

# E-Content

## POSTCOLONIAL & NEW WRITINGS

Semester: III

Lecture 7

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**GALGOTIAS  
UNIVERSITY**

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## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### The Wretched of the Earth: Character List Lecture 7

#### Topics to be Covered

- **Character Analysis of the main characters of The Wretched of the Earth.**
  - *Colonist/Colonizer*
  - The Colonized
  - National Bourgeoisie
  - Colonized Intellectual
  - Popular Leader
  - The Lumpenproletariat
  - The Young Frenchwoman
  - The Algerian Man

## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### To Revise

- Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth* Themes
  - Politics and Psychology
  - Liberation and Consciousness
  - Cycles of Violence
  - Manichaeism
  - Race vs. Tribe Nation vs. Culture
  - History and Theory
- In many ways, *Wretched* is a fulfillment of the short, suggestive promissory notes on anti-colonial struggle found in the many essays, editorials, and letters written in the time following *Black Skin, White Masks*.
- Those occasional writings and major essays shift focus away from anti-Blackness as a core theme and toward a broader sense of the effects of colonialism on the psyche, cultural formation, and political organization.
- That shift in focus allows Fanon to think more broadly about the meaning and purpose of revolutionary struggle.

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## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### **Politics and Psychology**

Fanon, a psychiatrist, was especially interested in how colonialism affects the psychological makeup of the colonized. In his understanding, the colonist subjugates the colonized not only economically and politically, but also psychologically, by imposing an inferiority complex on those they subjugate. The colonized also experience psychological problems due to the trauma of violence at the hands of the colonist. As a result, political problems and psychological health are deeply connected. When the colonized experience neuroses, depression, and other disorders, the cure is as much political as it is personal. Colonialism creates the very identities of colonized and colonist, which makes it not only a political regime, but also a psychological one.

### **Liberation and Consciousness**

Related to the connection between politics and psychology, Fanon argues that decolonization will not only liberate the colonized from exploitation, but will also free his mind. A persistent theme throughout *The Wretched of the Earth* is the different forms of consciousness, or self-awareness, that liberation and independence can bring. Most important, for Fanon, is a national consciousness, or an awareness of oneself as belonging to a free and sovereign nation. Under colonialism, Africans have no nation, because they are controlled by European authority. But in decolonization, Africans are liberated to think of themselves as having control over the conditions of their life. The freeing of their land from colonial control is also a freeing of their minds from submission and subjugation.

## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### Cycles of Violence

- Violence is a frequent theme in *The Wretched of the Earth*, and Fanon is particularly interested in showing how different forms of violence repeat in colonial and post-colonial history. Colonialism first maintains the authority of the colonist through violence, eliciting submission from the colonized through the police and soldiers. But this means that the colonized can only free themselves by reversing the dynamic and themselves exercising violence against the colonist. The colonized learn violence from the colonist, and then use it against them. At the same time, after independence, the most powerful within the new nation may, like the old colonists, once again use violence to elicit the submission of the rural masses. Thus, the cycle begins again.

### Manichaeism

- Manichaeism was a dualistic religious system in early Christianity that split the world into good and evil, light and dark. Fanon uses Manichaeism to refer to the colonist's simplistic, dualistic worldview in which the world is divided into good and evil, white and black, colonist and colonized. But, just like colonial violence, the dichotomy can be reversed. Under decolonization, the colonized begin to think of the colonist as evil in the same way that the colonist used to think of the colonized. Thus, a dualistic worldview is a theme through colonialism and decolonization alike.

## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* – Characters brief Summary

#### ➤ *Colonist/Colonizer*

The colonist/colonizer is the European who has settled in and taken control over an African country. Fanon will often talk about the group of colonizers as “the colonist,” referring to the entire force of the group or to the identity of the group as a whole. In Fanon’s argument, the colonist creates both his own identity and the identity of the colonized. He does so by dividing the world into two and saying the colonized are evil or subhuman. In the French-Algerian context Fanon discusses, the French are the colonists.

#### ➤ The Colonized

The indigenous African people whose land is settled and controlled by European colonists. As with “the colonist,” Fanon will often refer to the colonized as both an individual and as a group of all those subjected to colonial authority. In the French-Algerian context Fanon discusses, the Algerians are the colonized.

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## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### **Colonized Intellectual**

The colonized intellectual is a colonized person who has been educated, usually by the colonists, and often resides in the urban areas within a colony, usually along the coasts. The colonized intellectual has a precarious position between colonist and colonized, sometimes wanting to align with or imitate the colonist and sometimes wanting to empower or stand alongside the colonized. Fanon describes a multi-stage process in which the intellectual must unlearn the European values he has been taught—foremost among them the value that says Europe is superior to Africa—and come to a national consciousness alongside the other colonized, joining the anticolonial fight.

### **National Bourgeoisie**

The national bourgeoisie are the native Africans who, after independence, often assume the authority of the colonists. They are a “coastal elite,” meaning they have the wealth and run the industries associated with the big cities along the African coast. Fanon calls the “national bourgeoisie” both “immature” and “unnecessary.” They are immature because, unlike the colonial bourgeoisie, they have neither the resources nor the experience to properly rule the national economy. They are unnecessary because, simply replicating the colonial exploitation of power, they do not advance a nation into a phase of liberation. They must be opposed in order for a new, genuine national consciousness to emerge.

### **Popular Leader**

- The popular leader is a charismatic man, usually a patriot of the anticolonial fight, whom the national bourgeoisie rely upon to inspire the confidence of the rural parts of a country after independence.
- By investing in a popular leader, the national bourgeoisie exhibits a totalitarian tendency, aiming for a sort of dictatorship in which, like under colonialism, the rural masses comply with authority because of violence or the threat of violence.

## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### **The National Bourgeoisie**

#### **Character Analysis**

Made up of the urban proletariat, the national bourgeoisie is the ruling class of colonial society and the developing nation. The national bourgeoisie live Westernized lives, and they are in constant conflict with the peasant masses, with whom they have nothing in common. After the exit of a colonial power, the national bourgeoisie slips into the place of the colonists and exploits the peasant masses politically and economically. The national bourgeoisie have limited experience and little political wherewithal, and they stand to lose everything through decolonization. They support dictatorships and have zero intention of helping the peasant masses to rise from poverty, widespread hunger, and illiteracy. The national bourgeoisie are wholly damaging to a developing nation, which cannot expect to progress and prosper until the national bourgeoisie are stripped of their ruling power.

### **The Lumpenproletariat**

#### **Character Analysis**

A class within the peasant masses that is the absolute lowest rung of the social strata. The lumpenproletariat are the criminals, the unemployed, the prostitutes, and the juvenile delinquents, and they represent a serious security threat to society. They are also “the most spontaneously and radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people,” and Fanon refers to them as the “urban spearhead” of the liberation struggle. The lumpenproletariat are crucial in the fight for independence, and Fanon believes that any national liberation movement would do well to utilize them their advantage.



## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### **The Peasant Masses**

#### **Character Analysis**

The largest social class of the Third World. The peasant masses are largely made of rural farmers, and they live traditional lives that still resemble precolonial culture. The peasant masses are “the only spontaneously revolutionary force in the country,” and, Fanon contends, they are exceedingly important to the revolutionary cause. The peasant masses are the first to be oppressed and neglected when systems of neocolonialism take over, and they are generally mistrusting of the national bourgeoisie.

### **The Young Frenchwoman**

#### **Character Analysis**

One of Fanon’s patients while he is working as a psychiatrist in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence. The young Frenchwoman presents with anxiety after her father, a civil servant, is killed in an ambush. She is deeply ashamed of her father’s involvement in the oppression of the Algerian people, and before his death, she finds it difficult to look him in the eye. After her father’s death, the French government offers her restitution, but she refuses. The Young Frenchwoman claims that she would fight on behalf of the Algerians if she could, and she serves to illustrate Fanon’s contention that the colonist is negatively affected by colonialism as well.

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### **The Algerian Man**

#### **Character Analysis**

One of Fanon's patients in the psychiatric hospital in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence. The Algerian man is arrested for a "terrorist attack" after suffering a psychotic break. He is not involved with the rebellion in any way and is dedicated to his career in data processing. As a result, he begins to feel guilty for not participating in the national struggle and grows depressed and increasingly withdrawn. He begins to hallucinate and finds himself in the European sector of the city where Algerians are being harassed and arrested by police. He runs up to an officer screaming "I am an Algerian!" and attempts to take his gun. The Algerian man is beaten and sent to the hospital. After several weeks he begins to improve and is discharged.

### **The 13-year-old Algerian Boy**

#### **Character Analysis**

A patient of Fanon's at the psychiatric hospital during the Algerian War of Independence. Along with the 14-year-old Algerian boy, the boys kill their European friend because they heard that the Europeans want to kill all the Arabs. They couldn't kill an adult, the 13-year-old-boy says, so they killed their young friend instead. The 13-year-old boy is further proof of the psychological effects of colonialism on the colonized

## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### **The 14-year-old Algerian Boy**

#### **Character Analysis**

Another patient of Fanon's at the psychiatric hospital in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence. Along with the 13-year-old Algerian boy, the 14-year-old kills a young European friend after hearing that the Europeans want to kill all the Arabs. The 14-year-old boy refuses to talk, other than to ask why the Europeans are not arrested for killing the Algerians. The 14-year-old boy again underscores the psychological effect of colonialism on the colonized, but he also raises a valid point: the Europeans often killed the Algerians with impunity, and they were not held accountable.

**R**

#### **Character Analysis**

A 30-year-old European police officer and another patient of Fanon's during the Algerian War of Independence. R is tasked with torturing Algerians for the French, and he has taken to beating his wife and children as well. R won't quit his job, but he is hoping that therapy will allow him to stop abusing his family and do his job without guilt. R is an example of the rampant violence of colonialism and the mental disorders that plague those who are involved.

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## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### **B : Character Analysis**

- One of Fanon's patients in the psychiatric hospital in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence.
- B is 26 years old and is suffering from impotence, migraines, and insomnia after the rape of his wife by a French soldier.
- B is a militant in the Algerian Liberation Front, and his wife is raped when she won't give up information on him. B finds it difficult to be with his wife after her assault, and he wonders if he will ever get over it.
- B and his wife are another example of the widespread violence of colonialism and the lasting psychological impact of such violence.

### **S : Character Analysis**

- Another one of Fanon's patients in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence. S is a 37-year-old man from an outlying village.
- He had nothing to do with the war until the French ambushed his village and shot 29 men at point-blank range.
- S sustained two gunshot wounds, and after his injury when he was recovering in the hospital, he suffered a psychotic break. He was sent to the psychiatric hospital for treatment, and he is discharged after one month.
- S also represents the psychological effects of violence on the colonized individual.

### **D: Character Analysis**

- One of Fanon's patients in the psychiatric hospital in Algerian during the Algerian War of Independence.
- D is a 19-year-old man who joins the liberation movement, and after he kills a European woman at a white settlement, he suffers a psychotic break and begins to dream that his victim is haunting him.
- D remains in the hospital until his nightmares subside and he is discharged. Again, D's symptomology is directly related to colonialism and the war in Algeria, which also underscores the psychological effects of colonialism.

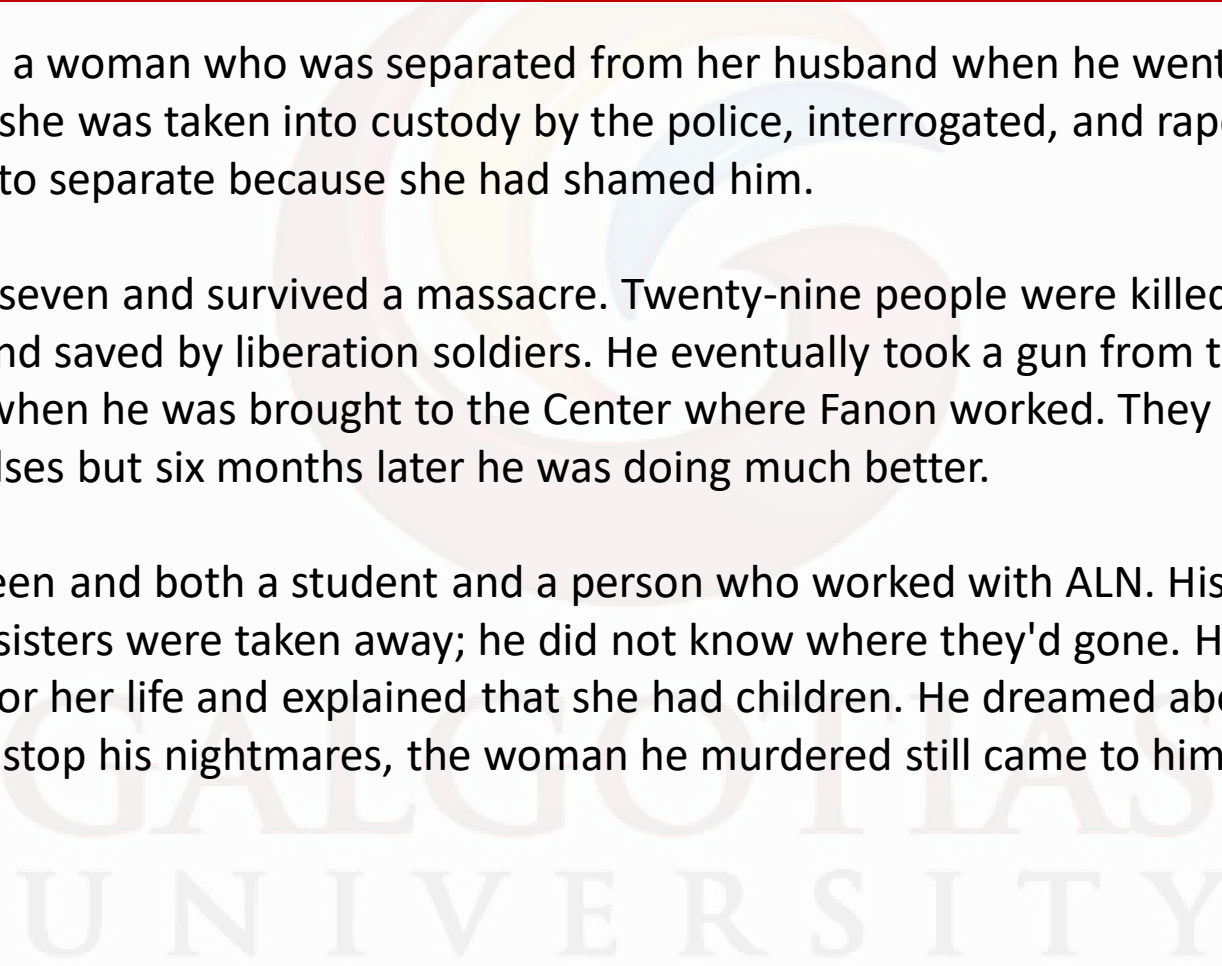
## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

### TO CONCLUDE

- Fanon engaged the fundamental issues of his day: language, affect, sexuality, gender, race and racism, religion, social formation, time, and many others.
- His impact was immediate upon arrival in Algeria, where in 1953 he was appointed to a position in psychiatry at Bida-Joinville Hospital.
- His participation in the Algerian revolutionary struggle shifted his thinking from theorizations of blackness to a wider, more ambitious theory of colonialism, anti-colonial struggle, and visions for a postcolonial culture and society.
- Fanon published in academic journals and revolutionary newspapers, translating his radical vision of anti-colonial struggle and decolonization for a variety of audiences and geographies, whether as a young academic in Paris, a member of the Algeria National Liberation Front (FLN), Ambassador to Ghana for the Algerian provisional government, or revolutionary participant at conferences across Africa.
- The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon is a discussion of colonization, decolonization, and movements to remove colonizers from colonized areas.
- While there aren't characters as there would be in a fictional work, Fanon does discuss people he treated in Algeria while he worked there and they were under colonial rule.
- He does not fully give the name of each person involved, instead identifying them by a series and an initial.

## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

- **Series A, Case 1:** B's Wife is a woman who was separated from her husband when he went to work with the militant group. While he was gone, she was taken into custody by the police, interrogated, and raped. Following this, she told him that she wanted them to separate because she had shamed him.
- **Series A, Case 2:** S is thirty-seven and survived a massacre. Twenty-nine people were killed at point-blank range in front of him; he was shot and saved by liberation soldiers. He eventually took a gun from them and fired at soldiers that were sleeping. That's when he was brought to the Center where Fanon worked. They had to work to reduce his violent and antisocial impulses but six months later he was doing much better.
- **Series A, Case 3:** D is nineteen and both a student and a person who worked with ALN. His mother was murdered by a French soldier and his two sisters were taken away; he did not know where they'd gone. He killed the wife of a colonist while she begged for her life and explained that she had children. He dreamed about her every night after that. While they worked to stop his nightmares, the woman he murdered still came to him whenever he thought of his dead mother.



## COURSE CONTENT UNIT-I

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