

DECOLONIZING CONSCIOUSNESS

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In one of the final chapters in his 1987 work *Is God A Racist? The Right Wing in Canada*, Stanley Barrett ponders a contentious issue. He questions whether there is a connection between endemic institutional racism in Canada and the white supremacy of the ultra right. His answer is that it would be “unjustified to conclude that it has been proved that the former has caused the latter, or the converse.”¹ On the contrary, this paper will illustrate how the covert racism found within the wider society does allow for and is a cause of the emergence of fringe right racist groups. Not only that, this paper will show that these fringe groups serve as concentrated examples of the specific, structurally and socially pervasive and theologically backed breed of racism that persists within Ontario.

To accomplish this task, I will approach the subject in a threefold manner. First, I will utilize a theory of racism offered by psychiatrist Frantz Fanon. Specifically, I will refer to his attempt to identify the final frontier of colonization, the individual psyche and its collective counterpart – its contemporary society. I have found that this theory is expounded upon, furthered and readdressed for a North American audience through the speeches of Malcolm X. By placing his words alongside Fanon’s, I will show the insidious kind of racism that, I contend, dangerously still exists in our Ontarian society at large.

Once I have established the type of racism I am meaning to expose, I will make obvious how this overt and covert societal form of racism enables groups like the Heritage Front to exist. An examination of the Heritage Front will serve as an example of what the racism described by Fanon and X looks and sounds like at the peak of its concentration –theologically and ideologically backed white supremacy.

Finally, I will explore the religious underpinnings that belong to both activists and racists. This is an area of controversy, for both groups use theological reasoning to justify their methods as means to their desired ends. For both Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X, the idea of a holy war had a special significance as an explosive curative measure for a diseased society. In contrast to this view, the Heritage Front believes that they are preparing for a final racial holy war that will end with the ultimate ‘victory’ of the white race. Where Malcolm X later believed that Islam was the only way to universal understanding and compassion among humanity, the Heritage Front utilizes a distinct form of Christianity to give authority to their brand of intolerance.

¹ Barrett, Stanley R. *Is God A Racist? The Right Wing in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 325.

By examining the racist problem as it has presented itself thusly in Canada, I intend to shed light on how we may utilize the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X to root out and destroy the fallacies of thought and relation that guide white/black, black/white interaction. My focus is specific to these two 'races', to two pioneers of thought and to the one explicit example of intolerance that I have chosen to utilize. As a country that champions multiculturalism, Canada has not experienced racism in the same way that the United States has. However, this does not mean that racism is nonexistent in Canada. In fact, it is just as much an epidemic here as it is for our southern neighbour. Hidden racism is not absent racism, covert intolerance does not equate to a riddance of bigotry. It is my hope that this brief study will serve as a model for further inquiry that will aid in the eradication of destructive modes of being-in-relation to others.

Frantz Fanon could have been speaking about Malcolm X's impact in the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s when he wrote the words: "This revolution is changing humanity. In the revolutionary struggle, the immense, oppressed masses [...] feel that they are a part of life for the first time."² Fanon was referring to the struggle in Algeria, a country within which he lived, practised psychiatry, saw firsthand the horrors of colonialism under French rule and the lengthy attempt to buck that system by the natives. It was in this state of affairs that he realized the true nature of the colonial situation, that it was one which 'standardized' (racial, black/white) relations.³ For Fanon, this standardization was a unique type of dichotomy that existed between white and black, colonizer and colonized.

Fanon had explored the depths of this relationship previously in his volatile work *Black Skin, White Masks*.⁴ However, it was his time in Algeria that led him to see how the unbearably racist human relations that took place within the colonial situation could, potentially, be opposed. He found that armed revolution was the way to buck the obvious colonial structure and renew social structure. Revolution was the chrysalis that allowed for an "inner mutation"⁵ of the colonized, a psychic transformation that made continuation of the colonial situation impossible. It was the attempt to gain physical freedom that acted as a catalyst for the ensuing mental freedom of the colonized and a shocking revelation of the truth.

The truth that was to become obvious to the colonized individual was the truth that *Black Skin, White Masks* had served to unmask. Fanon had later found, through his experience in Algeria, that violent means was the way to the new humanism and "understanding among men"⁶ that he so genuinely craved. However, he had initially hoped, with the publication of *Black Skin, White Masks* that meticulously exposing the root of racist interaction would constitute the driving force behind its destruction. He sought to destroy the sickness that guided black/white interaction. This sickness was

² Fanon, Frantz. *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1959), 1.

³ Fanon, 1959, 1.

⁴ Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (New York: Grove Press, 1952).

⁵ Fanon, 1959, 179.

⁶ Fanon, 1952, 7.

one that sealed the white man in his whiteness and the black man in his blackness.⁷ It was the essence of the standardized dichotomy he sought to repudiate.

This juxtaposition of the white and black races, as Fanon put it, was the cause of a “massive psychoexistential complex”⁸ that infiltrated all social interaction. For the black individual,

“If he is overwhelmed by such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates difficulties for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation.”⁹

The governing power, the white power, responsible for the creation of this condition, cannot be responsible for its eradication. If the colonized want to be cured of their neurosis, they have to do it themselves. This is a sentiment that Malcolm X echoes, as will be shown, but it is also the crux that Fanon’s diagnosis rests upon. The crisis of the black individual is not only that they must be black, but that they must be black in relation to white, fixed in the white gaze, the black self becomes hyper-corporeal-ized. It is a self-awareness that is doubly aware, realizing its embodiedness, struggling to break free of the cage which that realization creates yet fixed there by the system that created it as such –black, not white, not free.

The understanding of self primarily as a body created, for Fanon, a “real dialectic between my body and the world.”¹⁰ This is the dialectic that Malcolm X would work from, expose and set fire to in his speeches spanning the nineteen-fifties and sixties. He would also echo Fanon’s statement of wanting nothing more than to be a (hu)man, drawing on the notion of the black individual as something both hyper-corporeal yet, at the same time, nonexistent. There are many lines that can be drawn to Malcolm as one reads Fanon’s ‘facts’ of blackness. But it is Fanon’s understanding that is of primacy here, because it must be grasped in order to see how Malcolm X furthers Fanon’s final conclusion that violence is the only real means for ultimate catharsis.

It is imperative to recognize that Fanon fears the colonial situation, more specifically, the structurally and socially sustained and backed racist power system will literally destroy blackness. It will not only destroy a real heritage and history of a people, “A feeling of inferiority? No, a feeling of nonexistence,”¹¹ it threatens to exterminate them “Negroes like myself. To my horror, they too reject me. They are almost white. And besides they are about to marry white women. They will have children faintly tinged with brown. Who knows, perhaps little by little...”¹² Fanon sees no other outcome but increasing imprisonment in a white cage and a death sentence, a literal extinction of blackness.

⁷ Fanon, 1952, 9.

⁸ Fanon, 1952, 12.

⁹ Fanon, 1952, 100.

¹⁰ Fanon, 1952, 111.

¹¹ Fanon, 1952, 139.

¹² Fanon, 1952, 116-117.

His struggle against this sentence is a struggle for rationality. He knows he is up against an unreasonable enemy, an irrational system. He refers to the science of the day which states that cannibalism is in his chromosomes.¹³ He is at a loss, his attempts to rationalize the problem and thereby excise it seem futile. He can no longer work within the system for he “walk[s] on white nails.”¹⁴ Every aspect of black/white, white/black society is disfigured and tainted by the racism it practices. His only choice is to reclaim his black history and advocate a violent revolt against society-as-it-is.

The complexity of the problem brings Fanon to one final solution, physical aggression. He notes that this aggression is the natural reaction to being physically *fixed* in the method described previously. This type of aggression will have distinct phases. The first phase is in-group violence: “This is the period when the niggers beat each other up.”¹⁵ The second phase is the revolutionary one. It occurs when the demand to multiply the emancipated increases, when selected individual freedoms are not enough. This is when freedom is found in and through violence. Nonviolent methods are the “sleep cure”¹⁶ of the people; the violence enacted by colonialism can only be ended by the even greater violence of the oppressed. This type of violence is the illuminating violence, a rebelling against any type of pacification, including religion. Violence used in this way, Fanon claimed, would serve to engender self respect, realize political independence and create a new humanity.¹⁷ It would prove the colonizer’s fallibility and lessen their power.

Revolutionary violence undertaken by those suffering under colonization would serve to accomplish what Fanon had attempted and failed to do with *Black Skin, White Masks*. It would expose colonial exploitation for what it was, it would bring the ugly substructures of racism to light. Naturally, leaders would be necessary to determine what kind of violence was politically useful and to utilize its destructive force in such a way that it would sweep away the old order and lay a foundation for the new.¹⁸ This new order, this new history amounted to a decolonization that would bring about a new humanity. It was a holy violence – use of violent means in this way would advance the evolution of humanity. The ideal revolutionary that Fanon had theoretically invoked to helm such a task would appear on the American scene in 1954.

Malcolm X’s life and words have served as symbols that have appealed to many, sometimes conflicting, interpretations and usages. My interest lies in the religious and political outlooks espoused by X before and after his hajj to Mecca. Pre-hajj, Malcolm champions a view similar to Fanon’s, where freedom is to be won *by any means*

¹³ Fanon, 1952, 120.

¹⁴ Fanon, 1952, 126.

¹⁵ Fanon, Frantz, “Concerning Violence” from *The Wretched of the Earth* entire chapter reproduced in Ruth Miller’s (Ed.) *Race Awareness: The Nightmare and the Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 454.

¹⁶ Fanon in Miller, 463

¹⁷ Sonnleitner, Michael W. “Of Logic and Liberation: Frantz Fanon on Terrorism” in *Journal of Black Studies* (Sage Publications: Vol. 17, No.3,) 289

¹⁸ Sonnleitner, 293-294.

necessary.¹⁹ After his trip to Mecca in 1959, Malcolm's views began to change. The change in his thought became solidified in 1963-4 with his 'split' from the Nation of Islam and denunciation by its leader Elijah Muhammad.²⁰ In this tumultuous year before his death, Malcolm never fully discards any of his previous assertions, but they begin to take on a different tone. His evolution of thought begins to pave the way for an evolution of humanity. It is a move from exclusivity to inclusivity, with Islam playing a major role.

Where Frantz Fanon sought to point out how colonial racist structures become complicatedly internalized, Malcolm X attempted to internalize the fight against racism and oppression among all black Americans. Before he moved away from the Nation of Islam, the internalization of the fight meant an adoption of outright radicalism. There was to be no 'turning the other cheek,' no integration, no non-violence for none of these strategies had any effective bearing on the present struggle.²¹ Christianity was hypocritical, why turn the other (black) cheek when no Christian white cheek would turn in reciprocation? Separation was reclamation of segregation that exposed the sham of integration: "It's [society's] already divided on racial lines. [...] All we're saying now is since we're already divided, the least the government can do is let us control the areas where we live. Let the white people control theirs, let us control ours."²² Malcolm would hold onto this sentiment, in varying strengths, up until his assassination. What he wanted to make clear, above all else, was that this was a movement for and by black people.

In a similar vein, Malcolm took it upon himself to "straighten out the black people."²³ This meant making it clear what his message was and who it was for:

"Somebody's got nerve enough, some whites have the audacity, to refer to me as a hate teacher. If I'm teaching someone to hate, I'm teaching them to hate the Ku Klux Klan. But here in America they have taught us to hate ourselves. To hate our skin, to hate our hair, to hate our features, hate our blood, hate what we are. Why, Uncle Sam is a master hate-teacher, so much so that he makes someone think he's teaching law when he's teaching hate. When you've made a man hate himself, you've really got it and gone."²⁴

Even though Malcolm X was not publicly aware of Frantz Fanon's thoughts on race and oppression, he is clearly addressing the same type of hyper-corporeal-ization experience that Fanon earlier clarified. There is immense attention paid to the black body, yet when Malcolm recognizes that difference and attempts to expose and redress it publicly, he is accused of preaching hate. He also parallels Fanon's observation that

¹⁹ X, Malcolm, "Speech at the founding rally for the OAAU" in George Breitman's *By Any Means Necessary: Malcolm X*. (New York: Pathfinder, 1970.) vii. [Collection of transcribed speeches]

²⁰ Perry, Bruce (Ed.) *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*. (New York: Pathfinder, 1989.) 21.

²¹ X, Malcolm, "Interview by A.B. Spellman" in Breitman, 8-9.

²² X, Malcolm, "Militant Labour Forum" in Breitman, 26.

²³ X, "Militant Labour Forum" in Breitman, 32.

²⁴ X, Malcolm, "A Master Hate-Teacher" in Breitman, 181.

this double-bind racism is inherent in the social-regulating structure of the country – governmental law, namely, segregation.

Because of this realization, Malcolm does not believe that any white person can ‘help’ the battle that he is waging. At least, they cannot help by attempting to join. They can help by working within the white community, changing viewpoints and attitudes.²⁵ Malcolm points out that what needs to occur is a removal of all white influence from the movement. In order for the movement to progress, it must, again, be created by only black people and with only their agenda in mind. In turn, this will allow black Americans to begin to rid themselves of the image of themselves that they have been fed, that they have digested.²⁶ In this type of atmosphere, a white hand bent on helping is still coming from a place of destruction and will destroy if permitted to persist.

If the realization by Fanon is recalled here, it is easy to see how Malcolm came to the conclusion that the psyche must be cleansed, must be separated, decolonized, before physical freedom could be gained. This awareness causes Malcolm to believe that there are only two ways to gain freedom, the ballot or the bullet. When he was still largely speaking on behalf of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm indicated that a belief in fair exchange between races extended to and was indicative of the use of violence (the bullet): an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, “a head for a head and a life for a life.”²⁷ It was this type of speech that caused many to believe Malcolm was an advocate of a “bloody race war.”²⁸ On the contrary, Malcolm’s true belief in the necessity of violence vacillated over the years and throughout his many speeches. He is both an advocate of its use and also speaks out against it. However, in the speeches given before his rift with Muhammad, the progression of his thought regarding violence, its evolution and proper ‘place’ also mirrors Fanon’s findings.

For one, Malcolm recognizes that in-group fighting is occurring on a large scale

“You have to have a license [to kill an animal]. But there are only certain seasons that you can kill that animal. But you don’t need a license to kill a Negro and you can shoot one out of season –anytime- and you won’t get any time. By Negroes knowing this, what the white man has done is, set up a psychological situation where the average Negro thinks he can do anything to another Negro and get away with it. And this [...] is what makes Negroes continue to fight and kill each other.”²⁹

Malcolm’s findings mirror Fanon’s with regard to the first phase of violent aggression, that is, it initially turns inward. The inherent violence of the colonial structure is absorbed into the psyche of the colonized in such a way that when it erupts outward, the first place it can go is toward one’s own community, it goes toward one’s own race –the black race.

²⁵ X, “OAAU Founding Rally” in Breitman, 59.

²⁶ X, Malcolm, “Not Just an American Problem” in Perry, 160.

²⁷ X, “America’s Gravest Crisis” in Perry, 68.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ X, Malcolm, “The Old Negro and the New Negro” in Imam Benjamin Karim’s *The End of White World Supremacy, Four Speeches by Malcolm X*. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1971,) 119.

With this statement, Malcolm is also hinting at the idea that one needs ‘a license to kill an animal.’ He is stating that one needs empowerment, has to have authorization to turn that violence out where it belongs, against the violent colonizer –the violent white individual. Malcolm is giving that authorization: “And in the history of this country polite black people have never been successful in bringing about any kind of advantages for black people.”³⁰ He knows that for violence to have a productive rather than destructive effect, it must be utilized against those who have perpetrated the larger act of violence. This is not the same belief Fanon had in the ‘holiness’ of violence, but violence still has a useful place. It must be made clear, Malcolm is not an advocate of a large scale racial war, but he is for being loud, for taking a stand and for utilizing violence when it is called for. Violence against the Klan is one of those instances:

“[He states that Klansmen are cowards and that physical aggression is an effective means of ridding their presence.] We’ve got black people in Mississippi right now who are already ready [to act out against the Klan]. [...] The white man is finding out they’ve authorized it a long time ago. [...] They’re waiting for someone to let them know that it’s all right. [...] And once you make it known that it’s all right to fight to defend yourself, that it’s your right, that you are justified in returning bullet for bullet [...] you won’t even have to go down there. There’s enough of them to do it themselves.”³¹

Malcolm knows that the time is rife for action. He sees that the mental and physical violence perpetrated by the white man has paved the way for the violence to come. Malcolm wanted to put an end to destructive in-violence and turn the aggression where it rightfully belonged. Unlike Fanon, who believed that violence was necessary to change the psychic structure of racism, Malcolm knew that a mental revolution must take place before a physical one could gain any ground. His initial inclination was toward separation of the black race from the white race, by any means necessary, including violent means. But he also wanted the black people of his country to deeply recognize that they were not inferior, to purge the image of inferiority that they had been fed. He sees a change in attitude occurring: “Just yesterday you would have to admit that it was very difficult to get our people to refer to themselves as black. Now all of a sudden our people of all complexions are not apologizing for being black but bragging about being black.”³² He believes that this sentiment is being reflected throughout the Western Hemisphere, a revolution of thought is occurring amongst black people as they begin to identify with an emerging positive image of Africa.³³

Speaking in 1963, Malcolm states:

³⁰ X, “Second OAAU Rally” in Breitman, 100.

³¹ *Ibid*, 100.

³² X, “Black Man’s History” in Karim, 25.

³³ X, “Not Just an American Problem” in Perry, 171.

“We don’t think as Americans anymore, but as a Black man. With the mind of a Black man, we look beyond America. And we look beyond the interests of the white man. The thinking of this new type of Negro is broad. It’s more international.”³⁴

The psychological dependency of the colonized to the colonizer and their methods is being broken. Malcolm has not only recognized that this mass change was under way, he was in many ways responsible for it. Malcolm expertly crafts a group identity of and for black individuals. He crafts this identity by “telling members of a group who or what they are.”³⁵ It is specifically black, but it is not specifically tied to America.

This is partially because, at this point in time, Malcolm still subscribes to and upholds the religious message of Elijah Muhammad, believing that the present era will herald the end of the colonial world as it is known –white, Christian, Western.³⁶ Malcolm’s stance on violence is one of overt self defence (against the Klan, for instance) but covertly one of aggression. He wants the new world order to come about, for it signals the end of the colonial interiorized inferiority complex as well as violence misdirected to self (self hatred) or to black instead of white (black on black violence). Violent thought, words and deeds capable of bringing about the change Malcolm strove for were sacred to him. They were the driving force behind the reclamation of black identity and if that identity found no room for itself in the current society, then it would forcefully create one.

Before leaving the Nation of Islam, this is the view that Malcolm is left with, and that he has given to his followers and those who listen to him speak. He is exposing the same type of societal, structural racism that Fanon laid bare and through bold, loud, perhaps even violent methods, he is attempting to dig out its psychological basis in the black individual and confront those who would hinder this progress. I want to leave Malcolm’s views where they end here, before his trip to Mecca, because that is when they undergo a radical, religiously influenced change that I will clarify later. For now, it is important to see that Malcolm’s only cure for the racism he has exposed is complete separation of the races and virulent self defence, because it is a conclusion that is subverted by the group we will look at next, the Heritage Front.

The racism that has been exposed and described by Fanon and Malcolm is inherent in and never free from power relations. And this is the relationship at the basis of colonizer-colonized, white-black interaction. This form of ‘relationship’ is not nonexistent in Canada, neither is the intrinsic form of racism that this relationship simultaneously exposes and creates. The psychological-social disease of racism is most easily viewed in Canada by zeroing in on one expression of its hardened concentration – the Heritage Front movement.

³⁴ X, “Twenty Million Black People in Prison” in Perry, 45.

³⁵ Kahn, Robert M. “The Political Ideology of Malcolm X” in *Journal of Religious Thought*. (ATLA Serials: 38.02, 2006,) 20.

³⁶ Kahn, 21-22.

Fanon believed that we must “tirelessly look for the repercussions of racism at all levels of sociability.”³⁷ The fact that racism does have repercussions at all levels of society also points to the reality that, while racism can be brutally internalized, “a social group, a country, a civilization, cannot be *unconsciously* racist.”³⁸ The Heritage Front, a fringe-right white supremacist group originally based out of Toronto, Ontario, is an example of Canada’s racism coming to conscious fruition. It serves as a case-in-point, a magnified vision of the disorder of thought that underlies black-white, white-black interaction in this country.

Speaking out after an anti-racist film in France was attacked by Nazi-sympathizers, Frantz Fanon stated that he believed actions like this were not random, spontaneous exhibitions of dissidence. Rather, these demonstrations expressed, on a national scale, the consequences of decades of colonialism. Fanon felt that “for them to exist, for them to take shape, there must have developed a sufficient sedimentation of racism, of superiority complex, of discrimination in this very national conscience.”³⁹ This is the understanding that I will apply in examination of the Heritage Front. This is an understanding that goes against the grain of a deeply held Canadian nationalism rooted in multiculturalism. It is also an attempt to explore a phenomenon that has received very little research – the Canadian fringe right.⁴⁰

Relative public and academic silence on the matter does not indicate that there is nothing to discuss. Instead, it points to a difference in how the matter of racism has been handled on a larger scale in Canada. As Stanley Barrett points out: “What distinguishes Canada from the United States is that violence in the former has tended to be more official than private, which means it has been more masked.”⁴¹ This means that when a fringe right group openly presents their racist beliefs, it is viewed as an isolated incident rather than indicative of a deeper problem. Racism, if we are to follow Barrett’s line of thought, has been even more systematic in Canadian national government than in America. Although the reaction to racism, as I have defined it, in America is more ferocious, it is actually even more so brutally imbedded in the Canadian governmental and social structure. Perhaps this is why there has been no Canadian Malcolm X,⁴² but additionally, it indicates that racism in Canada needs to be examined in a manner similar to that utilized by Fanon and X so that the problem no longer remains neglected and a ‘cure’ may be attempted. For it will be shown, groups like the Heritage Front are not quickly on their way out of Canada.

The incident that pulled the Heritage Front out from the shadows and put them onto the evening news occurred in the fall of 1992. Heritage Front leader Wolfgang

³⁷ Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964,) 36.

³⁸ Fanon, 1964, 37.

³⁹ Fanon, 1964, 166.

⁴⁰ Barrett, 3.

⁴¹ Barrett, 326.

⁴² Rocky Jones is a Canadian minister and the only individual I found passing reference to in this way, but could find no work done on him. It must also be noted that there is a different kind of activist reaction to racism in Canada predicated by various factors but, because of spatial restraints, this factor is left to be explored further at a later time.

Droege staged a protest at Dunbarton High School in Pickering, Ontario in order to show support to students who had been suspended for wearing white pride symbols to school. He attempted to start a debate by questioning why those students who wore white pride symbols were suspended but students who displayed 'black power' slogans or the 'X' symbol (representing Malcolm X) did not receive like punishment.⁴³ This is but one instance that illustrates how the group would attempt to utilize rhetoric similar to Malcolm X's in order to recruit youth, advance their politics and (ironically) justify their brand of racism.

Before I advance the idea proposed in the previous paragraph, some background information on the Heritage Front is necessary. In making reference to them as a 'fringe-right' organization, I mean to demarcate them from the far right. In doing so, I follow Stanley Barrett's explanation that far right groups would be composed of open Nazi-sympathizers who would publicly support a Hitlerian-style program of eradication of all who are not 'Aryan,' while the fringe right would publicly support a more 'docile' defence of a pro-whiteness agenda.⁴⁴ For instance, the Heritage Front has had associations with various Ku Klux Klan orders from the United States. However, these orders represent what is known as the 'new' Klan, "with its members dressed in business suits, and violence and crude 'negative' racism, as opposed to 'positive' racism, relegated to the past."⁴⁵ These groups are less physically violent, relying more on propaganda to spread their message. The difference between negative racism and positive racism is that negative racism would indicate a use of mob violence or public slurs against a certain group, where 'positive' racism focuses on cultivating a 'white pride' image along the same lines as 'black pride.' Of course, this is highly ironic and still remains bigoted, but it is also a 'defendable' type of racism, instead of denouncing black it is upholding white. Arguments made to support this position claim 'free speech' and state that it is white people who are suffering (economically, socially) because of their skin colour.

This is yet another way in which Canada differs from the United States. The white supremacist groups in Canada tend to gravitate toward these 'new-Klan' methods, focussing on what they call 'positive racism.' They avoid outright violent attacks and instead actively try to recruit individuals to their movement. They also promote themselves as legitimate political and academic movements, claiming their right to free speech.⁴⁶ The Heritage Front, as seen in the Dunbarton High School example, largely claims to fight against 'reverse racism,' that is, they believe that whites are the true victims of discrimination in Canada.

The Heritage Front officially formed in 1989 and publicly refers to itself as a "White separatist group dedicated to the maintenance of European traditions and values in our society."⁴⁷ It claims close to two thousand members nationally and mainly seeks to end non-white immigration, claiming that it is responsible for the erosion of the 'inherently

⁴³ "The Nizkor Project" found online at www.nizkor.org/hweb/orgs/canadian/league-for-human-rights/heritage-front/youth-recruitment.html Accessed December 10th, 2007.

⁴⁴ Barrett, 10-12.

⁴⁵ Barrett, 122-123.

⁴⁶ The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, *The Heritage Front Report: 1994*. (Canada: League for Human Rights: 1994,) 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

European nature of Canada' and this is what the group is claiming to 'save' the white race from.⁴⁸ Wolfgang Droege was the initial founder of the group. Hailing from Germany, he was active in a number of white supremacist groups before creating the Front in 1989.⁴⁹

'White separatism' is the group's main political goal and the propaganda that the group sends out stresses this message rather than race war. Their propaganda is targeted mainly to youth –high school and university students, and their favoured method of circulation is to distribute flyers, placing them in library books on the Second World War. The University of Waterloo and downtown Kitchener have been scattered with such leaflets in the past.⁵⁰ Students are targeted because youth are believed to be more easily persuaded. Droege himself was also very interested in getting the group active in political lobbying and younger members would be more interested in forcing the government to include their mandate in its agenda.⁵¹

Droege had many contacts among other, more far-right racist groups and was highly interested and active in attempting to further the white supremacist movement in Canada.⁵² He wanted to advance the links between Western civilization, Christianity and the white 'race.'⁵³ It is somewhat ironic that these links were also made by Malcolm X in a much more negative way, however, this is yet another example of how the Heritage Front utilizes and subverts the rhetoric of Malcolm X in order to try to support a cause that is antipathy to everything Malcolm stood for. The Dunbarton High School incident was merely a reiteration of something the Heritage Front has argued all along: why, if it is okay to support black pride, is supporting white pride anything different and why is it disparaged?

Continually, the Heritage Front supports ideas similar to the suggestion that increased contact among the races will lead to nothing more than heightened racial tension.⁵⁴ It is along these lines that they argue for white separation. Not only do they sustain an idea that is similar, yet subversive, to X's initial plan for black separation, they follow his line of thought with regard to the use of violence as well. Groups like the Heritage Front will not use outright violence as a means of authority or to execute their ideal of white separation, however, they claim the right to 'counter demonstrate' or 'protect' themselves when attacked (that is, when an anti-racist group opposes them).⁵⁵ Avoiding use of targeted physical violence makes their racism more covert and their group more dangerous. Relying on propaganda and positioning, they seem to be spreading truths about racism against whites, touching on issues many can relate to – immigration and employment, for instance.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11/16.

⁵¹ Security Intelligence Review Committee, *The Heritage Front Affair: Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.* (1994,) 5.

⁵² Ibid., 12.

⁵³ Barrett, 5.

⁵⁴ Barrett, 31.

⁵⁵ Barrett, 61.

There are a variety of declamatory statements that the group uses to back up their conviction to white separation. A commonly held belief sounds something like: “The Negroes will always look to the white side and say, gee I wish I could do that or I wish I could drive in that [...] it’s chauvinistic.”⁵⁶ Recall Malcolm’s statement that exposed the root of black self-hatred –that it was the colonizer, the white individual that taught the black individual to hate their hair, their skin, everything about their selves. The comment made about blacks *wishing* for whiteness reveals a deep racism at work in a group that claims to be less about racism and more about reclaiming white pride. If nothing else, the comment shows that these groups have a surplus of ‘pride’ amongst them.

Utilizing rhetoric similar to X’s to give their claims what seems like authority, groups like the Heritage Front attempt to guise their racism under the assertion of practicing a right to something that seems like free speech. However, it is their very use of this type of rhetoric that exposes the racism they are attempting to (politically) distance themselves from. They aim for the appearance of ultra conservatism, but they are unmasked through their vocabulary, which points to the same problems that guide white-black interaction, understanding and power relations that Fanon and Malcolm sought to repudiate.

It is groups like the Heritage Front that serve to “expose the institutional framework alongside which the right wing has flourished”⁵⁷ in Canada. Referring to itself as inherently ‘political,’ white supremacy’s systematic ideology reveals the depth of the problem of racism. This is what Barrett means when he says that official rather than private forms of violence exist within this country. Droege himself had run for Scarborough city council on an anti-immigration ballot and ended up winning fourteen percent of the vote.⁵⁸ This is the way Canadian racism becomes ‘official’ and allows these groups, including the Heritage Front, to continue existing even after the death of their founder.

Droege’s leadership of the Heritage Front expanded its following in the nineties and after his death in 2005⁵⁹ an inquiry was made into the current state of the movement. Bonnie Burstow of the University of Toronto discovered that the Heritage Front can be compared to a phenomenon that has come to be known as the “radical-right groupuscule.”⁶⁰ In brief, a groupuscule is a leaderless, centerless, revolutionary and extremist party that has the ability to thrive under liberal democracy. Burstow found that the Heritage Front exemplified this type of phenomena in Canada and further, that it served as an umbrella group, uniting the radical and fringe right.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Barrett, 135.

⁵⁷ Barrett, 297.

⁵⁸ McDonald, Marci. “The Enemy Within” in *Maclean’s*. (Toronto: May 8, 1995,) 36.

⁵⁹ Friesen, Joe. “White Supremacist Droege Shot to Death in Toronto” in *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto: April 14, 2005,) pA1.

⁶⁰Burstow, Bonnie. “Surviving and Thriving by Becoming More ‘Groupuscular’: the Case of the Heritage Front” in *Patterns of Prejudice*. (Routledge: Vol. 37, No.4, 2003,) 415.

⁶¹ Burstow, 417.

Even though organizations like the Canadian Jewish Congress began to call the Heritage Front defunct in the late nineties, Burstow illustrates how the group did not disappear, but instead what occurred was much more complex. Droege was being arraigned on a number of charges and as a result the Heritage Front began to lose the publicity he brought as the group's most outspoken member. The resilient nature of the groupuscule meant that a loss of centralized leadership did not pose a fatal problem. With Droege going in and out of jail, devoting less time to advancing the Heritage Front, various people began to step forward to increase recruiting and carry on its activities.⁶² What occurred was that the Heritage Front seemed to disappear, but really became more dangerous, creating a website, the Freedom-Site, that is now the virtual home of many radical right and fringe-right groupuscules.⁶³

The reason that less public visibility indicates increasing menace on behalf of the Front is because its operations are now based largely on the internet, allowing for greater connectivity between groups and easier sustainability of the Front itself. In morphing into a groupuscule, rather than a hierarchically-organized association, the Front also strengthens its chances for survival, making this form of racism even harder to exterminate in the manner advocated by Fanon and Malcolm.

They are more dangerous even though they are less (physically) violent. Their danger lies in their ability to make their position seem valid. Claiming free speech, reverse racism and utilizing rhetoric that stresses a need to reclaim a 'lost' white 'identity' increases the number of people in their membership and makes them seem less harmful which ironically makes them even more harmful. These methods make their racism even more insidious, 'ingested' and systematic. Barrett points out that, while crafting his study on the right wing in Canada, the only negative reactions he received were from white academics. He suggests that, perhaps because these individuals had not been the victims of racism themselves they had a 'blind spot' about the anguish of those who had suffered as its targets. He points to their uniform whiteness to argue that he believes their reaction was somehow also informed by racism.⁶⁴ It is because of the structural ways racism is enforced and allowed to exist that it has become even more ingrained in the Canadian psyche. The Heritage Front represents this. They are clandestine, politically and academically minded and this is how they situate their racism. It has taken the guise of and has even become 'another point of view.' This is the face of racism in Canada and it is a symptom of a larger illness within our society as a whole.

The Klan has not disappeared from Canada, it has merely changed its outfit. The B'nai Brith foundation claims that the existence of the Heritage Front represents a "backlash against Canada's move toward multiculturalism,"⁶⁵ rather, I have attempted to show how groups like the Heritage Front are indicative of a larger racism problem that continues to persist in Canada. A major part of the reason the Heritage Front continues to have the influence and staying-power that it does today is because of its theological backing. There is a portion of the groupuscule that is non-Christian, the

⁶² Burstow, 424.

⁶³ Burstow, 425.

⁶⁴ Barrett, 294.

⁶⁵ The League for Human Rights, 14.

'Church of the Creator'⁶⁶ segment, which has its own theology, but there is an even more prominent subdivision that is connected to the 'Christian Identity'⁶⁷ movement.

This special breed of Christian theology feeds into the power structure of groups like the Heritage Front, adding religious credence and authority to their myth of white supremacy. This is the dominant God-is-a-racist theme that Stanley Barrett found amongst all of the right wing groups he studied.⁶⁸ Religious racism offers the adherent of a white supremacist group a deeper, more personal explanation and justification of their beliefs. The flexibility of theological racism allows for the accommodation of all other beliefs that play a significant role in the white supremacist thought system.⁶⁹ For instance, it is necessary to save Western civilization from non-white peoples because it is a *Christian* civilization and thereby has been and should remain a white civilization.

Utilizing Christianity in such a way attempts to document rather than explain the superiority of the white race (and thereby the inferiority of the black race).⁷⁰ Where scientific explanations for race superiority fail is that they can be discredited. Depending on the depth of personal conviction, one's theology cannot be discredited in a similar manner. One member revealed to Barrett that he continuously doubted his involvement in the radical right until he became a member of the Identity Christian movement.⁷¹

The Identity Christian movement has been found to sometimes constitute the only common link between the often fragmented white supremacist groups.⁷² This furthers the idea that a theological foundation to white supremacist beliefs serves to unite members and solidify the movement's survivability. The Identity movement began in 1940 and stresses an anti-government position based on the fear of the elimination of the white race, making it easy to see why members of the Heritage Front would be attracted to such a movement. The doctrine of Identity Christianity stresses that it is white, Anglo-Saxon and Germanic people who are truly God's 'chosen people' and are the only race to "fulfill every detail of Biblical Prophecy and World History concerning Israel."⁷³ Identity Christians believe in a 'literal' interpretation of the Bible meaning that they adhere to an understanding that the end of the world is near, but the final battle is restated in terms of a race war where the white race will come out as ultimate victor. It is a theological message that is copacetic with the political ideology of the Heritage Front, thus adding credence to their stance on white separation.

Identity Christians believe that there is a world conspiracy intent on destroying the white race. This translates into a belief that the goal of each nation's government (American, Canadian) is to control, eliminate or restrict the rights of white people.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Burstow, 422.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Barrett, 327.

⁶⁹ Barrett, 338-9.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Telfair Sharpe, Tanya. "The Identity Christian Movement: Ideology of Domestic Terrorism" in *Journal of Black Studies* (JStor: Vol. 30, no.4, Mar. 2000,) 605.

⁷³ Telfair Sharpe, 607.

⁷⁴ Telfair Sharpe, 609.

This is the crux of the Heritage Front's idea of 'reverse racism' and reflects their anti-immigration policy. A polygenist view of human origin only compounds their stance on anti-immigration. This view holds that humanity has several distinct origins, but that the white 'race' is the only one to have descended from the biblical Adam and Eve. Every other non-white people are believed to have evolved from a pre-Adamic, lower species.⁷⁵ The white race is therefore the only true heir to Western, Christian civilization while all others are lesser imposters conspiring on overthrowing the true successors of the nation. Such a belief is held by the groups that compose the Heritage Front and can easily translate into a sanction for violence.

The type of violence advocated by the Heritage Front, based in theological beliefs, can be seen as a perversion of the positive-destructive violence advocated by Fanon and Malcolm. Fanon believed that violence could be a solution to the problematic social structures created and maintained by colonialism.⁷⁶ In the neo-colonialist, racist thought of the Identity Christian movement, violence is an answer to problematic social structures as well, but they have perverted the original message to serve their own needs. It is a racism that feeds upon the notion that the *white* race is the race that is being oppressed, and violence may be necessary to secure their existence. This type of thinking exists in the Heritage Front and it is an example of the complicated way racist-theological beliefs are persevering in Canada.

The idea that Christianity is a devastating force aimed squarely at black people through mechanisms like those indicated above is not a new one. Malcolm X firmly expressed an antipathy toward Christianity, juxtaposing it as antagonistic to the survival of the Islamic faith. Christianity was a force, for Malcolm, that was, in opposition to Islam, virulently anti-black.⁷⁷ However, Malcolm knew that the Christian church was home to an innumerable amount of black individuals. He therefore made it his mission to preach the truth about Christianity.

While still under the tutelage of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X began to expose the 'truth' about Christianity. The teachings of the Nation of Islam were what allowed him to challenge the Christian church and manifest Islam as a viable religious alternative within the black American community. Malcolm was able to do this by illustrating how Christianity was doctrinally incorrect, in conflict with logic and with the original revelation of Allah (God) - bolstered by the race mythology of Islam.⁷⁸ Malcolm methodically exposed the ethical failings of both white and black Christians, coming to the conclusion that "the Christian world was the white man's heaven [...] and the white man's heaven was most certainly the black man's hell."⁷⁹

Giving a lecture at Michigan State University in 1963, Malcolm stated:

⁷⁵ Telfair Sharpe, 610.

⁷⁶ Perinbam, B. Marie. *Holy Violence, the Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon*. (Washington D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1982.)

⁷⁷ Kahn, 17.

⁷⁸ Decaro Jr., Louis A. *Malcolm and the Cross*. (New York: New York University Press, 1998,) 2/43.

⁷⁹ Decaro, 133.

“[...] The poor so-called Negro doesn't have his own name, doesn't have his own language, his own culture, his own history. [...] He doesn't even have his own mind. And he thinks that he's Black cause God cursed him. He's not Black cause God cursed him. He's Black because – rather he's cursed because he's out of his mind. He has lost his mind. He has a white mind instead of the type of mind that he should have.”⁸⁰

What has afforded this loss of sanity is an indoctrination of the black individual into the erroneous theological constructs of the (white) Christian church. The church is another mechanism by which the white 'race' gains and keeps oppression of those that are black. Christianity is fraudulent because it an erroneous white interpretation of religious history.⁸¹ The true interpretation, the true religion, is Islam.

Islam, as understood by Elijah Muhammad, is God's true religion and it was given to the black race which existed long before the white race. This understanding was preached by Malcolm as 'Yacub's history', and examines passages of the bible literally to demonstrate how the black race has existed since time immemorial, but the white race was only brought into creation by Adam.⁸² It is interesting that the Identity Christian movement uses the same type of understanding to promote white superiority, but the Nation of Islam used this belief to prove how the white race was created through evil genetic experimentation by a man called Yacub.⁸³

Prior to the black man's creation of the white race, black civilization had surpassed the level of knowledge that is expressed in the world today. The white race was literally created to be a weak race, adept at tricking the black people and dividing them against each other.⁸⁴ The white people upheld Christ and Christianity to be the only true religion and this is what has aided in keeping the black people divided and conquered. However, Malcolm states that if the black people are to return to Islam, then oppression will no longer be possible. The means by which to overcome oppression is to disavow the white man's Christianity.

With regard to the Identity Christian movement in the Heritage Front, Malcolm's thought can be seen as entirely right. It is a blatant tampering of theology to suit and bolster a racist ideology, but it is also a powerful and believable message to many. I have attempted to show that beliefs like this are not innocuously held by fringe groups that have no larger impact on Canadian society. Rather, these groups use their theology in a manner that gains more converts to their brand of racism and serves and furthers their political goals. Malcolm's unabashed disavowal of Christianity ignores a variety of issues with regard to the Black Church, but it also points out, truthfully if not painfully, how Christianity is used by (white) people to continue and uphold racism, allowing for its persistence.

⁸⁰ X, "Twenty Million Black People in Prison" in Perry, 33.

⁸¹ X, "Black Man's History" in Karim, 28.

⁸² *Ibid*, 42.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 51.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 58.

Here is how Malcolm became a cultural spokesman, interpreting and theorizing culture in a radical response to white cultural domination.⁸⁵ He is reclaiming a black heritage and past that is separate from the predominating white recollections of history and religion. Before his split from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm championed this new idea of black history and inherent black religion, separate and superior to that of the white race. He believed that the only way for the black people to regain their proper sense of history and culture would be through complete separation from the white race. However, after his trip to Mecca and split from Muhammad, Malcolm's view of Islam and its role in black-white relations becomes much more universal.

Christianity still remains a method of oppression for Malcolm, but it is a religion that oppresses all, not just one race. After his trip to Mecca, Malcolm sees that the Islam practiced there incorporates all races and colours and seemingly has no bias one way or the other.⁸⁶ This recognition provides nothing less than a revolution of thought for Malcolm: "All ate as One, and slept as One. Everything about the pilgrimage atmosphere accented the Oneness of Man under God."⁸⁷ It is during this time that Malcolm reappraises the 'white man.' He begins to understand that the term referred to specific actions and attitudes toward black people and that he does not see this attitude existing among the white men he meets on his journey to Mecca. Rather, he sees an opportunity for universal brotherhood, made possible by Islam, by Allah.⁸⁸

His renewed vision of Islam was a repudiation of the violent means of revolutionary catharsis he had earlier advocated, echoing Fanon. Islam is the universalizing humble spirit that is necessary to cure racism. Because black only exists in opposition to white and Malcolm sees that, in Mecca, 'white' does not really exist, then there is no schematic in Mecca like that in the United States that allows racism to exist. Malcolm concludes: "I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept *in reality* the oneness of man –and cease to measure and hinder and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in color."⁸⁹

The problem was that, upon returning to America, Malcolm was again dealing with a reality that was so strongly defined by racial hierarchy and particularity it became difficult to see how living the ideal of an egalitarian and universalistic Islam could translate.⁹⁰ In Canada, it is easy to see how difficult this message would be to spread to those like the Identity Christians who use similar theological grounds to provide a basis for exclusivity rather than inclusivity. The problem with the theological justification of racism and the view of the Heritage Front is that they are not reclaiming an identity that was forcibly 'lost,' for this identity was never 'taken,' historically, structurally and mentally, in the way Fanon and Malcolm demonstrated for those who are black. Black individuals are faced with the challenge of overcoming a racism that is built into the

⁸⁵ Baldwin, Lewis V. And Amiri YaSin Al-Hadid, *Between Cross and Crescent*. (Tampa: University Press of Florida, 2002,) 9.

⁸⁶ X, Malcolm. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. (Toronto: Random House, 1964,) 323.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 330.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 339-340.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 341.

⁹⁰ Curtis, Edward E. "Why Malcolm Never Developed an Islamic Approach to Civil Rights" in *Religion* (Elsevier Science: 32, 2002,) 241.

structure of the very nation. The colonizer mentality still exists in white supremacist groups and is indicative of a larger problem within society, illustrating that the 'multicultural' state of affairs in Canada is in need of some serious examination.

I have sought to expose, like Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X, the rotting core that must be discarded before healthy human relations between black and white individuals can occur. The institutional nature of racism means that it is a racism inherent in the structures that hold up this society. The most blatant example of this is the Heritage Front. This group has fine-tuned their brand of racism so that their ideology and theology can be subsumed under the guise of 'free speech' and 'free thought.' It is a position that has allowed them to attract and keep members and even enter politics. The belief in the occurrence of 'reverse racism' exists not only within the Heritage Front, it exists within the minds of those (white individuals) who are offended at the prospect of a study on racism in Canada. The benevolence toward or outright lack of a response to groups like the Heritage Front in Canada illustrates that there is 'something more' going on.

Utilizing the realizations of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X, it is easy to see that the Heritage Front is indicative of a larger neurosis within the Canadian social structure. The Heritage Front is the conscious expression of the unspoken fallacies of thought that govern black-white interaction in Canada. These types of groups and fallacies are harder to 'call out' and demand action against in the way Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X did because they are harder to see on a number of levels. Canada's racism lies behind the mask of covert institutionalization that serves to disguise messages of hate. The fact that Canadian society fails to address the Heritage Front not only shows the way in which racism is at work in Canada, it *is* the way racism is at work in Canada. The Heritage Front is not an attack on multiculturalism, it displays the failure of multiculturalism. The Heritage Front is a concentrated example of the problems of thought and interaction that are at work in Canada that need to be exposed in the way Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon did in their respective countries. Their theories apply to Canada's unique situation but their solutions must be modified.

Will outright violence release Canada from, or at least further expose and root out, the inherent violence of racism that is at work in its social structures? It is problematic because there is, so far, no leader to helm or curtail or direct the violence like Malcolm X did. It has been my task in this paper to show, along Fanonian lines, that the problem of racism as it exists in Canada is a serious, complex and complicated one. Malcolm X helps to point out the further, blatant expression of racism by 'whites' (with regard to action and belief) that we have seen at work in the Heritage Front. I believe that Malcolm X was on the right track when he discovered that what was needed to change these structures was a radical revolution in thought regarding race, regarding human interaction. I am not sure what kind of massive institutional change is possible or plausible for addressing the problem of racism in Canadian society. This study has hopefully pointed the way for further discussion and excision of the disease, as I have understood it. In the words of Frantz Fanon, "I believe that the *juxtaposition* of the

white and black races has created a massive psychoexistential complex. I hope by analyzing it to destroy it.”⁹¹

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⁹¹ Fanon, 1952, 12. [Emphasis added]

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