

The Genealogy of Colonial Racism in the Works of Frantz Fanon

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Fanon's Early Attempt

Fanon's earliest criticism of racist and imperialist ideologies, in "Black Skin, White Masks," relies upon Jungian analysis and ascribes the cause of racist and imperialist ideologies to white Europeans' psychological needs to project the detested part of themselves onto the colonial subjects.

In "Racism and Culture," Fanon attributes the cause of racist and imperialist ideologies to the relations of production in the colonies. He assumes a relatively tight connection between relations of production (the economic base) and ideologies (the superstructure).

Frantz Fanon, famous anti-colonial philosopher, attempts to show that racist and imperialist ideologies of his day are formed by contingent and disparate historical events. His critique aims at liberating people from viewing these socially harmful ideologies as self-evident.

Fanon's Subversive Genealogy

In his less famous psychiatric writings, Fanon attempts to use subversive genealogy to debunk colonial racism. Subversive genealogies set out to undermine the current beliefs, concepts, or practices by revealing them as a product of historical contingency.

Fanon shows that seemingly self-evident ideological beliefs such as the colonized are pathological liars or agents incapable of rational thought are dependent upon the particular forms of medical knowledge adopted by colonist doctors, the particular way the judicial institutions in the colonies are set up, and a variety of other historically contingent factors.