Marx’s dichotomy between capitalists and workers. As Marx explains, this capitalist distinction is symptomatic of the “mysterious character of the commodity-form,” which is created by the ostensible detachment of the value produced by the laboring process [3]. This value is perceived as an inherent attribute of the commodity, which generates the expression of capitalism’s social relations through the money-form and facilitates the exploitation of the workers by their capitalist oppressors. However, David Marriott asserts in his article “On Racial Fetishism” that there is an “antinomian relation” between the theories of Marx and Fanon because, although Marx’s commodity fetishism remains relevant in the capitalist society, it is inadequate to explain Fanon’s construction of race in the colonial context [4]. By contrasting Fanon’s construction of race with commodity and Freudian fetishism, Marriott construes Fanon’s racial fetishism as a stereotype arising from the racial phobias of colonial society. I argue that Marriott’s view of the limitations of commodity fetishism extends from an inaccurately rigid interpretation of Marx’s theory. Fanon instead employs Marx’s commodity fetishism as both a structural and causal model to describe his construction of race as a myth emerging from the colonization of the native identity rather than as an authentic biological characteristic.

Through the development of Fanon’s assertion that “a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem,” this paper argues that Fanon adapts the commodity fetishism of capitalism and the Marxist connection between humanity and selfhood to explain colonialism’s dual deception of racial fetishism [5]. Lacking the integrative exchange processes of capitalist society, colonialism produces social relations that assess value according to the whiteness of one’s skin rather than through the money-form. Just as the monetized relations of capitalism result from the fetishism of the commodity, these colonial social relations defined by skin color originate from the fetishism of race which appears inherently valuable as a reified biological fact that actually derive its value from the false constructs of the white colonizers. Furthermore, this colonial racial fetishism originates from the phenomena of commodity fetishism in the capitalist metropolis due to the colonizers’ estrangement from the products of their labor. By projecting their alienation within the capitalist system onto the colonized identity and, in turn, confining the colonized to a merely biological existence, the colonizers transcend the bounds of economic oppression through their colonization of the native selfhood.

In his critique of the application of commodity fetishism to Fanon’s racial fetishism, Marriott argues that Marx’s “one-sided emphasis on the reification of labor” proves insufficient to describe how “not only economic relations that come to be naturalized under the guise of immediacy but the phantasmatic nature of civil society itself” [6]. Marriott construes Marx’s commodity fetishism as a concept limited to explaining the economic structure of society which fails to pertain to the all-encompassing presence of race within the colonial context. However, commodity fetishism not only perverts the realities of society’s economic base but moreover commodifies the entire social relations of capitalism. This distortion of the subjective interactions of individuals into the