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From the revolutionary archive: A psychoanalytical reframing of the right to development

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Abstract: *This chapter draws from what it calls the revolutionary archive to argue that the right to development should be conceived of as the right to liberation. It argues that this is only possible if we reframe the right to development as liberation. In this sense, we suggest that a psychoanalytical approach is the best theoretical approach, because the*

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obstacles to liberation are not only material but psychical. Drawing from Fanon, we suggest that colonial domination is sociogenic in that it is inscribed in the unconscious, affect and desire, and so survives formal independence, legal equality and economic reform. A right to development that addresses only institutions and indicators, therefore, risks reproducing the very subjection it claims to end. We therefore contend that liberation must be waged on two fronts, the material and the psychical, and that it requires the transformation of the symbolic and cultural order along with the economic order. Read through this lens, the right to development becomes emancipatory only when it is the right to cease waiting for recognition and to undertake, collectively, the work of liberation.

Résumé : *Ce chapitre s'appuie sur ce qu'il appelle les « archives révolutionnaires » pour soutenir que le droit au développement doit être conçu comme un droit à la libération. Il affirme que cela n'est possible que si l'on redéfinit le droit au développement en tant que libération. En ce sens, nous suggérons qu'une approche psychanalytique constitue la meilleure approche théorique, car les obstacles à la libération ne sont pas seulement matériels, mais aussi psychiques. En nous appuyant sur Fanon, nous suggérons que la domination coloniale est sociogénique en ce sens qu'elle est inscrite dans l'inconscient, l'affect et le désir, et qu'elle survit ainsi à l'indépendance formelle, à l'égalité juridique et aux réformes économiques. Un droit au développement qui ne s'intéresse qu'aux institutions et aux indicateurs risque donc de reproduire la soumission même qu'il prétend mettre fin. Nous soutenons donc que la libération doit être menée sur deux fronts, le matériel et le psychique, et qu'elle nécessite la transformation de l'ordre symbolique et culturel parallèlement à celle de l'ordre économique. Vu sous cet angle, le droit au développement ne devient émancipateur que lorsqu'il est le droit de cesser d'attendre la reconnaissance et d'entreprendre, collectivement, le travail de libération.*

Key words: *psychoanalytic reframing; liberation; sociogeny; colonial unconscious; non-reciprocity; revolutionary archive; racial fantasy*

1 Introduction

> Indeed, I believe that only a psychoanalytical interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the complex.[1]

For Fanon, the colonial problem cannot be reduced only to the political, economic or sociological. In this vein, we suggest that Fanon is capable of being productively interpreted as suggesting that the resolution of the colonial problem is contingent upon equally being attentive to the psychical dimensions of colonialism. Although the struggle against material dispossession and imperialism are central to the liberation of African people, African development, we suggest, is equally contingent on the resolution of the internal, unconscious and affective dimensions that keep the African continent in a perpetual state of underdevelopment. This is because the psychic wound has a life of its own.

Mbembe foreshadows the dangers of being inattentive to the psychic wound by warning against easy resort to conceptualising or perceiving challenges in the African continent as merely technical and thus requiring technical solutions. Mbembe states that 'today, the overwhelming belief is that, coupled with science and technology, market capitalism and the "humanitarian" interventions will sort out most of the continent's problems'.[2] We agree with Mbembe about the dangers of treating complex social problems such as war, mass poverty, joblessness, diseases, illiteracy and general social decadence as if these are purely technical matters and 'the human subjects implicated in the dramas have no histories'.[3]

Mbembe laments what he calls research-for-hire financed by development agencies who favour the collection of large data sets and privileges quantitative indicators over critical analysis.[4] Driven by instrumentalism and social empiricism, this approach treats Africa merely as a crisis-prone entity requiring purely technical decisions. Ultimately, according to Mbembe, this approach has failed to yield significant improvements in knowledge or make space for theorisation. The result is the prevention of cultural ferment and intellectual innovation needed

1 F Fanon *Black skin, white masks* (2008) 3.
2 A Mbembe *Out of the dark night: Essays on decolonization* (2019) 11.
3 As above.
4 Mbembe (n 2).

to cut across the customary boundaries separating philosophy, history, political theory and theology.

This is precisely why we equally contend that development and the right to development should be reframed, reimagined and situated within the context of the project of African liberation. Retheorised and reconceptualised in this manner, development and the right to development are capable of being released from the clutches of Western structures of thought that reduce development to Africa 'catching up' with the West. In this manner, development and the right to development become anti-colonial projects. Currently, the dominant and enduring framing of the right to development in Africa tends to focus on economic indicators, juridical recognition and institutional reforms as measures for development. We suggest that this, *per se*, is not incorrect. However, we contend that precisely because Africa is yet to be truly liberated, the liberation project remains central. If anything, this chapter is animated by the concern well captured by Mignolo that 'the decolonization process that had taken place [in Africa] during the post-World War II era remains, unfortunately, an unfinished, and even a regressive, project'.[5] In other instances, both the decolonisation and development projects tend to appear as the proverbial *labour of Sisyphus*.

It is on this basis that we suggest, therefore, that a genuine right to development in Africa cannot be the right to catch up or equally be rejectionist. Instead, the right to development should be reconceptualised as a right to liberation. This is the liberation that is ontologically and genealogically contingent upon the liberation of the psyche. This is because development that does not begin with mental liberation may amount to new forms of oppression, however generously funded or legally enshrined. The project of liberation remains unfinished. In this sense, we suggest the return to the revolutionary archive of anti-colonial thought. In doing so, this chapter will advance a psychoanalytical reframing of the right to development. We do so by synthesising the theoretical insights of Frantz Fanon, Steve Bantu Biko, Amilcar Cabral and Achille Mbembe. Fanon provides a psychoanalytical diagnosis of the colonial wound by exposing the anomalies of affect, the epidermalisation of inferiority, and the neurotic desire for white and European recognition. Biko radicalises

5 W Mignolo *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options* (2011) 105.

this diagnosis into a collective psycho-political praxis. He insists that mental liberation is the precondition of all other freedoms. Cabral provides a bridge between the psychic recovery and historical agency. He demonstrates that cultural consciousness is the foundation of any authentic developmental trajectory. Mbembe extends the critique to the present by revealing that the very categories of 'right' and 'development' remain haunted by racial fantasies. In other words, it is the psycho-oneiric complex that continues to structure global aid, governance and humanitarian discourse. In the final analysis, our central argument is that development and the right to development are inseparable from the entire project of African liberation. This liberation is contingent upon the decolonisation of the mind. We suggest that this task requires returning to what we call the revolutionary archive and taking seriously the psychoanalytic insights of Fanon, Biko, Cabral and Mbembe.

It is in this sense that we suggest that a psychoanalytical reframing has the potential to rejuvenate the discourse about the right to development so that these issues continue to be seen as fundamentally about colonialism, decolonisation and the centrality of the psyche to the process of decolonisation and liberation. The psychic wound that Fanon diagnoses, the inferiority complex that Biko identifies, the cultural derailment and disruption of cultural historicity that Cabral exposes and the psycho-oneiric complex that Mbembe reveals all point to a 'frozen dialectic' where the colonised subject is relegated to a perpetual state of waiting for recognition that never comes. Yet, the revolutionary archive is itself a refusal to wait. Fanon's call to wage war on all levels, Biko's insistence that the most potent weapon is the mind of the oppressed, Cabral's demand that national liberation is not over the moment the flag is hoisted and Mbembe's critique of racial fantasies that continue to structure the development discourse are all calls for revolutionary impatience. The right to development, conceptualised as the right to liberation, is precisely the refusal to wait any longer for the colonisers' recognition. It is the insistence that liberation, both material and psychical, cannot be granted but must be seized.

The chapter unfolds as follows: Part 2, 'The frozen dialectic: Colonialism and the limits of recognition', examines Hegel's master-slave dialectic and the teleological conception of history it sustains, and shows why colonial racism denies the colonised entry into the reciprocal space on which recognition depends, leaving the dialectic frozen. In doing so,

it also contests the unilinear reading of history that the traditional left has often inherited, and retrieves Marx's own caution against treating the sequence of modes of production as a universal law. Part 3 turns to the instruments that establish the right and argues that the right to development must be reconceived as a right to liberation, before dealing with how the frozen dialectic might be jumpstarted. Part 4 addresses the prior methodological question relating to why psychoanalysis given its European moorings can be radically re-appropriated, be decolonised and redeployed sociogenically. Part 5 attempts to bring together the insights of Fanon, Biko, Cabral and Mbembe into a single framework, tracing the material and psychical dimensions of colonial subjection and their persistence after formal independence. Part 6 concludes by drawing together the argument and restating what is at stake in conceiving the right to development as the right to cease waiting for recognition and to undertake, collectively, the work of liberation.

2 The frozen dialectic: Colonialism and the limits of recognition

According to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, two self-conscious beings meet. Each sees the other as a threat to its own certainty of being the absolute centre of the world. To prove its independence, an essential reality, each seeks the negation of the other. They then engage in a primordial struggle for dominance – a fight to the death. However, a pure victory is self-defeating: If you kill the other, you destroy the very other whose recognition you need. The struggle must therefore end not with death, but with submission. The outcome of the struggle is that one consciousness, fearing death and valuing biological life above pure independence, submits. This consciousness becomes a slave. The other consciousness, who risks its life to demonstrate independence, becomes the master. The master gains immediate recognition from the slave and controls the material world through the slave's labour. The slave is denied recognition (the master views the slave as a mere tool, not an equal consciousness) and is forced to work on the world. The slave, through work and fear, educates himself and develops a more stable, independent self-consciousness. The master stagnates. The slave, in transforming the world, transforms himself and becomes the vehicle for historical progress. In short, the Hegelian master-slave dialectic is an attempt to demonstrate that authentic self-consciousness and freedom are achieved intersubjectively through a mediated process of struggle, work and

eventual mutual recognition between free, independent beings. The initial solution of domination is revealed as failure.

This Hegelian dialectic is teleological and linear because it describes a unilinear progression toward a predetermined end: the realisation of the absolute knowledge or the spirit's self-awareness. It is not a random or circular process, but a structured historical and logical march where each stage of contradiction (thesis + antithesis) is transformed into a higher, more rational synthesis. This synthesis resolves the prior contradiction while preserving its truth (sublation), thereby advancing consciousness closer to its final goal (the end of history) of complete self-transparency and freedom. In other words, buried deep in Hegel's master-slave dialectic is that in the struggle between good and evil, good will always triumph over evil and society is always characterised by the movement from the bad to the good.

The Hegelian dialectic[6] is important to our understanding of how national liberation is conceptualised. It is equally important for understanding the colonial logic. The dominant Hegelian understanding of national liberation is that the struggle for liberation (quantity) will inevitably result in liberation and freedom (qualitative transformation). In other words, there is always a dialectic or movement at play. The colonial logic also relies on the Hegelian dialectic to justify colonialism as a necessary (albeit violent) process that was indispensable to civilising African people.

We mention, in parenthesis, that what tends to complicate matters is that even scholars and thinkers from the traditional left have consistently maintained, and continue to uphold, the view of history and its unfolding as teleological. In so doing, we argue that this approach, which is generally Marxist-inspired, is actually a perversion of what Karl Marx himself has stated. In his 16 February 1881 letter to Vera Zassoulitch, Marx stated the following:[7]

> The 'historic inevitability' of this movement [of capitalism towards socialism] is therefore expressly restricted to the countries of Western Europe ... The analysis in *Capital* does not provide reasons either for or against the vitality of the rural commune, but the studies I have made, and my researches into material from

6 GWF Hegel *Phenomenology of spirit* trans AV Miller (1977) paras 178-196.
7 K Marx 'The reply to Zassoulitch' quoted in H Jaffe *A history of Africa* (2017) 16.

> original sources, have convinced me that this commune is the point of departure for the social regeneration of Russia.

For Jaffe, '"[t]he historic inevitability" of the sequence referred to in the *Communist Manifesto* – slavery-feudalism-capitalism-socialism – is thus specifically limited by Marx to a particular group of Western European "advanced" (ie colonialist) countries'.[8] Jaffe further says that

> [i]t does not automatically apply anywhere else in the world. Indeed, even in Western Europe, as Marx showed in his analysis of its evolution, feudalism did not come out of slavery. In most of Europe – Central and Northern – it came after tribalism ('barbarism').[9]

In this respect, Marx himself was diametrically opposed to what Meiksins Wood calls 'a conception of history as a mechanical, pre-ordained and unilinear succession of modes of production', the so-called stages of civilisation and 'an ahistorical conception of historical transitions'.[10] We should nonetheless not be interpreted as suggesting that the whole notion of development should be discarded; not at all. Speaking in the context of the decolonisation of knowledge, Mignolo says that 'decolonising knowledge is not rejecting Western epistemic contributions to the world. On the contrary, it implies appropriating its contributions in order to then de-chain from their imperial designs.'[11] It is to come up with what Ciccariello-Maher calls a 'counterdiscourse'[12] in relation to our conception of development and the unfolding of history.

Our observation is that in the context of the African continent, history tells a different story. The story that history tells is the story of stagnation, social death and paralysis of national liberation. This is precisely why Fanon critically reworks Hegel's master-slave dialectic by demonstrating how colonial racial relations disrupt the reciprocity on which Hegel's account of recognition depends.[13] This is because in the colonial situation, the master (the white coloniser) refuses to enter into the dialectic at all. The white master does not see the black colonised as a self-conscious 'other' worthy of a struggle for recognition. He sees the

8 Jaffe (n 7).
9 As above.
10 E Meiksins Wood *Democracy against capitalism: Renewing historical materialism* (1995) 5.
11 Mignolo (n 5) 82.
12 G Ciccariello-Maher *Decolonizing dialectics* (2017) 6.
13 Fanon (n 1).

black person as a thing, an object. The colonised is thus denied the very possibility of the life and death struggle that could lead to recognition. The dialectic is frozen in a state of non-reciprocity. The slave cannot become the negating power because his humanity is ontologically denied from the state. The slave or the black man does not even enter into the dialectic (into the movement of history). Therefore, the Hegelian path to mutual recognition is impossible under racism or a racist structure for the simple reason that racism is the denial of the other's humanity and being. *The only solution is the total destruction of the colonial framework itself to create the conditions where a new universal humanism might be possible*. This is precisely why Cabral states:[14]

> The facts make it unnecessary for us to waste words proving that the essential instrument of imperialist domination is violence. If we accept the principle that the national liberation struggle is a revolution, and that it is not over at the moment when the flag is hoisted and the national anthem is played, we shall find that there is and there can be no national liberation without the use of liberating violence, on the part of the nationalist forces, in answer to the criminal violence of the agents of imperialism. Nobody can doubt that imperialist domination, whatever its local characteristics, implies a state of permanent violence against the nationalist forces.

Cabral's intervention is an attempt to theorise how to jumpstart the dialectic (the historical movement). In the same vein, Ciccariello-Maher states:[15]

> Whereas Hegel presumed a shared basis for reciprocity and ultimately recognition, Fanon diagnoses the existence of a 'zone of non-being' inhabited by the racialized, which prevents the dialectic from entering into motion to begin with. Second, confronted with this absence of reciprocity – and lack of dialectical motion – Fanon turns to the one-sided subjective combat set into motion by those disqualified non-beings. This combat takes the precise form of the 'violent' self-assertion of Black identity, a 'making oneself known' that prepares the basis for further dialectical movement.

The discussion on the movement of history is indispensable to understanding the stagnation and deterioration of national liberation and the revolution in Africa. If we accept that the national liberation dialectic in Africa is frozen, how do we then jumpstart the dialectic?

14 A Cabral 'National liberation and culture' in T Serequeberhan (ed) *Return to the source: Selected texts of Amilcar Cabral* (2022) 261.
15 Ciccariello-Maher (n 12) 54.

3 A psychoanalytic reframing of the right to development: Jumpstarting the dialectic

3.1 The right to development as a right to liberation

The Declaration on the Right to Development (DRtD), an instrument of international law, provides that

> [t]he human right to development also implies the full realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, which includes, subject to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources.[16]

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter) states that '[a]ll peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind'.[17]

It is no longer a controversy that the right to development continues to be conceptualised from different theoretical and ideological prisms. Some scholars reject the idea that development simply describes social change. For them, development is a discourse that creates the very people it claims to describe, remaking them in the image of the developed.[18] Omar traces the *oeuvre* of engagements with the notion of development and argues that post-colonial approaches differ in method but converge in contesting the Eurocentric historicism that presents development as an inexorable and unilinear universal necessity.[19] The decolonial critique sharpens the point by locating in modernity itself a darker logic of coloniality, so that development cannot be separated from the coloniality of knowledge and power that gave it shape.[20] Debates about development have therefore been inseparable from debates about who is entitled to define it.

16 Declaration on the Right to Development Res A/Res/41/128 (1986) art 1(2) (DRtD).
17 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) OAU Doc CAB/LEG/67/3 Rev 5 art 22.
18 A Escobar *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World* (1995) 7.
19 S Omar 'Rethinking development from a postcolonial perspective' (2012) 3 *Journal of Conflictology* 42, 43.
20 Mignolo (n 5) xvii-xviii.

Calls for autochthonous conception of development and for epistemic autonomy in which the concept might be domesticated to serve the interests of developing countries, without abandoning the concept, constitute an attempt to respond to this concern.[21] Equally so is the appeal to alternative modernities, which reject the claim that there is a single path along which all societies must travel.[22] The human rights turn represents a further response by casting development as a right rather than a policy objective.

We suggest that the right to development is in tandem with the decolonial demand for an epistemic shift and independence rather than as a claim to be pursued within the context of the prevailing international and neo-colonial order.[23] This is precisely why we suggest that the right must be reconceived as a right to liberation. It should be so conceived not because law and rights are unimportant, but because a right that fails to contest the meaning of development runs the risk of being a *mirage*.

This is also not a dispute that can be resolved solely by reference to the text of the instruments. The DRtD and article 22 of the African Charter establish the right, but they also place self-determination, sovereignty over natural wealth and the freedom and identity of peoples at its centre. Our proposed reading of these instruments is that they treat development as belonging to people rather than as a standard applied to them. It nonetheless leaves open how far such provisions can displace the inherited conception of development in practice. The remainder of this part turns to that question.

3.2 Jumpstarting the frozen dialectic: Development as liberation and liberation as development

If the Hegelian dialectic is frozen under colonialism because the coloniser refuses to recognise the colonised as a self-conscious other, then the question of how to jumpstart the dialectic and how to set history back into motion becomes the central theoretical and political problem.

21 C Ngang 'Differentiated responsibilities under international law and the right to development paradigm for developing countries' (2017) 2 *Human Rights and International Legal Discourse* 265.
22 DP Gaonkar 'On alternative modernities' (1999) 11 *Public Culture* 1.
23 Mignolo (n 5) xviii.

Fanon's response is unequivocal. He says in *Black skin, white masks*[24] that 'indeed, I believe that only a psychoanalytical interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the complex'. Freire puts emphasis to Fanon's assertion and states that the pedagogy of the oppressed must first 'deal with the problem of the oppressed consciousness and the oppressor consciousness, the problem of men and women who oppress and men and women who suffer oppression'.[25]

In other words, the dialectic cannot be restarted through an appeal to the coloniser's conscience, nor through a patient waiting for recognition to be granted. The coloniser's refusal is ontological, not a mere matter of attitude. The colonised is relegated to a 'zone of non-being' where the very possibility of reciprocal struggle is denied. The dialectic can only be set in motion through a radical departure consisting in a radical self-assertion that forces the coloniser to confront the colonised as a subject, not as an object.

However, Fanon insists that this rupture cannot be solely military or political. It must also be psychical.[26] The overthrow of colonial states, although essential, is not enough. What is required is also the overthrow of the internalised structures of inferiority, shame and compulsive desire for white and European recognition that keep the psyche enslaved long after formal independence. For Cornell and Seely,

> [a]ny attempt at an ethical intervention into colonialism will therefore necessarily falter before the very impossibility of such a relation, absent a revolutionary struggle that would break open the Manichean universe and allow the colonized to appear as more than an object to be dominated.[27]

This is precisely where a psychoanalytical reframing of the right to development becomes indispensable. If the national liberation dialectic in Africa has been frozen and subsumed by the logic and rationale of a Euro-centred conception of development, jumpstarting the dialectic requires returning to the revolutionary archive and recovering the psychoanalytical insights of Fanon, Biko, Cabral and Mbembe.

24 Fanon (n 1) 3.
25 P Freire *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (2017) 29.
26 Fanon (n 1) 89-90.
27 D Cornell & SD Seely *The spirit of revolution: Beyond the dead ends of Man* (2016) 96.

Development, in this reframing, becomes not about catching up to the West, but about completing the unfinished project of liberation, and we suggest that this is a project that must be waged on two fronts, the material and the psychical. As Hook says in *Fanon, psychoanalysis, and critical decolonial psychology*:[28]

> The type of psychology that Fanon appeals to and develops is of a particular sort. Perhaps Fanon's greatest source of originality as a theorist, as McCulloch (1983) has argued, is to be found in his combination of psychology and politics, his attempts to approach the problems of national liberation and social revolution from the perspective of psychopathology, and the problems of personal identity through a sustained focus on the violence of the colonial encounter.

We suggest that this combination of psychology and politics raises both a theoretical and methodological question: Why retain psychoanalysis when its classical forms have often reproduced European universals? We deal with this in the next part.

4 Why a psychoanalytic approach?

For Hook, psychoanalysis has been criticised as part of a modernist discourse that is bourgeois and European in origin, and as a body of knowledge that describes psychology through universal frameworks while ignoring cultural and historical specificity. Psychoanalysis, Hook observes, has often dehistoricised and individualised racism, extended Eurocentric systems of knowledge, and legitimised oppressive politics through unexamined universalising assumptions.[29] However, for Hook, this does not mean that psychoanalysis must simply be abandoned. Following Fanon, Hook suggests that instead its concepts must be decolonised and redeployed sociogenically. In other words, psychic life must be treated as produced within a colonial social world rather than the Eurocentric and modernist approach which treats the psychical as autonomous and, therefore, detached from history, political economy and racial power.

Fanon makes precisely this methodological break in *Black skin, white masks*. Fanon observes the disparity between European psychoanalytic

28 D Hook *Fanon, psychoanalysis, and critical decolonial psychology: The mind of apartheid* (2025) 25.
29 Hook (n 28) 10 & 125.

schemas and the lived reality of the black subject, and concludes that there is a dialectical substitution when one passes from the psychology of the white person to that of the black person.[30] The point is not that black people possess a separate or deficient psychology. It is that colonialism reorganises the space within which subjectivity is formed. In this sense, Fanon could be read as suggesting, and correctly so, that a decolonial psychoanalysis must therefore begin from the colonial situation itself. This, we suggest, is how Fanon unsettles traditional psychoanalysis.

Our approach, therefore, is an antithesis of a tradition that privileges individual psychical and unconscious factors, or ontogeny, over socio-historical and political factors, or sociogeny.[31] Fanon does not deny psychic conflict or unconscious processes. What Fanon disputes is their abstraction from the world that produces them. In the colonial setting, the racial drama is also enacted publicly and repeatedly. The black subject has no time to make it unconscious in the manner presupposed by the classical neurotic model. Inferiority, superiority and the struggle for equality are continuously shaped by the context and society within which one lives.[32] Fanon similarly questions the universal application of the Oedipus complex to colonial subjects and families, because concepts derived from a specific European familial and cultural formation cannot be transported unchanged. He says that it would be relatively easy for him to show that in the French Antilles 97 per cent of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity, he adds, is one upon which we heartily congratulate ourselves.[33] Fanon's intervention, therefore, is not orthodox psychoanalysis. It is a socio-diagnostic method in which the psyche and the colonial world are entangled.

For Hook, colonial and apartheid orders offered material, social and symbolic privileges, but they also offered psychic rewards – fantasies of purity, superiority, mastery, security and belonging. For instance, the durability and apparent madness of apartheid cannot therefore be explained solely by rational interest or ideological error. Desire binds subjects to the structure, while the structure supplies the fantasies through which desire is organised.[34]

30 Fanon (n 1) 116.
31 Hook (n 28) 127.
32 Fanon (n 1) 116.
33 Fanon (n 1) 117.
34 Hook (n 28).

A psychoanalytic approach is necessary because it asks not only what racial ideology says, but what enjoyment, fear, fascination and reassurance it provides. Fanon's notion of negrophobia illuminates this affective and libidinal dimension. Anti-blackness is phobogenic: The black body is made into an object that elicits fear, disgust and sexual fascination before any rational proposition is formulated. Yet, these effects are not natural responses to bodily difference. They are historically produced and circulated through a European collective unconscious, in the cultural archive of myths, images, narratives and prohibitions. Hook's reading, therefore, enables us to understand the anomalies of affect as socially constructed rather than merely personal. Racism pervades these institutions and discourses, but it also manifests in bodily reactions, fantasy and the organisation of desire.

Cornell and Seely's *creolised* reading of Lacan with Fanon clarifies the revolutionary significance of this claim. They marshal Fanon's diagnosis of the psychosis of colonialism against political positions that reject futurity, human agency or the possibility of revolutionary transformation.[35] Colonialism is psychotic not because colonised individuals are inherently disordered, but because the colonial symbolic and political order denies the humanity it nevertheless requires and produces a world organised by violent racial fantasy. Within such a world, adaptation cannot be the measure of health. To adjust the colonised subject to a pathological order would make therapy an instrument of colonial normalisation. Fanon instead turns psychoanalytic diagnosis outward, towards action capable of transforming the world that generates the symptom.

A psychoanalytic reframing of the right to development follows from this synthesis. Development cannot be measured only by income, infrastructure, institutional reform or formal equality, indispensable though these remain. It must also ask whether the social order reproduces colonial fantasies; whether people remain compelled to seek white and European recognition; whether black embodiment continues to be phobogenic and whether public institutions reproduce the symbolic coordinates of inferiority. The right to development, reconceptualised as the right to liberation, therefore is a right to participate in remaking both material conditions and the collective symbolic world. It includes

35 Cornell & Seely (n 27).

freedom from externally imposed states of psychic alienation and the capacity to create new forms of human association.

We suggest that it is in this sense that psychoanalysis remains indispensable, provided that it is retheorised and conceptualised in line with Fanon's sociogenic orientation. Its value lies neither in universalising European clinical schemas nor in psychologising colonial domination. The value of psychoanalysis lies in exposing the unconscious, racial fantasies, affective anomalies and anxieties through which domination reproduces itself. Fanon, Hook, Cornell and Seely enable us to approach decolonisation as simultaneously institutional, economic, symbolic, libidinal and existential.

5 Synthesising the revolutionary archive

Our approach to the revolutionary archive of Fanon, Cabral and Biko is not to offer single individual theoretical approaches of these scholars, but rather to attempt a synthesis that makes a coherent psychoanalytic framework for understanding why the colonial dialectic remains frozen and how it might be jumpstarted.

Fanon's psychoanalytic intervention provides a diagnostic foundation for this project. He demonstrates that the colonial problem cannot be reduced to the political, economic or sociological alone. For Fanon, the colonial problem operates at the level of the unconscious by producing pathologies that material change alone cannot heal. Fanon introduces the concept of sociogeny, that is, the study of the social and historical environments that produce pathology. He does so by arguing that the inferiority complex of the colonised subject is not individual but collective and historically produced. Through epidermalisation, economic and social inferiority is inscribed onto the black body itself, making the skin evidence of inferiority and producing what Fanon calls the anomalies of affect: shame, compulsive desire for white recognition, narcissistic wounds and self-hatred. As Fanon himself says, '[i]f there is inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily economic; subsequently, the internalisation – or better, the epidermalisation – of this inferiority'.[36]

36 Fanon (n 1) 4.

Yet, Fanon insists that the 'black man's alienation is not an individual question'.[37] It cannot be understood through 'phylogeny' (biological inheritance), or ontogeny (individual biography) alone. Fanon says that 'beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny'.[38] The colonial pathology, therefore, is a sociogenic illness requiring a 'sociodiagnostic'[39] cure. This is precisely why Fanon insists that the struggle must be waged on both the material/objective and subjective/psychic levels. He warns that 'any unilateral liberation is incomplete' and that 'the gravest mistake would be to believe in their automatic interdependence'. The prognosis, Fanon concludes, 'is in the hands of those willing to get rid of the worm-eaten roots of the structure'.[40]

This diagnosis of the frozen dialectic where the coloniser refuses to recognise the colonised as self-conscious other reveals why material change alone cannot produce liberation. The psychic wound has a life of its own, and the dialectic can only be jumpstarted through a struggle that addresses both the material and psychical dimensions of colonial subjection.

From Fanon we learn that for the colonial world, history does not always move forward. It sometimes moves backwards and sometimes it does not move at all. This is in contrast to the dominant view of history and historical movement as comprising inevitable progress (thesis + antithesis = synthesis). The approach which seeks to decolonise time and dialectics is crucial for the simple reason that historically, the dominant approach to national liberation has been infested with the conception of history as a linear, teleological and progressive movement. This conception views the human past, present and future as a single, unbroken line moving inexorably in one direction. It is linear, teleological and progressive, assuming that historical movement inherently represents moral, technological and social improvement over time. In short, the view, which we contest, is that of an unfolding, inevitable and predetermined grand plan.

Biko radicalises Fanon's diagnosis by transforming it into a collective practical programme of psychic self-recovery. Where Fanon provides

37 As above.
38 As above.
39 As above.
40 Fanon (n 1) 5.

diagnostic tools such as sociogeny, epidermalisation and the anomalies of affect, Biko insists that 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed'.[41] For Biko, the coloniser's power depends on the colonised subject's internalisation of inferiority. The affirmation 'Black is Beautiful' is not a mere aesthetic slogan but a profound psycho-political intervention which seeks to restore the dignity of African people as the foundation upon which any authentic liberation must be built.

Fanon's assertion that a psychoanalytic approach is indispensable to dealing with the African problem and Biko's assertion that mental liberation is the precondition of all other freedoms are not only complementary, but are two ways of emphasising the same thing. For Fanon and Biko, the dialectic of liberation can only be jumpstarted when the colonised subject reclaims their self-worth, rejects the inferiority complex that has been imposed upon them, and asserts their humanity on their own terms and not those of their colonisers.

Cabral extends the psychoanalytical framework by insisting that colonialism is not merely an economic or political derailment, but a deep cultural and psychical disruption. For Cabral,[42]

> [c]ulture is simultaneously the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history, by the positive or negative influence that it exerts on the evolution of relationships between the human being and his/her environment, among human beings or groups of human beings within a society, as well as among different societies. Ignorance of this fact may explain the failure of several attempts at foreign domination – as well as the failure of some national liberation movements.

Cabral's observation that culture is 'simultaneously the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history' underscores why the psychoanalytical framework we advance must encompass not only the individual psyche but also the collective cultural and historical dimensions of colonial subjection. Where Fanon diagnoses the anomalies of affect produced by the colonial environment and Biko supplies the collective method of consciousness-raising to overcome the inferiority complex, Cabral insists that cultural consciousness is the foundation upon which any authentic developmental trajectory must be built. The failure of several national liberation movements, Cabral suggests, can be explained

41 S Biko *I write what I like* (2017) 68.
42 Cabral (n 14) 80.

by the 'ignorance of this fact', which is the neglect of the cultural and psychical dimensions of liberation. This is precisely why a genuine right to development cannot be reduced to economic indicators or institutional reform. It must be reconceptualised as the right to liberation, a liberation that is contingent on the decolonisation of the mind, the reclamation of cultural agency, and the restoration of historical self-determination.

In *Critique of black reason*, a chapter dealing with 'The subject of race', Mbembe states:[43]

> The pages that follow deal with 'Black reason'. By this ambiguous and polemical term I mean to identify several things at once: forms of knowledge; a model of extraction and depredation; a paradigm of subjection, including the modalities governing its eradication; and finally, a psycho-oneiric complex. Like a kind of giant cage, Black reason is in truth a complicated network of doubling, uncertainty, and equivocation, built with race as its chassis.

This definition of black reason as a 'giant cage' built with race as its chassis is indispensable for our psychoanalytical reframing of the right to development. If development discourse itself is constructed upon this chassis, that is, this 'complicated network of doubling, uncertainty, and equivocation', this suggests that the right to development cannot simply be asserted within existing frameworks. The 'psycho-oneiric complex'[44] that Mbembe identifies is precisely the reservoir of racial fantasies that continue to structure global aid, governance and humanitarian discourse. These fantasies are not historical relics. They are ongoing operations of the imagination that substitute projected images for actual human reality, perpetuating psychical subjugation under the guise of progress. This is why development that does not confront its own racial unconscious risks becoming merely a new form of subjection, if not a mirage. If black reason is a cage, then the right to development, reconceptualised as the right to liberation, must be an act of rupturing the integument. This is precisely why our turn, and return, to the revolutionary archive and our psychoanalytical reframing of the right to development are necessary so as to prise open the cage of black reason and to insist that liberation,

43 A Mbembe *Critique of black reason* (2017) 10.

44 The psycho-oneiric complex is Mbembe's term for how race and racism operate at the level of fantasy, dream and the unconscious, not only as social or economic structures.

both material and psychical, is not a gift to be granted but a project to be seized.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the right to development in Africa should be reconceptualised as neither a technocratic nor a technicist project of catching up with the West, but as a right to liberation. The argument began with a problem in the dominant narrative of historical progress. Hegel's dialectic presumes a struggle between consciousnesses capable of recognition, whereas Fanon shows that colonial racism denies the colonised entry into that reciprocal field. The dialectic is therefore frozen. Development understood as linear convergence cannot restart it, because the model of progress itself reproduces the authority of the colonial standard.

Fanon's psychoanalytic intervention identifies why formal independence and material reform, although indispensable, do not automatically produce freedom. Colonialism is sociogenic. It creates the social world in which inferiority is internalised and epidermalised, the black body becomes phobogenic, and recognition is sought from the order that instantiated it. Hook's decolonial psychoanalysis deepens this approach by locating racism in a sociogenic unconscious and a libidinal economy. Colonial power persists not only through institutions and interests, but also through fantasy, affect, anxiety, enjoyment and identification. Cornell and Seely, reading Lacan with Fanon, show why liberation must consequently transform the symbolic and erotic order while preserving the revolutionary promise of a new humanity beyond the falsely universal Man.

The retrieval of the revolutionary archive transforms this diagnosis into a collective programme. Biko makes mental liberation a practical struggle against internalised inferiority. Cabral situates culture as both the product and the maker of history, linking psychic recovery to historical agency. Mbembe exposes the psycho-oneiric complex through which racial fantasy continues to organise knowledge, governance and humanitarian development. Read together, these thinkers show that the material, psychic, cultural and symbolic dimensions of colonialism are distinct but inseparable. A focus on one aspect to the exclusion of others risks perpetual incompleteness of the liberation project.

The project of African liberation therefore remains unfinished. Returning to the revolutionary archive is not a nostalgic call. It is a method and approach for recovering and expanding concepts adequate to the present and for making action possible. We suggest that the right to development becomes emancipatory only when it enables African peoples to transform not only the material but also the psychic universe inherited from colonialism. Conceived in this way, the right to development is the right to cease waiting for recognition and to undertake, collectively, the work of liberation.

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