JIHAD OF THE WRETCHED: EXAMINING ISLAMIC MILITANCY THROUGH THE THOUGHT OF FRANTZ FANON

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to investigate how the theories of Frantz Fanon can be used to better understand contemporary Islamic militancy. Fanon is arguably one of the most important thinkers in the 20th century, particularly because of his influential ideas regarding colonialism. Recent trends studies have pushed scholars not to limit Fanon to particular disciplines, but to appreciate him as a philosopher and thinker. In that way, his ideas can resonate beyond previously fixed paradigms and into contemporary contexts. At the same time, rhetoric on the topic of Islamic militancy has often failed to grasp the manner in which the militant views himself and interprets his opposition to the West. Hence, Fanon can be used to help unlock the complexities of this militancy and helps us to better address it.

The method employed in this examination is primarily textual and began with an exploration of the four seminal texts attributed to Frantz Fanon: *Wretched of the Earth*, *Black Skins/White Masks*, *Towards an African Revolution* and *Dying Colonialism*. In particular, these texts were mined for Fanon’s ideas regarding three main areas: the mind of the colonizer, the condition of the colonized and the discourse on violence. Subsequent to this, the statements of various Islamic militant groups were examined to...
see where there might be parallels and divergences. Finally, this information was synthesized and proposals were made on how to proceed forward.

The results showed significant similarities between the rhetoric of Islamic militancy and the theoretical framework that Fanon creates. Similar grievances over usurpation of land and a threat to traditional patterns emerge in both contexts. Fanon’s study of violence contains a depth that is difficult to find in Islamic militant thought, but his observations are illustrated by their behavior and rhetoric. There are also areas where Islamic militancy diverges from Fanon, particularly to the extent that religion shapes their worldview.

The primary conclusion of this study is that Fanon’s insights in the colonial context are useful tools with which to get at the core of Islamic militancy because its rhetoric articulates a dimension of anti-colonial response found in Fanon’s writings.
To my parents, for giving me many lenses with which to view the world and to my teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, for challenging extremism despite the threats to his life.
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This thesis has been a journey of many years, many continents and many encounters, but it could not have reached its final destination without the patience, support and sacrifice of my wife, Hajira. She is a gentle soul in a chaotic world and she is where I find my tranquility. I am honored that she would share her life with me.

My mentor and friend, Raymond Trent, has enriched me with his wisdom and energy since our first meeting. I am indebted to him for many things, not least of which are the countless hours he spent tracking down research materials for this project. I am eternally grateful for the guidance and encouragement of my advisor, Maysam al-Faruqi. She challenged me to refine my ideas and provided incisive comments on all my drafts. I aspire to one day emulate her passion for teaching others. I must also thank Ric Faulkner, my ninth grade history teacher, who first pushed me to read history from many vantage points.

I am profoundly appreciative of the many friends who constantly inspire me, but I would be remiss if I did not mention two who were crucial to this project: Kendric Nixon and Ayim Darkeh. Over the last decade, my discussions with both of them on topics relating to the “wretched of the earth” have deeply impacted the way in which I understand the world. Their insights are scattered throughout these pages.

Finally, my parents and siblings are my greatest source of enrichment, comfort and strength. They push me to new heights, even as they keep me grounded. I only hope I have in some small measure been qurra for their a’yūn.
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INTRODUCTION

He felt that his murder of her was more than amply justified by the fear and shame she made him feel… it was not Mary he was reacting to when he felt that fear and shame. Mary had served to set off his emotions, emotions conditioned by many Marys. And now that he had killed Mary he felt a lessening of tension in his muscles; he had shed an invisible burden he had long carried.

Richard Wright, Native Son

The human condition, plans for mankind and collaboration between men in those tasks which increase the sum total of humanity are new problems, which demand true inventions.

Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth

The legacy of colonialism continues to have ramifications beyond the 20th century. The prolonged period of brutality and usurping of resources had not only material, but psychological consequences on a significant portion of the world’s population. Even more instructive than the colonial conquest was the eventual resistance that developed against the foreign occupiers. This resistance of ordinary people against overwhelming force illustrated the capacity of the human spirit to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles in order to be liberated. At the same time, it also demonstrated the extent to which the collected suffering of a people can unleash their own potential for unmitigated violence. Fast forwarding to our current age, we find that although “territorial” colonialism has largely disappeared, the embers of this anti-colonial resistance continue to persist against different enemies, both real and imagined. In some instances, we witness a familiar resistance against oppressive conditions, while in other places we observe violence seemingly outside the framework
of liberation. These examples of modern day “revolutionary” violence manifest themselves most readily in the context of Islamic militancy.

The phenomenon of Islamic militancy has garnered worldwide attention over the last few decades due to its engagement in a volatile encounter with the Western world. The first question of course is how one defines this idea of “Islamic militancy?” As this analysis will show, this definition contains many nuances, but as a starting point it is important to propose at least a broad definition. Hence, for the purposes of this treatment, “Islamic militancy” will be considered the state or condition of being combative or disposed to fighting by violent means on the basis of claimed Islamic motivations. With the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent colonization of the Muslim world, the collective resistance against the perceived threat of forced change spurned a variety of movements among those of the Islamic faith. Despite its decline, the Ottomans had retained a centuries old sense of the Muslim collective, even at the symbolic level, and with their defeat came confusion over this collective’s shared destiny. The impotence of Muslim armies in the face of external threats only further convinced many groups that their contribution must be in the form of armed struggle. Hence, in many respects, the notion of jihad (defined commonly as “holy war,” but more accurately as simply “struggle”), which had previously been directed by those in authority, was now taken over by non-state actors considering it their duty to assume the responsibility that the nation-states had abandoned.
Interestingly enough, as with many other phenomena, despite the attention that Islamic militancy has received in more recent times due to its introduction into the West, the primary challenges of this militancy are faced by those in the Muslim world. They have grappled with this militancy, in its various forms, for far longer and at a much higher cost. It is no exaggeration to suggest that the vast majority of victims of Islamic militancy, past and present, have themselves been Muslims.\footnote{Of course, militants cannot be understood as always victimizers; at times they are also victims, often suffering under oppressive states.} The phenomenon has not been limited geographically, rearing its head everywhere between Morocco and Indonesia. Of course, its expression in each place is usually different and the motivations behind the militancy are quite varied based on territorial concerns, sectarian ideologies and global objectives. For this reason, it has always been necessary to better appreciate the nuances in these different forms of militancy in order to adequately understand them and imagine ways in which to address them.

Sadly, the interest in Islamic militancy generated by the attacks on September 11\textsuperscript{th} also brought with it a cacophony of voices eager to offer their analysis of this phenomenon (but not always without prejudice). Amidst the tragedy many began to inquire as to the reasoning behind this tragic act. Unfortunately, aside from a few insightful commentators, the majority of analysts (in particular, those dubbed “terrorism experts”) offered shallow examinations betraying, at best, a superficial knowledge of not only militancy, but Islam and the Muslim world. Most analysis tended to be one-
dimensional and suffered from a tendency to conflate the issues at stake. The most
damaging consequence of this “expertise” was the manner in which different militant
groups were lumped together without regard for their divergent ideologies and
objectives. Whether for political reasons or expediency’s sake, all militants were
somehow connected with al-Qaeda. Aside from being inaccurate, this analysis has often
translated into policy that has only aggravated the situation.

What is necessary then is an approach to the phenomenon of Islamic militancy
which has not prejudged the issue and attempts to observe it from the most objective
standpoint possible, no matter how difficult that may seem. In essence then, what is
needed is an academic examination of these militant actors which does not seek to paint
them in one brush stroke as “wild eyed” crazies with no rational basis for their actions.²
Governments in particular are keen on placing virtual psychotic status on these
individuals often deflecting any reasonable attempt at understanding their motivations
for behaving the way they do.³ Fundamentally, any examination of Islamic militancy,
which hopes to properly assess it, must leave aside the question of whether it is
legitimate or justified, specifically with regard to its violence. The goal must be a

² Simon Jenkins, “Bin Laden’s Laughter Echoes Across the West,” The Times (U.K.), March 19,
2003. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article1121131.ece.
For a more comprehensive discussion on how bin Laden is characterized see, [Michael Scheuer], Imperial
Hubris (Dulles: Brassey’s, 2004), 105-107.

³ There are of course exceptions, like Michael Scheuer, former head of the CIA unit hunting bin
Laden, who notes that “he has never, to my knowledge, behaved or spoken in a way that could be
described as ‘irrational in the extreme’.” [Scheuer], Imperial Hubris, 114.
discovery of how they conceive of themselves and the world around them, not of what we think of them. This is not to suggest that one’s own personal beliefs accept their understandings, nor to even suggest that the religion of Islam accommodates such violence, but simply to assert that the question of the “morality of militancy” is a separate discussion. It is only in this way that we will properly be able to conceive of ways to address the issues surrounding militancy.

Furthermore, categorically removing violence from the list of “legitimate” responses is not the pretext for an accurate examination of a cause and its actors. This caution is particularly necessary for the broad category of people labeled as “Islamic militants.” In reality, these actors do not all follow the same rules of engagement, nor do they have the same goals or agendas. Some have been hailed as “freedom fighters” by the United States Congress and Executive; others have been labeled as “evil” by the same bodies.4 Labels of illegitimacy have been placed on other “movements” in the past, only to be later proven as hollow injunctions against very real and legitimate struggles. In recent history we have groups like Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the African National Congress in South Africa, which was formed by, among others, Nelson Mandela, to take part in the struggle against

In addition, it is also important to dispense with the assumption that violence occurs in a vacuum. Often times, the reasons for Islamic militancy arise out of violence itself, which was committed, directly or indirectly, against an aggrieved population. Many instances of militancy are examples of a cycle of violence that may have been unbroken for decades.

Bearing this in mind, the question becomes how best to analyze Islamic militancy? Although there are a variety of avenues that might be explored, it is necessary to fully appreciate the two fundamental sources driving the militant mentality: Islam and anti-colonialism. Islam is the mechanism through which the militant is able to legitimate his struggle and elevate it to cosmic levels. It may seem strange to suggest that these militants consider themselves “colonized” since the nations where they reside achieved independence many years ago. However, although the same type of foreign presence does not exist in their lands as it did during colonialism, the anxiety over what “foreign” presence exists, both physical and psychological, results in a reaction similar to anti-colonial resistance from native populations. In light of this, it seems prudent to consider the extent to which the era of colonialism can help enlighten us on the mentality of the contemporary militant. For this task, there is no better theoretician from that period than Frantz Fanon and his revolutionary philosophy.

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For examining the causes and values of this militant reaction, Frantz Fanon is perhaps best situated, as the father of post-colonial psychology, to help shed light on these matters. Fanon’s usefulness to this task comes from his philosophical attempt to understand the human mind during its colonization. This is done primarily through his four major works: *Wretched of the Earth*, *Black Skins/White Masks*, *Toward the African Revolution* and *Dying Colonialism*. He is arguably the most important revolutionary theorist during the colonial period and his ideas are said to have influenced countless movements for independence; he has been called the “psychoanalyst of cultural degradation” and “poet of emancipation.”\(^6\) His works were secretly read and passed around in the jails of apartheid South Africa so that eventually they became part of a new “lexicon of strategy” for resisting.\(^7\) The bookshelves of the Irish Republican Army are said to have housed many copies of Fanon’s books and influenced many key republican leaders including Bobby Sands.\(^8\) His influence was even felt in the American civil rights movement, leading Eldridge Cleaver, the former Black Panther, to declare


\(^7\) Fran Lisa Buntman, *Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 283. For a more detailed discussion of this matter see Thomas K. Ranuga, “Frantz Fanon and Black Consciousness in Azania (South Africa),” *Phylon* 47, no. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1986), 182-191.

that “every brother on a rooftop can quote Fanon.”9 A cursory examination of Islamic revolutionary thought during the period of anti-colonialism will find parallels in Fanon’s philosophy. There is no doubt that there were Muslim intellectuals who engaged Fanon, even outside of Algeria. For instance, the Iranian revolutionary thinker, Ali Shariati, is said to have been in correspondence with Fanon and translated many of his books for the Iranian audience, despite the fact that they differed on the role of Islam in the revolutionary struggle.10 Furthermore, as one of the few revolutionary thinkers who was also a practitioner engaged the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria, Fanon blends his theory with practical insights from the field. Tony Martin describes him as “the master theoretician who is also a man of action.”11 Another scholar notes, Fanon’s “writings were intended to be a part of the war against colonialism and imperialism.”12 Hence, there is a real possibility to benefit from applying Fanon’s ideas and philosophy to an examination of contemporary Islamic militancy. It should be noted that this thesis is primarily interested in “contemporary” Islamic militants, meaning those militants who are operating today (or are recently deceased). In addition to limiting the scope of the


analysis, this focus recognizes the impact of contemporary events like September 11th, the Iraq and Afghan wars, etc. on Islamic militancy.

Naturally, we must keep in mind that Fanon himself was not Muslim, much less an Islamist, even though he operated in a Muslim country. The movement he was a part of, the Algerian Liberation Movement, for the most part did not have “Islamist” goals, unlike the contemporary Islamic militancy that we wish to examine, and so may not necessarily shed much light on certain aspects of contemporary thinking. Apart from symbolic references to religious vocabulary (i.e. jihad or mujahid) that proved helpful in waging an independence struggle, the Algerian movement against the French, unlike, say, the Libyan movement against the Italians, was devoid of the religious motivations that define contemporary Islamic militancy. However, Fanon’s examination of the relationship between the native and the colonizer is extremely instructive for the overlying psychology and rhetoric that pervades the Islamic militant movement. The same power dynamics, the same feelings of colonization, westernization, and the same ideas of resistance are to be found in contemporary Islamic militant ideology. Hence, though the shades of the motivating ideologies are different, they stem from the same place: independence from the West. The colonial context saw this independence in relation to land; the Islamist views it in terms of not only land, but also ideas.

That said there are some who might question whether Frantz Fanon is still relevant today, in the post-colonial context. The argument may be that his ideas no longer hold currency because the environment has changed significantly since his time. There are two main points to make with regard to this suggestion. The first is that ideas are eternal, or endure. Their utility is not determined by their context, but rather by their relevance to a particular situation. It is for this reason that American military strategists still study the ideas of Sun Tzu from over two thousand years ago, despite his being far removed from the advances in warfare since then.14 The second is that we must get past a tendency of pigeon-holing certain historical figures while allowing others to have more universal application. This helps frame the way in which I believe Fanon should be utilized: as a thinker. Some thinkers, like St. Augustine are acknowledged to be relevant beyond their time even though, like everyone else, they are the product of a particular period. When it comes to figures like Fanon, there seems to be greater difficulty in helping them escape the confines of their particular context so that their ideas find applicability in other situations. Even in the process of historicizing Fanon, we have to recognize, as Nigel Gibson points out, that although Fanon is “very much a product of his time and place,” he “still has much to say in our age.”15 One can speculate as to whether this disparity is a result of underlying biases or even racism, but

14 Ben Macintyre, “They Fought by the Book, and it was Sun Tzu Wot Won it,” The Times (U.K.), April 23, 2001, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/ben_macintyre/article1129503.ece.

the important fact is that a difference exists and that this thesis rejects it. As Lewis Gordon, the noted Fanon scholar, has suggested, the purpose is “neither to glorify nor denigrate Fanon, but instead to explore ways in which he is a useful thinker.”

That is the approach taken in this thesis.

Hence, the main goal of this thesis is to engage Frantz Fanon and examine how he would view the different types of contemporary Islamic militancy from the perspective of his own ideas regarding anti-colonial struggles. In other words, I am interested in working from “within the spirit of his way of viewing the world.” The first chapter aims to provide a brief background on who Fanon is, the history of colonialism in the Muslim world and the nature of Islamic militancy. The substantive part of the analysis will take place in the following chapters where three areas of Fanon’s thought will be explored: his ideas pertaining to the colonizer, the colonized and violence. Each chapter will begin by examining Fanon’s ideas and will then explore the corresponding ideology of Islamic militant groups. It will conclude with a discussion on where there is congruence and divergence between Islamic militancy and Fanon’s ideas. Naturally, this will also be an occasion to critique Fanon’s ideas. The final chapter will endeavor to summarize or synthesize the ideas presented in this thesis and derive the implications for understanding contemporary Islamic militancy.

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CHAPTER I  

FANON, COLONIALISM AND ISLAMIC MILITANCY

Fanon’s anti-colonial ideas are central to a proper understanding of contemporary Islamic militancy and that is because colonialism forms the social background for both. Before analyzing Fanon’s writings and the Islamist discourse, in order to show the similarity and differences between them, we need to consider first how colonialism provided the framework both for Fanon’s life and ideas as well as for the development of militant Muslim movements.

*The Life of Frantz Fanon*

Though, as mentioned earlier, Fanon’s importance is best apprehended by taking his ideas beyond his immediate context, a concise sense of the background of this man from the Antilles, his upbringing and subsequent development will allow some insight into the factors that shaped his views. Fanon’s life was unfortunately quite short; he was merely thirty-six years old when he passed, eventually losing his battle with cancer on December 6, 1961 in Bethesda, Maryland. Yet, from the perspective of his legacy, it encompasses many lifetimes and will continue to be the source of endless discussion. This study hopes to make a small contribution in that regard.

Scholars have divided Frantz Fanon’s biography into five main parts: his birth and upbringing on the island of Martinique; his service in the French Army; his pursuit

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1 Several biographies have been written on Frantz Fanon, for example: Peter Geismar, *Fanon: The Revolutionary as Prophet* (New York: Dial Press, 1971); Hussein A. Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology*
of higher education in France and interaction with the Left; his work in North Africa as a psychiatrist; and his life as a revolutionary. Frantz Fanon was born on July 20th, 1925 to small property owners on the island of Martinique. His father was a self-educated customs inspector who was sometimes described as a “free mason” and “free thinker” and who died in 1947. His mother was a strong figure deeply wedded to her identity as a “French citizen.” The combination of his father’s salary and mother’s earnings as a shopkeeper allowed the family to live in “relative comfort.” This also enabled them to send all their eight children, of whom Fanon was the fifth, to a lycée, a privilege reserved for approximately four percent of the black population in Martinique. It was here that he took classes with the chief architect of negritude, Aimé Césaire. It was also here that Fanon was inundated with information about everything French, which led to his identification with “French culture and its values,” but also led to “alienation.” As Hussein A. Bulhan notes, “the Fanons were assimilated into French culture and they

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3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 16.


8 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 27.
reflected the common ambiguities of identity this assimilation entailed.” It seems the revolutionary bug did not simply inflict Fanon alone, but also one of his elder brothers who “worked with a French separatist organization” and thus was “exiled” from Martinique.10

The dynamics of Fanon’s family have been hotly debated among scholars, particularly with regard to the fact that Fanon was apparently the “darkest of eight children.”11 Some scholars have suggested that personal details, like Fanon’s pigmentation relative to his siblings, actually explain his thought and personality.12 As Emmanuel Hansen has noted, these interpretations are rather “shallow” and attempt to “class all innovators as psychopaths.”13 This is not to suggest that these elements did not impact Fanon or his ideas at all -- in fact he is deeply personal in his works; but one must have serious reservations about analysis which, whether intentionally or not, dismisses Fanon’s contributions as merely the product of childhood angst. As mentioned earlier, there is a curious omission of Fanon in the works that deal with

9 Bulhan, Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression, 16.


11 Ibid. There is actually some doubt as to whether Fanon was actually the darkest in the family. Bulhan, Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression, 19.

12 The study that has come to represent this psycho-historical examination of Fanon’s life, despite its own reservations of such examination, is Gendzier, Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study. For critique of her ideas, see L. Adele Jinadu, review of Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study, by Irene L. Gendzier, Journal of Developing Areas 8, no. 2 (Jan., 1974): 301; and, Bulhan, Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression, 16, 19-20.

13 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 27.
European philosophers. In addition, any such analysis about the shade of Fanon’s skin distract us from the likely cause in the development of Fanon’s perspectives: namely, the racism of the “prevailing social structure and culture” in Martinique and France.¹⁴ L. Adele Jindalu has quite succinctly addressed the reasons why this type of psychoanalytical interpretation is generally problematic:

First, to offer it is to fall victim to a psychological reductionism that overrates the personality factor in the evolution of the ideas of a social philosopher. Second, it is not clear what the relevant personality traits are that one is to look for or emphasize in tying a social philosopher’s writings to psychological factors. Third, how does one determine whether a social philosopher’s intention, in putting forward his ideas, is in fact to work out [as Albert Memmi suggests of Fanon] “the solution to his personal drama in political action and philosophy?”¹⁵

Signs of Fanon’s commitment to “freedom and self-sacrifice” were shown early, when, at the age of seventeen, he “committed himself to the liberation of France from German occupation.”¹⁶ In 1940, France fell to the pro-Nazi French Vichy Administration and the French navy in the Caribbean declared allegiance to the Vichy regime; “overnight” Martinique “came to look like an occupied territory.”¹⁷ This new regime came to represent “rape, racism and rioting” and as a result Fanon escaped, in the midst of his college education, to the Dominican Republic where he received

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¹⁴ Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 20.

¹⁵ Jinadu, review of *Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study*: 301

¹⁶ Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 20.

¹⁷ Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 27.
military training for six months. Subsequent to that, he left for North Africa to fight for the “Free French.” In 1946, he left the army with “the rank of corporal,” partly due to the “rampant racism” and “conditions of poverty.” He was to experience the same racism while serving in the army in Europe. In addition, although he seems to have also been subjected to Arab racism during this period he tended to view it as “part of the superstructure, a reflection of colonial racism occasioned by colonial experience.” Needless to say, it seems by this stage Fanon was “increasingly cynical about France and the French values” he had been taught in school.

At this stage, Fanon returned to Martinique briefly to work for Aimé Césaire’s campaign for parliamentary delegate on the Communist ticket. In 1947, following the death of his father, Fanon went to France to pursue higher education. Taking advantage of a scholarship available for French veterans, he briefly enrolled in dental school in Paris before deciding to pursue medicine, specifically psychiatry, in Lyon.

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18 Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting and White, “Introduction: Five Stages of Fanon Studies,” 2. Fanon had to escape because Martiniqueans were not allowed to collaborate with the “Free French.” Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 21.


20 Ibid., 28.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

However, even while in medical school he continued his “interest in philosophy and literature” with a particular focus on “existential philosophers.” It helped that the community in Lyon was a “hotbed of radical politics in the midst of heated racial tension.” During this period he wrote three plays that remain unpublished: *Les Mains Paralleles, L’Oeil Se Noie* and *La Conspiration.* It was also during this period that he began to compose the essays which later would become part of his book *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (“Black Skins, White Masks”), first published in 1952. This book dealt with “the ontological existence of the Black man in a white-dominated world and covers the subject matter of the psychology of colonial rule.”

Fanon remained actively engaged in politics during this period and helped organize the “Union of Students from Overseas France.” In 1951, he completed his medical studies then briefly visited Martinique before returning the same year to do his residency in the field of sociotherapy in France. In 1952, he married Josie Dublé, a white Frenchwoman he met in Lyon. At this stage, Fanon had already begun to move in “the company of the

26 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 29.


28 Ibid., 2-3.


30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.
French intellectual Left,” with figures like Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.\(^{34}\) However, his experiences in France seem to have caused him to grow “disillusioned with Europe and France.”\(^{35}\)

In 1953, Fanon was offered the directorship of a Martinican hospital, but turned it down for a position as \textit{chef de service} of Blida-Joinville Hospital in Algeria.\(^{36}\) There are different reasons why he may have done so, but it seems as though he had a desire to be “at the center of things” with all the change that was occurring in Africa.\(^{37}\) He arrived in Algiers, Algeria in 1953, at a time when the revolution in Algeria was just beginning. Fanon began to live a double life, “collaborating with” the Algerian resistance, \textit{Front de Liberation Nationale} (FLN), by treating Algerians in the evenings and officially treating French patients in the day time.\(^{38}\) Eventually, by 1956, Fanon resigned from his post as medical director with a letter to the Ministre-Resident lamenting that “the objective conditions under which psychiatry is practiced in Algeria…challenge common sense” and that if psychiatry was supposed to allow the human to no longer be a “stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his

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\(^{34}\) Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 30.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 31.


\(^{37}\) Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 32.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.
own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization.” Subsequent to this he participated in a strike organized by doctors “sympathetic to the FLN” and was expelled from Algeria in January 1957. In some sense, because of Fanon’s experiences in Algeria his intellectual commitment to “revolutionary violence” took a “personal and practical form.”

Hence, after returning to Lyon briefly, Fanon went to Tunisia to work for the FLN and the Algerian revolution became “his life.” He took on a series of roles for the FLN in Tunisia, including as a member of the editorial staff of the FLN publication, *El Moudjahid*. It was during this period that Fanon first published his book *L’An V de la Révolution Algérienne* (“The 5th Year of the Algerian Revolution” also known as “Dying Colonialism”), which was a “sociological study of the effects of the revolutionary war on Algerian society.” Six months after its publication the French government ordered “all copies seized and banned further publication.” In 1958, Fanon also attended the All-African People’s Conference in Accra, meeting with leaders like Kwame Nkrumah.

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40 Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 33.

41 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 32.

42 Ibid., 33.

43 Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 33.

44 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 33.
and Patrice Lumumba, and argued for the “necessity of violence for decolonization.”

In March 1960, Fanon was appointed ambassador for the Algerian Provisional Government in Accra and seemed to concentrate his efforts on the “establishment of a southern flank in Mali” and recruiting “volunteers to fight in Algeria.”

Later that year, Fanon would discover that he was suffering from leukemia. Of course, he had been near death on several assassination attempts. In 1959, his jeep was blown up as he travelled to a camp on the Algerian-Moroccan border. He was subsequently flown to Rome, after sustaining “twelve fractured spinal vertebrae,” where two additional attempts on his life took place. In 1960, while ambassador in Accra, there was an attempt by French intelligence to capture him as he flew from Guinea, but Fanon managed to escape. When diagnosed with cancer, Fanon went to the Soviet Union and was treated for granulocytic leukemia, but he was also instructed that his condition required further advanced treatment in the United States. He refused to go and instead returned to Tunis. By May 1961, Fanon had almost completed his last, and arguably most famous, book, *Les Damnés de la Terre* (“The Wretched of the Earth”) after

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45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 34.

47 Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 34.

48 Ibid., 33-34.

49 Ibid., 34.
a “ten-week explosion of intellectual energy.” In it he “propounds a theory of social action and makes a passionate plea for revolutionary decolonization and the creation of a free society.” At the beginning of October, Fanon suffered a relapse in his illness and was flown to the United States where, after being left without medical care for several days, he was finally admitted, as “Ibrahim Fanon,” on October 10th, 1961 to the National Institute of Health hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. On December 6, 1961, “after reading the proofs” of his book, Frantz Fanon passed away. In his last days, Fanon bemoaned not being able to die on the battlefield. He was subsequently flown back to Algeria and buried “in the soil for which he so relentlessly fought.”

Colonialism and Muslims

It is difficult to fully appreciate the extent of change that occurred in the Muslim world in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The traditional patterns of Islamic thought and the structures of Islamic institutions went through such dramatic shifts during this period that many would not be recognizable to earlier generations. For instance,

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51 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 35.

52 Macey, *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*, 488-489.

53 Hansen, “Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary Intellectual,” 34.


European powers initiated the “process of marginalizing Islamic law, setting up their own systems of economic, commercial and civil law.” A variety of factors led to these tumultuous times, but none has arguably had as traumatic an impact as European colonization of Muslim lands. The lands that had been readily dismissed by medieval Muslim rulers as the emblems of backwardness emerged on the scene from relative obscurity to present a formidable challenge to the Islamic empire. In the centuries before the 19th and 20th a gradual encroachment of European powers became evident in Muslim lands, primarily for economic pursuits through trade. In the “generation of 1789” Europe came to exercise an “ultimate hegemony over the Islamic peoples” either through direct rule or relations of dependence such that the Europeans had the power to “enforce their will in most Muslim lands.” In the 19th and early 20th centuries, European states had established “worldwide territorial empires” to feed their industrial economies needs for “raw materials and markets.” By the start of the 20th century, European powers were “in control of large portions of former Ottoman and Mughal lands, as well as other parts of the Muslim world.” This control was consolidated by the end of World War I with the final defeat of the Ottomans.


59 Sonn, *Brief History of Islam*, 104.
Although a full treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief discussion of the manifestation of colonial rule in different parts of the Muslim world will provide a useful context for the later discussion. Naturally, there are a lot of precursors to European domination in the Muslim world, but for our purposes a survey of European colonial rule will be sufficient. It is important to note, that European colonialism did “not operate as a unit, following a pre-planned scheme to take control of the whole Muslim world” and instead used the world “as a kind of monopoly board to play out their colonial competition.”60 For instance, due to its “naval superiority” the British preferred to establish its bases “around the ‘rims’ of continents” while France favored a “North-South approach, establishing colonial outposts directly south of its own territory.”61

By the early 20th century, the Muslim world began to look “like the Crusades were on again.”62 North Africa, West Africa and Syria were controlled by the French; the British controlled Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and India; the Dutch controlled Indonesia; and the Dutch and then the British controlled Malaysia.63 This process of colonization had occurred gradually, starting first with a seemingly harmless increase in trade between Europeans and Muslims, as had been the case in earlier centuries when, by the

60 Ibid., 115.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 105.
63 Ibid.
end of the 15th century, the Portuguese had taken control of the “Indian Ocean spice trade from the Arabs.” 64 This developed into deeper economic ties, with various “investment” companies establishing their presence in different pockets across Asia and Africa. Eventually, however, in order to consolidate and “protect” these holdings European countries took physical control of territory. 65 Three main strategies seem to have been employed by European countries to gain control of the Muslim world: a “gradual assumption of economic power,” “playing off internal rivals against one another,” and military campaigns when necessary. 66 Hence, the domination of the Muslim world did not really become “apparent to most people until it was almost complete.” 67

To some extent this unawareness seems to have been the result of an underestimation of European intentions and strength. For instance, the Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Magnificent gave “French subjects the right to travel and trade in Ottoman lands” and exempted them from taxation, without recognizing the impact that this would have on local competition. 68 These “special privileges (imtiyazat)” gave “Europeans distinct trade advantages,” which they “passed on to local Christian and

64 Ibid.
66 Sonn, Brief History of Islam, 105.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 106.
Jewish communities” allowing them to attain “greater wealth than was possible for local Muslims.” For his part, it seems as though Suleiman, and other leaders after him, did not anticipate this type of influence coming from foreigners and turned a blind eye to it. Eventually, by World War I, the French had begun to treat Greater Syria as part of their “eminent domain” and the Versailles Treaty at the end of the war gave them formal control.

Prior to the British, India was a part of the Islamic empire and was ruled by the Mughuls, though the population remained primarily Hindu. The British began to set their sights on India quite early, with a royal charter in 1600 that established the British East India Company. However, this was no benign “commercial enterprise;” in order to achieve its “monopolistic goals, the Company required military force, as well as administrators to control foreign populations.” By 1757, the British had gained control of Bengal and by 1818 they were the “paramount power in most of India.” By 1849, the Sikh-controlled Punjab province was taken and by 1857 the British controlled “either directly or through compliant local leaders, virtually all of India.” Initially, the British used traditional administrative patterns and Persian remained the official

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., 107.

71 Ibid., 110.


73 Sonn, *Brief History of Islam*, 110.
language so the local populations did not feel much difference in their daily affairs.\(^{74}\) However, when the British decided to replace Persian with English, it meant the “undermining of the basis of their [Muslim] traditional cultural life.”\(^ {75}\) Subsequent policies sought to accommodate some aspects of the religions and cultures of India, but generally eroded the traditional patterns of life. The British remained in South Asia for over a century until their departure in 1947. In Indonesia and Malaysia, Islam had been introduced by Indian traders in the 13\(^{th}\) and 14\(^{th}\) centuries. In 1816, the Dutch came with orders to establish “a colonial system based upon principles of free trade and free cultivation.”\(^ {76}\) Soon after, the Dutch East India Company had gained control of the region and aside from brief interludes by the French (1811-16) and Japanese (1942-45), the Dutch had effective control until 1949.

In North Africa, by World War II, France had taken control of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. However, their presence in the region dated back at least a century. In Algeria, the French initially entered in 1830 to combat “piracy.”\(^ {77}\) They were able to successfully combat the pirates, but did not leave; instead, they proceeded to establish a

\(^{74}\) Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 3, 333.

\(^{75}\) Ibid.


\(^{77}\) Sonn, *Brief History of Islam*, 107.
governor general in Algiers for “French possessions in Africa.” The Algerian resistance began immediately, but by 1871 it had been defeated. Algeria only gained independence after a brutal war from 1954 to 1962 in which “an estimated one-tenth of the population lost their lives and another one-fifth to one-third were displaced.” In Morocco, the French military first defeated the local army in the 1840s, but Great Britain and Spain also had territorial interests in the country. By 1904, the European parties in Morocco agreed to let France have the territory, but in exchange France allowed England to have Egypt, Spain to exercise its influence over northwestern Morocco and Italy to take Libya. The 1912 Treaty of Fez declared Morocco a “French protectorate.” In Tunisia, the initial French presence came as a result of France’s offer in 1830 to act on Tunisia’s behalf in ruling Algeria. Tunisia soon realized that the French had a longer term agenda in the region and as a result tried to build itself up to tackle this threat. Unfortunately, or ironically, it did so by taking loans from Europe, which eventually gave it the pretext to take over Tunisia in order to “recoup its debts.” At the Congress of Vienna in 1878, Britain gave France permission to take control of

78 Ibid., 108.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 109.
83 Ibid.
Finally, in Libya, Italy had received rights to the territory from the other European powers in 1904, and they invaded Libya in 1912. They consolidated their power by 1932 and were forced to leave by 1951.

After 1880, Europeans began to seek more “out-of-the-way areas” including those with little role in the “inter-regional market,” specifically sub-Saharan Africa. By the end of the 19th century, the British, Italians and French shared the “whole Abyssinian and Somali territory” among themselves. The British and Germans shared the territory “inland from the Swahili coast.” In “the Chad and Niger Sudans,” as well as the “far west coast,” the Muslim territories were quickly occupied by the German, British and French forces. By 1905, the French and British agreed to their “respective spheres” and all of sub-Saharan Africa was “partitioned out.”

In 1798, Napoleon first sailed into Egypt and “announced to the Egyptian people that he was going to overthrow the Mamluks.” France’s primary reason for entering Egypt seems to be trade and the “reliability of Egypt’s annual grain

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84 Ibid.
86 Ibid., 248.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 Sonn, *Brief History of Islam*, 111.
production.”90 By 1801, the French had to vacate Egypt after the Ottoman military defeated them in a series of battles and installed Mehmed Ali as the ruler. In order to develop Egypt’s economic power, Mehmed Ali and his successors needed money, but wanted to keep “independence from Istanbul” so borrowed from the French and British.91 As a result, Egypt was faced “with mounting debt – which would ultimately end the country’s independence.”92 By 1875, Egypt had to sell shares in the Suez Canal to the British, which allowed them a significant foothold in the country. In 1876, Egypt’s debt had gotten so bad that an international commission was set up to deal with it and all Egypt’s finances were put under the control of a British and a French agent.93 In 1879, the Egyptian ruler was ousted and the Europeans took over. Actual independence from the British was not achieved until 1952.

With regard to modern Iraq, it was created by the Europeans from “three Ottoman provinces.”94 The discovery of oil in Iraq only increased the competition for its territory. In 1914, British, Dutch and German oil companies combined to form the Turkish Petroleum Company and began “negotiations for the rights to develop Iraqi oil

90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 113.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., 116.
Local rulers were relatively autonomous but weak and wanted the hard cash in exchange for this mineral that had unknown value for them. Exploiting this situation and the general Arab discontent over Turkish rule, the British offered Arabs independence in their territories if they rebelled against the Turks. This would open a second front for the Turks, which meant they could not aid the Germans against the British. This was “a momentous decision; among the earliest rules established in Islamic law was the prohibition of collaborating with non-Muslims against Muslim rulers.” Unfortunately, what the Arabs did not know was that the Europeans had no plans to liberate these territories. In 1916, they had signed the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement in which France was assigned Arab Syria and the Kurdish Mosul province while Britain received Baghdad, Basra and the Palestinian portion of traditional Syria including Transjordan. The attempt to take over Turkey failed and it remained independent while the Arabs fell under protectorates. France wanted a share of Iraqi oil and traded their Mosul province with the British for Germany’s shares of the Turkish Petroleum Company, which it had relinquished due to World War II. Even the U.S. got into the act in 1928 with its oil companies gaining shares in the Turkish Petroleum

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 117.
98 Ibid., 118.
Company, which was renamed the Iraqi Petroleum Company.\textsuperscript{99} The British combined their Mosul, Baghdad and Basra provinces and set up monarchies in Iraq and Transjordan. Foreign control of Iraq did not end until a violent revolution in 1958.\textsuperscript{100}

Lebanon and Syria remained under French control, with some Lebanese ethnic groups becoming particularly pro-French. During World War II, Lebanon and Syria were freed from pro-Nazi French Vichy administrators and given independence. In 1943, a National Pact was signed between the various Lebanese factions, on the basis that the Muslims would accept a Lebanon independent of Syria and Christians would accept one independent of France. Although not put into writing, it was also agreed that the president of Lebanon would always be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni and the speaker of the National Assembly a Shi’a.\textsuperscript{101}

The largest portion of traditional Syria given to the British to rule was Palestine and it remains the “most problematic place in the region.”\textsuperscript{102} For a variety of reasons, including European persecution, European Jewry wanted to establish a homeland for Jews in Palestine. Hence, in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 the British agreed to “use their best endeavors to facilitate” the establishment “in Palestine of a national home for

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 119.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 120. This agreement, along with significant demographic shifts in Lebanon, has led to severely strained communal relations in the country.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 121.
the Jewish people.”103 At the same time, the declaration noted that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”104 In 1922, the League of Nations gave the British full control of the area. As a result, the Jewish population grew exponentially from 24,000 in 1882 to 83,790 in 1922 and 174,610 in 1931.105 Initially, Arab leaders supported “limited Jewish immigration on humanitarian grounds,” but considered them Europeans and were strongly opposed to distributing land to foreigners. With Nazism on the rise, Jewish immigration increased, which produced tensions and revolt in the local population.106 Zionist activists felt that removing the British and forming a sovereign state was the only way to ensure their continued presence in the region. Hence, British mandate authorities in Palestine “faced Arab uprisings against increased foreign immigration” and “Zionist terrorism against both Arab opponents and the British presence.”107

However, as devastating as the European invasion had been, it was the hasty departure and the policies adopted to ensure a continuing influence that caused most of the lingering tensions in the Muslim world, most prominently in Kashmir and Palestine.

103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., 121-122.
107 Ibid., 122.
Devastated by World War II, the British had to give up their “troublesome colonial holdings.” They decided to leave both India and Palestine and partitioned the land. In India, partition led to the creation of Pakistan, which involved the loss of nearly one million lives. In each Indian province, the ruler was asked either to join India or Pakistan. Many provinces were ruled by individuals who did not share the same religion as their subjects. However, most provinces, with the exception of a few, joined the nation that shared the same religion as their population; Muslim-majority provinces joined Pakistan, while Hindu-majority populations joined India. In Kashmir, the Hindu ruler decided to join India even though the population was largely Muslim. This led to fighting and subsequent wars, to the extent that the issue still remains in dispute to this day. Similarly, in Palestine, various proposals for partitioning the land among the Jews and Arabs were rejected by both sides. In May 15, 1948, Zionist activists unilaterally declared the formation of the Israeli state. Arab leaders in the region responded by “declaring war” but were subsequently defeated by Israel, with Western help, resulting in close to 800,000 Palestinians being left as refugees.

Even countries like Iran that avoided falling under colonial rule found that they were “defined by the same kinds of commercial concessions and colonial

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108 Ibid., 123.


110 Sonn, *Brief History of Islam*, 123.
competition…that led to such disastrous results for other Islamic states.”

Russian advances into Caucasian territory ruled by the Qajars, who dominated Iran, caused them to seek a “counter-alliance with another European power…in order to save themselves.”

Russian “manufactures” had become the “commonest imports in Persian markets” and Russia the “single most important external political factor.”

Hence, Iran gave its first oil concession in 1901 to British Petroleum for 60 years in return for 20,000 pounds, less than “one-fifth of the annual profits.”

The Qajar family also “sold the rights to develop Iran’s tobacco to a British firm” and in order to “modernize” the country they decided to invite the Europeans to intervene on many different fronts.

But since they did not receive immediate revenues from oil, they “were forced to rely on foreign loans to finance their projects.”

The local population protested against “growing foreign influence” and in 1906 the Qajars were forced to establish a constitutional government. They were eventually overthrown in 1925 by Reza Shah Pahlavi who continued the policies of modernization, but he attempted to

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111 Ibid.


113 Ibid., 227.

114 Sonn, *Brief History of Islam*, 123.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid., 124.
decrease foreign control.\textsuperscript{117} However, the League of Nations and the British navy forced him to “accept a higher percentage of profits” of Iran’s oil production instead of taking control of Iran’s oilfields from the British.\textsuperscript{118} Despite this acquiescence, in World War I Reza Shah was deposed due to his “fascination with fascism” and his son put in his place. The son agreed to “be compliant with Western interests,” and British Petroleum “maintained sole control of petroleum production in Iran.”\textsuperscript{119} In 1951, the Iranian parliament, led by Muhammad Mosaddeq, called for “nationalization of Iran’s petroleum industry” and Mosaddeq became prime minister with the shah heading for exile. The Iranian government offered to buy out British Petroleum, but the British refused and led a boycott of Iranian oil. Eventually, the CIA, with British support, led a coup that ousted the democratic government and reinstated the shah.\textsuperscript{120} As a result, British Petroleum retained its interests in Iran’s oilfields and agreed to share the profits with their American equivalents. American influence increased to the extent that the shah’s policies became associated with America.\textsuperscript{121} In 1979, the shah was overthrown by the Islamic Revolution. The Iranian example demonstrates that “added to the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[117] Ibid.
\item[118] Ibid.
\item[119] Ibid., 125.
\item[120] Ibid.
\item[121] Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
humiliation and sense of betrayal was the frustration of colonized people’s hopes for true independence and empowerment.”

Several themes mark this period and help illustrate the dynamics at play in the Muslim world. As Tamara Sonn notes, “economic, political and social crises are the cumulative effects of colonialism in the Muslim world.” In addition, Marshall Hodgson suggests that the most devastating “net result” of European “imperial activity” was to “freeze boundaries” and dynasties. They drew “arbitrary boundaries with reference to paths of European trade rather than to local ethnic considerations.” They made a “great point of inventing boundaries where they did not exist” and fixing them in areas where they may have temporarily existed. This allowed the European powers to know “which government was to be held responsible for any given stretch of territory.” In addition, the Europeans imposed a “dynastic legitimism,” insisting that a “sovereign monarch whose succession must be fixed” be put in place. This destroyed

122 Ibid., 126.
123 Ibid., 127.
125 Ibid., 248.
126 Ibid., 227.
127 Ibid.
the traditional patterns of regulating rule through “free military competition” and eventually led to increased despotism.\textsuperscript{128}

Internally, the Muslim world experienced various disputes, which in themselves were not extraordinary. However, unlike in the past, the opposing parties allied with the European powers to strengthen their hand. In the process, they gave Europeans a foothold within the Muslim world. The most prominent allegiance occurred between the Arab tribes and the British, which opened a second front against the Ottomans and eventually led to their defeat. Although in some respects it is surprising that these Muslim factions would ally with Europeans, it can also be explained by the fact that Muslims seem to have underestimated the rising European powers. Hence, they created special provisions for them, like exempting them from taxation in the Ottoman Empire, thinking the impact would be minimal. However, actions like these gave European traders a distinct advantage over their local competition and enriched Europe’s co-religionists in the region.

Possibly one of the most significant factors that led to Europe’s eventual domination over the Muslim world was the issue of debt. In their internal disputes, Muslims often required financial resources in order to properly defend themselves. Reluctant to seek loans from other Muslims, Muslim rulers sought resources from their weaker neighbors in Europe. As a result, they began to accrue significant debts, which

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
only increased when the Muslim world realized that they had fallen behind Europe and needed to rapidly modernize to compete. The process of modernization was not popular among Muslim populations and rulers responded, ironically, by borrowing money from Europe to build their military strength. This only led to even greater debt.

The discovery of oil in the Muslim world not only attracted more European investment, but made the actual acquisition of Muslim lands all the more attractive. With this backdrop, it is no surprise that the rhetoric of contemporary Islamic militancy centers on territorial integrity and oil.

Of course, Muslims did not passively accept this foreign invasion. Various examples of anti-colonial rebellion can be found in all these countries. Initially, this resistance was led by rulers, but they attempted to bring about modernization, in addition to military tactics, as a way of responding to the outsiders, which did not go over well with their population. During the first quarter of the 20th century, resistance jihad in Africa was waged against “encroachments of European infidels,” with the most determined resistance in “Sudan, Somaliland, Libya and Morocco.” In Mauritania and Morocco, Shaykh Ma’al al-‘Aynayn declared a “holy war” in 1909 and “rallied the Moorish tribes” against the French. The holy men (marabouts) were the ones who gave

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this movement its “cohesion.” Shaykh al-‘Aynayn rallied “some ten thousand” followers against the French. In Somaliland, it was the jihad launched by Muhammad Abdullah Hasan, known as the “Mad Mullah” to the foreigners, against the British which lasted for two decades. In Libya, and the central Sahara, it was the Sanusiyya Sufi brotherhood that was a “focal point for Muslim resistance to alien intrusion.” This resistance movement is said to have “raised echoes all over the Islamic world.” In Indonesia, the revolt of Dipa Negara (1825-1830), started with an isolated dispute and led to an appeal for people to “take up arms to fight for the country and for the restoration of the true Islam.” Hence, it is generally understood that Islam played a “paramount role” in the revolt by “providing the ideology” which “associated purified Islamic belief and practice once and for all with defense against alien rule.” In Niger, the Taureg, loyal to the Qadiriyya brotherhood, and the Sanusi force of Targui joined together at the end of 1916 to revolt against the foreigners, continuing their raids,

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132 Stewart, “Islam,” 197

133 Ibid., 196.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid., 196.


138 Ibid., 161.
despite severe repression, until 1931.\textsuperscript{138} In India, the “Sepoy Mutiny” of Muslim and Hindu conscripts resonated across the country and took almost a year to put down.\textsuperscript{139} The most important opposition movement in India, under the banner of \textit{jihad}, was that of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi’s \textit{Tariqa-i Mubammadi}, which was both a “revivalist movement” and a “political and social organization” working for liberation.\textsuperscript{140} It began in 1821 and it was only in 1883 when the British were able to “completely suppress this movement.” In Algeria, it was under leaders like Ahmad Bey and later ‘Abd al-Qadir that resistance to French rule occurred, starting as early as 1830.\textsuperscript{141}

These are just a few examples of the type of resistance that was widespread across the Muslim world. At the same time the “voices of reform” had also begun to be heard as “early as the 14\textsuperscript{th} century.”\textsuperscript{142} In some respects, it was as a result of the declining “vitality of Muslim society” that reformers slowly began to appear in the Muslim world. They were concerned with the central challenge facing Muslims: understanding “how their society plunged from the heights of affluence and influence, culture and learning in the Middle Ages to the depths of subjugation and despair, and

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\item \textsuperscript{138} Coquery-Vidrovitch, “French Black Africa,” 331-333.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Sonn, \textit{Brief History of Islam}, 111.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Peters, \textit{Islam and Colonialism}, 46-47.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 53-54.
\item \textsuperscript{142} Sonn, \textit{Brief History of Islam}, 127.
\end{itemize}
It is in many respects the combination of this anti-colonial response and the impulse for internal reform that became the foundation of contemporary Islamic militancy.

Islamic Militancy

The primary question underlying this thesis is whether Islamic militancy includes a dimension of anti-colonial response. The methodology employed to discover this is a textual analysis of both Frantz Fanon’s writings and the statements of Islamic militants to determine whether there is any congruence between the two. A detailed textual analysis of the respective discourses will provide a clear method for comparison. As noted earlier, Fanon’s writings emerge in the midst of the battle against colonialism and were employed around the world as handbooks for the anti-colonial response. Hence, if Islamic militancy expresses similar sentiments in similar terms then it is not unreasonable to also consider it a form of anti-colonial response.

Recognizing that Islamic militancy has a variety of manifestations, it is important to isolate a representative sample that one might be able to apply broadly. Hence, I propose to examine three different militant groups for theological, ideological and geographic reasons: Hezbollah, the Taliban and al-Qaeda. With regard to theology, these groups are Shia (Hezbollah) and Sunni (Taliban and al-Qaeda). Ideologically, Hezbollah and the Taliban are focused on localized objectives while al-Qaeda is more

\[143\text{ Ibid.}\]
global in its outlook. Finally, Hezbollah is located in the Arab “center” while the Taliban operates in the Islamic “periphery;” al-Qaeda technically has no geographical boundaries. That said a few caveats are necessary with regard to this sample. First, my interest is in examining the extent to which the rhetoric of these groups parallels that of Frantz Fanon, and in turn the period of colonialism. I do not intend to do a full analysis of the theology of these movements. These are multi-layered groups with perspectives on a host of issues; however, much of this is beyond the scope of this thesis. I am only interested in the extent to which their thought echoes anti-colonial sentiments and to what degree they consider their enemies as colonizers. Second, although I have attempted to represent the Islamic periphery, I realize that my sample is somewhat Arabcentric and thus does not necessarily reflect worldwide Muslim demographics. For instance, by not including groups from South Asia and Indonesia, I realize that I am excluding almost 50% of the world’s Muslims. While recognizing these limitations in the sample chosen, these three groups will likely be well-known to even the least informed reader. Hezbollah, the Taliban and al-Qaeda have had a disproportionate influence on Islamic militancy, and perceptions of it, in the last few decades and thus are more likely to reflect broader trends. Furthermore, there is a greater amount of secondary literature in English on these three groups than most other Islamic militant groups. This allows for a more comprehensive analysis.

That said a little background on each group will provide a helpful context for their ideas. With regard to Hezbollah, the group was officially formed in 1982, but it
“did not exist as a coherent organization” until the mid-80s. Hizbullah publically declared its existence in 1984 “through a communique, on the second anniversary of Sabra and Shatilla’s massacre” with a promise to “liberate Palestine.” There is some suggestion that Hezbollah’s formation occurred when Iran dispatched 1,500 members of its Revolutionary Guard to the “Syrian-controlled Biqa’ region” in the summer of 1982 under the “pretext of fighting Israel.” The Guard subsequently “organized and trained” Hezbollah’s first batch of fighters. This is not surprising though since throughout the 80s, Hezbollah was heavily influenced by Iran and was particularly inspired by the Iranian Revolution (1978-79).

The first secretary general of Hezbollah was Subhi al-Tufayli who took office in 1989 at the age of thirty-four. Hezbollah has been described as a “virtual state-within-a-state, with an army of several thousand men, an extensive social service network, a popular satellite television station called al-Manar ("the Beacon of Light"),

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146 Ibid., 322.


149 Ibid., 34.
and an annual budget in excess of $100 million.” It is approximated that its supporters number around 100,000 and “about half” are actual members of the party. Among Hezbollah’s most important “successes” has been their ability to force the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon in 1985, 2000 and 2006. However, in addition to gaining “unshakable credibility as a party renowned for fighting Israel,” Hezbollah also has a program to address “socio-economic grievances” which gives “the party a solid ground among the grassroots.”

Of course, Hezbollah, like other organizations, has evolved over the years. Early on, in 1992, under the new leadership of Hasan Nasrallah, Hezbollah decided to change course a bit and take part in the Lebanese political process, even though many members felt this betrayed their “revolutionary principles.” The decision has paid off as Hezbollah is now the largest political faction in Lebanon. Similarly, initially Hezbollah “rejected the very idea of an independent Lebanon” and called for Lebanon to be integrated into a “greater Islamic state.” At this early stage, the establishment of

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151 Ibid.


an Islamic state was part of Hezbollah’s “political ideology” and “political program.” Since then, Hezbollah has modified its position, retaining its desire for an Islamic state as part of its political ideology, but not its political program. They suggested that an Islamic state would be a great option if the people were to choose it. They have also shifted its “Islamisation process” from the political sphere to “civil society.” In a more recent development, the new Hezbollah manifesto released on November 30, 2009, “drops reference to an Islamic republic” completely and Nasrallah noted that “people evolve” and that the “whole world had changed in the last 24 years.”

The primary Hezbollah figure discussed in this thesis is also Hezbollah’s most prominent leader today: its secretary general, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah. Nasrallah was elected to this position in February 1992. He was born on August 31, 1960 to “an impoverished fruit and vegetable salesman” in a small village in South Lebanon and then raised in the “slum quarter of Karantina in East Beirut.” At the age of 15 he was appointed to head the Amal organization, a precursor to Hezbollah, in Bazouriye in

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156 Ibid.
159 Ibid., 2.
He was only 22 when Hezbollah formed in 1982 and at the time had been a “rising star” in the Amal movement. Prior to becoming secretary general, Nasrallah had been appointed to Hezbollah’s leading Shura Council in 1987. Like many Hezbollah leaders, he also studied at seminaries in Najaf, Iraq and Qom, Iran, building on an early interest in religious studies. Yet, many consider him a “modern Lebanese politician” who speaks the language of “nationalism... saturated with the elements of Shiite theology that emphasize resistance to persecution and martyrdom.”

He has particularly made his mark as a speaker, providing “detailed examinations of Arab politics” and seldom making “claims he cannot defend” in “stirring” speeches. As one commentator observes, “Nasrallah’s leadership is the glue that binds the party together.” In addition to Nasrallah, we will also examine the thoughts of its deputy secretary general, Naim Qassem. Qassem was born in Southern Lebanon in 1953 and

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160 Ibid. Amal was founded in the early 1970s by Sayyid Musa al-Sadr, an Iran-born cleric of Lebanese ancestry, as a militia connected to Harakat al-Mahrumin (“Movement of the Deprived”), which was a populist Shi’a reform movement. Hezbollah is an off-shoot of Amal. Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 17.

161 Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 34.

162 *Voice of Hezbollah*, 5.

163 Ibid., 3-8.


165 Ibid.

received his religious studies education under various senior figures in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{167} He
also received a B.A. in Chemistry from Lebanese University and taught high school
chemistry for six years. He has been in his current position since 1991 and began his
involvement in the 1970s with Amal.\textsuperscript{168} He was a founding member of Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{169}

The second group that will be studied is al-Qaeda, which was conceptualized as
\textit{al-Qaeda al-Sulbah} (“The Solid Base”) in 1987 by Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian-
Jordanian, for the “sole purpose of creating societies founded on the strictest Islamic
principles.”\textsuperscript{170} It is considered the “first multinational terrorist group of the 21\textsuperscript{st}
century”\textsuperscript{171} Azzam is the “ideological father” of al-Qaeda and was a “mentor” to
Osama bin Laden. Together they co-founded the Afghan Service Bureau (\textit{Maktab al-
Khidmat}) to help support the \textit{jihad} against the Soviets.\textsuperscript{172} In 1988, Azzam laid out
principles for the founding of al-Qaeda in the journal \textit{al-Jihad}.\textsuperscript{173} From the 1990s
onwards, al-Qaeda invited other terrorist groups to join its “consultative council” in
\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{167} Naim Qassem, \textit{Hizbullah: The Story from Within}, trans. Dalia Khalil (London: Saqi, 2005), back
cover.
\textsuperscript{168} Norton, \textit{Hezbollah: A Short History}, 99.
\textsuperscript{169} Qassem, \textit{Hizbullah: The Story from Within}, back cover.
\textsuperscript{170} Rohan Gunaratna, \textit{Inside Al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror} (New York: Columbia University
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 3-4.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 4.
\end{flushright}
order to “function at a global level” and create a “worldwide strategic framework of Islamic military and political organizations.” Its ideology has been characterized as “puritanical” and its membership constitutes a range of ethnicities, including Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Tajiks, Uighurs, Pakistanis, Kashmiris, Indians, Malaysians, Filipinos, Indonesians and of course Arabs.

Osama bin Laden currently heads the al-Qaeda network and was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1957. He is the son of a Syrian mother and a Yemeni father, who made his fortune on construction and public works projects. Bin Laden grew up quite comfortably and eventually went to study management at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. His first foray into militancy came during college when he helped finance the Syrian Muslim Brothers in their opposition to President Hafez al-Assad in 1979. It was also at King Abdul Aziz University where bin Laden first met a professor named Abdullah Azzam, who would later found al-Qaeda. As the son of a millionaire, bin Laden learned how to “talk to the wealthy, attract the poor” and situate

174 Ibid., 6.

175 Ibid., 11.


177 Ibid., 16.

178 Ibid., 15.

179 Ibid., 16.
himself at the “intersection of several social categories.” After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, bin Laden joined the jihad as a representative for his family. His role seems to primarily have been that of fundraiser and he “fought in very few battles, perhaps only one armed engagement.” His activities eventually led him to build a strong network in Afghanistan, as well as committed him to militancy. Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia in 1990 and shortly thereafter offered to organize a “fighting force of Arab Afghan veterans to defend the Kingdom” from the Iraqi threat. This offer was rejected and Saudi Arabia instead invited “half a million American and other foreign troops into the country to protect the dynasty.” Bin Laden was among many who vigorously protested and eventually left the country for Khartoum, Sudan in 1991. He was subsequently stripped of his Saudi citizenship in 1994. By 1996, bin Laden was expelled from Sudan after being accused of carrying out a series of terrorist attacks around the world and so, along with his supporters, he moved back to Afghanistan, specifically the Tora Bora mountains. Bin Laden soon formed an allegiance with the

180 Ibid.

181 Ibid., 17.

182 Ibid., 21.


184 Ibid.

185 Ibid.

186 Ibid., xiv.
Taliban, “organizing the resources, finance, training and safe havens” for their young fighters.\textsuperscript{187} In 1998, he came to be known on the world stage as the suspected architect of the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.\textsuperscript{188} Three years later, al-Qaeda would attack the World Trade Center and Pentagon and in 2004 bin Laden would acknowledge his role in these attacks.\textsuperscript{189}

The other al-Qaeda figure whose thoughts will be examined is Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician who is second in command to bin Laden in the al-Qaeda organization. He is often considered the “mastermind” behind the organization.\textsuperscript{190} He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo at an early age and was a “founding member of Egyptian Islamic Jihad,” which advocates the overthrow of the Egyptian government through violence.\textsuperscript{191} He has also “admitted planning the 1981 assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.”\textsuperscript{192} After serving time in prison for “illegal possession of firearms,” al-Zawahiri left for Pakistan in 1986 in order to care for

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{190} Harvey W. Kushner, \textit{Encyclopedia of Terrorism} (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 25.
\item\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Afghan soldiers. He linked up with Osama bin Laden and merged Islamic Jihad with al-Qaeda in the mid-1990s.

Finally, the last group whose thoughts I will examine is the Taliban. The term Taliban actually means “two students” in Arabic, but in its Persianized form represents the plural form of the word talib or student. The exact origin of the Taliban movement is “shrouded in mystery,” but the “most widely circulated theory” is that the Taliban emerged from among the “disgruntled young Afghan refugees” studying in religious seminaries, primarily Deobandi, on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are “mostly Pashtuns,” Afghanistan’s largest ethnic group comprising almost half the country. The Taliban’s own narrative is that their leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, had a dream in which “he was called to lead a campaign by ‘pure’ young students to cleanse Afghanistan of the corruption and debauchery of warring commanders.” There also seems to be evidence to suggest that the initial impetus behind creating the Taliban might have come from the government of Benazir Bhutto

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193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
197 Ibid., 27.
198 Maley, The Afghanistan Wars, 184. After the war with the Soviet Union the Afghan forces split into many factions and a devastating civil war ensued.
in Pakistan as a means of asserting “control over Afghanistan policy.”\textsuperscript{199} Needless to say, eventually these students became a “militarized force” known in Pashto as \textit{Da Afghanistano da Talibano Islami Tabrik} or the “Islamic Movement of Taliban.”\textsuperscript{200} The most immediate cause for the establishment of the Taliban, and its initial success, was likely the power struggle between two Afghan warlords: Gulbadin Hikmetyar and Burhanuddin Rabbani. Some estimates say that close to 50,000 Afghans were killed in their power struggle.\textsuperscript{201} In addition to the “wanton killing,” the Afghani people had grown tired of the fact that many of these former Afghan mujahideen were “indulging in corruption, looting, drug trafficking and rape.”\textsuperscript{202} Thus, the ordinary Afghan was “looking for a messiah” and the Taliban easily fell into that role.\textsuperscript{203} When the organization formed, they put forward four main goals: to disarm rival militias, fight those who did not give up their weapons, impose Islamic law in liberated areas and retain all areas captured.\textsuperscript{204} The Taliban’s rule lasted from 1996 to late 2001.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 183.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 182.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 26.
Ideologically, the Taliban are products of traditional Deobandi madrassas ("religious schools") in Pakistan and Afghanistan.\footnote{Deobandis arose in British India as a “forward looking movement” that would “reform and unite Muslim society.” Its main ideologues were Mohammed Qasim Nanautawi (1833-1877) and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1829-1905) who founded a madrassa in Deoband near New Dehli. The Deobandis aimed to “train a new generation of learned Muslims who would revive Islamic values based on intellectual learning, spiritual experience, Sharia law” and the Sufi path. Ahmed Rashid, \textit{Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 88.} Here they were given a traditional Islamic education, consisting of studying Qur’anic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence, Prophetic traditions, Arabic language, propagation, logic, mathematics, etc.\footnote{Matinuddin, \textit{The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997}, 15.} The Taliban’s ideology is a combination of radical Deobandi interpretations of Islam and their ethnic tribal code, known as \textit{Pashtunwali}.ootnote{Rashid, \textit{Taliban}, 89-90.} There are also elements of Wahhabism that have also seeped into their thought due to Saudi influence in the region.\footnote{Ibid.,90.} The Taliban’s ideas could be defined as a “new model for a purist Islamic revolution,” one that imposes severe interpretations of Islamic law and “rejects all” ideological “accommodation with Muslim moderation and the West.”\footnote{Ibid., 93, 137.}
CHAPTER II

MIND OF THE COLONIZER

Before examining Fanon’s approach to the condition of the colonized, it is important to understand his conception of the mind that produces colonialism; in other words the mind of the colonizer. Fanon spends considerable time exploring the manner in which colonialism impacts the colonizer. Unfortunately, the Islamic militant material on this topic is both scant and lacking in depth. There are a number of reasons for this, but primarily it has to do with where Fanon and the contemporary Islamic militant are situated. Fanon exists in two worlds, the West and the “Third World,” and is constantly negotiating between the two. He has intimate knowledge of both and is invested in both, emotionally and intellectually. The Islamic militant on the other hand generally operates from only the Muslim or developing world. His knowledge of the West is often rudimentary and understanding it is not of great interest.¹ Thus, it is difficult to find Islamic militant thought that “theorizes” about the “enemy.” As a result, this chapter aims more at setting up the framework of Fanon’s thinking than examining its utility for understanding militancy.

For Fanon, both parties, the oppressed and the oppressor, are deeply impacted by the colonial experience. He remarks at one point that the colonizer is “both the

¹ Note: I am speaking here of contemporary Islamic militants and not of Muslim intellectuals who, both in the past and the present, have demonstrated considerable knowledge of the Western world and familiarity with its modes of thought.
organizer and the victim of a system that has choked him.”

Hence, the native and the colonizer both require a catharsis which occurs through the process of decolonization and revolt. Central to Fanon’s discussion is his belief that the “problem of colonialism” is not simply the “interrelations of objective historical conditions” that come from the usurping of land but, at times more importantly, the “human attitudes toward these conditions.”

Thus, there are two broad goals that Fanon sees colonialism pursuing. The first is the most obvious practical one: “to strengthen its domination,” which allows for “human and economic exploitation.”

The second is far more abstract, but psychologically devastating. It is the effort to maintain the “image” that the colonizer has of the native, as well as, perpetuate the “depreciated image” that the native has of himself. There is, in essence, a desire that, on both the practical and psychological level, “colonialism wants everything to come from it.”

The colonial system by its very nature desires control over all aspects of the native. It is for this reason that it develops strategies that focus on causing disruption in the native’s life.

On the individual level Fanon finds that the most potent attack comes on the native’s sense of self. The colonizer targets the native’s sense of self by first attacking

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4 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 30.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 63.
the native’s culture as a whole. He does this through a process aimed at stripping the native’s culture of its indigenous patterns. This “enterprise of deculturation” is arguably the most devastating technique that the colonizer uses, far more severe than the “economic” or “biological” enslavement that takes place in the colonies.\footnote{Ibid., 164.} This is an incredibly violent process according to Fanon. He equates the “exploitation, spoliation, raids and objective murder” of the colonizer with the “sacking of cultural patterns.”\footnote{Fanon, \textit{Toward the African Revolution}, 33.}

The colonizer is not simply doing violence to the land and the bodies of the people, but also to their minds. The “social panorama is destructed” and subsequently the colonizer carries out a multi-pronged attack on the native’s values.\footnote{Ibid.} In turn, a “new system of values” is imposed with the “heavy weight of cannons and sabers.”\footnote{Ibid., 34.}

To some degree, al-Qaeda frames the Western engagement with the Muslim world in similar ways. For instance, in one of his letters to the “Muslims of Iraq,” Osama bin Laden characterizes American actions as a “new crusade against the Muslim world” which will have “dangerous repercussions and damaging effects on Islam.”\footnote{Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, eds., \textit{Al-Qaeda in its Own Words}, trans. Pascale Ghazaleh (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 67.} He considers the “Crusader-American alliance” to be premised on the “greatest unbelief” and aimed at “tearing the Islamic world apart and plundering the wealth of the
Muslims.”\textsuperscript{12} He implicates the United Nations in this as well, referring to them as a “tool with which the plans of global unbelief against Muslims are implemented.”\textsuperscript{13} Ayman al-Zawahiri takes it one step further, suggesting that “rulers of Muslim peoples, multinational corporations, international communications and data exchange systems, international news agencies and satellite media channels, international relief agencies and nongovernmental organizations” are all part of a program to “fight Islam.”\textsuperscript{14} For bin Laden, their end goal is to “annihilate Islam.”\textsuperscript{15} Hezbollah takes a different approach. Despite criticism of the United Nations, Qassem notes the “importance of having an international forum for resolving international disputes” and the need for “a coordinator at such a level should peace predominate in the world.”\textsuperscript{16}

Al-Zawahiri also characterizes Western engagement as a “crusade” which seeks to “erase the lines between Truth and Falsehood,” a clear reference to a prominent Qur’anic verse.\textsuperscript{17} The impact of this “falsehood” is linked to the promotion of “depravity,” which operates on the psychological level while physical occupation ruins

\textsuperscript{12} Messages to the World, 89.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 96.

\textsuperscript{14} Kepel and Milelli, \textit{Al-Qaeda in its Own Words}, 193.

\textsuperscript{15} Messages to the World, 188.

\textsuperscript{16} Qassem, \textit{Hizbullah: The Story from Within}, 258.

\textsuperscript{17} Kepel and Milelli, \textit{Al-Qaeda in its Own Words}, 207.
the “pure soil” of Muslim lands. As he notes, this depravity “floats above us like this occupation that has sullied our nation’s pure soil.” Similarly, bin Laden considers this promotion of falsehood to be pervasive and that Americans are interested in changing the “beliefs, curricula and morals of Muslims.” For him, “changing of the religious curricula is the loss of religion” and the production of “educated slaves who will be loyal to America.”

Similarly, the Pakistani government’s ban on foreign religious students was seen by Maulana Sami ul-Haq, considered the “Father of the Taliban,” as an “inhumane and unlawful act” taken only to “appease the United States and its [Pakistan’s] other Western masters.”

Interestingly enough, bin Laden also bemoans “parliaments” and “legislative councils” as examples of Muslims being led “astray” by an “ignorant religion” (presumably speaking of democracy). He conceives of Western forces using their might to impose these values on Muslim nations who are agents in the destruction, but not the powers behind it. In a response to a prominent Islamic scholar, Ayman al-

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18 Ibid., 208.

19 Ibid.

20 Messages to the World, 214.

21 Ibid., 253.


23 Kepel and Milelli, Al-Qaeda in its Own Words, 67.
Zawahiri, considered by many to be the main theoretician behind al-Qaeda, blasts democracy as a “new religion” because it proposes that legislation should come from the people whereas, according to him, legislation must “come from God” in Islam.\textsuperscript{24} He considers this to be “tantamount to worshiping gods, peers and associates alongside God.”\textsuperscript{25} One Pakistani Taliban commander similarly argues that “you can’t have anything above the laws of God, not even democracy.”\textsuperscript{26} However, this is one of the areas where we find differences among Islamic militants. For instance, Hezbollah adopts a very different position on parliamentary elections. Hezbollah’s original stance had been a “denunciation of the confessional electoral system as corrupt,” however in 1992 they seem to have been swayed in the other direction.\textsuperscript{27} This was largely due to the “pro-election position” that the “most influential Shi’i cleric in Lebanon, Shaik Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah” had been advocating for years.\textsuperscript{28} As a result, Naim Qassem, Hezbollah’s deputy secretary general, writes that Islam provides “guidelines for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 184.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 171.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Norton, Hezbollah: A Short History, 98. It seems a significant debate occurred within Hezbollah prior to the 1992 election with some members, like Subhi al-Tufayli, arguing that running for office would be “selling out.” Ibid., 100.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 99.
\end{itemize}
the good governor or leader” but leaves the “choice of government framework” open.\textsuperscript{29} Hence, “electing a president could be through direct popular vote or through a parliament.”\textsuperscript{30} Nasrallah explains that this participation is necessary in order to address “internal issues that are important to the people in the political and economic spheres, and in their daily lives.”\textsuperscript{31} More broadly speaking, Nasrallah notes that through elections Hezbollah could make its “voice heard by the Lebanese people,” have a “platform” from which it could “defend public causes” and “serve the people’s interests.”\textsuperscript{32} There is also support for elections among Islamic militants in Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of Hezb-i-Islami (“Party of Islam”), notes that upon defeat of the occupiers all parties should “respect the people's vote and allow the nation to decide on their own.”\textsuperscript{33}

For Fanon, the mental colonization of the native begins and ends with his values. In the first instance, the colonizer takes aim at the values already present in

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\textsuperscript{29} Qassem, \textit{Hizbullah: The Story from Within}, 28.
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\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 89.
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\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 138.
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native society which are “flaunted, crushed and emptied.”\textsuperscript{34} He presents these native values in a “simplified and pejorative” manner in the hopes of demoralizing the native.\textsuperscript{35} Native values are attributed to “religious, magical, fanatical behavior” and in the process whatever “shreds of national existence” the native tries to preserve are cut down.\textsuperscript{36} Taking this to the next level, the colonizer paints the native as the “quintessence of evil.”\textsuperscript{37} Hence, it is not simply an issue of native society lacking values, but rather the native is declared “insensible to ethics.”\textsuperscript{38} The native is then more than an “absence of values” but in fact a “negation of values” and thus the manifestation of “absolute evil.”\textsuperscript{39} The native disfigures everything to do with “beauty or morality” and is crafted into the “depository of maleficent powers.”\textsuperscript{40} This psychological impulse to belittle the other is not strictly reserved for the colonial context, but in fact pervades colonial society both at home and in native lands. Fanon mentions, for instance, the status of minorities, specifically “the Negro,” in Europe who is made to symbolize the “dark side

\textsuperscript{34} Frantz Fanon, \textit{Toward the African Revolution}, 33.

\textsuperscript{35} Frantz Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 41.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} Frantz Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 41.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
of the soul.”\footnote{Fanon, \textit{Black Skins, White Masks}, 190.} It is interesting to note that militants like bin Laden view their enemies in the same terms that Fanon’s colonizer views the native. Hence, bin Laden looks with disdain at the morality of every American noting that their “leader commits adultery and great sins” but “sees his popularity rise” and furthermore that they (Americans) are a “vile people who have \textit{never} understood the meaning of values.”\footnote{Messages to the World, 70.}

For Fanon, the colonizer utilizes three main groups to help create this psychological impact on the native masses: the “specialist in colonial affairs,” the “veteran” and the “developed native.”\footnote{Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 39 fn.6.} They are tasked with destroying any “cultural resistance” that may arise among the colonized masses and part of this effort involves belittling indigenous values.\footnote{Ibid.} In Fanon’s context, this cultural resistance was primarily found in Algeria’s Islamic culture which battled for supremacy with the colonizer’s Western culture.\footnote{Ibid., 41.} The colonizer recognized the potency of the native’s culture and the fact that its ability to resist the colonial agenda was far greater than the material means for resistance at the native’s disposal. Special attention must be paid to controlling and undermining this culture. Similarly, Qassem notes that “Western hegemony” which predominated over the region had attempted to make “Westernization” a “replacement
for the prevalent Islamic proposition.”\(^{46}\) However, he suggests that among the reasons why this effort failed was the “rooted Islamic infrastructure that blends with instinctive native thought.”\(^{47}\)

Subsequent to attempting to destroy native culture, Fanon finds that the colonizer seeks to introduce his own values into the society. For Fanon, there seem to be two primary values that the colonizer chooses to inject into the native’s psyche: individualism and women’s “rights.” The first value puts forward the suggestion that the “individual” is the most important part of a society and that each person must “shut” themselves up in their own subjectivity.\(^{48}\) This emphasis on the individual, discussed later with regard to its impact on the colonized, serves to disassociate people such that the unity necessary for revolution is unable to happen. The second value focuses on women, particularly as it relates to their freedom, or lack thereof, in the traditional native society. There is a concerted effort towards “converting the woman” and bringing her over to the side of “foreign values.”\(^ {49}\) One might assume that this is also because the colonizer believes that their long-term presence in native lands will only be enhanced by bringing the primary caretakers of tomorrow’s children to their side. However, for Fanon the goal of this unveiling of the native woman was to achieve

\(^{46}\) Qassem, *Hizbhulla: The Story from Within*, 253.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 253.

\(^{48}\) Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 47.

\(^{49}\) Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 39.
“real power over the man” and initiate a “practical, effective means of destructing”
native culture. The native woman also serves as a measure of the extent to which the
colonizer is impacting colonized society. Hence, in the Algerian context every new
“unveiled” woman “announced to the occupier” that the native “systems of defense
were in the process of dislocation.” The opposite effect was obviously being felt by
the colonized for whom every fallen veil was an acceptance of the “rape of the
colonizer.”

This attempt to impose values is so violent that the “very life of the colonized
can manifest itself only defensively.” Hence, every time Western values are mentioned
they produce in the native a “stiffening or muscular lockjaw.” In addition to assuming
a defensive posture, the native struggles to appreciate the colonizer’s values because of
the fact that colonial actions fall far short of the values they promote. Hence, the
colonized hears talk of “equality,” but is then confronted by the fact that when “seven
Frenchmen” are killed it “kindles the indignation of all civilized consciences” while the
“massacre of whole populations” of the colonized is “not of the slightest importance.”

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50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 42.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 130.
54 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 43.
55 Ibid., 38.
Similarly, the native observes how indiscriminate the colonizer is in his assault on the native since for every “soldier” killed, the colonizer also kills or wounds “ten civilians.”

A parallel sentiment can be found when Hasan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah, speaks of Israeli actions in Lebanon in 1982. He notes that “thousands of Lebanese citizens” were killed or wounded “while the world watched.” The destruction of the Buddhist statues in Bamiyan, Afghanistan in 2001 also demonstrated the Islamic militants feeling that a double standard exists. In this instance, the Taliban, who were then in power, had been requesting international aid for almost a year to help with the humanitarian situation in the country. No country responded, but when they threatened to destroy the Buddhist statues millions of dollars were offered to preserve them. Outraged, the Taliban destroyed the statues bluntly asking “instead of spending money on statues, why didn’t they help our children dying of malnutrition?”

It should be noted that the process of deculturation does not itself bring about the end of native culture; rather, the colonizer’s aim is a “continued agony” as opposed to a “total disappearance” of culture. What Fanon means by this is that the colonizer’s aim is to slowly squeeze the native culture of its dynamic soul, hence, the culture

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56 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 141.


59 Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 34.
becomes “closed” and “fixed” in its colonial status due to the “yoke of oppression.” He classifies this as a “cultural mummification” which results in the stifling of individual thought. In many respects, for Fanon this explains the apathy that is often witnessed among colonized people, before they awaken to the revolution. The colonizer’s strategy aims to fix the native’s culture in one place, by threatening it through various policies that attack its very structure or causing the native to make his culture static as a means of defending it against the colonizer’s onslaught. For instance, we see this demonstrated by the colonizer’s attempt to unveil women, which, rather than leading to cultural destruction, actually “had the effect of strengthening the traditional patterns of behavior.” At the same time, the colonizer advances his own culture as a means of progress and in many respects the only avenue through which one can access the future.

On the societal level, the colonizer begins to examine the ways in which tribal dynamics can be utilized for his purposes. Hence, the colonial system does not “simply state the existence of tribes,” but rather “reinforces” this existence and aims to “separate” the tribes. Fanon notes that this is a classic “divide and conquer” strategy to bring about appropriate submission. He considers this strategy of separation to be a part of the very “structure of colonialism” because it distracts the native with

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60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 49.
63 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 94.
“regionalist” concerns which turn attention away from colonial conquest. Thus, the colonizer is quite content with perpetuating the role of chiefs and tribal leaders since they allow the population to remain largely disunited. The emphasis on local identity also prevents the development of a national consciousness that could then be utilized in movements for resistance.

There is evidence to suggest that some of this strategy has also been attempted in contemporary times in places like Lebanon. For instance, Nasrallah speaks of outsiders trying to place Hezbollah, a Shi’a group, in a “state of confrontation with what they called ‘Sunni fundamentalism’. Hezbollah’s “worldview” considers the “fractiousness among Muslims” to be the “product of imperialism.” Nasrallah went so far as to suggest that Israel’s entire creation was specifically for the “purpose of dividing and partitioning the Muslim world.” Similarly, from the Sunni side, Maulana Sami ul-Haq, considers talk of Iranian ambitions or a “Shiite Crescent” in the Middle East to be “U.S. propaganda aimed at dividing the strength of Muslims” and to “hide its failure in Iraq.”

Ibid.

Voice of Hezbollah, 258.

Norton, Hezbollah: A Short History, 37.

Voice of Hezbollah, 33.

Baghdad in 2004, Nasrallah told a crowd of worshippers in Beirut that “they” were trying to “sow sedition among the Muslims” and cause your blood to boil till “cries of revenge” are heard.\(^69\) Interestingly enough, in this instance he not only implicates the CIA and Mossad as falling within the category of “they” but also suggests that it might be “a fanatic and extremist group that lives in the Middle Ages and has no brain, no heart, no religion, no morality and yet claims to be Muslim” – an obvious swipe at al-Qaeda.\(^70\)

In addition, to emphasizing certain traditional patterns, the colonizer also aims to destruct the native’s society where it serves his needs. So for instance, in the Algerian context where Fanon operated, the assignment of Algerian women to a “prominent place” actually functioned as a means of destroying traditional patterns of behavior to serve colonial ends.\(^71\) Despite its apparently virtuous objective, Fanon considers the colonizer’s plan to be more insidious and aimed at gaining control over the norms of the society that it occupies.

Yet, colonialism does not focus its energies only on the native when promoting values at the societal level. These values are also imposed, though in a far more benign manner, on the settler class. One example is that of the doctor in colonized lands. Fanon notes that this doctor has come to represent the healer who happens to be a

\(^{69}\) *Voice of Hezbollah*, 311.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 312.

\(^{71}\) Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 46.
“torturer.” The doctor is made, willingly or unwillingly, to collaborate with colonial forces in “their most frightful and degrading practices.” Naturally, this strikes at the very core of what the doctor’s profession is supposed to mean and thus begins to shape how the doctor views himself. For example, Fanon mentions that in Algeria it was known that doctors, specifically psychiatrists, would administer “electric shock treatments” on the accused to eventually leave the native’s personality “in shreds.” Even in less violent ways, the doctor is often forced to play a hand in the suppression of natives. For instance, in Algeria, doctors had to pass on the names and addresses of anyone whose “wound” appeared “suspicious” to the authorities otherwise face legal penalty. Despite the impact of this colonial practice on the doctor himself, its most devastating consequence was on the patient who eventually began to mistrust Western medical professionals, at the cost of his own well-being.

It is here worth mentioning that Fanon’s books are peppered with direct and indirect references to his own Marxist leanings, especially in opposition to the relationship between capitalism and colonialism. Of course, Fanon is critical of aspects of Marxism, particularly as it applies in his own Algerian context, but he is quite forthright in his condemnation of capitalism’s role in the colonial system. He notes that

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72 Ibid., 135.
73 Ibid., 137.
74 Ibid., 138.
75 Ibid., 135.
“for centuries” capitalists have behaved in the developing world like “war criminals,” suggesting that “deportations, massacres, forced labor and slavery” have been mechanisms by which capitalism increases its “wealth” and “power.” He goes so far as to suggest that capitalism functions to make the “task of policing” considerably easier. Thus, it is found in the “educational systems,” the relationships between individual family members and the loyalty of workers. For Fanon, all these factors lend themselves to an atmosphere of “submission and inhibition” that is necessary for the proper functioning of the colonial system.

This rhetoric is largely absent among Islamic militants for a variety of reasons. First, these groups tend to frame their worldview in Islamic terms as opposed to any other ideological framework. This has a greater appeal to their potential audience, but also betrays their hesitance at advocating any other ideology besides Islam. Second, many Islam-centered groups, militant and non-militant, were in competition with Marxists throughout the Cold War. In Pakistan, the Jama’at-i-Islami (Party of Islam) engaged in polemical exchanges with the left in the late 60s, but these eventually turned into open, and violent, hostility. In Lebanon, the relationship between Hezbollah and

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76 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 101.
77 Ibid., 38.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
the left has been more fluid, but saw serious violence in the mid-80s.\textsuperscript{81} However, despite this, recent statements by Osama bin Laden, whose fortune was made through purely capitalistic ventures, utilize the “grandiose language of Marxism.”\textsuperscript{82} He urges Americans to unite against their “capitalist laws” and rails against the “warmongering owners of the major corporations.”\textsuperscript{83} In addition, he speaks of the “destructive, usurious global economy” which is used to “impose unbelief and humiliation on poor peoples,” thus referencing both leftist and Islamic thought.\textsuperscript{84} That said, while bin Laden does not think it is harmful to fight alongside “socialists” when their “interests coincide,” he makes it a point to note his “firm conviction that they are infidels.”\textsuperscript{85}

In Fanon’s eyes, much of colonial behavior stems from a deep-seated insecurity about their place in the native’s land. The colonizer is “preoccupied with security” and for this reason is constantly reminding the native that the colonizer alone is “master.”\textsuperscript{86} This then leads to the colonizer suffering from what might be termed a type of guilt with regard to his role in the native’s land. This in essence is where the concept of “white man’s burden” develops; a justification is necessary to explain why the colonizer

\textsuperscript{81} Norton, \textit{Hezbollah: A Short History}, 37.


\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84} Messages to the World, 150.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 184.

\textsuperscript{86} Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 53-54.
needs to colonize. So even though the colonial system is built on military conquest and a police state, it still feels compelled to explain itself, and seeks a “justification for its existence and the legitimization of its persistence in its works.”\textsuperscript{87} This of course is not unusual for an occupying power. The original selfish goals of conquest for resources are eventually conceptualized as more altruistic in nature in order that the occupier might convince itself of its moral superiority.

Fanon is also pointed in his critique of the international press, specifically the Western press. He almost equates their role to that of the colonizer, finding their ambivalence to accurately report on Western activities in native lands a betrayal of their liberal credentials. In particular, Fanon is most disturbed by the fact that even the most liberal of these reporters use “ambiguous terms” to describe the native’s struggle.\textsuperscript{88} Although the reporters’ explain this as their attempt at objectivity, Fanon notes that “for the native, objectivity is always directed against him.”\textsuperscript{89}

Nasrallah also complains of the disparate manner in which Hezbollah’s activities are portrayed and the double standard that exists. He notes that the “situation is always presented as the reverse of what it is.”\textsuperscript{90} So, for instance, “Israeli aggression becomes a reaction” when in fact they were the ones to “attack first” and Hezbollah simply

\textsuperscript{87} Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 122.

\textsuperscript{88} Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 77.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 61.
reacted. Interestingly enough, on one occasion, former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made the same point, noting in a 1992 press conference that Hezbollah “had not fired without provocation from the Israeli army.”

Furthermore, in criticizing the report published in 2005 by UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen, Nasrallah complains that “Israel’s pretext for its actions” is mentioned, but no pretext is mentioned when speaking of the other side. Bin Laden is particularly vicious in his attack on the media implicating them along with the enemy and suggesting that they are set up to “fulfill the plans of the enemies through keeping the people occupied with minor matters.”

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91 Ibid.


93 *Voice of Hezbollah*, 357.

94 *Messages to the World*, 33.
CHAPTER III

PARADIGM OF A HOLY WARRIOR

Of the topics that dominate Fanon’s books, there are few that he is more concerned with than the mind of the colonized. In Fanon’s specific context, this individual was the mujahid or “holy warrior” fighting French imperialism in Algeria. What Fanon is preoccupied with is the manner in which the colonial condition impacts its victims and, as we will later see, the victimizers. With regard to the victims, that is, the colonized or the “native”, Fanon is interested in a variety of aspects of their particular mindset. First, he concerns himself with the practical consequences of colonialism and its policies on the native. Specifically, Fanon explores how colonialism shapes the way the colonized looks at the world. Second, he analyzes its effect on the way the native thinks about himself. Third, he considers how the colonized views the colonizer. Finally, Fanon looks into the way in which the native renegotiates his relationship with the future and, in doing so, with his past as well.

With regard to colonialism’s impact on the native’s perception of the world, Fanon describes what he considers to be a total disfigurement of the native’s context and psychology. In his opinion, “it is the country as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured, in the hope of a final destruction.”¹ He suggests elsewhere that “the appearance of the settler has meant…the death of the aboriginal

¹ Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 65.
society, cultural lethargy and the petrification of individuals.” In the beginning, Fanon notes, at least in his own Algerian context, the native is restrained by an extreme fatalism which he utilizes to accept his condition. The belief in fatality leads to the native removing “all blame from the oppressor” and determining that the “cause of misfortunes and poverty” is God, or rather God’s will. In some respects, this is a coping mechanism that the native employs to deal with the onslaught of colonialism. It should be noted though that the Islamic militant is not so exclusive in assigning blame. For instance, bin Laden “consistently has put the blame for the decrepit condition of Islamic civilization squarely on Muslims themselves.” Although he definitely blames the West for “attacking Islam” and “stealing” its resources, he believes their success is due to the fact that “many Muslims have strayed from the path” and “failed to join a defensive jihad.” For Fanon’s native, he is made impotent by the overwhelming force with which colonialism invades his life and is left to accept the disintegration of his world as a part of God’s greater plan. As a result, Fanon believes the colonized “bows down before the settler and his lot, and by a kind of interior restabilization acquires a

2 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 93.

3 Ibid., 55.

4 [Scheuer], Imperial Hubris, 114.

5 Ibid.

6 For a discussion of how this echoes the colonizer’s discourse on Algeria see Paul A. Silverstein, Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race and Nation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 50.
stony calm.” In a similar way, the initial phase of colonialism also impacts the way the native people consider resistance. For Fanon, this relationship with resistance is dictated by the plans of the occupier since they “determine the centers of resistance around which a people’s will to survive become organized.”

Interestingly enough, Islamic militancy utilizes a form of fatalism in its approach which is opposite to its use in the subjugation of the Algerian. Instead, it is framed as “trust in God” and through this faith one should “never retreat” on the battlefield. Some have described the results of “Islamic predestination” as being twofold: “either…the pursuit of holy war…or passive acquiescence.” As Naim Qassem notes, the “logic of the believers is positive and optimistic” because “God Almighty never fails to reward.” In other words, accepting one’s destiny as being in the hands of God means that victory is assured since it will either be “success on earth or a postponed recompense earned in the hereafter.”

In essence then, for Fanon, this initial stage of colonialism is marked by the development of a subjugated mentality among the colonized. However, as the

7 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 55.
8 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 47.
9 Voice of Hezbollah, 266.
10 Jan-Erik Lane and Hamadi Redissi, Religion and Politics: Islam and Muslim Civilization (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 69.
11 Qassem, Hizbullah: The Story from Within, 36.
12 Ibid.
rumblings of decolonization begin to be heard, the alternative consequences of foreign occupation come into play. Specifically, the presence of a shared enemy brings about a unity among diverse populations which few other factors are able to do. Hence, being “equally victims of the same tyranny,” a physically dispersed population finds unity and in their suffering discovers a “spiritual community” which becomes a “solid bastion” of the revolution.13 In the ensuing fight against the colonial authorities, the colonized adopt the “radical decision” to erase their “heterogeneity” and choose to unify instead.14 For Fanon, the main reason that this decision is made by the colonized is due to the realization that their previous differences, ethnic or otherwise, were erased by the colonial authorities who did not discriminate in their prejudice against them.15 What seems to occur is a confluence of interests between the different parties among the colonized such that “interests of one will be the interests of all” and they begin to see their destiny as shared.16 Hence, Fanon notes that “everyone will be discovered by the troops, everyone will be massacred – or everyone will be saved.”17 He goes on to

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13 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 120.

14 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 46.

15 This of course is not always the case, as seen by the disparate treatment of Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda, but those should be considered exceptional cases. In fact, Belgian colonizers carried out “scientific” studies on the Hutu and Tutsis to study their physical differences using “rulers and calipers.” They eventually determined that the Tutsi not only shared physical features with the Europeans, but that they were “nobler and more intelligent than the Hutu.” Joseph Sebarenzi and Laura Mullane, *God Sleeps in Rwanda: A Journey of Transformation* (New York: Atria Books, 2009), 12.

16 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 47.

17 Ibid.
comment that the “mobilization of the masses” during a war of liberation “introduces into each man’s consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny and of a collective history.” He suggests that the colonized find their unity in the lot that fate has dealt them and from there the seeds of resistances are sown.

Hasan Nasrallah also speaks of this shared destiny when describing Israeli activities in Lebanon during the 1980s. He notes that initially the Israeli military attempted to cause friction between Hezbollah and the Amal Movement by differentiating “between the homes” of people affiliated with the respective groups. They were attempting to bring Amal onto their side, but they eventually were “forced to go back to treating everyone with the same severity.” This just allowed for greater unity between Amal and Hezbollah over their shared predicament. On another occasion, we see how the shared destiny is linked to the shared sacrifices, particularly between leaders and followers. This occurs when Hadi Nasrallah is killed on the frontlines of battle and in eulogizing his son Nasrallah proclaims:

...we are not a resistance movement whose leaders want to enjoy their private lives and fight you through the sons of their loyal followers and their good and true supporters from among the ordinary citizens. The martyr Hadi’s martyrdom is the proof that we in Hezbollah’s leadership do not spare our own sons; we take pride in them when they go to the frontlines and hold our heads high when they fall as martyrs.

18 Ibid., 93.
19 Voice of Hezbollah, 25.
20 Ibid., 172.
Fanon sees this unity as part of the larger effort that brings about an end to individualism among the native. Individualism seems to represent for the native a primary lesson that the colonizer has taught. This is particularly true of those that Fanon refers to as the “native intellectuals” whose education has often separated them from the masses. Hence, Fanon speaks of how the colonizer teaches the native that every individual ought to “express himself fully” and that it is necessary to create a “society of individuals” where the only “wealth is individual thought.” Not surprisingly, when the colonized attains a consciousness about his position and the necessity to escape it, he rejects the “atheist” motto of “look out for yourself” and discovers the “falseness” of an individualistic worldview. Even the native intellectual is purged of these ideas as he recognizes the revolution afoot against foreign authority.

This unity is also of utmost important to the Islamic militant, regardless of whether their focus is local or global. It is both a tactical need, but also a foundational principle within Islamic thought and identity. The concept of a global umma or “community” is central to the Muslim worldview since they “see their community as a religious community, requiring adherence to religious beliefs” first and foremost. In fact, although in recent times Hezbollah has softened its rhetoric with regard to global

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21 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 47.

22 Ibid.

Muslim unity (constrained by the local politics of Lebanon), a few decades ago Nasrallah openly declared the organization’s belief in a “single Islamic world governed by a central government” because they considered “all borders throughout the Muslim world as fake and colonialist.”

As mentioned earlier, unity also has a practical dimension to it because of the shared threat. This is particularly true in the Lebanese context since the Islamic militant recognizes that it is not only Muslims who are fighting for liberation, but also Christians, Druze, etc. Thus, Nasrallah speaks of all Lebanese, regardless of their religion, “transcending” and “healing” past grievances and uniting “in the face of our enemy” to make the nation “victorious.”

Qassem also speaks of the need to “transcend sectarian hurdles in favor of cooperation” and “of the search for that which assembles and does not disperse.”

Hence, there is a negative and positive basis upon which the union takes place resulting from a shared enemy and ideology, respectively. Similarly, al-Zawahiri calls for “unity against the common enemy” and suggests that “half the road to victory is attained through union, unity, rising above minor matters, self-sacrifice and putting the interests of Islam above personal conflicts.”

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24 Voice of Hezbollah, 32.

25 Ibid., 176.

26 Qassem, Hizbullah: The Story from Within, 208.

27 Kepel and Milelli, Al-Qaeda in its Own Words, 202.
Unlike with Fanon, there is no discovery of a false individualistic worldview, because this view is never truly adopted by the Islamic militant. Nasrallah does see its presence in his society though and thus defines the “jihadi spirit” in terms contrary to individualism: “a sense of self-sacrifice, for giving without restraint, and for transcending all calculations, selfishness and personal temptations.”

Qassem suggests that martyrdom epitomizes the differences in the Islamic and Western views of the individual. He notes that the West resorts to “invalid explanations” for why people choose martyrdom explaining it as the “influence of chemicals” or desire for “compensation through material reward” all in an attempt to “affix the individual to it [martyrdom] at all costs.” Qassem goes on to note that martyrdom is an act “based on altruism and manifested through preferring the hereafter to life, the nation to the individual.”

The second aspect of the colonized that Fanon examines is his perception of self after the impact of colonialism. As with the previous discussion of the native’s worldview, we find that there are two phases that occur in the definition of self. The first phase is when colonialism first takes root and the colonized is reacting to it, while the second phase is after the colonized gains his sense of consciousness and recognizes the need to resist. When it comes to perceptions of self, the native suffers from a

28 Voice of Hezbollah, 127.

29 Qassem, Hizbullah: The Story from Within, 44.

30 Ibid., 47.
variety of complexes. In many respects this is because the native is a product of the colonial system. Fanon notes that “it is the settler who has brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence.”31 The “native” status is a contrived status because it only exists in relation to a colonizer. More broadly speaking, it is “the racist who creates his inferior.”32 This is not only done through the very existence of the colonizer, but also through the colonizer’s actions, both subtle and brutal. As Fanon poignantly asks about one of his patients, “does anyone think it is easy to make this child of seven forget both the murder of his family and his enormous vengeance?”33 Striking a similar tone, Nasrallah laments that “the pictures of children whose heads were severed and whose bodies were torn to pieces do not leave our mind, and never will; we are not people who forget easily.”34

As a result, there are two complexes that the colonized begins to suffer from. The first, and most obvious one, is that of an inferiority complex in relation to the colonizer. In a subjugated position within his own homeland, and likely having suffered defeat in the initial opposition to colonial entry, the native feels inferior. For Fanon this translates into the larger dynamic between black and white on the world stage. Having been previously physically enslaved, black people are then mentally enslaved by “white

31 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 36.

32 Ibid., 93.

33 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 26.

34 *Voice of Hezbollah*, 167.
civilization,” such that it becomes the standard by which they measure themselves.\textsuperscript{35} As Fanon notes, the colonized people are ones in whose “soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality.”\textsuperscript{36} The native is not only subjected to the acquisition of his territory and its appropriation for the colonizer’s ends, but also the manipulation of his own culture and values. As such, “colonial domination distorts the very relations that the colonized maintains with his own culture.”\textsuperscript{37}

In a 1986 interview, Nasrallah makes mention of a similar distortion occurring in Lebanon. He mentions that along with “removing colonialism from this region,” the goal of Hezbollah is to combat the “colonial means of information and culture” such that people can “understand Islam as it should be understood.”\textsuperscript{38} He goes on to specifically mention the manner in which “Muslim political terminology has been distorted by colonial interpretations.” For the Islamic militant, “culture” takes a backseat to religion in terms of what needs to be protected. Of course, the militant’s ethnic culture is heavily informed by religion so this distinction is not necessarily that instructive. Unlike Fanon’s native, the Islamic militant is first and foremost concerned with distortion of his ideology and thought as opposed to cultural patterns, dress or

\textsuperscript{35} Fanon, \textit{Black Skins, White Masks}, 192.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 18.

\textsuperscript{37} Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 130.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 32.
language. That said, it is not that the Islamic militant is unconcerned with these other elements. For instance, Nasrallah strikes a defiant tone in a 2005 speech where he says that Lebanon will “never change its name, its history, identity or garb” and that it will “always be Lebanon, a homeland for its people, for Arabism…”³⁹

For Fanon, the parallel complex that the colonized begins to suffer from is the desire to be the “other.” Specifically, this is in reference to adopting the cultural norms and values of the colonizer. This is of course a natural byproduct of the inferiority complex and the distortion that occurs between the colonized and his culture. In discussing this issue, Fanon steps outside of the Algerian context and speaks specifically about the experience of being a black man in France. The most powerful observation that he makes is that much of this adoption occurs because the black man, or specifically the Antillean, requires the “Other” to “corroborate him in his search for self-validation.”⁴⁰ His sense of self and identity are then subjected to almost a paternal approval. There is a need to “prove…at all costs” the “richness of their thought” and “equal value of their intellect.”⁴¹ Naturally, this validation will only come through the adoption of patterns of behavior familiar and known to the colonizer and so “we witness the destruction of cultural values, of ways of life” and find that everything from

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³⁹ Ibid., 325-26.

⁴⁰ Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 213.

⁴¹ Ibid., 10.
“language” to “dress” are “devalorized” by the native. Through devaluing these elements of his own heritage and instead adopting European dress and language, the native begins to feel a sense of “equality with the European and his achievements.” This not only happens through the introduction of the colonizer into the native’s context, but it also comes from the domination of all mediums of information that the native is exposed to. Hence, through controlling newspapers, schools, films, radio, etc. the colonizer begins to shape the native’s view of the world, which inevitably becomes a “white” view of the world because “no black voice exists.” Fanon summarizes this with a particularly powerful statement in Black Skins, White Masks:

In other words, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world, “that I am a brute beast, that my people and I are like a walking dung-heap that disgustingly fertilizes sweet sugar cane and silky cotton, that I have no use in the world.

This then is the first phase of the native’s definition of self subsequent to the arrival of the colonizer. It is marked almost exclusively by a sense of self-loathing, as though the trappings of culture and tradition from the past require cleansing. To some extent, the paradigm of self-loathing may be true in a Muslim context, but not

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42 Fanon, Toward the African Revolution, 33.

43 Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks, 25.

44 Ibid., 152-53.

45 Ibid., 98.
necessarily for the Islamic militant. Rather, the militant’s faith promotes an exaggerated positive self-identity, thus erasing many negative perceptions of self. He embraces his Islamic identity as his main identity and considers the empowerment it provides to be the reason why other Muslims must recover this identity to eliminate their self-loathing. For Fanon once the native becomes aware of his condition and desires to rid himself of the colonizer, the process of redefining himself begins. This process of “decolonization” is one that requires a rebirth of sorts, because it “influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally.” The first “impulse” is one that rejects the attempts by others to define the native.

This rejection of the Other’s definitions is seen among Islamic militants as well, particularly in relation to terrorism. In a 2001 interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper, al-Rai al-Aam (“The Popular View”), Nasrallah rejects the “premise that anyone could teach us the difference between what is religious and legitimate and what is criminal and terrorist.” In a similar vein, bin Laden decries the fact that the U.S. has “set a double standard calling whoever goes against its injustice a terrorist.” He wonders why it is not “a terrorist act to launch atomic bombs at nations thousands of miles away.”

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46 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 36.

47 Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks, 36.

48 Voice of Hezbollah, 258.

49 Messages to the World, 51.

50 Ibid., 51.
another instance, when speaking with al-Jazeera, bin Laden goes so far as to accept the label of terrorist, but offers an alternative definition suggesting that “if killing those that kill our sons is terrorism, then let history witness that we are terrorists.” He raises similar questions about why “your dead are considered innocent but ours worthless” or “your blood counts as real and ours no more than water?” In a 2007 interview, Maulana Sami ul-Haq sharply notes that the U.S. attack on Afghanistan was a clear act of aggression and terrorism, but “when someone rises up against U.S. aggression, then he is called a terrorist.” For Qassem, the Western proclivity to define Islamic movements using terms like “fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism” is aimed at “paving the way for taking ideological control of the Islamic world.” Furthermore, he questions whether “they have a right to speak of moderation and extremism, when they themselves stand accused of colonialism, imperialism and the subjugation of people.” In fact, Hezbollah encourages the “peoples of the world to distinguish between aggression, which is none other than terrorism, and the honest resistance that is the only

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51 Ibid., 107.
52 Ibid., 234.
54 Qassem, Hizbullah: The Story from Within, 222.
55 Ibid., 223.
way to deter aggression,” which, among other things, suggests the need for “state terrorism” to be included within the broader category.  

Fanon suggests that after the native accepts his present condition and the demands made upon him by the colonizer, he learns how to say “no” to colonial demands. This is a crucial development in his psyche because it lays the foundation for the process of decolonization. Not only is decolonization a physical removal of the colonizer from colonial lands, but it is a very powerful decolonizing of the native’s mind as well. As Fanon observes, “challenging the very principle of foreign domination brings about essential mutations in the consciousness of the colonized, in the manner in which he perceives the colonizer, [and] in his human status in the world.” These elements are crucial for resistance because, over the course of time he is able to articulate what every native has wished for “at least one time in his life”: the “defeat” of colonialism.  

Bearing that in mind, the motivations for the Islamic militant are not necessarily as nationalistic as Fanon suggests for the native. As Nasrallah notes, his fighters are compelled by their “faith in God” and “in answering God’s summons to fight the occupiers.” They are motivated by transcendental concerns related to the “expectation of going to paradise” and this is why motivating people with “purely

56 Alagha, The Shifts in Hizbullah’s Ideology, 240.

57 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 69.

58 Ibid., 102.

59 Voice of Hezbollah, 222.
nationalistic and popular language” has failed. Regardless, for Fanon this backdrop helps frame the mentality that begins the process of removing the colonizer’s presence from the land.

It is here then, in the discussion of land, that we come to the “most essential value,” in Fanon’s view, that a colonized people hold dear. The land is important for two primary reasons: it brings sustenance and it brings “dignity.” However, for Fanon, this dignity is not as we conceive of it in terms of a human individual’s dignity. Rather, it is the dignity that comes with countering the “flaunting violence” of the colonizer to “put him out of the picture.” The native’s experience of humiliation in relation to the colonizer has not simply been at the individual level; rather, he sees the impact on the entire community of colonized people who on any occasion can be freely beaten, arrested or starved in their own land. By reclaiming this land, the colonized is reclaiming his dignity.

For the Islamic militant, land is not the primary means of regaining one’s dignity; rather it is the strengthening and elevation of faith. Islam is his “motivator.”

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60 Ibid.

61 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 44.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 *Voice of Hezbollah*, 223.
For some it is a return to an original, pristine version of the faith, for others it is simply giving precedence to faith over everything else. That said land is also a very important part of many Islamic militant ideologies, particularly the notion of “freeing” the land of foreigners. This is clear in bin Laden’s rhetoric since his first grievance with the United States begins over their presence in the Middle East. His goal then is “to liberate the lands of Islam from unbelief.” This seems to have the twin aims of not only removing the presence of Americans in Saudi Arabia, but also eradicating particular modes of thinking that presumably Saudis themselves have adopted. Unlike bin Laden, when Nasrallah says “the objective of the resistance is the liberation of the land” he is not promoting an ideological agenda alongside the actual physical removal of Israelis from Lebanon. Similarly, Maulana Sami ul-Haq states that “there is no chance for peace and stability in Afghanistan until the presence of foreign troops is removed,” emphasizing that violence is necessary for liberating the land, but not necessarily any other immediate ideological agenda. One Taliban commander notes that their resurgence occurred because fighters “embraced…the idea of returning to free our land of the American invaders.”

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66 Messages to the World, 90-91.

67 Voice of Hezbollah, 142.


Mohammad, a member of the Taliban’s governing council in Zabul province, who says: “the U.S. has the weapons, but we are prepared for a long and tireless jihad. *We were born here. We will die here. We are not going anywhere.*”\(^\text{70}\)

For Fanon, having redefined himself, the native then turns to redefining his relationship with those who colonize his land. As noted earlier, the initial phase of colonization contains an almost mythic stature for the colonized in the eyes of the native. He tries to be “like” the colonizer in every sense he can; he values those who are able to attain closeness to the colonizer’s values and culture. Once a new awareness emerges over his condition and the need for removing the colonizer, the native begins to reconfigure his relationship to the colonizer. This takes on many forms, but the three most prominent occurrences that Fanon describes in detail are those of blame, rejection and replacement.

With regard to blame, the native begins at this point to hold the colonizer responsible for all the problems and miseries of his society. This is even more pronounced when the actual war for liberation begins because at this stage “any death is conceived of as a direct or indirect consequence of colonialist repression.”\(^\text{71}\) He points specifically to the example of Algeria where he says that there is “not a dead person” who is “not the victim of French colonialism.”\(^\text{72}\) This mental shift has far reaching

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 43

\(^{71}\) Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 118.

\(^{72}\) Ibid.
consequences. It creates an inescapable culpability for the colonizer who the colonized people have decided will be “innocent of none of the wounds inflicted upon its body and its consciousness.” By doing this, the native is also able to focus all the most charged energies of the population in the direction of the colonizer. Hence, the experience of death within the colonized land becomes an experience of colonial oppression regardless of whether that death occurred naturally or due to a colonizer’s bullet. As Fanon observed, even the “sudden deaths” in Algerian hospitals were interpreted by the local population as “murderous and deliberate” decisions resulting from the “criminal maneuvers” of the “European” doctors on staff at that hospital. In some respects, this is also extremely useful to the resistance fighter because his own violent acts will be dismissed and all casualties and brutality imputed to the colonizer.

Subsequent to this, although Fanon does not suggest a chronology, the native learns to reject the colonizer. This begins because the colonial situation is one that eventually drives the native to “appraise all the colonizer’s contributions in a pejorative and absolute way.” This is due, to some extent, to the fact that any acknowledgment by the native of the colonizer’s contributions to his society was then “taken advantage of by the latter and used as “justification of the occupation.” At this point, according

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73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 123-24.
75 Ibid., 121.
76 Ibid., 122.
to Fanon, the native also embraces a more stubborn position. Having seen the way in which the colonizer justifies the colonization and usurpation of the native lands and having witnessed the brutality that comes with this occupation, the native adopts a posture with regard to the colonizer that is “uncompromising, rigid and static.”\(^{77}\) Hence, any proposals that the colonizer might make with regard to the colonial situation are always seen as means to perpetuate the occupation and subsequently dismissed by those engaged in the revolution.

This can be seen in some respects with regard to how America’s initial involvement in the first Gulf War is viewed by the Islamic militant. For al-Qaeda this was really a defining moment and as bin Laden quite dramatically states it was “the first time, the Crusaders” gained “control over the Islamic holy places and the Holy Sanctuaries, and hegemony over the wealth and riches.”\(^ {78}\) Even Nasrallah adds his two cents by going so far as to question America’s no-fly zone over the Shia south in Iraq. He notes that Americans always “seize opportunities to further their own interests” and through this prism he considers the American “protectorate” in the south to be designed for the “division and dismemberment of Iraq.”\(^ {79}\) This is particularly noteworthy given the fact that Saddam Hussein had been oppressing the Shi’a in the south of Iraq for a long time; so presumably Nasrallah, himself a Shi’a leader, would

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 63.

\(^{78}\) Messages to the World, 16.

\(^{79}\) Voice of Hezbollah, 99.
have welcomed an American no-fly zone.\textsuperscript{80} However, the extent of the mistrust of the Americans is so great that all their actions are questioned. Similarly, Nasrallah makes a sweeping statement with regard to the Israeli whom he considers to be “a big liar in all that he says, talks about and claims.”\textsuperscript{81}

But concomitant to this rejection, according to Fanon, a certain measure of irrationality takes hold because rationality has not been successful and the native is thus pushed into a position of “regression.”\textsuperscript{82} This is partly demonstrated by the appearance of “irrational overestimation” among the native population with regard to the success of the resistance.\textsuperscript{83} The native, upon hearing news of battles, would react in such a disproportionate manner that it “assumed a pathological character.”\textsuperscript{84} The desire for success of the resistance and the subsequent liberation became so powerful that even when news was coming in fragmentary forms, an “autonomous creation of information” began among the colonized which elevated the revolution to mythic proportions.\textsuperscript{85} The collection of these attributes then directly impacts what the native’s reality and, more specifically, his conception of the “truth” is. “Truth” simply becomes

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{80} Sandra Mackey, \textit{The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein} (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2002), 290.
\item \textsuperscript{81} \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 385.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Fanon, \textit{Black Skins, White Masks}, 123.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 77.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 86.
\end{itemize}
that which “hurries on the break-up of the colonialist regime” and “promotes the emergence of the nation.” In essence, truth is “all that protects the natives” and “ruins the foreigners,” such that in this colonialist context the only notion of good becomes that which is “evil for them.” The mindset of the native thus becomes completely oppositional in relation to the colonizer. This is most profoundly demonstrated by the issue of values, where the native rejects the values of the colonizer even if they are “objectively…worth choosing.”

For the Islamic militant, there are some shared traits on these points with Fanon, but one major difference in that truth is first and foremost as it relates to the divine will. It is only secondarily defined by the political circumstances. That said the two can often be interrelated as the Islamic militant seeks to interpret the “truth” of his political circumstances in transcendental terms. These interpretations are often essentialist in the same manner described by Fanon. Thus, Nasrallah notes that “the Israeli enemy’s intentions are beyond doubt and always bad and satanic.” In another instance, bin Laden proposes that AIDS is a “satanic American invention.”

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86 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 50.
87 Ibid.
88 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 63.
89 Voice of Hezbollah, 196.
90 Messages to the World, 168.
For Fanon, this then helps determine how the native conceives of life after the departure of the colonized. Thus, the native focuses his attention on the long-standing desire to replace the colonizer. This “dream” is one in which the native envisions “settling himself up in the settler’s place.” At this stage, despite being treated as inferior, the native is no longer “convinced of his inferiority.” In many respects, his position is one of “patiently waiting” to catch the colonizer off-guard and to go from the position of “oppressed person” to that of “persecutor.”

For the Islamic militant, the inferiority complex was a shortcoming that he witnesses among his fellow religionists. For his part, the militant is completely convinced of the superiority of his position and faith. Hence, although he may feel inferior in terms of military strength, morally he considers himself by far superior. Thus, when addressing the American people in 2002, bin Laden implores them to “reject immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling and usury” and urges them to account for the “despicable state they have reached.” For the global militant, jihad becomes a way to regain “strength” and superiority in the military realm.

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91 Frantz Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 130.

92 Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 51.

93 Ibid.

94 *Messages to the World*, 166.

95 Ibid., 49.
The final dimension of the native that Fanon explores is his relationship with the future, and in turn, the past. The mindset that has been created as a result of a new perception of the world, of self and of the Other leads the native to conceptualize the future differently than he would have imagined prior to the emergence of revolutionary tendencies. In particular, the oppositional stance against the colonizer alters how the native constructs his own value system. Thus, it is feared that any acceptance of the colonizer’s values on the colonizer’s terms might lead to the “integration” of the native into the colonial system, thus precluding the disintegration of the system itself.96 We find that the Islamic militant is similarly reluctant to indicate any flexibility since “weakness” or “lack of resolve” in their “words” or “logic” or “performance” would only lead to “more arrogance, more tyranny and more aggression” from the other side.97

The result is a “newness” that emerges in the native who has joined the revolutionary struggle. In the first instance, it reconfigures one’s relationship to the past, to family, to culture and to tradition. Thus, the revolutionary alters his attitude toward family such that he “frees” himself of conventions that are “unnecessary and detrimental to the revolutionary situation.”98 Part of this development occurs due to the different postures adopted by the older generations versus the newer ones. The fatalism mentioned earlier, which attributes the colonial condition to God’s plan and thus

96 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 126.

97 Voice of Hezbollah, 281.

98 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 101.
encourages the path of “waiting and resignation,” now clashes with the “new world” that the younger generation chooses to build through the revolution.\textsuperscript{99} This generational relationship within the family, between fathers and sons, represents for Fanon a microcosm of what occurs throughout the society between old and new.

Fanon considers the questioning of traditional values to be the most profound expression of change. In his opposition to the father, the son becomes a new person who is the “creator of his own values.”\textsuperscript{100} The “defeat of the father” puts forward “new forces” that ultimately “modify the relations” that had previously prevailed.\textsuperscript{101} One of the most interesting such example is that of women in Algerian society. Fanon spills considerable ink discussing the role that women played in the revolution. With regard to these new relationships, Fanon finds that “new values governing sexual relations” emerge as a result of the requirements of the revolution. The increasing involvement of women in revolutionary activity leads to their absenting themselves from their homes for unspecified periods, actions that fly in the face of traditional notions of sexual morality. Yet, as Fanon observes, the “militant girl, in adopting new patterns of conduct, could not be judged by traditional standards.”\textsuperscript{102} Hence, he suggests that the

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 101.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 110.
family learns to live with these new patterns of behavior because they are necessary for liberation. As a result, the old tradition is discarded.

However, it is difficult to believe that these “new” social patterns were widely accepted within Fanon’s Algeria; indeed, there are few indications that today’s customs are any different from those that prevailed there prior to Fanon’s arrival. In fact, after independence the program for “female emancipation” was “limited and short-lived,” and thus “did not justify Fanon’s western liberal belief that the liberation struggle had ‘developed new values’.”

For the Islamic militant, the discarding of tradition is not really an option, although it might be redefined and presented in a new light. The global militants like al-Qaeda do not mention the role of women in their fight, indicating that it is not even on their radar screen. Hezbollah frames the role of women differently, suggesting that “religious commandment does not require this form of sacrifice from women given the sufficient number of men, which renders female participation in combat unnecessary.” However, women do have a role in the “back ranks through support and recruitment” and for which they are equally rewarded by God.

As could be expected, Fanon believes that the native’s relationship with the past is fundamentally altered; indeed, he even considers that the past has no more relevance.

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104 Qassem, Hezbollah: The Story from Within, 46.

105 Ibid.
in relation to the present. He states at one point that “the discovery of the existence of a Negro civilization in the 15th century confers no patent of humanity on me,” suggesting that one’s heritage has no impact on one’s definition of self during revolutionary times.\(^{106}\) He quite emphatically argues that discovery of one’s unique culture is not the reason why oppressed people revolt, but rather it is because it has become “impossible for them to breathe” due to the suffocation of colonialism.\(^{107}\) For Fanon, the obsession with the past and with one’s ancestral contributions, is pointless and distracts from the current task. He does not wish to “exalt the past at the expense” of his present and future.\(^{108}\) As one scholar notes, for Fanon “retrospective glory dilutes” the native’s anger and “moves them away from the task of inventing a new future.”\(^{109}\) Furthermore, another commentator observes that there is a sense in which Fanon fears that because the native is “still operating within the parameters prescribed by colonial culture” even assertions of “Arab-Muslim culture” are understood and “defined in western terms.”\(^{110}\)

\(^{106}\) Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 225.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 226.

\(^{108}\) Ibid.


This is one of the more interesting perspectives that Fanon takes and seems to be in line with the Marxist impulses in his work. One wonders whether Fanon’s revulsion over the past has to do with the difficulties he might have encountered in breaking the Algerian people away from it. Regardless of what brought Fanon to this conclusion, he seems to discount the pivotal role that ideology and self-identity play in propelling a revolution. Furthermore, although some revolutionaries, for instance the early Americans, might have been motivated by dreams of a new society they had never experienced, it is unlikely that this would hold much sway among people who emerged out of a thriving civilization that, whether real or imagined, represents an ideal way of life. It is for this reason that the Islamic militant is constantly coloring his speeches with evocations of the past. For instance, during a particularly impassioned elegy that Nasrallah gave when Sayyed Abbas Musawi, Hezbollah’s secretary general, was killed in 1992, he says that Musawi was “just like al-Hussein...just like al-Abbas...just like the greatest Ali,” each central figures in Islamic history, let alone Shi’a history.\footnote{Qassem, \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 52.} Qassem suggests that the use of al-Hussein, who was killed by the authorities of his time, is particularly important for two reasons. First, al-Hussein’s sacrifice shows that no matter what the sacrifices of the contemporary militant they are “little as compared” to him.\footnote{Qassem, \textit{Hizbullah: The Story from Within}, 45.} Second, al-Hussein’s death indicates the “importance of confrontation even with no
In another speech in 2002, Nasrallah warns the Israelis and Americans not to think they can “annihilate” the “Arab and Muslim populations” because “the people of this area are alive, and their ancestry goes back to the first human beings that walked on this land.” Similarly, al-Zawahiri notes that one of the goals of this confrontation is to defend “the legacy of the pious ancestors and the virtuous first centuries of Islam.”

Fanon finds the connection with a particular group or one’s ethnic past to be too limiting; rather, he wishes to connect with every “victory of the dignity of the spirit” and “every time a man has said no to an attempt to subjugate his fellows.” In essence, Fanon is asking that the actions of his fellow revolutionaries elevate beyond the ethnic and tribal to a different kind of bond. He senses that the solidarity that people feel as a result of religion or nationality is difficult to escape. However, it is a “practical solidarity” that he wants people to feel, such that they are fighting not simply to escape the bondage of their particular group, but so that “never again would a people on the earth be subjugated.” Thus, he proclaims that his “course of conduct” is not laid down by the “black world” and nor are his specific values captured in his “black skin,”

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113 Ibid.
114 *Voice of Hezbollah*, 280.
115 Kepel and Milelli, *Al-Qaeda in its Own Words*, 207.
117 Ibid., 227.
but rather the commitment to combat oppression. Similarly, Hezbollah also attempts to “offer its successful resistance to Israeli occupation in Lebanon as a model for other oppressed people to emulate and adapt to their own circumstances,” particularly the Palestinians. As Nasrallah recently stated, “Hezbollah has become a global model of how to fight occupation.”

One senses in Fanon’s tone that this is a point that he struggles to make in his context, where tradition and religion influence much of one’s value system. One would hazard to guess that there is a sense to which Fanon is talking directly to the Algerian populace about their relationship to the past. A population that would view its Islamic past as the ideal to return to would challenge Fanon’s vision of the “new society” that, in his view, ought to be created by revolution. At one point he points to the Vietnamese and says that they do not stand before “firing squads” in order to bring about the “reappearance” of the past, but rather for the present and future. He urges people not to be “prisoners” to their history and to avoid finding “meaning” for their “destiny” in the past. But as noted earlier, the Islamic militant’s relationship with the past is fundamentally different from Fanon’s understanding. Although few wish to

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118 Ibid.

119 Voice of Hezbollah, 10.


121 Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks, 229.
return to the simple society of early Islam (though Hezbollah has accused al-Qaeda of aiming for such a goal), there is a call to return to faith, which functions as a dynamic positive force on which to build the principles of a new society. This is the Islamic system that Qassem describes as the “supreme representation of human happiness.”

As the journalist Ahmed Rashid observes in the Central Asian context, “by ignoring their heritage, which has given so much to their own people and to the wider Islamic world, Central Asia’s rulers deny their people a chance to create a modern identity from their own past” and in the process “fuel the fires of extremism.”

However, it would not be correct to say that Fanon wishes to eradicate the past. Rather the issue is of usefulness and efficiency; the celebration of one’s past may bring one comfort but it does not necessarily aid in the task at hand. Furthermore, it is not that Fanon discounts the importance of native culture. In fact, he notes quite accurately that the “bristling resistance” of the native often arises out of the colonizer’s “frenzy” to attack the native’s culture, most prominently in Algeria with regard to the attempts to unveil women. Rather, Fanon wishes to preserve or create the capacity for cultural “originality” in the new nation that comes about after colonialism. It is difficult to

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124 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 47.

125 Ibid., 42.
assess to what extent these new attitudes were widespread in traditional Algerian society. The importance of this issue cannot be overemphasized when it comes to Fanon’s overall strategy. He considers the process of decolonization to be one that introduces “new men,” a “new language” and a “new humanity.” For him, revolution is a cathartic process that leaves people, both colonizer and native, forever altered. It is a rebirth for the native, but not a return. Fanon considers the revolutionary process to be one that precludes a full return to norms of the past because of the intense upheaval the revolution brings in the lives of the colonized. This intensity is felt at every level of colonized society and affects every native. As Fanon notes, “in the course of the multiple episodes of the war, the people came to realize that if they wished to bring a new world to birth they would have to create a new Algerian society from top to bottom.” Underlying this desire for a “new world” is Fanon’s belief that the “absence of ideology” was the “greatest danger,” particularly in the African context. For Fanon, as one commentator describes it, “the only way to break the grip of European influence and forestall the inevitable slipping back into intellectual dependency was to devise an original non-western ideology.” This stems from Fanon’s fear that, in the rush to develop a counter ideology, the natives, and specifically the Africans, might only

126 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 36.

127 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 101.


129 Wright, “Fanon and Africa: A Retrospect,” 682.
revert to “western bourgeois hegemonies.”

It is not clear why he did not consider the prevalent Islamic ideology, patently non-western, to be a sufficient basis to build upon.

For the Islamic militant, this “new humanity” is actually less “new” than what Fanon envisions. It is a humanity that is premised on a religious, specifically Islamic, foundation because it is considered a total way of life. Thus, for instance, Nasrallah proclaims in an interview with the magazine *al-Watan al-Arabi* (“the Arab Nation”) that Hezbollah believes that “a system that rests on Islamic principles will be able to solve all of Lebanon’s problems, be they legislative, legal, intellectual, spiritual or moral.”

Of course, Nasrallah is also emphatic in declaring that this system will only come about through “choice” and not by force. In a 1997 interview, the then Taliban spokesman, Ma’soum Afghani, states that “Islam is a comprehensive way of life” and “has radiating basics for every social, political, economical and militarily event.” Striking the same tone, Qassem declares: “Islam is the comprehensive, complete and appropriate programme for a better life” and “is the “intellectual, religious, ideological and practical

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130 Ibid.

131 *Voice of Hezbollah*, 90.

132 Ibid., 91.

133 Ma’soum Afghani, “Interview with Maulana Ma’soum Afghani,” *Nida’ul Islam* 18 (April – May 1997): http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/taliban2.htm. Maulana Ma’soum Afghani was the official spokesman of the Afghani Taliban Movement and some consider him one of the founders of the Taliban. He joined the Movement right from its emergence in September 1994 as a teacher at the national religious schools in Karachi. At the time of this interview, he was in charge of the Afghan Embassy in Pakistan. Ibid.
foundation” for the resistance.\(^{134}\)

\(^{134}\) Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*, 19.
CHAPTER IV
DISCOURSE ON VIOLENCE

The final, and possibly most fascinating, area of Fanon’s ideas relate to violence. There seems to be considerable debate as to what Fanon’s views were on violence, although much of this debate concerns the meaning behind his words as opposed to what he actually wrote.\footnote{For a partial bibliography of this debate see Robert Blackey, “Fanon and Cabral: A Contrast in Theories of Revolution in Africa,” 204 fn. 4.} Although Fanon is explicit at certain points about the problems with violence, those commentators who try to soften Fanon’s language on violence often rely on what they presume he implicitly meant by certain other phrases. Among the pitfalls of discussing ideas in the contemporary context is the tendency to color one’s evaluation with current proclivities. In modern parlance, it seems difficult to imagine a “humanist” like Fanon advocating violence, yet in Fanon’s context that was not necessarily the case. As B. Marie Perinbaum explains, because Fanon’s “prescriptive use of violence offends humanist traditions…most critics prefer to condemn first and explain later.”\footnote{B. Marie Perinbaum, Holy Violence: The Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1982), 5.} As a revolutionary fighter and theorist, Fanon was engaged in the cause of his time: anti-colonialism. The rise of the developing world against their subjugated status inevitably led to armed struggle and thus violence. As Robert Blackey points out, Fanon believed that “only through revolution could a suppressed people undo the
effects of colonialism.” Tony Martin suggests that for Fanon, freedom required a “clean break with colonialism” and this “necessitates violence.” Hence, the manner in which modern day liberals might conceive of violence was not necessarily the way in which Fanon saw it.

For Fanon, there were reasons behind violence and a necessity for it. With regard to the reasons, as with other aspects of Fanon’s theory, there are both practical and psychological reasons for violence. The two are interconnected as the practical reality of violence in the native’s life under colonialism creates a particular psychology. One scholar notes that “the revolutionary struggle is, for Fanon, comprehensive: it must aim not only to restructure society, but also to reshape consciousness.” In other words, in addition to releasing tension, which can also be achieved through nonviolence, violence “had the capacity to destroy myths and gain control of the land.”

Lewis Gordon provides a perceptive analysis of why violence is often chosen over nonviolence in the colonial context:

If the oppressor or the colonizer perceives the very notion of a postcolonial society as a violent condition – violent because it displaces him – then his very call for a nonviolent solution amounts to the preservation of colonialism, or at

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4 Tony Martin, “Rescuing Fanon from the Critics (Frantz Fanon),” 392.

5 Paul Nursey-Bray, “Race and Nation: Ideology in the Thought of Frantz Fanon,” 140.

least a transformation of colonialism into a condition that he will prefer which amounts to a form of neocolonialism.  

Anthony Shadid notes that for the local Islamic militant, violence was also “the answer to every humiliation...every compromise...and every hardship another day brings to a land convulsed with despair.”8 Fanon discusses how this violence “ruled over the ordering of the colonial world” and in the process “ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms” and destroyed everything from the “economy” to the native’s “external life.”9 Hence, the native’s primary reason for violence arises out of the violence he experiences under colonialism, both to his body and mind. The native and colonizer’s first encounter is “marked by violence” and their subsequent existence is constructed on the “exploitation of the native by the settler” through a “great array of bayonets and cannons.”10 The agents of the colonial government “speak the language of pure force” and bring violence “into the home and into the mind of the native.”11 The horrors of torture, the indiscriminate killing and the violence necessary to assert the colonizer’s control over the territory eventually lead to reciprocal behavior. As Fanon describes it, this was a reaction to the period when


9 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 40.

10 Ibid., 36.

11 Ibid., 38.
Europeans’ announced in the streets that they would take out ten natives in each town indiscriminately in order to solve the native problem.\textsuperscript{12} This then reflected the attitude of the colonizer, which was at the heart of the arbitrary nature of the violence that he committed upon the native.

Eventually, Fanon notes that some among the native people grow “impatient” and decide that it is necessary to erase the “advantage” that the enemy has through pursuing their own “path of terror.”\textsuperscript{13} Frustrated with the impotency of inaction and the submissiveness that comes with not responding to the other side’s violence the native claims the violence and takes it over.\textsuperscript{14} As Eric Margolis notes in the Kashmiri context, “Muslims who had not favored” violence “were driven into its arms by the increasing violence and ferocity of Indian repression.”\textsuperscript{15} Fanon observes that, in some cases, solutions might be sought through “legal action” carried out in a “parliamentary framework,” but after awhile when these “peaceful” channels have failed the native “hardens his position.”\textsuperscript{16} As Ato Sekyi-Otu brilliantly observes, Fanon’s discussion of violence is not to equate politics and violence as other scholars like Hannah Arendt have suggested; rather, “he is saying with the most classical of political philosophers that

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 56.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 57.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 40.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Eric Margolis, \textit{War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir and Tibet} (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 101.
\end{itemize}
where there is no public space, there is no political relationship, only violence..." He suggests that initially this violence might manifest itself in the form of tribal feuds because “plunging into a fraternal bloodbath” allowed the native an outlet for his aggression. This only delayed the inevitable: “armed resistance against colonialism.” The colonizer had claimed that the native only understood force and as a result the native decides to “give utterance by force.”

For the Islamic militant, force must be used because it is the only language the enemy understands and the only way to regain the lost territory. As bin Laden notes, “America does not understand the language of manners and principles, so we are addressing it using the language it understands,” an obvious allusion to violence. In a 1999 speech, Nasrallah states that his fighters “fight and do jihad with serious intent and a deep conviction that the only way to regain their usurped territory is by waging war on the enemy.” In addition to withdrawal, Nasrallah suggests that this violence can be used as a “bargaining chip in the negotiations.”

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18 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 54.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 84.
21 *Messages to the World*, 165.
23 Ibid., 156.
The native identifies his enemy and then brings “all his misfortunes” and “all the exacerbated might of his hate and anger” into the violence he inflicts on the colonizer.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, the native seeks out the known torturers and murderers in every given city.\textsuperscript{25} The native decides to kill the torturer or “colonialist leader” because these people “constitute an obstacle to the progress of the Revolution.”\textsuperscript{26} For Fanon a “reciprocal homogeneity” takes place between the “violence of the colonial regime” and the “counter-violence of the native” such that a balance is reached between them.\textsuperscript{27} This of course is important because in an inherently imbalanced relationship the native manages to acquire some semblance of power. The question arises as to whether the violence of the native might exceed that of the colonial regime and Fanon seems to emphatically argue the opposite. For him, the violence of the colonized people will be at least “proportionate” to the violence of the now threatened colonial regime.\textsuperscript{28} In fact, he argues that more often than not since the native lacks the ability of “machine-gunning from airplanes” and bombardments from the sea, he will always lack the “horror and magnitude” of the colonizer’s violence and thus the ability to be actually proportionate.

\textsuperscript{24} Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 71.

\textsuperscript{25} Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 56.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 58.

\textsuperscript{27} Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 88.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
in his response. This is not surprising though because it is through the use of force that colonialism has gained “its legitimacy” and through this overwhelming force it will try to retain it. Yet, the disproportionate nature of the colonizer’s violence only “increases” the native’s consciousness of his condition and the need to change it. The “atmosphere of violence and menaces” has prepared the native neither to be frightened nor deterred by the colonizer’s force.

The notion of reciprocal homogeneity is discussed at various points by Islamic militants as well. For instance, Qassem argues that:

If the Israeli military, with all its might, does not limit its confrontations to resistance combatants, then depriving the resistance of acts of reciprocity would simply deny it the ability to exert pressure, or achieve balance in this domain of horror, thus weakening its effectiveness in confronting occupation.

Hence, for him “resistance is perceived to be the only available solution for confronting the power imbalance between the Israeli occupiers and the rightful owners of the land.” Similarly, bin Laden notes that “reciprocal treatment is a part of

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29 Ibid., 89.
30 Ibid., 84.
31 Ibid., 72.
32 Ibid., 81.
33 Qassem, Hizbullah: The Story from Within, 175.
34 Ibid., 73.
justice.”35 He claims that jihad has been declared against the U.S. for its “acts of aggression and injustice.”36

Furthermore, this pursuit of violence elevates to the level of “terror” out of the psychological needs of the native population. The revolutionary leadership recognized that if “it wanted to prevent the people from being gripped by terror it had no choice but to adopt forms of terror.”37 Hence, they chose “terrorism” as a weapon to combat the psychological impact of the colonizer’s terror.38 With regard to terrorism, Fanon describes it in a number of places, but explicitly makes mention of techniques which involve “individual or collective attempts by means of bombs or by the derailing of trains.”39 In other words, quite clearly Fanon is not speaking of “terrorism” in some abstract form (though he obviously was not loading the term with our contemporary definitions,) but as a very practical means of representing violent action. The “existence of an armed struggle” demonstrates the native’s decision to trust “violent methods only” so it is an easy transition into more terrifying acts.40 As Fanon notes, “national liberation, national resistance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, common-

35 Messages to the World, 234.
36 Ibid., 47.
37 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 55.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 84.
wealth; whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.”

Resistance is characterized in parallel terms for the Islamic militant, except that a religious element is added. Hence, Nasrallah notes that abandoning “resistance under any pretext, and for any reason, is giving up on a sacred duty.” Similarly, the Islamic militant views the adoption of unorthodox fighting mechanisms and terrorism as a way to equate their power with the enemy. Hence, Qassem notes that the “resources available to a resistance movement are...weaker than the occupier's means” and so “damaging combat methods” must be chosen in order to “buttress such weakness.” He goes on to note that “concentrating on inflicting pain on Israel serves to demonstrate to all occupiers that stable living is a far-fetched and difficult objective.”

According to Fanon, the psychology of the native fighter goes through an evolution as well. Initially, the idea of all men being equal is finally accepted in the colonies by the natives once the native becomes conscience of his condition. Prior to this he was unable to even conceptualize the notion of being equal to the settler. Subsequent to this equality, the native moves to the next level and indicates his

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41 Ibid., 35.

42 Voice of Hezbollah, 88.

43 Qassem, Hizbullah: The Story from Within, 73.

44 Ibid., 173.
willingness to “fight to be more than the settler.”

With regard to the native fighter, Fanon makes an interesting distinction between the *fidai*, or guerilla, and the “terrorist.” The distinction relates to how each approaches death. Fanon dismissively notes that the terrorist allows “death to enter his soul” the moment he undertakes an assignment. On the other hand, the *fidai* seeks a “rendezvous with the life of the revolution” and does not “choose death” nor shrink from the “possibility of losing his life.”

The fundamental impetus behind this choice is encompassed in the sentence that defines the goals of decolonization: “the last shall be first and the first shall be last.” Essentially this sentence represents the goal of replacing the colonizer with the colonized, shifting the balance of power in the native land. For Fanon, this can only occur after a “murderous and decisive struggle” between the native and the colonizer. Since this process requires a rapid rise of the native into the position of the colonizer, it can only occur if “all means” are used to turn the scales, including violence. Bin Laden proclaims something similar by noting that “as they kill us, without a doubt we have to kill them, until we obtain a balance in terror.”

Similarly, in a January 2008 interview, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid states that they will use “every tactic through which

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45 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 44.

46 Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 57-58.

47 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 37.

48 Ibid.

losses are inflicted on the enemy, to force them to reconsider their military presence in Afghanistan.”

As has already been mentioned, one of the factors leading to violence was the fact that the native despairs of the colonialis’s “values,” especially because of the inconsistency between the values claimed by the colonizer and the reality of his oppressive tactics. As Fanon describes it, eventually the native gets to a point where when he “hears a speech about Western culture he pulls out his knife – or at least he makes sure it is within reach.” There is a visceral reaction to the constant promotion of these values and the “aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native.” The accumulation of indignities eventually results in the native lashing out. As Fanon notes, “the colonized, in the face of the emphasis given by the colonialists to this or that aspect of his tradition, reacts very violently.” Essentially, the revolution becomes an “outlet” or “channel” through which the native’s aggression can find release. Colonialism had taught the native in

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51 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 43.

52 Ibid.

53 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 47.

54 Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks, 145.
the first instance to learn how to “stay in his place” and thus it is no surprise for Fanon that the native only dreams of “action” and “aggression.”

Aside from simply elucidating the reasons behind the violent path that the native chooses to pursue against the colonizer, Fanon posits a more radical proposition. He suggests that violence is not only justified, but in fact needed. In arguably his most well-known quote on violence, Fanon states:

Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there’s nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of the trumpets.

In essence, the very process of decolonization necessitates violence in order to actually be successful. In the first instance, since colonialism is “violence in its natural state” it is not going to yield until it is “confronted with greater violence.” As one commentator notes, “because the colonized states were created and are maintained by the use of violence…it is a necessity that it will take violence to reverse these power relationships.” Hence, at the very basic level, violence is necessary because militarily there is no victory over colonialism unless significant force is used to counter force.

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55 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 52.
56 Ibid., 117.
57 Ibid., 61.
Yet, even when disproportionate force is applied against the native and he is led to adopt terror as a tactic, this is not simply a military choice. Psychologically, there are many levels at which the native needs this violence. At the most basic level, the native needs this because through his many battles against “exploitation, misery and hunger” he has realized “he cannot conceive of life otherwise” except through violent resistance.\(^59\) For Fanon, the “starving peasant” is the “first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays.”\(^60\) He is the spark behind the revolution because of the uncompromising posture he takes which employs “all means” and “that of force first” in order to achieve his liberation.\(^61\) In some respects, he has been conditioned for this from birth because all he has witnessed is a “narrow” colonial world “strewn with prohibitions” and has come to recognize that only “absolute violence” can call this world into question.\(^62\) Hence, Fanon suggests that there is a need for a “challenge to his humanity” and “conflict.”\(^63\)

Within this radical proposition of the necessity of violence, Fanon goes one step further to suggest that violence against the colonizer is actually therapeutic for the native. Since this violence often constitutes the native’s only independent “work” it

\(^59\) Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 224.

\(^60\) Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 61.

\(^61\) Ibid.

\(^62\) Ibid., 37.

\(^63\) Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 221.
invests the native’s “character with positive and creative qualities.” It is important to note here, that Fanon actually had different types of violence. As Perinbaum explains:

...he distinguished between violence, meaning coercion and physical force; and holy violence, suggesting a destructive force creative beyond belief, and frightening beyond comprehension, compelling and dangerously powerful, irresistible and fearful to approach, easy to comprehend, yet mysterious, terrible and sacred.

For all these reasons, one commentator has observed, for Fanon it is “violence...that guarantees a positive...content to the new nationhood.” In addition, “at the level of individuals,” this violence is a “cleansing force” because it “frees the native from his inferiority complex,” his “despair” and his “inaction.” The native’s “self-respect” is restored and he is made “fearless.” One scholar notes that Fanon believes this violence “proves to the oppressed that the colonizer is as moral as they are and that they are as powerful.” This occurs even if the armed struggle is purely

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64 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 93.


67 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 94.

68 Ibid.

“symbolic.”\textsuperscript{70} For Fanon, freedom for the colonized is found “in and through violence.”\textsuperscript{71}

Islamic militancy shares many of these ideas. As Nasrallah notes, one of the most important elements of the resistance is to help remove the “strongman image” of the enemy.\textsuperscript{72} He points to the positive impact on the psyche of the colonized of an Israeli chief of staff’s apparent declaration that “there is not a single army in the world…capable of defeating the resistance.”\textsuperscript{73} By pursuing the resistance, Nasrallah believes that one can “spread hope and optimism in the people’s hearts.”\textsuperscript{74} Similarly, al-Zawahiri believes that calls to “end violence” will result in “disastrous consequences…, dragging the community back into weakness and fear.”\textsuperscript{75} Qassem develops this further noting that the consequences of ending the resistance will build upon themselves such that “personal disgrace… powerlessness and subjugation to the enemy’s will” will be the first “outcome of defeat.”\textsuperscript{76} This will mean living in “poverty, as his land’s wealth, his life and national fortunes all fall under the enemy’s rule” and gradually it will mean a

\textsuperscript{70} Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 94.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 86.

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 200.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 207.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 276.

\textsuperscript{75} Kepel and Milelli, \textit{Al-Qaeda in its Own Words}, 204.

\textsuperscript{76} Qassem, \textit{Hizbullah: The Story from Within}, 42.
loss of religion. He goes on to get at the heart of why the desire to be fearless is important: “all that the enemy is capable of is implanting the fear of death in us” and “when we halt this fear, we render the power of death with which he menaces us futile.”

Despite these impulses towards violence, Fanon mentions that there is significant anxiety among the native about the violence they are about to commit. He notes two primary reasons why the native goes beyond simply hesitating, but actually cancelling plans of attack, specifically in the Algerian context. First, there is the “memory of civilians killed or frightfully wounded.” This is the very real result that occurs when one sees death and injury caused upon innocents. As Fanon notes, there is a “battle of conscience” that occurs for the native over the decision to “kill a civilian in the street” or place a “bomb in a public space.” Taking the life of other human beings does not come lightly to the native. This was something that Fanon admits the leaders in Algeria did not initially fully appreciate. Their assumption was that due to the “intensity of the repression and the frenzied character of the oppression” they would be able to “answer the blows received without any serious problems of conscience.”

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., 48.
79 Fanon, Dying Colonialism, 55.
80 Ibid., 25.
81 Ibid., 55.
However, this proved to be false and as a result there were various instances where the revolutionary leaders in Algeria “canceled plans” to carry out violence.\(^82\)

In a 2001 interview, Nasrallah mentions this hesitation particularly when it comes to attacking innocent civilians. He quite emphatically claims that Hezbollah has “never, ever targeted innocent civilians” because of the moral qualms with doing so.\(^83\) There is of course some evidence to suggest the contrary, particularly Hezbollah’s early actions.\(^84\) However, the Israeli General Shlomo Gazit did observe that “for a long period” Hezbollah “refrained from shelling Israeli territory” and “limited their operations” to military targets; it was after Israel “bombed and shelled many targets in Lebanon” that Hezbollah started to “retaliate by shelling some Israeli localities.”\(^85\) More recently, Nasrallah noted after the 2006 war with Israel that if they had known that there was even a “1 percent chance” the capture of an Israeli soldier “would have led to war” then Hezbollah would have “absolutely not” done it for, among other things, “humanitarian” and “moral” reasons.\(^86\)

Second, Fanon notes that the hesitation to use violence arises out of the “political consideration not to do certain things that could compromise the cause of

\(^82\) Ibid.

\(^83\) *Voice of Hezbollah*, 260.

\(^84\) Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 79.


\(^86\) *Voice of Hezbollah*, 394.
This was a strategic calculation because the native realized that world opinion would be an important factor in securing the removal of the colonizer. Hence, restraint had to be shown even with serious provocation from the other side because the consequences were too great. We see similarly discussion of world opinion among some Islamic militants. For al-Qaeda, it is not much of a concern, but Hezbollah has evolved to recognize the role of world opinion for their long-term objectives, particularly in relation to the Palestinian cause. Early on we find that Nasrallah’s statements seemed to reject the international stage, noting that Hezbollah’s theory “contradicts that of diplomatic chivalry and international forums.” However, this has since changed. Hence, Qassem notes that the targeting of Israeli civilians is done with hesitancy because, among other things, of the “repercussions in the sphere of international support for the Palestinian cause.”

In addition, part of the hesitation, particularly as it relates to elevating resistance to a level of amplified violence or terror, is due to the double standard that exists between the native and the colonizer. The native people are expected to “practice fair play” in battle even while the colonizer “ventures, with a clear conscience into the unlimited exploration of new means of terror.” Hence, the native realizes that when...
the European nation commits terror it is considered to be a shortcoming indicative of the European being “unfaithful” to his history.\textsuperscript{91} At the same time, when the native commits torture then it is a confirmation of his “nature” and his being “underdeveloped.”\textsuperscript{92} Part of the native’s hesitancy arises out of this heavy burden that he is made to carry due to the double standard.

This double standard is mentioned on numerous occasions by the Islamic militant. It is among the primary complaints about the other side. For instance, Nasrullah points out that the “yardstick” by which the international community measures Hezbollah’s actions versus Israel’s is consistently unfair. He notes that Hezbollah is “forbidden to have modest weapons to defend themselves, their country, and their homeland” but that everyone is “tight-lipped about Israel’s 200 nuclear warheads.”\textsuperscript{93} In essence then he wonders why it is alright for Israel “to have nuclear weapons in violation of all international laws and conventions,” but that the Palestinians “have no right to own weapons.”\textsuperscript{94} Bin Laden presents a litany of charges against the United States who it says despite claiming to “uphold the banner of freedom and humanity…perpetrated deeds which you would not find the most ravenous of animals

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Voice of Hezbollah}, 361.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
debasing themselves to do.” 

He then proceeds to cite American actions like sanctions on Iraqi children, the “withholding of arms from the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina,” and the “premeditated dropping of the H bombs on cities with entire populations of children, elderly and women.”

In another interview on CNN in 1997, bin Laden speaks of how if Palestinian children “throw stones…they are terrorists,” but “when Israeli pilots bombed the United Nations building in Qana, Lebanon…the U.S. stopped any plan to condemn Israel.”

Bin Laden also cites double standards with regard to democracy, claiming that America promotes “freedom and democracy” for themselves and “for the white race only” while preventing other countries from “establishing democracies.”

He also points to the abuse of “international law,” the fact that Americans ask for “immunity” from the international criminal court and policies of arbitrary detention post-9/11.

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95 Messages to the World, 40.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., 51.

98 Ibid., 169. It is interesting to note that this is one of the rare times that bin Laden makes reference to race. He generally seems to view the other side by their religious persuasions as opposed to their ethnicity. That said, Islamic militants are not unaware of the racial differences between themselves and their enemies. As one Taliban commander notes, "we don’t distinguish between American, British or other Europeans…they are all white people; they are all occupiers." Mujeeb Ahmad, “Taliban Commander: We’re Fighting for Independence,” NBC News, November 18, 2009, http://worldblog.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2009/11/18/2130311.aspx.

Despite the advocacy that Fanon gives to the use of violence, he only seems to consider it a necessary evil. This is why he advocates its use in “specific ways at the moment of struggle for freedom.” There are even indications that he was pained when contemplating the “results of violence, whether inflicted by the enemy or his own side.” In fact, on numerous occasions he indicates his familiarity with the serious consequences of unleashing the beast of violence, not least of which impacts the native himself. For instance, he presciently notes that once this violent course is adopted it does not “magically disappear” after independence is gained. In his context, he argues that this disappearance is all the more unlikely because of the competition between “capitalism and socialism.” Thus, the “atmosphere of violence” which is created “continues to dominate national life.” The problem is quite severe though because once the people’s consciousness has been “illuminated by violence” it is difficult for them to be pacified. As Fanon notes, “colonial domination...gives rise to and continues to dictate a whole complex of resentful behavior and of refusal on the

100 Martin, “Rescuing Fanon from the Critics,” 383.
101 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 75.
102 Tony Martin, “Rescuing Fanon from the Critics,” 383.
103 Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, 75.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 76.
106 Ibid., 94.
part of the colonized.”\footnote{Fanon, \textit{Dying Colonialism}, 13.}

Lack of pacification is an asset when fighting a colonial regime, but becomes a more significant issue when trying to rebuild a state. One of the most prominent examples of this in contemporary times has to be the situation in Afghanistan where, after raising the call of \textit{jihad} against the Russians, the \textit{mujabideen} fighters turned to fight each other even after the enemy was defeated.\footnote{Maley, \textit{The Afghanistan Wars}, 145-150.}

Finally, it must be noted that, when speaking of violence, Fanon was very context specific. As Nigel Gibson notes, violence “does not have its own meaning but it has a context and a history and has to be approached nonreductively.”\footnote{Gibson, \textit{Rethinking Fanon}, 105.} Since Fanon was largely dealing with Algeria, where he thought violence was necessary, he only makes passing reference to the fact that violence is \textit{not} always necessary. In fact, he considers violence in Algeria to have been “inevitable,” but suggests that in other countries “political action” and “clarification” have led people to the “same results.”\footnote{Fanon, \textit{Wretched of the Earth}, 193.}

As L. Adele Jinadu suggests, Fanon was “equivocal in his espousal of the positive functions of violence as a vehicle for social and political change” because he was an empiricist and would not apply the generalizations of the Algerian experience to “all revolutionary struggles.”\footnote{L. Adele Jinadu, “Some Aspects of the Political Philosophy of Frantz Fanon,” \textit{African Studies Review} 16, no. 2 (Sep. 1973), 269.} This indicates that violence was not always the solution for
Fanon and that if other means could more easily bring about similar results they should be pursued. Fanon seems to suggest, according to one scholar, that if “colonialism withdraws without a violent confrontation then there is no necessity to pursue the retreating enemy and pick a fight simply for the sake of shedding blood.” This betrayed his reluctance to promote violence whose consequences he understood because of his medical practice. Perinbaum suggests there were two identities that Fanon embodied which remained in tension: Fanon the “political propagandist” and Fanon the “psychiatrist.” The psychiatrist was “frightened by the effects of violence” while the propagandist “brought colonialism to trial for perpetrating violence, and condemned it to death by violence.”

There is some variety among Islamic militants as to this issue. Similar to Fanon, Qassem suggests that despite the West dealing with “dialogue as a formality that conceals an interest in subjugation” the “discussion channel is possible.” Nasrallah calls for “the solution of our problems...through dialogue, cooperation and constructive initiatives, and by avoiding the use of force.” As he notes on another occasion, “the path we have chosen does not involve dragging the region into a war

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112 Martin, “Rescuing Fanon from the Critics,” 394.
114 Ibid.
116 *Voice of Hizbollah*, 368.
with the intention of ruining the negotiations.”\textsuperscript{117} Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of an Afghan insurgent group, strikes a middle path, noting that the insurgency in Afghanistan is “not against [a] political solution” but that the “the occupiers” do “not want a political solution.”\textsuperscript{118} In fact, he goes so far as to say: “we will not close the door to negotiations, unless we believe that the opposite side is not sincere and has nothing to negotiate.”\textsuperscript{119} Mullah Baradar, considered Mullah Omar’s counsel, strikes a more questioning tone asking “what would be the topic of the talks and what would be the result” since the “basic problem with the Americans is that they have attacked our country.”\textsuperscript{120} In other words, until they are ready to leave there is “no benefit for the country and Islam in such kind of talks.”\textsuperscript{121} Bin Laden is significantly more blunt in his opposition to all such efforts noting that “there can be no dialogue with the occupiers except with weapons.”\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 142.


\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{122} Messages to the World, 217.
CONCLUSION

Good ideas never die, Sire, and, though they may slumber for a time, they wake up stronger than when they fell asleep.

Alexandre Dumas, The Count of Monte Cristo

There is little doubt that Frantz Fanon’s ideas shaped a generation of revolutionaries in the Third World. He applied the weight of his intellect in the quest to better appreciate the colonial condition, and having provided the diagnosis, suggested a prescription for moving forward. Despite having the luxury to remain disengaged from the populations he theorized about, Fanon embraced the difficult role of both scholar and practitioner. His presence on the battlefront only enhanced his understanding of the dynamics at play in the colonial milieu. Fanon recognized early on that he was engaged in work which challenged conventions and produced new paradigms. For this reason his works have enhanced, among other things, our grasp of power relations, violence, Western colonialism and the Third World response. Fanon was driven by one simple prayer, which he includes at the end of Black Skins, White Masks: “make of me always a man who questions.”  

Just as Fanon’s influence was so instrumental in the colonial period, it can easily be as instructive in our contemporary context. Although people are surely less familiar with Fanon than they were a few decades ago, his penetrating observations continue to be relevant. As noted earlier, some have suggested that there is no longer any utility in

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1 Fanon, Black Skins/White Masks, 232.
Fanon’s work, that in fact his ideas are outdated. It is unfortunate that people would construe the world of ideas in such narrow terms. They would benefit from recalling that sometimes, as Beauchamp recounts in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, old ideas reemerge “stronger than when they fell asleep.”

In essence, this thesis is an attempt to prove just that. The sentiments that Fanon saw in his society find parallels in the current rhetoric of Islamic militancy. In addition, Fanon’s own perspectives are echoed by some of those engaged in combat today. Putting aside one’s own personal judgment of Fanon’s theories or the views of contemporary Islamic militants, the comparison between their ideas is instructive for a number of reasons.

First, it is clear that there are obvious similarities between what was said by Frantz Fanon and what is being said by many contemporary Islamic militants. Unfortunately, much of the current discourse on Islamic militancy fails to fully appreciate its diverse manifestations and its historical precedent, instead focusing on either assigning it to a particular sect or dismissing it outright as irrational behavior. There is much to critique, and even condemn, within Islamic militancy, but if our goal is to find solutions to it, then there is a need to properly understand it. In particular, Fanon’s discussions of the anti-colonial response, and how it develops, provide a good launching point for reading Islamic militancy. In many respects, given the parallels between what Fanon describes as native sentiments about the colonial regimes and

\[\text{2 Alexandre Dumas, } \textit{The Count of Monte Cristo} \text{ (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 813.}\]
Islamic militant sentiments about the West, Islamic militancy can be understood as simply a contemporary form of anti-colonial response.

Naturally, the circumstances today are quite different because colonialism has formally ended in most parts of the world. However, from the perspective of the Islamic militant it has not been truly terminated. The presence of American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the continued land conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, the Russian control over Chechnya, and the large Indian military deployment in Kashmir are just a few examples of “foreign occupations” that are routinely cited throughout the Muslim world as indications of continued colonialism or worse neo-crusades.³ Hence, in many respects Islamic militancy is simply a perpetuation of the anti-colonial response that has existed in the Muslim world for decades. It is for this reason that you will find some Islamic militant groups making broad appeals to “oppressed people” around the world, regardless of whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim. In fact, Hezbollah goes so far as to state that “all the oppressed in the world” should form an “international front comprised of all their liberation movements in order to fully coordinate among themselves so that an efficient action will transpire, thus concentrating on the Achilles heels of the enemies…”⁴ It is also clear in their statements that they go beyond simple occupation to also the break-up of their culture as identified by Fanon.

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Similarly, Fanon’s ideas on violence also find expression in the statements of Islamic militants. Aside from the catharsis that Fanon believes violence brings in the colonial context, you find echoes of Fanon’s theories on anti-colonial violence across the categories of Islamic militancy. For instance, Fanon’s notion of the necessity for resorting to violence to restore “dignity” is even found among low-level soldiers in the Taliban who note that “just firing a mortar, even if it didn’t hit the target, was a big deal: it proved to everyone we were there and were a force to be respected.”\(^5\)

Regardless of whether the perception of the militants is accurate or not in equating current Western involvement in their world with colonialism and whether their recourse to violence can be justified or not, the fact is that this perception is one of the main reasons given by them in their discourse, and it must therefore be taken into account if one is to understand their ideology and behavior correctly. What is of interest is the Islamic militant’s perception of what is true because this is what motivates him to act. In order to properly address this phenomenon we must take it on its own terms. Fanon’s ideas allow us an avenue to do just that.

The second area where Fanon’s ideas can be instructive is the main point of departure between Fanon and the Islamic militant: ideology. This is also where a general critique can be made of Fanon’s theories in terms of their application to both his own context and to contemporary Islamic militancy. Aside from scattered

\(^5\) Yousafzai, “The Taliban: In Their Own Words,” 41.
references to Islam and a discussion on the veil, Fanon’s works largely ignores the role of Islam in the Algerian context. In fact, at certain points we find that Fanon’s Algeria could just as easily be a non-Muslim country. This seems to be a shortcoming in Fanon’s work.

There are of course a variety of reasons why Fanon may have overlooked the Islamic dimension in the Algerian movement. Partly, this failure to fully appreciate the role of Islam may have come from the fact that “Fanon did not make a detailed study of Arab culture” and that his attempts to learn Arabic were “mostly fruitless.” In essence then, there were significant barriers to his connecting with the average Algerian to better appreciate their hopes, aspirations, and motivations. However, Fanon’s reluctance to assign a role to Islam within his discourse was likely due to his own ideological commitments. First and foremost, it must be remembered that despite being a powerful anti-colonial voice, for all intents and purposes Fanon was deeply influenced by Western thought. As one scholar has noted, Fanon was a “devotee of French culture” even though he “reviled French colonialism.” Second, the particular strand of Western thought that most influenced Fanon’s thinking was Marxism, which itself pejoratively considered religion as “opium” for the masses. Fanon seems to betray similar sentiments during his discussion of fatalism, which he blames on tradition, and how it promotes inaction. Ironically, this argument was one which the colonizers in the

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7 Wright, “Fanon and Africa: A Retrospect,” 679.
Muslim world also routinely used when judging that Islam promotes both passive and aggressive behavior. Thus, in the “colonial discourse,” Islam was both the reason for “religious fanaticism” and “reverent fatalism;” on the one hand promoting irrational, excitable behavior but on the other, equally the cause for laziness and indolence. But what they claimed to be irrationally violent behavior was of course the resistance to colonialism. In this sense, they correctly apprehended that it was rooted in the religion of the natives; therefore, religion could be the source of fatalism in one of its variant interpretations, but it could also be the source of an actionalist interpretation. In some respects, this is a fatal flaw in Fanon’s analysis: the positive role of religion is never fully appreciated.

It might also have been that Fanon did not think Islam should be the basis of the “new humanity” he wished to be created after decolonization. As Nigel Gibson notes, for Fanon, “traditions,” which includes religion, “serve the function of bringing colonialism down to size,” but “once the period of decolonization has begun they could become a barrier to new cultural developments.” However, by ignoring religion or considering it an illegitimate ideology to base a new society on, Fanon does not seem to appreciate that Islam has a developed ideological structure and framework that not only can be drawn upon, but is very difficult to sideline. As Nasrallah says about his fighters, “these young men believe that ending the occupations is a sacred duty tightly linked to

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their religion, prayers and fasting, and to the hereafter; this is what the resistance in south Lebanon is all about.”

He notes at another place that “before being a battle with guns and weapons, it is a battle of ideology, faith, loyalty, truth, reliance on God, aspiration to martyrdom, [and] renunciation of worldly pleasures.”

Scholars are divided as to whether the same was true of Fanon’s Algeria. L. Carl Brown concludes that Islam “served its revolutionary purpose” but was “discarded…in the new world of national independence.” However, more convincing arguments have been put forward from the other side. For instance, David C. Gordon suggests that the post-independence Algerian regime was “obliged to accept the demands of Islamists for Islamic observances.”

In fact, some note that the Algerian “Islamic reformer of the 1930s, Ben Badis,” was the most crucial influence in the revolution. Furthermore, the “rise of political Islam” in the 80s has “called for a reappraisal of the whole subject of the war” for Algerian independence and questioned the “largely secular” analysis of this war.

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11 Ibid., 177


13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 231.

15 Ibid., 235.
It is critical that we appreciate and understand these points of similarity and departure between Fanon and Islamic militancy if we wish to craft a better approach to the growth of Islamic militancy around the world. In addition, we must also fully appreciate the differences between Islamic militant movements because a single strategy of engagement will not fit every group. Despite the fact that Islamic militants often share similar rhetoric, appeal to the same scriptural justifications and highlight the same illustrations of “Western hegemony,” there is significant variety among them. For instance, if we consider al-Qaeda and Hezbollah there are many areas of commonality. Both groups will refer to the suffering of Muslims around the world and the double standard held by the West. Both groups will stress the importance of *jihad* as a technique for combating foreign occupation. Yet, there are some stark differences. The first is theological: Hezbollah is Shi’a and al-Qaeda is Sunni. Second, Hezbollah favors parliamentary democracy while al-Qaeda considers it a sin. Third, Hezbollah is not inherently anti-Western, especially since it is often appealing to a Lebanese population that is increasingly Westernized and includes many non-Muslims. Al-Qaeda on the other hand is convinced of an “eternal conflict” with the West.\(^\text{16}\)

In the final analysis and despite certain shortcomings in Fanon’s work, his ideas and philosophy are enduring tools for diagnosing the human condition. Within his works we also find prescriptions for how oppressive power relations impact different

\(^\text{16}\) *Messages to the World*, 217.
populations and what is required to rectify these situations. Central to all that Fanon writes about is the notion of liberation, for both colonizer and native. It is for this reason that he presents a diagnosis not only for the oppressed, but also for the oppressor. In his brief sojourn on this earth, Fanon theorized and fought for a better world, a new humanity and a more enlightened set of relations between peoples. In some of the last words he wrote, he urged his “comrades” that “for Europe, for ourselves and for humanity...we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.” As one scholar describes it, these sentiments came from Fanon’s “tenacious adherence to the principle of hope.” In the same way, one hopes his thoughts might aid us in better apprehending and addressing the “jihad of the wretched.”

17 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 316.

18 Sekyi-Ortu, *Fanon’s Dialectic of Experience*, 239.
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