

A MACAT ANALYSIS

FRANTZ FANON'S

# THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH





An Analysis of

**Frantz Fanon's**

---

**The Wretched  
of the Earth**

Riley Quinn



Copyright © 2017 by Macat International Ltd  
24:13 Coda Centre, 189 Munster Road, London SW6 6AW.

Macat International has asserted its right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as the copyright holder of this work.

The print publication is protected by copyright. Prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, distribution or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, permission should be obtained from the publisher or where applicable a license permitting restricted copying in the United Kingdom should be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Barnard's Inn, 86 Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1EN, UK.

The ePublication is protected by copyright and must not be copied, reproduced, transferred, distributed, leased, licensed or publicly performed or used in any way except as specifically permitted in writing by the publishers, as allowed under the terms and conditions under which it was purchased, or as strictly permitted by applicable copyright law. Any unauthorised distribution or use of this text may be a direct infringement of the authors and the publishers' rights and those responsible may be liable in law accordingly.

[www.makat.com](http://www.makat.com)  
[info@makat.com](mailto:info@makat.com)

Cover illustration: Capucine Deslouis

#### *Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.  
Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

ISBN 978-1-912303-74-8 (hardback)  
ISBN 978-1-912128-53-2 (paperback)  
ISBN 978-1-912282-62-3 (e-book)

#### **Notice**

The information in this book is designed to orientate readers of the work under analysis, to elucidate and contextualise its key ideas and themes, and to aid in the development of critical thinking skills. It is not meant to be used, nor should it be used, as a substitute for original thinking or in place of original writing or research. References and notes are provided for informational purposes and their presence does not constitute endorsement of the information or opinions therein. This book is presented solely for educational purposes. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged to provide any scholarly advice. The publisher has made every effort to ensure that this book is accurate and up-to-date, but makes no warranties or representations with regard to the completeness or reliability of the information it contains. The information and the opinions provided herein are not guaranteed or warranted to produce particular results and may not be suitable for students of every ability. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, damage or disruption arising from any errors or omissions, or from the use of this book, including, but not limited to, special, incidental, consequential or other damages caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information contained within.

## CONTENTS

### WAYS IN TO THE TEXT

Who Was Frantz Fanon?	9
What Does <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> Say?	10
Why Does <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> Matter?	11

### SECTION 1: INFLUENCES

Module 1: The Author and the Historical Context	14
Module 2: Academic Context	19
Module 3: The Problem	24
Module 4: The Author's Contribution	29

### SECTION 2: IDEAS

Module 5: Main Ideas	34
Module 6: Secondary Ideas	39
Module 7: Achievement	44
Module 8: Place in the Author's Work	48

### SECTION 3: IMPACT

Module 9: The First Responses	53
Module 10: The Evolving Debate	58
Module 11: Impact and Influence Today	63
Module 12: Where Next?	68

Glossary of Terms	73
People Mentioned in the Text	80
Works Cited	88

## THE MACAT LIBRARY

The Macat Library is a series of unique academic explorations of seminal works in the humanities and social sciences – books and papers that have had a significant and widely recognised impact on their disciplines. It has been created to serve as much more than just a summary of what lies between the covers of a great book. It illuminates and explores the influences on, ideas of, and impact of that book. Our goal is to offer a learning resource that encourages critical thinking and fosters a better, deeper understanding of important ideas.

Each publication is divided into three Sections: Influences, Ideas, and Impact. Each Section has four Modules. These explore every important facet of the work, and the responses to it.

This Section-Module structure makes a Macat Library book easy to use, but it has another important feature. Because each Macat book is written to the same format, it is possible (and encouraged!) to cross-reference multiple Macat books along the same lines of inquiry or research. This allows the reader to open up interesting interdisciplinary pathways.

To further aid your reading, lists of glossary terms and people mentioned are included at the end of this book (these are indicated by an asterisk [\*] throughout) – as well as a list of works cited.

Macat has worked with the University of Cambridge to identify the elements of critical thinking and understand the ways in which six different skills combine to enable effective thinking.

Three allow us to fully understand a problem; three more give us the tools to solve it. Together, these six skills make up the

**PACIER** model of critical thinking. They are:

**ANALYSIS** – understanding how an argument is built

**EVALUATION** – exploring the strengths and weaknesses of an argument

**INTERPRETATION** – understanding issues of meaning

**CREATIVE THINKING** – coming up with new ideas and fresh connections

**PROBLEM-SOLVING** – producing strong solutions

**REASONING** – creating strong arguments

To find out more, visit **WWW.MACAT.COM**.

## CRITICAL THINKING AND *THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH*

**Primary critical thinking skill: REASONING**

**Secondary critical thinking skill: CREATIVE THINKING**

Frantz Fanon is one of the most important figures in the history of what is now known as postcolonial studies – the field that examines the meaning and impacts of European colonialism across the world.

Born in the French colony of Martinique, Fanon worked as a psychiatrist in Algeria, another French colony that saw brutal violence during its revolution against French rule. His experiences power the searing indictment of colonialism that is his final book, 1961's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's account of the physical and psychological violence of colonialism forms the basis of a passionate, closely reasoned call to arms – a call for violent revolution. Incendiary even today, it was more so in its time; the book first during the brutal conflict caused by the Algerian Revolution. Viewed as a profoundly dangerous work by the colonial powers of the world, Fanon's book helped to inspire liberation struggles across the globe.

Though it has flaws, *The Wretched of the Earth* is above all a testament to the power of passionately sustained and closely reasoned argument: Fanon's presentation of his evidence combines with his passion to produce an argument that it is almost impossible not to be swayed by.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE ORIGINAL WORK**

The psychiatrist **Frantz Fanon** was born in 1925 and grew up in Martinique, which was a French colony at the time. His first book, 1952's *Black Skin, White Masks*, was a condemnation of colonial racism that explored the causes and effects of racial prejudice.

As Fanon got older he became increasingly radical, partly because of his involvement in the Algerian War of Independence against France. But he died young, in 1961 aged just 36, from leukemia. It was mainly after his death that his academic contribution was recognized and appreciated.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE ANALYSIS**

**Riley Quinn** holds master's degrees in politics and international relations from both LSE and the University of Oxford.

## **ABOUT MACAT**

### **GREAT WORKS FOR CRITICAL THINKING**

Macat is focused on making the ideas of the world's great thinkers accessible and comprehensible to everybody, everywhere, in ways that promote the development of enhanced critical thinking skills.

It works with leading academics from the world's top universities to produce new analyses that focus on the ideas and the impact of the most influential works ever written across a wide variety of academic disciplines. Each of the works that sit at the heart of its growing library is an enduring example of great thinking. But by setting them in context – and looking at the influences that shaped their authors, as well as the responses they provoked – Macat encourages readers to look at these classics and game-changers with fresh eyes. Readers learn to think, engage and challenge their ideas, rather than simply accepting them.

‘Macat offers an amazing first-of-its-kind tool for interdisciplinary learning and research. Its focus on works that transformed their disciplines and its rigorous approach, drawing on the world’s leading experts and educational institutions, opens up a world-class education to anyone.’

**Andreas Schleicher**  
**Director for Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic**  
**Co-operation and Development**

‘Macat is taking on some of the major challenges in university education ... They have drawn together a strong team of active academics who are producing teaching materials that are novel in the breadth of their approach.’

**Prof Lord Broers,**  
**former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge**

‘The Macat vision is exceptionally exciting. It focuses upon new modes of learning which analyse and explain seminal texts which have profoundly influenced world thinking and so social and economic development. It promotes the kind of critical thinking which is essential for any society and economy.

This is the learning of the future.’

**Rt Hon Charles Clarke, former UK Secretary of State for Education**

‘The Macat analyses provide immediate access to the critical conversation surrounding the books that have shaped their respective discipline, which will make them an invaluable resource to all of those, students and teachers, working in the field.’

**Professor William Tronzo, University of California at San Diego**





# Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# WAYS IN TO THE TEXT

---

## KEY POINTS

- Frantz Fanon was an influential theorist and writer born in the French colony of Martinique in 1925.
- His personal experiences of racism and colonialism\* (the political domination and exploitation of one nation by another) directly affected his work as a writer and thinker.
- His 1961 book *The Wretched of the Earth* analyses the effects of colonialism on the colonized and sets down a powerful argument for the violent overthrow of colonial regimes by their victims.

## Who Was Frantz Fanon?

Frantz Fanon, the author of *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), was born in 1925 in Martinique, an island in the Caribbean and, from 1635, a colony of France. Fanon's family was middle class. His father was a civil servant and his mother owned a shop. His belief in liberty drove him to enlist in the Free French army, a force composed of volunteers and troops outside the borders of occupied France, formed to fight Nazi\* Germany and its allies in World War II\* (1939–45). Fanon's experiences in the French military exposed him to real racism. He no longer thought of himself as Martiniquais (a Martinique national), but as a black man, who faced abuse himself and saw it perpetrated on others. Fanon went home to Martinique after the war, but soon