Marxism and Frantz Fanon’s Theory of Colonial Identity: Parallels between Racial and Commodity-Based Fetishism
Jacqueline Crowell

Abstract
Despite Frantz Fanon’s and Karl Marx’s shared goal of the emancipation of all human beings from oppression, Fanon maintains in his final book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, that the connection between his theory of colonial identity and Marxist ideology cannot be reduced to a superficial doctrine of class struggles. Though Fanon resisted an oversimplified comparison with Marxist theory, this paper argues that Fanon’s analysis of the colonizers’ fabricated identity of the colonized is derived from the structure of Marx’s monetized social relations and the fetishism of the commodity which produces these relations. Marx defines commodity fetishism as the phenomenon in which the commodity is endowed with value through the labor process yet ultimately has a perceived value that is independent of the labor that produced it. Fanon adjusts this concept to the economic and psychological differences of colonialism. Fanon articulates that the colonial social relations are “epidermalized” and expressed through the whiteness of one’s skin rather than monetized and expressed through the exchange of the money-form in the commodity market. Beyond the structural similarities between the commodity fetishism in the capitalist society and the colonial racial fetishism, this paper explores the deeper causal relationship between the two phenomena: the alienation of the colonizer which is projected onto the identity of the colonized and the ensuing exclusion of the colonized—from recognition of both their humanity and their identities—which constitutes the colonization of the native selfhood.

In his fifth chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* entitled “The Lived Experience of the Black Man,” Frantz Fanon recounts his journey as an educated black man who hopes to discover “a world we could build together” as he travels from the colonies to the metropolis [1]. During his trip, Fanon discovers the colonization of his selfhood. This results from the “deep-rooted myth” that fetishizes race and excludes the colonized from membership within the human race by segregating the black natives from the white colonizers and confining the colonized to the status of an animal [2]. In Fanon’s racialized division between colonizers and colonized resonates Karl