



Modern Caribbean thinkers: Garvey, Fanon, Césaire, Glissant

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Four influential thinkers

- Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)
- Frantz Fanon (1925-1961)
- Aimé Césaire (1913-2008)
- Édouard Glissant (1928-2011)

The Caribbean and the critics of colonialism

- The Caribbean: a tragic history between the transshipment, the killings of local population, the plantations.
- The Caribbean and the first process of globalization (The discovery of the New World and the destruction of populations and cultures).
- Some thinkers from the Caribbean could analyze this history to resist against colonialism. New considerations on Blackness.
- Négritude movement, decolonization thinking and autonomy

Marcus Garvey and the *Negro World* Newspaper

- Slavery and no Black governments, no Black interests, invisibility of the world of Black people
- No recognition, no self-esteem, victim of a capitalist system using their labour force
- Necessity to act in order to reveal a Black identity.
- The experience of *Negro World*, <https://www.theuniversityofchicago.edu/acl.com/index.php/history/negro-world-newspaper>
- Black identity is the one of African-American people that have to invent a future disconnected from the trauma of transshipment.

Marcus Garvey

- https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcus_Garvey#/media/Fil:Marcus_Garvey_1924-08-05.jpg
- Amy Ashwood Garvey (1897-1969), director of the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation (Martin, 2016: 256)
- Cofounder of the *Negro World* newspaper. She was involved in the organization of the 5th Pan-African Congress of Manchester in 1945 (strong influence of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora), <http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2007/05/political-biography-on-amy-ashwood.html>

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)

- Inspiration for Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is an ideology claiming the reunion of Africans and their descents in nations. Connection to the African diaspora.
- Conquest of a new positive identity in order to break the psychic and political feeling of inferiority. Garvey promoted a form of Pan-African philosophy.
- In 1914, organization of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. This idea of organizing associations, leagues, movements and business is seen as the seeds of Black nationalism.

Marcus Garvey

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY02D0tgVeo>
- Recording of 1921
- Political importance in Jamaica, he contributed to the creation of the People's Political Party in 1929, the first modern political party in Jamaica.
- The newspaper *The Negro World* was censored in different colonies
- Marcus Garvey promoted black business to sustain the development of Black communities and Black nations.
- Example of the Black Star line Steamship corporation established in 1919.

The mission of Garvey

- Garvey travelled inside the United States to promote his ideas. Strong speeches in favour of Black pride. He urged the African-Americans to prepare for return to Africa.
- After being arrested in 1922 and convicted of fraud charges in 1923, he was imprisoned in 1925 and then deported to Jamaica in 1927.

Speech of 1921 "If You Believe the Negro Has a Soul" (Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League)

- <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5124/>
- #Task 1: Listen and read the speech of Marcus Garvey.
- Examine the significant ideas, beliefs and themes of the speech.
What kind of organization and political power is presented?
- What is the relation to the Caribbean space?

The context of the years 1920

- Harlem renaissance and consciousness of the African-American identity
- *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925)

The question of decolonization

- Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) showed that the decolonization implied the transformation of the social imaginary so that the decolonized can reach a form of emancipation.
- Need to break the alienation of Black people and communities.
- Fanon was born in Fort-de-France in Martinique where he experienced colonialism as a European order imposed in the Caribbean zone. Fanon left Martinique for France, Algeria and Africa, he is a key reference for anticolonial and Pan-African movements. Garvey's theories echo in Fanon's conception of the colonial alienation (Martin, 2016: 258).

Frantz Fanon (1925-1961)

- The Caribbean is perceived as a crossroads in the tragical history, it is the first place of the relation between America and Africa.
- Transshipment / Slavery / Thought for emancipation
- Fanon had Césaire as a teacher. At the end of the war, he also supported the political campaign of Aimé Césaire.
- Exposed to a *bourgeois* background and a well-integrated family, Fanon's life radicalized his perspectives and formed his view on the impact of colonization – bringing him (ideologically) closer to Césaire

Reading Frantz Fanon

- #Task 2 Discuss the style of chapters 4 and 6 of *Black Skin, White Masks*
- Take some concrete examples and discuss the different arguments defended by Frantz Fanon.

Deconstructing racism

- Chapter 4 of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon discusses the thesis of Octave Mannoni who was a psychoanalyst working on the impact of colonization on the human psyché. He criticizes the method and the result of Mannoni's work.
- "Mannoni believes that the contempt of the poor whites of South Africa for the Negro has nothing to do with economic factors" (Fanon, 2008: 64).
- European civilization based on colonial racism (Fanon, 2008: 67). "For what is the meaning of this sentence: 'European civilization and its best representatives are not responsible for colonialism racialism?'" (Fanon, 2008: 67). Analysis of the inferiority complex (Fanon, 2008: 74)

Self-confidence versus alienation

- "In other words, the black man should no longer be confronted by the dilemma, **turn white or disappear**; but he should be able to take cognizance of a possibility of existence. In still other words, if society makes difficulties for him because of his color, if in his **dreams** I establish the expression of an **unconscious desire** to change color, my objective will not be that of dissuading him from it by advising him to 'keep his place'; on the contrary, my objective, once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, will be to put him in a position to **choose action** (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict – that is, toward the **social structures**" (Fanon, 2008: 75).

Criticism against structuralist theories

- Three dimensions of the colonial alienation: **the subjective, the cultural, and the political.**
- In the introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks* he also emphasized that “alongside **phylogeny and ontogeny, there is also sociogeny** (Fanon 2008: xv).
- The notions of situation and circumstances are very important (“opportunities”). “To ask a Negro of the Upper Niger to wear shoes, to say of him that he will never be a Schubert, is no less ridiculous than to be surprised that a worker in the Berliet truck factory does not spend his evenings studying lyricism in Hindu literature or to say that he will never be an Einstein” (Fanon, 2008: 71).

Experiences of daily racism

- "A drama is enacted every day in colonized countries" (Fanon, 2008: 112). Works on traumatism and invisibility
- "Collective aggression" (Fanon, 2008: 113) (White culture that fosters the complex of inferiority). Alienation of social structures (families, nations).
- Hallucinations, fearness. Stereotypes on Negroes. Cf. The Black athlete. "A prostitute told me that in her early days the mere thought of going to bed with a Negro brought on an orgasm" (Fanon, 2008: 122). Analysis of Negrophobia. "The Negro symbolizes the biological danger; the Jew, the intellectual danger" (Fanon, 2008: 127). "Guilt complex" (Fanon, 2008: 137).

The strong commitment of Aimé Césaire in the movement of *Négritude*

- « It was only with the appearance of Aimé Césaire that the acceptance of negritude and the statement of its claim begins to be perceptible » (Fanon, 2008: 118).
- *Discourse on colonialism* published in 1950
- « The fact is that the so-called European civilization – “Western” civilization – as it has been shaped by two centuries of bourgeois rule, is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem » (Césaire, 2000: 31)

Fanon and Césaire (Martinique)

- Mutual respect and tributes between Césaire and Fanon. Fanon read Césaire who read Fanon. About Fanon, Césaire declared that it was necessary to read *Peau noire, masques blancs* for the understanding of the brutality of colonialism and then *Les Damnés de la Terre* for the understanding of decolonization (Lucrèce, 2011).
- Two attitudes on the relation to Caribbean. Fanon died in the early 1960s and Césaire in 2008. For Fanon, Caribbean is perceived as the import zone of colonial patterns whereas Césaire refers to the horizon of social emancipation. He represented *Martinique* with the risk of facing the contradictions of French policies for overseas departments.

Césaire did not like the *bourgeoisie* of Martinique as this class adopted fake values from the European elite. The travel to France in the thirties is important.

He is well-known for his denunciation of colonialism and the creation of the *négritude* movement with Léon Gontran-Damas and Léopold Sédar-Senghor.

The *négritude* was not first a theoretical perspective, it was a scream, a reaction against daily racism ("Le nègre t'émmerde!"). Perspective of **self-confidence / social visibility / equality**

The consciousness of colonial relations in Martinique preceded Fanon in Césaire's work

Césaire and Fanon

- Influence of the Communist party in 1945. Césaire was one of the two Communist MPs representing Martinique at the French National Assembly (Armet, 1973: 83). Fanon quoted one of the speeches of Césaire as a politician in 1945.
- He was elected as a mayor of Fort-de-France in the 27th of May 1945. Whereas Fanon lived and worked as a psychiatrist in Algeria, Césaire was a spokesperson for Martinique with the poor social conditions of people living in the countryside.

Édouard Glissant (1928-2011)

- Critique of the *négritude*
- Creolization of the world
- He was in the shortlist of the Nobel Prize in 1992, but Derek Walcott (1930-2017) from St. Lucia won it. Derek Walcott had written a play on the Haitian King Henri Christophe in 1949
- Creolization – Hybridity after the enslavement and the plantation societies – The Caribbean: specific space for this hybridity (landscape / culture) (Ortiz, 1995)

Édouard Glissant (1928-2011)

- Creolization: Caribbean identity with the transformation of cultural features
- No essentialization of the Caribbean space. Neither African nor European / American. The Caribbean identity is the result of this transformation
- Glissant insists on the notion of relation

Conclusion

- Correspondence between the dislocation of Caribbean spaces and the emergence of original theories?
- The experience of alienation led to the elaboration of new Pan-African ideas (Marcus Garvey / Frantz Fanon) and the resistance against colonialism (Césaire and the movement of *négritude*)
- The creolization is also linked to the necessity of building a specific cultural identity
- The Caribbean space cannot be considered as a simple location for a clash of cultures, there is a positive transculturation which has to be studied.

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