative realities.”<sup>37</sup>

A close comparative reading of Fanon and some of his direct and indirect interlocutors—most importantly Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of body and world, and Jacques Lacan’s formulation of the mirror stage—provides the basis for a more detailed explication of bodies of structural harmony. The neurotic individual uses a mirror to affirm his delusional self-image. A close reading of Fanon shows that the Negrophobe engages in a more

complex scheme. Fanon conceptualizes time as the process through which individuals and groups carve out their specific future by exceeding their present. The Negrophobe seeks to lobotomize time via the eradication of possibility. He seeks to make his safe self-image his only possibility. The Negrophobe projects what he sees as his own characteristics onto black and white bodies in order to assert that he himself is free of guilt. He seeks to deceive himself into believing that it is impossible for him to perform the acts that are the basis of his guilt. This article argues that in his inauthentic embodiment, the Negrophobe creates a mirror world, a world of fantastically imagined objects that support his delusional self-image. Merleau-Ponty defines phenomenological horizons as the background that reveals existence. The Negrophobe and white society seek to alter the natural state of his world to the point where his world has no horizons. The Negrophobe seeks ironic invisibility. You cannot see a white thing when that thing is set against a white background.

### Sealed Bodies

The Negrophobe who articulates bodies of structural harmony is living his body as a sealed body. He seeks to avoid his body's true possibility by making absolute virility and absolute innocence its only possibilities. Fanon deplores inauthentic attempts to live one's body as an unchanging thing (i.e., inauthentic embodiment), attempts that are fundamentally impossible.<sup>38</sup> Such attempts are perpetuated by "[a sealed society, any] society that becomes rigidified in predetermined forms, forbidding all evolution, all gains, all progress, all discovery."<sup>39</sup> To live one's body as sealed is to be "sealed [in one's] own particularity."<sup>40</sup> Fanon observes, "The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black man is sealed in his blackness."<sup>41</sup> If a white person always positions himself as superior to those who are black, an act that includes always being different from those who are black, then this person is "sealed in [their] whiteness." If a black person always views himself as inferior to those who are white, an act that includes always being different from those who are white, then this person is "sealed in [their] blackness."<sup>42</sup> This superiority-inferiority matrix, a "dual narcissism," represents the crux of antiblack racism.<sup>43</sup>

Sartre argues that trying to exist as an unchanging entity is a bad faith response to anguish. Freedom leads to anguish. The individual realizes that



he and his world are not predetermined: he is “a being which is compelled to find the meaning of being—within [himself] and everywhere outside of [himself].”<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Fanon examines how living one’s body as sealed is a flight from anguish, a means of “duping” oneself into believing that one is not free. The two static conditions that combine to constitute “sealed” bodies (i.e., sealing one’s self in one’s own body and sealing the other in his own body) are heavily influenced by larger social conditions “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.”<sup>45</sup> Blacks are economically exploited by, and economically inferior to, whites. Alienation causes many blacks and whites to equate this economic relationship with a law about the relative values of black and white lives. This “alienation” at the heart of the internalization of the economic relationship leads to “narcissism,” which leads to the articulation of sealed bodies.

Fanon uses various conceptualizations of alienation and narcissism. In some cases, his use follows that of the prominent conceptualizations. However, in relation to his analysis of sealed bodies, his conceptualizations differ from the prominent theorizations of these concepts. According to G. W. F Hegel, alienation occurs when something’s “essential nature . . . is not present to it; on the contrary, it places it beyond itself.”<sup>46</sup> Karl Marx finds that alienating labor reflects the worker’s situation and condition, but it does not reflect the worker’s expression of its individuality (i.e. his/her “essential being”).<sup>47</sup> It reflects the worker’s denial of its “essential being.” Fanon’s uses of the word alienation are equivocal. Sometimes his use reflects Hegelian alienation: sometimes it reflects Marxist alienation. However, Fanon also employs a third type of alienation.

Fanon links sealed bodies to alienation. His first chapter offers his definition of the alienation at the heart of the internalization of the economic relationship of blacks to whites that stands as a basis of white society, a definition that identifies bad faith as the foundation of the inauthentic “black-white relation”: “I am speaking here, on the one hand of alienated (duped) blacks, and, on the other, of no less alienated (duping and duped) whites.”<sup>48</sup> The alienation at the heart of the internalization of the economic relationship is the act of living in the midst of a deception. Later on, Fanon makes it clear that alienated men, black and white, are also deceiving themselves.<sup>49</sup> Blacks retreat to inferiority, while whites retreat to superiority. Such alienation leads to narcissism “[the alienated individual] must put an end to the

narcissism on which he relies in order to imagine that he is different from the other ‘animals’.”<sup>50</sup>

Sigmund Freud’s conceptualization of narcissism finds that the individual, when faced with problems, focuses on himself through a withdrawal of his psychic energy from the external world and the investment of this energy into himself.<sup>51</sup> Marx asserts that the individual is “a species being.” The individual’s natural goal is to make the species the object of his labor as a means of improving the species.<sup>52</sup> Fanon agrees that “the individual should tend to take on the universality inherent in the human condition.”<sup>53</sup> Fanon argues that the individual should maintain a strong (but not complete) focus on the qualities that he shares with others, while, at the same time, attempting to improve the conditions faced by all.<sup>54</sup> According to Fanon a failure to do so is an act of narcissism.<sup>55</sup>

Fanon conceptualizes narcissism as a social and individual retreat from the external world towards a focus on the self.<sup>56</sup> Fanonian narcissism is carried out through living one’s body as a sealed body. The Negrophobe’s narcissism and its accompanying sealed bodies—bodies of structural harmony—emerge from the group and individual level dynamics that produce antiblack racism. Antiblack racism is supported by a simple dynamic: “Fault, Guilt, refusal of guilt, paranoia.”<sup>57</sup>

### **The Group and Individual Foundations of the Negrophobe’s Lived Experience**

Whites are plagued by four major sources of guilt, and these anxieties inform how the Negrophobe makes meaning of his own body, the bodies of other white males, and the bodies of black males. Whites are oppressed by society, and they consent to their oppression. In addition, the capitalist system oppresses people of color, and whites consent to and benefit from this second oppression. Furthermore, the culture and the family unit of the capitalist social and economic structure induce sexual impulses in whites that this same society categorizes as socially deviant. Finally, due to all of these previous reasons, whites are hostile towards society.<sup>58</sup> These issues lead the Negrophobe, through his phenomenological engagements with masculinity and morality as aspects of agency, to use alienation and narcissism to articulate his body as a sealed body. The Negrophobe’s articulation of his body as a body of structural harmony is a defense mechanism.<sup>59</sup>

The origin of these anxieties is contemporary society's socialization process. The white child's presence in the social milieu leads to the development of impulses (sexual and otherwise) that society categorizes as inappropriate.<sup>60</sup> The family induces sexual frustration, and the larger social condition's contradictory promotion and policing of these impulses makes oppression familiar to the child (meaning that any hostility towards society is deviant).<sup>61</sup> In these situations, the individual can choose to act out his socially unacceptable impulses. Hiding from this possibility is an act of bad faith.

*Black Skin, White Masks* is an example of bricolage "[the assemblage of myths] from the material [at] hand."<sup>62</sup> Fanon uses the context of the experiences of an oppressed group to alter the meanings and importance of theories, philosophies, literatures, and histories. Picking specific aspects of these works and re-positioning them (e.g. moving them to the foreground or to the background of his analysis, while critiquing or emphasizing their validity) allows him to perform this act of creolization.<sup>63</sup> Fanon's take on the social and individual bases of antiblack racism on the part of whites emerges through his creolization of Gershon Legman's analysis of U.S. white psychopathology, Sartre's analysis of anti-Semitism, and Aimé Césaire's theories concerning the role of fear in antiblack racism.<sup>64</sup>

In the chapter "The Negro and Psychopathology," Fanon juxtaposes three sections of a French translation of Gershon Legman's "The Psychopathology of Comics" into one long quote,<sup>65</sup> a quote that effectively frames Fanon's own theory about the origins and dynamics of antiblack racism.<sup>66</sup> Legman argues that U.S. culture exposes white children to an extraordinary number of violent images, including violence against Native Americans. An origin of this cultural phenomenon is the U.S. extermination of the Native Americans who originally, and rightfully, controlled what the United States now calls its land. The guilt stemming from this act is the source of the cultural presence of the "Bad Injun." The fantasized violence and immorality connected to the "Bad Injun" serve to justify white aggression against Native Americans and pacify white guilt.

[The] punishment that [we whites] deserve can be averted only by denying responsibility for the wrong and throwing the blame on the victim; by proving—at least to our own satisfaction—that by striking the first and only blow we were acting solely on the legitimate ground of defense.<sup>67</sup>

The relationship between guilt and projection as a defense mechanism underlies the lived experience of U.S. racists. However, this massaging of guilt through the projection of violent intent and action onto the Other and through the ingestion of cultural and real violence against the Other is but an aspect of the “fixation on violence and death” found in U.S. culture as a whole. Fanon’s analysis of the Negrophobe emphasizes how projections employed by whites serve as cathartic substitutions of white hostility against society.

Sartre argues that the anti-Semite creates and engages an inauthentic and completely fictional image of the Jew.<sup>68</sup> This image does not have its basis in the actual experiences that the anti-Semite has with Jews, but it does explain the experiences of the anti-Semite. The origin of the anti-Semite’s position, his choice to hate, is his “longing for impenetrability.”<sup>69</sup> The “rational man” knows that life is defined by anguish, and he confronts anguish where he finds it. The anti-Semite, because of “a basic fear of [himself] and of truth,” wishes to never change. This desire to be the in-itself attempts to be fulfilled through the projection of one’s inferiority onto another group(s), and the reification of this hierarchy.<sup>70</sup> Fanon argues that projection of inferiority and reification of social structures factor into white Negrophobia.

Fanon opens his text with a quote from Césaire about the role that fear plays in colonialism.<sup>71</sup> Césaire talks of “millions of men [injected with] fear.”<sup>72</sup> Fanon emphasizes the role that white fear plays in antiblack racism.<sup>73</sup> Fanon’s position on capitalism’s exploitation of white labor, the fears of whites, and the role that these things play in antiblack racism echoes W. E. B. DuBois’s argument that the “public and psychological wage” given to working-class whites has the goal of preventing unity between black and white workers.<sup>74</sup> To this end, Fanon quotes Oswin Magrath’s argument that white society seeks to destroy any sense of kindredness between whites and blacks.<sup>75</sup> Like DuBois and Oliver C. Cox,<sup>76,77</sup> Fanon argues that the interplay of white superiority and black inferiority is the crux of contemporary social cohesion “[The black man] lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex.”<sup>78</sup> The separation of whites from blacks via white fear underlies capitalist relationships of productions in that it establishes blacks as the Other, making possible the projections that Negrophobes use to construct mirror worlds as a defense against their own anxieties, a process that leads to the latter’s complacency in the face of oppression.<sup>79</sup>

Following the work of Joachim Marcus, Fanon affirms the link between “social neurosis” and “the individual situation.” Whites’ individual situation can be reduced to their family environment, which Marcus states “represents in effect a certain fashion in which the world presents itself to the [white] child”.<sup>80</sup> This leads Fanon to conclude that “in all such cases of [white neurosis] the sickness lies in the family environment.”<sup>81</sup> This makes the “sexual phenomena” found in white families highly influential. Due to society’s constraints, whites “[retain] an irrational longing for [the realization of the life instinct],”<sup>82</sup> a longing that materializes in the desire for “unusual eras of sexual license, of orgiastic scenes, of unpunished rapes, of unrepressed incest.”<sup>83</sup> In Fanon’s estimation, the Oedipal complex is a white phenomenon, and it plays an important part in the development of white racism.<sup>84</sup> To this effect, Fanon again quotes Marcus “‘the most strongly anti-Semitic persons belonged to the most conflictual family structures. Their anti-Semitism is a reaction to frustrations suffered inside the family environment.’”<sup>85</sup> Octave Mannoni offers a similar argument: the racist relieves his frustrations by projecting them upon the subordinated racialized Other.

Following Mannoni, Fanon argues that the white Negrophobe is “motivated only by his desire to put an end to a feeling of unsatisfaction, [through the employment of an] overcompensation.”<sup>86</sup> This happens through projection, when the Negrophobe makes “[the Other into the] mainstay of his preoccupations and his desires.”<sup>87</sup> Here, the projected-upon object is the scapegoat, and this projection process has four parts: “Fault, Guilt, refusal of guilt, paranoia.”<sup>88</sup> Through Sartre’s discussion of anti-Semitism and Henri Baruk’s discussion of “the anti-Semitic psychosis,” Fanon shows how the anti-Semite embodies the Jew with the former’s own “inner [self-hatred].” A similar dynamic occurs through the Negrophobe’s relationship to blacks. Oedipal impulses manifest, and guilt develops. This leads the Negrophobe to make his guilt unconscious “to a certain extent” by charging his white individual and “collective guilt” to the scapegoat.<sup>89</sup> Now, the Negrophobe views the scapegoat as a threat. Lacan, whose ideas help form the foundation of Fanon’s conceptualization of bodies of structural harmony, argues that the castration complex is the key to the resolution of the Oedipus complex. The castration complex is a “phantasy that consists essentially in the mutilation of a bodily member.”<sup>90</sup> Due to “sociological” dynamics, the son’s sexual thoughts about his mother and his hostility towards his father are prohibited, so he institutes a “localisation of the tendency” that causes him

anguish.<sup>91</sup> This allows him to evince a psychological castration, which leads to the development of the super-ego. The super-ego is the basis of the anxiety that the Negrophobe attempts to relieve by using bodies of structural harmony to turn black males into scapegoats.

### **Bodies of Structural Harmony and the Mirror World of the Negrophobe**

The Negrophobe's articulation of the black male as embodied possibility means that to the former, the latter is a "phobogenetic object." Fanon says "all anxiety derives from a certain subjective insecurity linked to the absence of the mother."<sup>92</sup> The Negrophobe's articulation of the black male has multiple links to such an absence. The mythical black male embodies sexual impulses that, if possessed by the white male, would lead the white male to be banished from society or murdered by his father. Furthermore, Fanon argues that this black male embodies a virility that can steal women, such as white wives.<sup>93</sup> The same dynamic is imagined in reference to white daughters.<sup>94</sup> Fanon says that crimes of racism can be traced back to jealousy.<sup>95</sup> Merleau-Ponty argues that there are manifest and latent objects of jealousy.<sup>96</sup> Jealousy "[restructures one's social relations] and at the same time [provides] new dimensions of existence (past, present, and future) with a supple play among them."<sup>97</sup> This suggests that it is a mistake to assume that the Negrophobe is simply jealous of the black male's sexual virility, a virility that allows the black male to steal the former's mother. The primary object of the Negrophobe's jealousy is the most direct, real threat to the Negrophobe's Oedipal impulses, his own father; and this jealousy fuels the Negrophobe's narrow articulation of possibility via bodies of structural harmony. Articulating the black male as the only source of aggressive non-normative sexuality allows the Negrophobe to displace his own sexual impulses and to construct a socially acceptable outlet for his rage against his father, society, and himself. White society traumatizes whites to the point that they project their trauma onto blacks.<sup>98</sup> "Frustrated" whites (and white society) try to "frustrate" blacks.<sup>99</sup>

In a very important footnote, Fanon writes, "It would indeed be interesting, on the basis of Lacan's theory of the mirror period, to investigate the extent to which the imago of his fellow built up in the young [Negrophobe] at the usual age would undergo an imaginary aggression with the appearance of the [non-mythical] Negro."<sup>100</sup> Lacan writes "the imago of the other

is linked to the structure of one's own body."<sup>101</sup> Merleau-Ponty shows that "In the absence of a reduction of the anxiety to its subjective source and a concentration of the anxiety within the [subject] in whom it was actually located, the anxiety [can be] lived as something that has an external as well as internal origin."<sup>102</sup>

Non-mythical blackness prevents the Negrophobe from positing himself as the pinnacle of innocence and virility. This anxiety is rooted in the Negrophobe's individual body, and this articulation is a flight from his Oedipal impulses. The presence of non-mythical blackness makes the Negrophobe feel weak and angry about his own weakness. Instead of directing that anger at himself, he directs it towards an external manifestation of his weakness, "the imago of his [fellow white males]." Hence, the Negrophobe's aggression in respect to this imago would be an attempt by the former to alleviate his own anxiety. This points to why the affinity that the Negrophobe constructs between himself and other white males must not be taken as the Negrophobe's ultimate goal. Reading Fanon's discussion of the Negrophobe in juxtaposition with one of his passages about black narcissism shows that while the Negrophobe positions other white males as similar others, he still places himself above them:

I am Narcissus, and what I want to see in the eyes of others is a reflection that pleases me. Therefore in any given [group/environment], one finds the man on top, the court that surrounds him, the in-betweens (who are waiting for something better, and the losers. The last are slaughtered without mercy.<sup>103</sup>

The Negrophobe wants to posit himself as *absolute* innocence and *absolute* virility.<sup>104</sup>

The mirror image can lead to alienation.<sup>105</sup> Previous to seeing one's reflection, a man can believe that he is how he imagines himself to be. Having seen his reflection he knows that others have their own perspective of who he is. Furthermore, "anxiety impregnates [the subject's] entire view of things and people around [the subject]."<sup>106</sup> "Postural impregnation" is a form of projection wherein an individual subconsciously imbues others with his own body.<sup>107</sup> It can serve to reduce the subject's anxiety in relation to the ability of others to have their own, potentially negative, perspective on the subject. Taken to an extreme, postural impregnation becomes pathological when the "subject incorporates the world into his ego, affirming that

he includes the Totality, that his body is composed of the most precious materials and that his life and functions sustain the order and existence of the Universe.”<sup>108</sup> Such a mirror alleviates anxiety by enforcing a delusion.<sup>109</sup>

The role played by the mirror image in flights from reality is an important part of philosophical discourse. German idealism addresses the relationship between subject-predicate identity and the subject’s attainment of universality.<sup>110</sup> Members of the Frankfurt School posited identity as the Enlightenment’s primary method for fleeing a sense of powerlessness.<sup>111</sup> James Baldwin argues that the United States has a mirror imperative “The American ideal, after all, is that everyone should be as much alike as possible.”<sup>112</sup> In this instance, of course, “American” means whites in the United States. Scholars have described the social nature of the mirroring dynamics present in Fanon’s work.<sup>113</sup> The relationship between Fanon’s mirror concept, antiblack racism and bad faith has also been addressed.<sup>114</sup> This article’s analysis of structural harmony and mirror worlds extends this line of critical inquiry.

Bodies of structural harmony have an important social aspect. Negrophobes surround themselves with other Negrophobes that they define as similar others for a specific reason “Everything that happens to us makes us sensitive to a certain aspect of the other and makes us seek in the other the equivalent of, or something that corresponds to, what has happened to us.”<sup>115</sup> Crabs in a barrel pull down anyone who tries to escape the prison. With bodies of structural harmony, well-behaved prisoners secure and embrace their own chains. For the Negrophobe, the bodies of other white males are a part of the former’s mirror world, a field comprised of pathologically constructed delusional self-images.

The Negrophobe removes all non-mythical blackness from his world, and projects all of his imagined sinful characteristics onto a mythical version of blackness, making it a scapegoat. Then he projects all of his imagined positive characteristics onto similar others, white males like himself. Now, every thing in his world is to his liking. He has created a mirror world—a phenomenal world that affirms his delusional self-image. With bodies of structural harmony, the Negrophobe uses scapegoating and postural impregnation to turn his delusional self-image into the horizons of his phenomenal world.<sup>116</sup> Bodies of structural harmony cannot be reduced to the postural impregnation discussed by Merleau-Ponty.<sup>117</sup> With bodies of structural harmony, the Negrophobe integrates projection and postural impregnation to create an individual, social, and existential alteration of



the things of his world and his relationship to them. And, these alterations are reciprocated by similar Others. Structural harmony alters horizons to create a mirror world.

A horizon forces an object to be seen the same way, regardless of the time at which the object is viewed or the direction from which the object is seen.<sup>118</sup> But, there is movement below the surface of things and the worlds in which they exist. Below the white paint of our world, can be found what Ralph Ellison calls the “*vee-hicle of the paint.*”<sup>119</sup> Blackness is unseen and unacknowledged, but it is the foundation that allows society to function as a white society. Blackness is the base layer that allows the Negrophobe to stay warm in a frozen and uncaring world while wearing delicate pure white clothing. The Negrophobe turns himself and his world white, a hostile and uncaring whiteness that he consents to, a blizzard of his own making. Every thing is all white. Whiteness is everything. Such a world has no horizons. Structural harmony and the two types of projection that make it possible—scapegoating and postural impregnation—creates a world where the Negrophobe cannot be seen. He, and white society, are snow-blind. And, it is hard to attach guilt to something that you cannot see.

Scholars have noted that in the antiblack world, whiteness lacks “solid foundations.”<sup>120</sup> Black bodies are forced to occupy limited phenomenological spaces and temporalities.<sup>121</sup> This article’s analysis speaks to the specifics of how and why these conditions and situations occur. The Negrophobe decorates his world with his delusional self-image, an in-itself. He creates an image of the black male that holds many of his fears and shortcomings and banishes this creation from his world. Next, he finds other white male bodies and impregnates them with the absolute innocence that he and they crave. These other men—also scared, scarred, and guilty—repeat this “self-castration,” in so doing him the same kindness.<sup>122</sup> One of the foundations of antiblack racism is the way in which bad faith allows people to evade anguish. Encounters with evidence can facilitate such evasions. Lewis R. Gordon points out that practitioners of bad faith insist that all evidence be “perfect,” that it be “so justified that it is equivalent to knowledge.”<sup>123</sup> Fanon’s discussion of bodies of structural harmony points to another way in which evidence is utilized by those in bad faith. The person in bad faith could remove himself from environments that contradict his worldview. This second situation is also an appeal to perfect evidence in that the actor has immersed himself in a world (i.e., a relationship between things) wherein his worldview constitutes knowledge. This is what happens with bodies of structural harmony and the snow-blindness that it produces.

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#### NOTES

This paper was informed by the helpful comments of Colena Sesanker.

1. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. trans. Charles Lam Markmann (1952; reprint New York: Grove Press, 1967), 161.
2. From this point onward “Negrophobe” will refer to a white Negrophobic male (i.e., white males who are antiblack racists).
3. Fanon, *Masks*, 224.
4. *Ibid.*, 11.
5. *Ibid.*, 160.
6. See *ibid.*
7. Fanon’s (*Masks*) analysis of women’s romantic and/or sexual relationships in chapters 2 and 6 shows that women also serve as objects upon which the Negrophobe projects his own weaknesses.
8. *Ibid.*, 100.
9. *Ibid.*, 13.
10. Lewis R. Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 9.
11. Fanon, *Masks*, 177.
12. *Ibid.*, 139.
13. *Ibid.*, 41.
14. Kelly Oliver, “Alienation and Its Double: or, The Secretion of Race,” in *Race and Racism in Continental Philosophy*, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 182.
15. David Macy, *Frantz Fanon: A Biography* (New York: Picador USA, 2000), 166.
16. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*. trans. Colin Smith (1945; reprint New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), 250.
17. *Ibid.*, 406.
18. *Ibid.*, 441.
19. From this point onward “bodies” will refer to corporeal schemas and “world” will refer to phenomenal worlds.
20. Fanon, *Masks*, 14–15.
21. Merleau-Ponty, *Perception*, 282.
22. Fanon, *Masks*, 134.
23. *Ibid.*, 44–45.
24. *Ibid.*, 121.

25. *Ibid.*, 122.
26. White Negrophobic males are not the unique bearers of intransigence (Fanon, *Mask*). Black intransigence is central to chapters 1, 3, and 5.
27. L. Gordon, *Crisis*, 45.
28. *Ibid.*, 38.
29. *Ibid.*, 59.
30. Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children*, (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 1997), 77-78.
31. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothing: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (1943; reprint New York: Washington Square Press, 1943), 89.
32. *Ibid.*, 116.
33. L. Gordon, *Crisis*, 38.
34. Robert Bernasconi, "The European Knows and Does Not Know" in *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Max Silverman, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 102.
35. LaRose Paris, *Being Apart: Theoretical and Existential Resistance in Africana Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 106.
36. Nigel Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2003), 22.
37. L. Gordon, *Children*, 81.
38. Fanon, *Masks*, 218.
39. *Ibid.*, 224.
40. *Ibid.*, 45.
41. *Ibid.*, 11.
42. There are many permutations of sealed racial bodies.
43. Fanon, *Masks*, 12-13.
44. Sartre, *Being*, 711.
45. Fanon, *Masks*, 13.
46. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1807/1977), 206.
47. Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1844/1992), 326
48. Fanon, *Masks*, 29.
49. Chapter 5, "The Fact of Blackness," focuses on black self-deception (Fanon, *Masks*).
50. Fanon, *Masks*, 22.
51. Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (1914; reprint New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 546.
52. Marx, "Economic," 328.
53. Fanon, *Masks*, 12.
54. *Ibid.*, 89.
55. From this point onward "alienation" and "narcissism" will refer to Fanonian alienation and Fanonian narcissism respectively.

56. Fanon's (*Masks*) focus on the interaction between individual and social factors is what differentiates the mirror world described in this article from the "narcissistic world" described by Lacan (1938, 31).
57. Fanon, *Masks*, 183.
58. *Ibid.*, 146–47. Following these points, it is incorrect to simply state that Barack Obama's election as president led to a significant increase in antiblack racism among white U.S. citizens. The election of the nation's first black president made it easier for people in the United States to express—through acts such as direct antiblack racism, the rejection of universal healthcare, and support for government shutdowns—their hostility toward the social and economic order that oppresses and neglects them. What we are witnessing is a soft revolution, a social movement of revolutionary intention that refuses to explicitly state or acknowledge its true intentions and the causes of these intentions.
59. Fanon, *Masks*, 170.
60. *Ibid.*, 146–47, 148–49.
61. *Ibid.*, 143.
62. Macy, *Biography*, 162.
63. Jane Gordon, *Creolizing Political Theory: Reading Rousseau Through Fanon* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 16–17.
64. These are three important ingredients in Fanon's (1967) recipe, but they are not the only ingredients.
65. Fanon, *Masks*, 146–47.
66. Gershon Legman, "The Psychopathology of Comics" in *The Collected Neurotica*, ed. Jay Irving Landesman and Gershon Legman (1948; reprint New York: Hacker Art Books, 1963) 7, 17, 29.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* trans. George J. Becker, (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 69.
69. *Ibid.*, 18.
70. Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 69.
71. Fanon, *Masks*, 9.
72. Aimé Césaire. *Discourse on Colonialism* trans. Joan Pinkham, (1950; reprint New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 43.
73. Although an immediate reading of Césaire may suggest that the "millions" to whom he refers to in this instance are black, the statement, when referenced with Césaire's discussions of colonial exploitation, can be interpreted as a reference to oppressed workers of all colors. Césaire emphasizes the "boomerang effect of colonization" "[Colonization] dehumanizes even the most civilized man . . . colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other as *an animal* [and] tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal" (*Discourse*, 41).

74. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America* (New York: Russell and Russell), 700.
75. Fanon, *Masks*, 87–88.
76. DuBois writes “the doctrine of racial separation [which makes whiteness the basis of solidarity, negates] laboring class unity [, which rests] upon the assumption that laborers, despite internal jealousies, will unite because of their opposition to exploitation by the capitalists” (*Reconstruction*, 700).
77. Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1948), 333.
78. Fanon, *Masks*, 100.
79. See note 72 above.
80. Fanon, *Masks*, 141.
81. *Ibid.*, 143.
82. *Ibid.*, 165.
83. *Ibid.*
84. Fanon, *Masks*, 151–152.
85. *Ibid.*, 158.
86. *Ibid.*, 84.
87. *Ibid.*, 170.
88. *Ibid.*, 183.
89. Fanon’s statement about making guilt “unconscious to a certain extent” speaks to the complexity of the Negrophobe’s adjustment of mythical blackness. Mythical blackness is both present and absent in the Negrophobe’s world. This is apparent when Fanon writes “the defense mechanism [can function] without reference to what had brought it on” (*Masks*, 208). The issue of presence and absence relation to antiblack racism is taken up in L. Gordon (*Antiblack*, 98).
90. Jacques Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*, trans. Cormac Gallagher (<http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/FAMILY-COMPLEXES-IN-THE-FORMATION-OF-THE-INDIVIDUAL2.pdf>), 39.
91. Lacan, *Complexes*, 45.
92. Fanon, *Masks*, 154.
93. *Ibid.*, 171–72.
94. *Ibid.*, 164–65.
95. *Ibid.*, 171–72.
96. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Child’s Relations with Others.” in *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics*, ed. James M. Edie trans. William Cobb (1950–1951; reprint Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 144
97. *Ibid.*, 110.
98. Fanon, *Masks*, 152.
99. *Ibid.*, 175.

100. Ibid., 161.
101. Lacan, *Complexes*, 26.
102. Merleau-Ponty, "Child," 148.
103. Fanon, *Masks*, 212.
104. The Negrophobe's intense desire to be at the top of the hierarchy is what differentiates structural harmony as a form of bad faith from the bad faith through being-with described by Sartre (*Being*, 535).
105. Merleau-Ponty, "Child," 136.
106. Ibid., 148.
107. Ibid., 150.
108. Lacan, *Complexes*, 60.
109. Socially constructed mirrors can serve positive functions. Marx's discussion of species being is such an example ("Economic," 327–28), as is the stand-up comedy of Richard Pryor and Jackie "Moms" Mabley.
110. Hegel, *Spirit*, 38.
111. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 2002), 12.
112. James Baldwin, "The Harlem Ghetto" in *James Baldwin: Collected Essays* ed. Toni Morrison (1948; reprint New York: Library of America, 1998), 48.
113. Gibson, *Fanon*, 31.
114. Lewis R. Gordon, *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and His Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 40–42.
115. See note 98 above.
116. The influence of the white world and white culture on the Negrophobe means that his acts of postural impregnation are more nuanced than the transitivity described by Merleau-Ponty.
117. Merleau-Ponty, "Child," 150.
118. Merleau-Ponty, *Perception*, 69.
119. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952; reprint New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 210.
120. L. Gordon, *Crisis*, 9.
121. Ato Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 73–79.
122. Fanon, *Masks*, 177.
123. L. Gordon, *Antiblack*, 11.

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