



From European theory to African colonial reality: Exploration of the psychological and philosophical foundations of Frantz Fanon's anti-colonial thought

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Received: 09 December 2025; Accepted: 19 May 2026; Published: 30 October 2026

Abstract: Reflective thinking is embedded in the material conditions of living. Yet few studies have explored this relationship in relation to leading thought leaders with global impact. Frantz Fanon is one such eminent thought leader, with a growing body of scholarship addressing his key propositions. This conceptual study, situated within the fields of African psychology, critical psychology, and decolonial psychology, investigating the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of Fanon's anti-colonial thought. It analyses Michel Foucault's examination of modern Western subjectivity to offer a new interpretation of Fanon's critique of Hegelian dialectics and Marxist historical materialism. From these analyses, we find that Fanon made the unique contribution of exposing the epistemological boundaries of the modern subject—a subject that at once acts as an empirical object and as the transcendental precondition for knowledge. Based on Foucault's concept of the “transcendental-empirical couplet,” this study shows how colonial governance systematically blocks the formation of the subject presupposed by Hegelian recognition and Marxist historical agency. Through an analysis of Fanon's engagements with dialectics, Marxism, and psychopolitics, this study makes the unique contribution of repositioning the colonial experience that Fanon emphasizes as a privileged site for revealing the historicity and raciality of the Western subject. We conclude that Fanon's philosophy of “man” was one of the most valuable aspects of his intellectual heritage.

Keywords: Frantz Fanon; Michel Foucault; colonial subjectivity; Hegel–Marxian dialectics; psychopolitics

Introduction

For a long time, Frantz Fanon's anti-colonial thinking has produced significant resonance in academic circles (Gates, 1991; Gibson, 2003). This may be due to his unique combination of psychoanalysis, political criticism, and revolutionary practice (Hook, 2005). By situating the psychiatry of the colonized within the colonial context, Fanon exposes colonial rule as more than just economic and political structures, revealing also its harms to the innermost strata of spiritual life (Fanon, 2008). Fanon's work possesses the quality of an eternal that completely transforms the experience of colonial domination (Haddour, 2021; Sekyi-Otu, 2020; Jilani, 2024), repudiating the Hegelian presupposition of reciprocal acknowledgment and bringing into question the universal character of Marxism when it is applied to racialized colonial societies. Recent scholarship has further argued that Fanon's critique should not be understood as a rejection of dialectics per se, but rather as a demonstration that colonial domination suspends the conditions under which Hegelian reciprocity and dialectical recognition can emerge (Faustino, 2021). This article is explicitly positioned as a conceptual study that operates at the intersection of African psychology, critical psychology, and decolonial psychology. Rather than offering empirical findings or clinical interventions, our inquiry engages with Fanon's oeuvre as a theoretical resource for rethinking the very foundations of psychological knowledge under colonial and postcolonial conditions. In so doing, we follow the trajectory of critical psychology that challenges the universalist pretensions of mainstream Western

psychology, and we contribute to the emergent field of African psychology by foregrounding the epistemic violence embedded in colonial subject-formation.

In our critical analysis, we argue that Fanon's critique of Hegelian and Marxist dialectics

- should be understood not merely as a political or sociological modification of European theory but as a more fundamental epistemological shift beyond Hegelian dialectics.
- is essentially an anti-colonial thinking that contains an implicit critique of modern Western subjectivity, revealing how the subject as the transcendental precondition of knowledge and history is racially excluded or destroyed under colonial governance.
- exposes the racial and historical boundaries of the Western subject-form: colonial power ruthlessly reduces the colonized subject to an empirical object—racialized, pathologized, and subjected to scientific scrutiny—while systematically excluding it from the transcendental position of the knowing subject.
- points out that what collapses in the colonial context is not only dialectical mutual recognition, class consciousness, or even the psychological problems of colonized people, but the very subjectivity that modern Western rationality takes as a precondition (Fanon, 2008).

The compelling questions for Fanon were:

1. On what basic epistemological assumptions are the “master” and “slave” conceptualized in Hegel's system?
2. How do these epistemological assumptions collapse under colonial conditions?



Theoretical echoing trends

Recent scholarship discusses the theoretical resonance between Fanon and Foucault, especially concerning the making of the subject, power, and the critique of humanism (Alessandrini, 2009; Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018). Drawing on these insights, this study aims to advance the conversation between Fanon and Foucault by showing that Fanon's engagement with Hegelian and Marxist dialectics already prefigured a Foucauldian critique of the transcendental subject—a critique grounded not only in the history of European epistemology but also in the violent reality of colonial rule.

First, Fanon's psychoanalytic critique rejects the Hegelian master-slave dialectic within the colonial context and argues that it is impossible for colonized people to become a transcendental subject capable of laying a foundation for recognition and history (Fanon, 2008, pp.191–222). Second, Fanon's call to “stretch” Marxism reveals the epistemological boundaries of historical materialism when the subject of knowledge and practice that it presupposes is foreclosed by colonial power (Fanon, 2004, p.40). Third, Fanon's analysis, via Foucault's concept of the “transcendental-empirical doublet,” suggests that the “colonial experience” has epistemological roots in Western philosophy. From this perspective, the present study grants Fanon a new status, not only as a revolutionary theoretician of decolonization but also as a critical thinker concerning modern human subjectivity. For background and context, we provide a brief account of Hegelian thought, Marxist philosophy, and Kojève's critique.

Hegelian thought

In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel endeavors to apprehend the innermost essence of consciousness through its external expressions. For Hegel, consciousness is never a self-contained inner existence but is actualized through connection with an object external to the self (Hegel, 1977, p.152). As he famously argues, consciousness can only know itself by confronting an other that lies outside itself; hence, self-certainty is produced through a process of mediation and alienation. In sense-certainty, pure being at once directly splits into two moments: the “I” and the object. Neither of these is purely immediate, because each can obtain its certainty only by depending on the other. Hegel writes: “The ‘I’ obtains its own certainty by means of a thing, that is, the object; and the object, in the same way, possesses its own certainty by means of an ‘I’” (Hegel, 1977, p.64). This turning toward the other reflects a relation of mutual estrangement—consciousness is the estrangement of the object, and the object is the estrangement of consciousness—and it is precisely through this self-estrangement that consciousness achieves determinate cognition and self-consciousness. It is from this angle that Marx grasped the critical possibility of the negative dialectic existing in Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

Marxist philosophy

Marx, with sharp insight, points out that what manifests itself as alienation in Hegel is ultimately the alienation of the human essence itself (Marx, 1975, p.341). But Marx

further criticizes Hegel because Hegel holds that alienation is grasped only at the level of consciousness, and he fails to situate alienation within the material conditions of social life. In *The German Ideology*, which marks the formal establishment of Marxist materialism, Marx and Engels write: “Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being, and the being of men is their actual life-process” (Marx & Engels, 1976, pp.36–37).

The materialist rewriting that Marx gave to Hegel found another expression in French thought in the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1933 and 1939, Alexandre Kojève delivered his famous lectures on Hegel in Paris, thus deeply influencing French intellectual life. This differed from Marx, who returned dialectics to the domain of material production.

Kojève's critique

Kojève focused on the interaction of desire, recognition, and history within dialectics. He placed special emphasis on the master-slave dialectic, interpreting it as the fundamental drama of human history. For him, understanding the master-slave relation involves the dynamics of desire and historical dialectics. Kojève not only explicated Hegelian dialectics but also developed it in specific respects. The master's recognition is one-sided: he requires that the slave recognize him while refusing to acknowledge the slave's humanity and honor. The master achieves the truth of his self-affirmation at the price of turning the slave into a thing or a brute. Hence, the master's position is an existential dead end. On one hand, the master can be master only because he does not long for a thing but for another desire—hence, he is a kind of longing for recognition. On the other hand, once he has become master, he must seek recognition as the master; he can only receive recognition from a person whom he himself recognizes as a slave. But in his view, the slave is merely a beast or an object. He obtains recognition from a thing. Therefore, his desire ultimately points toward an object, not—as it appeared at the beginning—toward a (human) desire. Hence, the master is on the wrong path. After the fight that made him master, he has not become what he wished to be in that fight: a person who receives recognition from another (Kojève, 1980, p.19). From this perspective, Kojève describes the master's condition as tragic (Drury, 1996, p.35).

Although this tragic situation exists, the master in Kojève's description remains a subject endowed with desire, negativity, and history. Even though recognition fails, the structure of subjectivity remains intact. The slave, too, retains the potential for historical agency. Through labor, the slave transforms nature, and in this process overcomes the fear of death encountered in the initial struggle. Labor becomes the medium through which the slave achieves self-discipline, objectification, and finally self-consciousness. Therefore, for Kojève, history does not belong to the warlike master but to the working slave, whose productive activity lays the foundation for the future freedom of human beings (Kojève, 1980, p.23).

Kojève further argued that Hegel's dialectic is ultimately the dialectic of being: “The structure of thought is thus determined by the being it reveals. Thought is

dialectical only if it correctly reveals the dialectic of existing Being and of existing things” (Kojève, 1980, p.486). However, Kojève’s “being” differs greatly from the Marxist conception: his being is the being of the human, a human actuality realized by desire, work, and history. The reinterpretation that Kojève offers brings this dual aspect to the forefront. But the problem is that although Kojève’s entire dialectical framework takes for granted a subject that can occupy a dual epistemological position—an empirical individual and, at the same time, a bearer of historical meaning—this interpretation possibly ignores the epistemological dimension of Hegel’s idea of subjectivity, namely “self-consciousness as the premise of truth” (Butler, 2012, p.23). Several commentators have also pointed out that Kojève’s interpretive approach tends to transform Hegel’s philosophical sociology into anthropology, thus ignoring the core problem of Hegel’s theory concerning the normative character of self-consciousness (Pippin, 1989, pp.6–20). Although Foucault never directly criticized Kojève, his analysis offers a different perspective.

Fanon’s contribution

As we have pointed out earlier, Foucault argues that interpretations of Hegel’s dialectical method such as Kojève’s fail to critically examine the subject as a point of departure with universal validity—they directly project Hegel’s dialectic onto real historical phenomena (such as colonialism and labor) without first asking whether the “subject” on which this dialectic relies is truly universal (Foucault, 2005).

Whether the Hegelian dialectic and its subject possess the universal validity that Foucault questions can be preliminarily assessed by examining early attempts to apply them to colonial societies. An example is the psychoanalytic theory put forward by, who explained colonial domination by ascribing it to psychological demands and personality structures. From his perspective, the colonizer is driven by a feeling of inferiority and seeks compensatory satisfaction through domination, while the colonized is depicted as having a dependence complex that makes him prone to submission. Thus, colonialism could be regarded as the product of mutually matching psychological tendencies (Mannoni, 1990, p.32). Although Mannoni’s analysis is an early attempt to place the master-slave dialectic into a concrete colonial context, its limitations are very clear. By psychologizing colonial relations, Mannoni regards both the colonizer and the colonized as pre-existing subjects whose interaction produces domination. From the perspective of Foucault’s theory, this approach cannot inquire into the historical making of the subjective self itself.

The subjective self

Colonial rule is reduced to individual mental pathology, and the structural and epistemic violence of colonial power remains hidden. The colonized are presented as objects of psychological knowledge, not as subjects whose exclusion from subjectivity itself needs to be explained.

Relational self

Fanon holds that the relation between colonial master and slave cannot be understood as a distorted form of the master-slave dialectic. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he emphasizes that the colonizer does not seek recognition from the colonized but instead pursues the colonized’s labor. The colonized do not participate in the struggle for mutual recognition; they are fixed in an inferior position, their humanity completely denied. As Fanon famously puts it, there exists “no interaction” between colonizer and colonized (Fanon, 2008, p.174). The absence of interaction should not be explained only as a moral and political error. It indicates, instead, a more profound epistemological break: the colonized are denied the chance to develop the self-awareness required by dialectical conflict. They are not acknowledged as subjects capable of negation, mediation, or historical agency. On the contrary, they are formed and pressured as racially marked bodies, as labor power, as pathological objects within colonial knowledge.

Economic servitude

According to Fanon, colonial rule operates not only through economic exploitation and physical force but also through the organized exclusion of the colonized from the transcendental status of subjectivity. Fanon’s critique resonates deeply with Foucault’s later analysis of modern subjectivity. Contemporary human sciences generate their research objects through objectifying procedures, thereby turning human beings into knowable, classifiable entities. Fanon points out that in the colonial situation, this objectification process becomes absolute and racialized. Haddour (2025) extends this resonance by examining how colonial biopolitics operates through gendered violence and torture, showing that the colonial subject’s body is not only racialized but also sexualized and subjected to extreme physical violation as a technique of political control.

The colonized are reduced purely to an experiential existence, so that the overarching position of the knowing subject remains exclusively held by the colonizer. Hence, the failure of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic within the colonial situation discloses not only the limits of philosophical abstraction; it also reveals the historicity and racial character of the modern Western subject itself. The dialectical subject, far from being a universal figure of human development, appears instead as a product of specific European conditions that disintegrate when confronted with the colonial world. Fanon’s critique has already laid bare the epistemic limits of a Western subjective self-understanding that cannot be sustained beyond European modernity.

Social realities

For Fanon, the social reality of the colonies acts as a touchstone for evaluating the validity and efficacy of every theory (Fanon, 2004). Fanon consciously employs the tenets of Marxist dialectics and contributes an account of the psychic estrangement produced by colonialism from a materialist position grounded in economic reality. This shows that Fanon’s understanding of Marxist dialectics is relatively balanced and prudent. Fanon’s famous statement—“When handling colonial problems, Marxist

analysis must always be pulled open a little bit” (Fanon, 2004, p.40)—is often interpreted as adding considerations of race or culture to compensate for the deficiencies of class analysis. But, as Nigel Gibson argues forcefully, Fanon’s intervention is much more radical. Fanon does not merely extend Marxism; he reveals its internal structural limitations: the colonial condition damages the very conditions required for the revolutionary subject to come into being (Gibson, 2003, pp.62–68).

Fanonian psychoanalysis combines psychoanalytic elements with the socio-political reality of the colonial environment. Therefore, psychological critique changes from a strategy that focuses only on individual psychic life to one that incorporates specific political dimensions, thereby undergoing a qualitative transformation. Hook calls Fanon’s approach “psychopolitics”: the embedding of psychological terms and concepts within political discourse itself to expand the potential for mutual engagement and reconstruction between psychology and socio-political reality (Hook, 2005, p.475).

Moreover, Fanon firmly holds that within the colonial world, economic relations do not function as the main axis for understanding society. Instead, colonial society is structured by a rigid racial dualism that precedes and overrides class divisions (Fanon, 2004, pp.5–6). The colonized are not positioned as historical agents who can develop class consciousness through labor, but as existences whose humanity is systematically denied. Gibson stresses that, in Fanon’s view, colonial rule not only exploits labor power; it gives rise to a social ontology wherein the colonized are completely excluded from the category of historical subject (Gibson, 2003, pp.62–68). This critical conclusion has very important implications for Marxist theory. In other words, Fanon uses Marxist perspectives to analyze imperialist capitalism, while at the same time he rejects the view that class struggle alone can produce revolutionary consciousness in the colonial environment (Hudis, 2015). Similarly, Fadaee (2024) explicitly characterizes Fanon as “the Marx of the Third World,” arguing that his thought represents a distinctive adaptation of Marxist categories to the conditions of colonial and racialized exploitation.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon makes clear that colonial power fixes the Black subject as a target of racial knowledge, denying it entry to the symbolic and epistemological positions through which subjectivity is constructed (Fanon, 2008, pp.89–119). Fanon exposes the racial boundaries of the concept of “man” that underpins modern Western thought (Gordon, 2020). For Gordon, the problem here is not only social exclusion but the collapse of the universal subject that European philosophy takes as a precondition. In a related vein, Robert Bernasconi argues that Western philosophical reason has historically participated in the production and regulation of racial distinctions rather than standing outside them as a neutral discourse (Bernasconi, 2010). The colonized individual is subjected to thorough fact-based investigation—by means of anthropology, psychiatry, and colonial governance—while being systematically denied access to the transcendental position from which the meaning of history is generated.

Decolonization reconsidered

From Fanon’s perspective, decolonization is not the expression of an already constituted revolutionary subject but rather the violent reconstruction of subjectivity itself. The disintegration of the colonial system creates a rupture in the distribution of subject positions, thereby enabling forms of agency that could not previously exist. Seen from this angle, Fanon’s engagement with Marxism thus converges at a fundamental level with Foucault’s critique of modern Western thought. Both disclose the fragility of the subject that underpins assertions about historical knowledge and political liberation. Fanon’s contribution lies in pointing out that this fragility exists not only at the theoretical level but is also forcefully demonstrated in colonial scenarios—where the modern subject emerges as an existence with racial boundaries, excluded from the domain of knowledge.

Colonial power continuously constructs the Black man as a pure empirical object—a racialized body to be observed, classified, pathologized, and exploited—while systematically denying him the chance to occupy the transcendental position of the subject (the universal ground of meaning, knowledge, and history) (Fanon, 2008, pp.89–92; Sekyi-Otu, 1996, pp.41–45).

This study must hereby indicate that up to the present moment, Fanon’s psychopolitics is not merely a direct combination of psychoanalysis and political science. It is an epistemological revolution: beginning from the concrete, racialized, dispossessed experience of colonized people, it reconstructs from the ground up the possibilities of subjectivity and politics. This constitutes the real meaning of the “anticolonial edition of Hegelian dialectics”: the starting point of history and consciousness is no longer the abstract “being-for-itself” or the recognition of the other, but the violent construction of the colonized person’s experiential self through colonial relations. As Louise du Toit argues that phenomenological reflection must begin from embodied and suffering experience rather than from an abstract conception of subjectivity (du Toit, 2009). At the same time, this amounts to a profound return to and concrete realization of Marx’s view that “social being determines social consciousness.” In the colonies, the economic-political “existing state” of racism directly produces psychic “awareness” such as feelings of inferiority and self-alienation. Hence, Fanon’s “social diagnosis” becomes a materialist depth psychology, focusing critique on the material power structures that give rise to the psyche (Gibson, 2003). As Bernasconi (2022) argues, lived experience in Fanon cannot be separated from the material conditions that produce it; colonial structures become intelligible through the experiences they generate, while those experiences can only be understood in relation to the structures that shape them. This emphasis on lived experience finds a parallel in the work of South African psychologist Chabani Manganyi, who, as More, et al., (2023) show, articulated a phenomenology of racial difference that resonates with Fanon’s project, particularly in understanding how black subjects navigate a world that denies their humanity.

As a result, psychopolitics turns into a reversed critical practice. It no longer asks, “How does the knowing subject

grasp the external world?” but rather, “How does colonial power bring into being empirical subjects deprived of transcendental status?” It moves back and forth between individual psyche and social structure, thereby revealing how colonial violence writes political control into the unconscious, and how psychic injury can be transformed into the possibility of political opposition. It is in this sense that Fanon has gone beyond Mannoni’s psychologizing reading and accomplished an extremely thorough rewriting of the Marxist base-superstructure model within the colonial context. In the colonies, racial discrimination is not a reflection from the superstructure; it is the direct manifestation of productive relations. Spiritual alienation is not a secondary epiphenomenon but a core technique of population control.

The new humanism

The final goal of Fanon’s psychological and political project is his radical vision of a “new humanism.” This standpoint must be understood as a philosophical overcoming of the colonial knowledge order that he diagnoses, hence it is not merely a political or ethical thought.

First, the new humanism attempts to make a complete break from the Hegelian-Kojévian narrative of the “fight for recognition.” Kojève interpreted history as the dialectical movement of master and slave seeking recognition, which ultimately reaches its end (Kojève, 1980). Fanon argues that the colonial relation, on account of its fundamental negativity (“no interaction”), is excluded from this drama (Fanon, 2008, p.174). Hence, liberation cannot be the immanent dialectical movement whereby the slave obtains recognition through labor; on the contrary, it must break the entire dialectical structure in order to build human relations that do not presuppose the logic of master and slave. This responds to Judith Butler’s later view that genuine politics consists in establishing the social conditions for new, unthought forms of recognition to emerge (Butler, 2004).

Second, Fanon’s new humanism does not return to the Kantian, unchanging, idealist transcendent subject; rather, it advances a “future transcendental.” It is not a pre-existing universal ground of humanity but a promise and a horizon to be co-created in the practice of liberation. This “new human” has no predetermined inner nature (whether racial, class, or cultural); its “transcendent character” lies in the condition that makes absolute equality possible, opening toward the future. Fanon writes: “I hope to give my nation a new tool, a historically new tool, that can let them begin a new history of humankind” (Fanon, 2004, p.239). This “new tool” is the new humanism itself—not the recovery of an essence from the past, but the transcendental projection of future possibility. Nigel C. Gibson points out that Fanon’s humanism is a “universality which is built in practice,” something that “makes new universal values out of the denial of actual oppressions” (Gibson, 2011, p.67). This kind of “practical transcendence” or “liberatory transcendence” shares similarities with what Giorgio Agamben calls the “coming community”—it forever remains in a state of becoming, thereby opposing already constructed political classifications through its very existence (Agamben, 1993).

Consequently, the ultimate aim of Fanon’s thinking is to bring about the demise of the “subject” as conceived in the European philosophical tradition. This subject, a transcendental-empirical double, is epistemologically complicit with modern knowledge and colonial domination. The new humanism heralds the dawn of a “new human” after this complicity is broken apart. In that world, human relations will no longer be driven by the dialectical struggle for recognition or delimited by racialized, hierarchical ordering of experiences, but will be established on a postcolonial, embodied universality—a universality that arises from the shared overcoming of colonial injury and is realized in the equal affirmation of difference.

Hence, Fanon’s intellectual legacy has two aspects: with unparalleled force, he uncovered how colonial modernity overturned and shattered human self-consciousness, and at the same time he drew, with hopeful lines, a blueprint for overcoming its conceptual foundations. His work reminds us that genuine liberation is not only political freedom or economic redistribution but an epistemological rebirth—a struggle for the coming of a humanity that “does not copy Europe” (Fanon, 2004).

Summary and Conclusion

This critical reading of Fanon through Foucault’s “transcendental-empirical couplet” has revealed three epistemological dimensions of his critique. First, Fanon’s refusal of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic is not merely because the colonizer refuses to recognize the colonized, but because the colonized is systematically excluded from the transcendental place of subjectivity—he can only exist as a racialized empirical object, never as a bearer of historical meaning. Second, Fanon’s effort to “stretch” Marxism makes clear that the revolutionary subject presupposed by historical materialism disintegrates in the colonial context: the humanity of the colonized is negated, thereby preventing him from becoming the reflexive subject required by class consciousness. Third, Fanon’s psychopolitics, which begins from the concrete, racialized experience of colonized people, subverts the epistemological order of modern Western subjectivity, thus reconstructing colonial experience as a privileged site for critiquing the foundations of Western philosophy.

The final goal of this critical discussion is Fanon’s “new humanism.” It is not a simple negation of European universalism, nor a return to some essentialized identity, but a “future transcendental”—that is, a commitment and vision co-created in the practice of liberation. Fanon wrote: “I desire to give my nation a novel tool, a historically novel tool, that permits them to begin a novel history of humankind” (Fanon, 2004, p.239). This “human” is neither colonizer nor colonized, neither the abstract subject of Western universalism nor the particular identity constructed by colonial experience. This “human” is born from the dismantling of the epistemological foundations of Western philosophy—it is precisely from this dismantling that Fanon develops what Sekyi-Otu calls the “dialectic of experience.” (Sekyi-Otu, 1996, p.26). Nigel Gibson also points out that Fanon’s emphasis on “lived experience” is not a self-indulgence in personal emotion but a transformation of experience into a creative principle

in the historical time of anti-colonial struggle (Gibson, 2003, p.10). His future-oriented “new humanism” is not a utopian fantasy but a historical expectation growing from his own lived experience as a Black person, a psychiatrist, and a revolutionary.

Beyond these critical findings, the present study makes two specific contributions to psychological theory and to African psychological research. First, to psychological theory, we demonstrate that Fanon’s critique of Hegelian and Marxist dialectics offers a decisive challenge to the transcendental subject that underpins much of Western psychological epistemology. By revealing how colonial power reduces the colonized to a pure empirical object while denying them access to the transcendental position of the knowing subject, Fanon compels psychology to confront its own historical complicity with racialized regimes of knowledge production. This reorients psychological theorising away from individualised, ahistorical models of subjectivity toward a structural and epistemic critique that situates psyche within colonial material relations. Second, to African psychological research, our analysis provides a conceptual framework for understanding how colonial experience itself becomes a generative site for redefining human subjectivity and agency. Rather than applying Western psychological categories to African contexts, we argue that Fanon’s psychopolitics—as an epistemological revolution grounded in the lived, racialised experience of colonised peoples—offers a methodological blueprint for decolonising psychological inquiry in Africa. It invites African psychologists to centre the concrete, embodied, and historically situated realities of their subjects, and to treat colonial trauma not as a pathological deviation from a universal norm, but as a privileged entry point for theorising new forms of relationality, recognition, and liberation. In this sense, our study reaffirms Fanon’s enduring relevance for building a genuinely African psychology that is both critically reflexive and politically engaged.

Since the beginning of globalization, Fanon’s thought has been invoked in many different fields, and his figure has increasingly appeared in various, even opposing, guises. Contemporary readings tend to subsume Fanon’s thought under the rubric of identity politics. However, Chukwudinma et al. (2025) reaffirm the centrality of class struggle to the future of African liberation, arguing that Fanon’s work remains indispensable for understanding the intersection of racial oppression and capitalist exploitation on the continent. This reminds us once again that Fanon’s political critique has not lost its relevance, and that it, together with identity politics, constitutes the most significant intellectual legacy of Fanon’s thought in the contemporary era.

Acknowledgement: Not applicable.

Funding Statement: The authors received no specific funding for this study.

Author Contributions: Xiaoyun Kang conceptualized and designed the study, analyzed the data, and wrote and revised the manuscript, collected the data. Ruijing Yang provided assistance in data collection and revised the

manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Availability of Data and Materials: Not applicable.

Ethics Approval: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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