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THE SO-CALLED DEPENDENCY COMPLEX OF COLONIZED PEOPLES

In the whole world no poor devil is lynched, no wretch is tortured, in whom I too am not degraded and murdered.

—Aimé Césaire, *Et les chiens se taisent*

When I embarked on this study, only a few essays by Mannoni, published in a magazine called *Psyché*, were available to me. I was thinking of writing to M. Mannoni to ask about the conclusions to which his investigations had led him. Later I learned that he had gathered his reflections in a forthcoming book. It has now been published: *Prospero and Caliban: Psychology of Colonization*. Let us examine it.

Before going into details, I should like to say that its analytic thought is honest. Having lived under the extreme ambivalence inherent in the colonial situation, M. Mannoni has managed to achieve a grasp—unfortunately too exhaustive—of the psychological phenomena that govern the relations between the colonized and the colonizer.

The basic characteristic of current psychological research seems to be the achievement of a certain exhaustiveness. But one should not lose sight of the real.

I propose to show that, although he has devoted 225 pages to the study of the colonial situation, M. Mannoni has not understood its real coordinates.

When one approaches a problem as important as that of taking inventory of the possibilities for understanding between two different peoples, one should be doubly careful.

Mr. Mannoni deserves our thanks for having introduced into the procedure two elements whose importance can never again escape anyone.

A quick analysis had seemed to avoid subjectivity in this field. M. Mannoni's study is sincere in purpose, for it proposes to prove the impossibility of explaining man outside the limits of his capacity for accepting or denying a given situation. Thus the problem of colonialism includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes toward these conditions.

Similarly, I can subscribe to that part of M. Mannoni's work that tends to present the pathology of the conflict—that is, to show that the white colonial is motivated only by his desire to put an end to a feeling of unsatisfaction, on the level of Adlerian overcompensation.

At the same time, I find myself opposing him when I read a sentence like this: "The fact that when an *adult* Malagasy is isolated in a different environment he can become susceptible to the classical type of inferiority complex proves almost beyond doubt that the germ of the complex was latent in him from childhood."¹

In reading this one feels something turn upside down, and the author's "objectivity" threatens to lead one into error.

Nevertheless, I have tried zealously to retrace his line of orientation, the fundamental theme of his book: "The central idea is that the confrontation of 'civilized' and 'primitive' men creates a special situation—the colonial situation—and brings about the *emergence* of a mass of illusions and misunderstandings that only a psychological analysis can place and define."²

Now, since this is M. Mannoni's point of departure, why does he try to make the inferiority complex something that antedates colonization? Here one perceives the mechanism of explanation that, in psychiatry, would give us this: There are latent forms of psychosis that become overt as the result of a traumatic experience.

1. [Dominique] O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (New York, Praeger, 1964), p. 40.

2. My italics—F.F.

Or, in somatic medicine, this: The appearance of varicose veins in a patient does not arise out of his being compelled to spend ten hours a day on his feet, but rather out of the constitutional weakness of his vein walls; his working conditions are only a complicating factor. And the insurance compensation expert to whom the case is submitted will find the responsibility of the employer extremely limited.

Before taking up M. Mannoni's conclusions in detail, I should like to make my position clear. Once and for all I will state this principle: A given society is racist or it is not. Until all the evidence is available, a great number of problems will have to be put aside. Statements, for example, that the north of France is more racist than the south, that racism is the work of underlings and hence in no way involves the ruling class, that France is one of the least racist countries in the world are the product of men incapable of straight thinking.

In order to show us that racism does not reflect an economic situation, M. Mannoni reminds us that "in South Africa the white labourers are quite as racist as the employers and managers and very often a good deal more so."³

I hope I may be forgiven for asking that those who take it on themselves to describe colonialism remember one thing: that it is utopian to try to ascertain in what ways one kind of inhuman behavior differs from another kind of inhuman behavior. I have no desire to add to the problems of the world, but I should simply like to ask M. Mannoni whether he does not think that for a Jew the differences between the anti-Semitism of Maurras and that of Goebbels are imperceptible.

After a presentation of *The Respectful Prostitute* in North Africa, a general remarked to Sartre: "It would be a good thing if your play could be put on in black Africa. It shows how much happier the black man is on French soil than his fellow Negroes are in America."

I sincerely believe that a subjective experience can be understood by others; and it would give me no pleasure to announce that the

3. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

black problem is my problem and mine alone and that it is up to me to study it. But it does seem to me that M. Mannoni has not tried to feel himself into the despair of the man of color confronting the white man. In this work I have made it a point to convey the misery of the black man. Physically and affectively. I have not wished to be objective. Besides, that would be dishonest: It is not possible for me to be objective.

Is there in truth any difference between one racism and another? Do not all of them show the same collapse, the same bankruptcy of man?

M. Mannoni believes that the contempt of the poor whites of South Africa for the Negro has nothing to do with economic factors. Aside from the fact that this attitude can be understood through the analogy of the anti-Semitic mentality—“Thus I would call anti-Semitism a poor man’s snobbery. And in fact it would appear that the rich for the most part *exploit*⁴ this passion for their own uses rather than abandon themselves to it—they have better things to do. It is propagated mainly among middle classes, because they possess neither land nor house nor castle. . . . By treating the Jew as an inferior and pernicious being, I affirm at the same time that I belong to the elite.”⁵—We could point out to M. Mannoni that the displacement of the white proletariat’s aggression on to the black proletariat is fundamentally a result of the economic structure of South Africa.

What is South Africa? A boiler into which thirteen million blacks are clubbed and penned in by two and a half million whites. If the poor whites hate the Negroes, it is not, as M. Mannoni would have us believe, because “racialism is the work of petty officials, small traders, and colonials who have toiled much without great success.”⁶ No; it is because the structure of South Africa is a racist structure:

Negrophilism and *philanthropy* are pejoratives in South Africa . . . what is proposed is the separation of the natives from the Europeans, territorially,

4. My italics—F.F.

5. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York, Grove Press, 1960), pp. 26–27. Originally, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris, Morihien, 1946).

6. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

economically, and on the political level, allowing the blacks to build their own civilization under the guidance and the authority of the whites, but with a minimum of contact between the races. It is understood that territorial reservations would be set up for the blacks and that most of them would have to live there.

. . . Economic competition would be eliminated and the groundwork would be laid *for the rehabilitation of the "poor whites" who constitute 50 per cent of the European population.* . . .

It is no exaggeration to say that the majority of South Africans feel an almost physical revulsion against anything that puts a native or a person of color on their level.⁷

To conclude our consideration of M. Mannoni's thesis, let us remember that "economic exclusion results from, among other things, the fear of competition and the desire both to protect the poor-white class that forms half the European population and to prevent it from sinking any lower."

M. Mannoni adds: "Colonial exploitation is not the same as other forms of exploitation, and colonial racialism is different from other kinds of racialism. . . ."⁸ He speaks of phenomenology, of psychoanalysis, of human brotherhood, but we should be happier if these terms had taken on a more concrete quality for him. All forms of exploitation resemble one another. They all seek the source of their necessity in some edict of a Biblical nature. All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same "object": man. When one tries to examine the structure of this or that form of exploitation from an abstract point of view, one simply turns one's back on the major, basic problem, which is that of restoring man to his proper place.

Colonial racism is no different from any other racism. Anti-Semitism hits me head-on: I am enraged, I am bled white by an appalling battle, I am deprived of the possibility of being a man. I cannot disassociate myself from the future that is proposed for my

7. R. P. Oswin, Magrath of the Dominican Monastery of St. Nicholas, Stellenbosch, Republic of South Africa, *L'homme de couleur*, p. 140. My italics—F.F.

8. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

brother. Every one of my acts commits me as a man. Every one of my silences, every one of my cowardices reveals me as a man.⁹

I feel that I can still hear Césaire:

When I turn on my radio, when I hear that Negroes have been lynched in America, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when I turn on my radio, when I learn that Jews have been insulted, mistreated, persecuted, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when, finally, I turn on my radio and hear that in Africa forced labor has been inaugurated and legalized, I say that we have certainly been lied to: Hitler is not dead!¹⁰

Yes, European civilization and its best representatives are responsible for colonial racism¹¹; and I come back once more to Césaire:

9. When I wrote this I had in mind Jaspers' concept of metaphysical guilt:

There exists among men, because they are men, a solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world, and especially for crimes that are committed in his presence or of which he cannot be ignorant. If I do not do whatever I can to prevent them, I am an accomplice in them. If I have not risked my life in order to prevent the murder of other men, if I have stood silent, I feel guilty in a sense that cannot in any adequate fashion be understood juridically, or politically, or morally. . . . That I am still alive after such things have been done weighs on me as a guilt that cannot be expiated.

Somewhere in the heart of human relations an absolute command imposes itself: In case of criminal attack or of living conditions that threaten physical being, accept life only for all together, otherwise not at all. (Karl Jaspers, *La culpabilité allemande*, Jeanne Hersch's French translation, pp. 60–61.)

Jaspers declares that this obligation stems from God. It is easy to see that God has no business here. Unless one chooses not to state the obligation as the explicit human reality of feeling oneself responsible for one's fellow man. Responsible in the sense that the least of my actions involves all mankind. Every action is an answer or a question. Perhaps both. When I express a specific manner in which my being can rise above itself, I am affirming the worth of my action for others. Conversely, the passivity that is to be seen in troubled periods of history is to be interpreted as a default on that obligation. Jung, in *Aspects du drame contemporain*, says that, confronted by an Asiatic or a Hindu, every European has equally to answer for the crimes perpetrated by Nazi savagery. Another writer, Mme. Maryse Choisy, in *L'Anneau de Polycrate*, was able to describe the guilt of those who remained "neutral" during the occupation of France. In a confused way they felt that they were responsible for all the deaths and all the Buchenwalds.

10. Quoted from memory—*Discours politiques* of the election campaign of 1945, Fort-de-France.
11. "European civilization and its best representatives are not, for instance, responsible for colonial racialism; that is the work of petty officials, small traders, and colonials who have toiled much without great success" (Mannoni, p. 24).

And then, one lovely day, the middle class is brought up short by a staggering blow: The Gestapos are busy again, the prisons are filling up, the torturers are once more inventing, perfecting, consulting over their workbenches.

People are astounded, they are angry. They say: "How strange that is. But then it is only Nazism, it won't last." And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves: It is savagery, the supreme savagery, it crowns, it epitomizes the day-to-day savageries; yes, it is Nazism, but before they became its victims, they were its accomplices; that Nazism they tolerated before they succumbed to it, they exonerated it, they closed their eyes to it, they legitimated it because until then it had been employed only against non-European peoples; that Nazism they encouraged, they were responsible for it, and it drips, it seeps, it wells from every crack in western Christian civilization until it engulfs that civilization in a bloody sea.¹²

Whenever I see an Arab with his hunted look, suspicious, on the run, wrapped in those long ragged robes that seem to have been created especially for him, I say to myself, "M. Mannoni was wrong." Many times I have been stopped in broad daylight by policemen who mistook me for an Arab; when they discovered my origins, they were obsequious in their apologies; "Of course we know that a Martinican is quite different from an Arab." I always protested violently, but I was always told, "You don't know them." Indeed, M. Mannoni, you are wrong. For what is the meaning of this sentence: "European civilization and its best representatives are not responsible for colonial racialism"? What does it mean except that colonialism is the business of adventurers and politicians, the "best representatives" remaining well above the battle? But, Francis Jeanson says, every citizen of a nation is responsible for the actions committed in the name of that nation:

Day after day, that system elaborates its evil projects in your presence, day after day its leaders betray you, pursuing, in the name of France, a policy as foreign as possible not only to your real interests but also to your deepest needs. . . . You pride yourselves on keeping your distance from realities of a certain kind: so you allow a free hand to those who are immune to the most

12. Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme* (Paris, Présence Africaine, 1956), pp. 14–15.

unhealthy climates because they create these climates themselves through their own conduct. And if, apparently, you succeed in keeping yourselves unsullied, it is because others dirty themselves in your place. You *hire thugs*, and, balancing the accounts, it is you who are the real criminals: for without you, without your blind indifference, such men could never carry out deeds that damn you as much as they shame those men.¹³

I said just above that South Africa has a racist structure. Now I shall go farther and say that Europe has a racist structure. It is plain to see that M. Mannoni has no interest in this problem, for he says, “France is unquestionably one of the least racist-minded countries in the world.”¹⁴ Be glad that you are French, my fine Negro friends, even if it is a little hard, for your counterparts in America are much worse off than you. . . . France is a racist country, for the myth of the bad nigger is part of the collective unconscious. We shall demonstrate this presently (Chapter Six).

But let us proceed with M. Mannoni: “In practice, therefore, an inferiority complex connected with the colour of the skin is found only among those who form a minority within a group of another colour. In a fairly homogeneous community like that of the Malagasies, where the social framework is still fairly strong, an inferiority complex occurs only in very exceptional cases.”¹⁵

Once again one asks the author to be somewhat more careful. A white man in a colony has never felt inferior in any respect; as M. Mannoni expresses it so well, “He will be deified or devoured.” The colonial, even though he is “in the minority,” does not feel that this makes him inferior. In Martinique there are two hundred whites who consider themselves superior to 300,000 people of color. In South Africa there are two million whites against almost thirteen million native people, and it has never occurred to a single black to consider himself superior to a member of the white minority.

While the discoveries of Adler and the no less interesting findings of Kuenkel explain certain kinds of neurotic behavior, one

13. Francis Jeanson, “Cette Algérie conquise et pacifiée . . .,” in *Esprit*, April, 1950, p. 624.

14. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

cannot infer from them laws that would apply to immeasurably complex problems. The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior.*

This conclusion brings us back to Sartre: "The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew: that is the simple truth from which we must start. . . . It is the anti-Semite who *makes* the Jew."¹⁶

What becomes of the exceptional cases of which M. Mannoni tells us? Quite simply, they are the instances in which the educated Negro suddenly discovers that he is rejected by a civilization which he has none the less assimilated. So that the conclusion would come to this: To the extent to which M. Mannoni's real typical Malagasy takes on "dependent behavior," all is for the best; if, however, he forgets his place, if he takes it into his head to be the equal of the European, then the said European is indignant and casts out the upstart—who, in such circumstance, in this "exceptional case," pays for his own rejection of dependence with an inferiority complex.

Earlier, we uncovered in certain of M. Mannoni's statements a mistake that is at the very least dangerous. In effect, he leaves the Malagasy no choice save between inferiority and dependence. These two solutions excepted, there is no salvation. "When he [the Malagasy] has succeeded in forming such relations [of dependence] with his superiors, his inferiority no longer troubles him: everything is all right. When he fails to establish them, when his feeling of insecurity is not assuaged in this way, he suffers a crisis."¹⁷

The primary concern of M. Mannoni was to criticize the methods hitherto employed by the various ethnographers who had turned their attention to primitive peoples. But we see the criticism that must be made of his own work.

After having sealed the Malagasy into his own customs, after having evolved a unilateral analysis of his view of the world, after having described the Malagasy within a closed circle, after

16. Sartre, *Anti-Semite*, p. 69.

17. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.

having noted that the Malagasy has a dependency relation toward his ancestors—a strong tribal characteristic—M. Mannoni, in defiance of all objectivity, applies his conclusions to a bilateral totality—deliberately ignoring the fact that, since Galliéni,¹⁸ the Malagasy has ceased to exist.

What we wanted from M. Mannoni was an explanation of the colonial situation. He notably overlooked providing it. Nothing has been lost, nothing has been gained, we agree. Parodying Hegel, Georges Balandier said of the dynamics of the personality, in an essay¹⁹ devoted to Kardiner and Linton: “The last of its stages is the result of all its preceding stages and should contain all their elements.” It is whimsical, but it is the principle that guides many scholars. The reactions and the behavior patterns to which the arrival of the European in Madagascar gave rise were not tacked on to a pre-existing set. There was no addition to the earlier psychic whole. If, for instance, Martians undertook to colonize the earth men—not to initiate them into Martian culture but to *colonize* them—we should be doubtful of the persistence of any earth personality. Kardiner changed many opinions when he wrote: “To teach Christianity to the people of Alor would be a quixotic undertaking. . . . [It] would make no sense inasmuch as one would be dealing with personalities built out of elements that are in complete disaccord with Christian doctrine: It would certainly be starting out at the wrong end.”²⁰ And if Negroes are impervious to the teachings of Christ, this is not at all because they are incapable of assimilating them. To understand something new requires that we make ourselves ready for it, that we prepare ourselves for it; it entails the shaping of a new form. It is Utopian to expect the Negro or the Arab to

18. General Joseph-Simon Galliéni, “the hero of the Marne,” played a major part in French colonial expansion. After his conquests in Africa and his service on Martinique, he was appointed resident-general of Madagascar in 1896, when it was made a French colony, and he later became governor-general. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (fourteenth edition), “He completed the subjugation of the island, which was in revolt against the French. . . . His policy was directed to the development of the economic resources of the island and was conciliatory toward the non-French *European* population.” (Translator’s note.)

19. “Où l’ethnologie retrouve l’unité de l’homme,” in *Esprit*, April, 1950.

20. Quoted by Georges Balandier, *ibid.*, p. 610.

exert the effort of embedding abstract values into his outlook on the world when he has barely enough food to keep alive. To ask a Negro of the Upper Niger to wear shoes, to say of him that he will never be a Schubert, is no less ridiculous than to be surprised that a worker in the Berliet truck factory does not spend his evenings studying lyricism in Hindu literature or to say that he will never be an Einstein.

Actually, in the absolute sense, nothing stands in the way of such things. Nothing—except that the people in question lack the opportunities.

But they do not complain! Here is the proof:

At the hour before dawn, on the far side of my father and my mother, the whole hut cracking and blistered, like a sinner punished with boils, and the weather-worn roof patched here and there with pieces of gasoline tins, and this leaves bogs of rust in the dirty gray stinking mud that holds the straw together, and, when the wind blows, all this patchwork makes strange sounds, first like something sizzling in a frying pan and then like a flaming board hurled into water in a shower of flying sparks. And the bed of planks from which my race has risen, all my race from this bed of planks on its feet of kerosene cases, as if the old bed had elephantiasis, covered with a goat skin, and its dried banana leaves and its rags, the ghost of a mattress that is my grandmother's bed (above the bed in a pot full of oil a candle-end whose flame looks like a fat turnip, and on the side of the pot, in letters of gold: MERCI).²¹

Wretchedly,

this attitude, this behavior, this shackled life caught in the noose of shame and disaster rebels, hates itself, struggles, howls, and, my God, others ask: "What can you do about it?"

"Start something!"

"Start what?"

"The only thing in the world that's worth the effort of starting: The end of the world, by God!"²²

21. Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris, Présence Africaine, 1956), p. 56.

22. *Ibid.*

What M. Mannoni has forgotten is that the Malagasy alone no longer exists; he has forgotten that the Malagasy exists *with the European*. The arrival of the white man in Madagascar shattered not only its horizons but its psychological mechanisms. As everyone has pointed out, alterity for the black man is not the black but the white man. An island like Madagascar, invaded overnight by “pioneers of civilization,” even if those pioneers conducted themselves as well as they knew how, suffered the loss of its basic structure. M. Mannoni himself, furthermore, says as much: “The petty kings were all very anxious to get possession of a white man.”²³ Explain that as one may in terms of magical-totemic patterns, of a need for contact with an awesome God, of its proof of a system of dependency, the fact still remains that something new had come into being on that island and that it had to be reckoned with—otherwise the analysis is condemned to falsehood, to absurdity, to nullity. A new element having been introduced, it became mandatory to seek to understand the new relationships.

The landing of the white man on Madagascar inflicted injury without measure. The consequences of that irruption of Europeans onto Madagascar were not psychological alone, since, as every authority has observed, there are inner relationships between consciousness and the social context.

And the economic consequences? Why, colonization itself must be brought to trial!

Let us go on with our study.

In other words, the Malagasy can bear not being a white man; what hurts him cruelly is to have discovered first (by identification) that he is a man and *later* that men are divided into whites and blacks. If the “abandoned” or “betrayed” Malagasy continues his identification, he becomes clamorous; he begins to demand *equality* in a way he had never before found necessary. The equality he seeks would have been beneficial before he started asking for it, but afterwards it proves inadequate to remedy his ills—for every increase in equality makes the remaining differences seem the more intolerable, for they suddenly appear agonizingly irremovable. This is the

23. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

road along which [the Malagasy] passes from psychological dependence to psychological inferiority.²⁴

Here again we encounter the same misapprehension. It is of course obvious that the Malagasy can perfectly well tolerate the fact of not being a white man. A Malagasy is a Malagasy; or, rather, no, not he *is* a Malagasy but, rather, in an absolute sense he “lives” his Malagasyhood. If he is a Malagasy, it is because the white man has come, and if at a certain stage he has been led to ask himself whether he is indeed a man, it is because his reality as a man has been challenged. In other words, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world, “that I am a brute beast, that my people and I are like a walking dung-heap that disgustingly fertilizes sweet sugar cane and silky cotton, that I have no use in the world.”²⁵ Then I will quite simply try to make myself white: that is, I will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human. But, M. Mannoni will counter, you cannot do it, because in your depths there is a dependency complex.

“Not all peoples can be colonized; only those who experience this need [for dependency].” And, a little later: “Wherever Europeans have founded colonies of the type we are considering, it can safely be said that their coming was unconsciously expected—even desired—by the future subject peoples. Everywhere there existed legends foretelling the arrival of strangers from the sea, bearing wondrous gifts with them.”²⁶ It becomes obvious that the white man acts in obedience to an authority complex, a leadership complex, while the Malagasy obeys a dependency complex. Everyone is satisfied.

When the question arises of understanding why the European, the foreigner, was called *vazaha*, which means *honorable stranger*;

24. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

25. Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour*.

26. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–86.

when it is a matter of understanding why shipwrecked Europeans were welcomed with open arms; why the European, the foreigner, was never thought of as an enemy, instead of explaining these things in terms of humanity, of good will, of courtesy, basic characteristics of what Césaire calls “the old courtly civilizations,” scholars tell us that it happened quite simply because, inscribed in “fateful hieroglyphics”—specifically, the unconscious—there exists something that makes the white man the awaited master. Yes, the unconscious—we have got to that. But one must not extrapolate. A Negro tells me his dream: “I had been walking for a long time, I was extremely exhausted, I had the impression that something was waiting for me, I climbed barricades and walls, I came into an empty hall, and from behind a door I heard noise. I hesitated before I went in, but finally I made up my mind and opened the door. In this second room there were white men, and I found that I too was white.” When I try to understand this dream, to analyze it, knowing that my friend has had problems in his career, I conclude that this dream fulfills an unconscious wish. But when, outside my psychoanalytic office, I have to incorporate my conclusions into the context of the world, I will assert:

1. My patient is suffering from an inferiority complex. His psychic structure is in danger of disintegration. What has to be done is to save him from this and, little by little, to rid him of this unconscious desire.

2. If he is overwhelmed to 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.

What emerges then is the need for combined action on the individual and on the group. As a psychoanalyst, I should help my patient to become *conscious* of his unconscious and abandon his attempts at a hallucinatory whitening, but also to act in the direction of a change in the social structure.

In other words, the black man should no longer be confronted by the dilemma, *turn white or disappear*; but he should be able to take cognizance of a possibility of existence. In still other words, if society makes difficulties for him because of his color, if in his dreams I establish the expression of an unconscious desire to change color, my objective will not be that of dissuading him from it by advising him to “keep his place”; on the contrary, my objective, once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, will be to put him in a position to *choose* action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict—that is, toward the social structures.

Conscientious in his desire to examine the problem from every angle, M. Mannoni has not overlooked the investigation of the unconscious of the Malagasy. To this end he analyzes seven dreams: seven narratives that open the unconscious to us, and in six of them we find a dominant theme of terror. Six children and an adult tell us their dreams, and we see them trembling, seeking flight, unhappy.

The cook's dream. “I was being chased by an angry *black*²⁷ bull. Terrified, I climbed up into a tree and stayed there till the danger was past. I came down again, trembling all over.” . . .

Dream of a thirteen-year-old boy, Rahevi. “While going for a walk in the woods, I met two *black*²⁸ men. ‘Oh,’ I thought, ‘I am done for!’ I tried to run away but couldn’t. They barred my way and began jabbering in a strange tongue. I thought they were saying, ‘We’ll show you what death is.’ I shivered with fright and begged, ‘Please, Sirs, let me go, I’m so frightened.’ One of them understood French but in spite of that they said, ‘We are going to take you to our chief.’ As we set off they made me go in front and they showed me their rifles. I was more frightened than ever, but before reaching their camp we had to cross a river. I dived deep into the water and thanks to my presence of mind found a rocky cave where I hid. When the two men had gone I ran back to my parents’ house.” . . .

Josette's dream. The dreamer, a young girl, got lost and sat down on a fallen tree-trunk. A woman in a white dress told her that she was in the

27. My italics—F.F.

28. My italics—F.F.

midst of a band of robbers. The account goes on: " 'I am a schoolgirl,' I said, trembling, 'and I lost my way here when I was going home from school,' and she replied: 'Follow this path, child, and you will find your way home.'" . . .

Dream of a fourteen-year-old boy, Razafi. He is being chased by (Senegalese) soldiers who "make a noise like galloping horses as they run," and "show their rifles in front of them." The dreamer escapes by becoming invisible; he climbs a stairway and finds the door of his home. . . .

Dream of Elphine, a girl of thirteen or fourteen. "I dreamed that a fierce black²⁹ ox was chasing me. He was big and strong. On his head, which was almost mottled (*sic*) with white he had two long horns with sharp points. 'Oh how dreadful,' I thought. The path was getting narrower. What should I do? I perched myself in a mango tree, but the ox rent its trunk. Alas, I fell among the bushes. Then he pressed his horns into me; my stomach fell out and he devoured it." . . .

Raza's dream. In his dream the boy heard someone say at school that the Senegalese were coming. "I went out of the school yard to see." The Senegalese were indeed coming. He ran home. "But our house had been dispersed by them too." . . .

Dream of a fourteen-year-old boy, Si. "I was walking in the garden and felt something like a shadow behind me. All around me the leaves were rustling and falling off, as if a robber was in hiding among them, waiting to catch me. Wherever I walked, up and down the alleys, the shadow still followed me. Suddenly I got frightened and started running, but the shadow took great strides and stretched out his huge hand to take hold of my clothes. I felt my shirt tearing, and screamed. My father jumped out of bed when he heard me scream and came over to look at me, but the big shadow?³⁰ had disappeared and I was no longer afraid."³¹

Some ten years ago I was astonished to learn that the North Africans despised men of color. It was absolutely impossible for me to make any contact with the local population. I left Africa and went back to France without having fathomed the reason for this hostility. Meanwhile, certain facts had made me think. The Frenchman does not like the Jew, who does not like the Arab, who does not like the Negro. . . . The Arab is told: "If you are

29. My italics—F.F.

30. My italics—F.F.

31. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–92.

poor, it is because the Jew has bled you and taken everything from you.” The Jew is told: “You are not of the same class as the Arab because you are really white and because you have Einstein and Bergson.” The Negro is told: “You are the best soldiers in the French Empire; the Arabs think they are better than you, but they are wrong.” But that is not true; the Negro is told nothing because no one has anything to tell him, the Senegalese trooper is a trooper, the-good-soldier-under-command, the brave fellow-who-only-knows-how-to-obey.

“You no come in.”

“Why not?”

“Me not know. You no come in.”

Unable to stand up to all the demands, the white man sloughs off his responsibilities. I have a name for this procedure: the racial distribution of guilt.

I have remarked that certain things surprised me. Whenever there has been any attempt at insurrection, the military authorities have ordered only colored soldiers into action. They were “men of color” who nullified the liberation efforts of other “men of color,” proof that there was no reason to universalize the procedure: If those good-for-nothings, the Arabs, took it into their heads to revolt, it was not in the name of any acceptable principle but purely and simply in order to get rid of their “*bicot*” unconscious.

From the African point of view, a colored student said at the 25th Congress of Catholic Students during its discussion of Madagascar, “I wish to protest against the dispatch of Senegalese troops there and the misuse that is being made of them.” We know from other sources that one of the torturers in the Tananarive police headquarters was a Senegalese. Therefore, since we know all this, since we know what the archetype of the Senegalese can represent for the Malagasy, the discoveries of Freud are of no use to us here. What must be done is to restore this dream *to its proper time*, and this time is the period during which eighty thousand natives were killed—that is to say, one of every fifty persons in the population; and *to its proper place*, and this place is an island of four million people, at the center of which no real relationship can be established, where dissension breaks out in every direction,

where the only masters are lies and demagogy.³² One must concede that in some circumstances the *socius* is more important than the individual. I recall what Pierre Naville wrote:

To speak of society's dreams as one speaks of the dreams of the individual, to discuss collective will to power as one discusses individual sexual drive, is to reverse the natural order of things once more, because, on the contrary, it is the economic and social conditions of class conflicts that

32. We bring up in this connection the following testimony given at a trial in Tananarive.

(Session of August 9. Rakotovao states:)

M. Baron said to me, "Since you refuse to accept what I just told you, I'm sending you to the 'thinking room.' ..." I was led into the adjoining chamber. The floor of the room in question was already covered with water. There was a pail full of dirty water, not to mention other things. M. Baron said to me, "Now you'll learn to agree to what I said you should declare." He gave an order to a Senegalese to "do the same to me as to the others." The Senegalese made me kneel with my wrists facing outward; then he took wooden tongs and squeezed my hands together; then, with me kneeling and my two hands pressed together, he put his foot on the back of my neck and forced my head down into the bucket. Seeing that I was on the point of fainting, he removed his foot so that I could get some air. And this was repeated again and again until I was completely exhausted. Then M. Baron said, "Take him away and beat him." The Senegalese thereupon used a bull-whip, but M. Baron came into the torture chamber and personally took part in the whipping. This went on for about fifteen minutes, I think, after which I said that I couldn't endure any more, because in spite of my youth it was unbearable. Then he said, "In that case you must agree to what I told you before!"

"No, *Monsieur le directeur*, it is not true."

Thereupon he sent me back into the first torture chamber and called in another Senegalese, since one was not enough, and he ordered them to hold me up by the feet and lower me into the bucket as far as my chest. This they did several times. Finally I told them, "It's too much! Let me talk to M. Baron," and to him I said, "I request at least that I be treated in a manner befitting France, *Monsieur le directeur*," to which he replied, "You're getting French treatment!"

Since I could stand no more, I said to him, "All right, I'll accept the first part of your statement." M. Baron replied, "No, I don't want the first part, I want it all." "Am I supposed to lie, then?" "Lie or no lie, you must agree to what I tell you. . . ."

(The testimony went on:)

Immediately M. Baron said, "Try some other method on him." I was then taken back into the adjoining room, where there was a small stone stairway. My arms were tied behind me. The two Senegalese again held me with my feet in the air and made me go up and down the stairs in this way. This was beginning to be unendurable, and, even if I had had any moral strength left, it was physically too much. I said to the Senegalese, "Tell your boss I'll agree to what he wants me to say."

(In the session of August 11, Robert, a defendant, testified:)

The policeman took me by my shirt collar and kicked me in the behind and punched me in the face. Then he forced me to kneel, and M. Baron began hitting me again.

explain and determine the real conditions in which individual sexuality expresses itself, and because the content of a human being's dreams depends also, in the last analysis, on the general conditions of the culture in which he lives.³³

The enraged black bull is not the phallus. The two black men are not the two father figures—the one standing for the real father, the other for the primal ancestor. Here is what a thorough analysis could have found, on the same basis of M. Mannoni's conclusions in his section, "The Cult of the Dead and the Family."

The rifle of the Senegalese soldier is not a penis but a genuine rifle, model Lebel 1916. The black bull and the robber are not *lolos*—"reincarnated souls"—but actually the irruption of real fantasies into sleep. What does this stereotype, this central theme of the dreams, represent if not a return to the right road? Sometimes we have *black* soldiers, sometimes *black* bulls speckled with white at the head, sometimes, outright, a white woman who is quite kind. What do we find in all these dreams if not this central idea: "To depart from routine is to wander in pathless woods; there you will meet the bull who will send you running helter-skelter home again."³⁴

Settle down, Malagasies, and stay where you belong.

Without my knowing how he managed it, he got behind me and I felt hot irons against the back of my neck. I tried to protect myself with my hands and they were burned too. . . .

The third time I was knocked down I lost consciousness and I don't know any more what happened. M. Baron told me to sign a paper that was all ready; I shook my head *no*; then the director called the Senegalese in again and he half-carried me into another torture chamber. "You better give in or you'll be dead," the Senegalese said. The director said, "That's his lookout, you have to get started, Jean." My arms were tied behind my back, I was forced down on my knees, and my head was pushed into a bucket full of water. Just as I was about to suffocate I was pulled out. Then they did the same thing over and over again until I passed out completely. . . .

Let us recall, so that no one may plead ignorance of the fact, that the witness Rakotovoao was sentenced to death.

So, when one reads such things, it certainly seems that M. Mannoni allowed one aspect of the phenomena that he analyzes to escape him: The black bull and the black men are neither more nor less than the Senegalese police torturers.

33. *Psychologie, Marxisme, Matérialisme*, 2nd ed. (Paris, Marcel Riviere, 1948), p. 151.

34. Mannoni, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

After having described the Malagasy psychology, M. Mannoni takes it upon himself to explain colonialism's reason for existence. In the process he adds a new complex to the standing catalogue: the "Prospero complex." It is defined as the sum of those unconscious neurotic tendencies that delineate at the same time the "picture" of the paternalist colonial and the portrait of "the racist whose daughter has suffered an [imaginary] attempted rape at the hands of an inferior being."³⁵

Prospero, as we know, is the main character of Shakespeare's comedy, *The Tempest*. Opposite him we have his daughter, Miranda, and Caliban. Toward Caliban, Prospero assumes an attitude that is well known to Americans in the southern United States. Are they not forever saying that the niggers are just waiting for the chance to jump on white women? In any case, what is interesting in this part of his book is the intensity with which M. Mannoni makes us feel the ill-resolved conflicts that seem to be at the root of the colonial vocation. In effect, he tells us:

What the colonial in common with Prospero lacks, is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected. This is the world from which the colonial has fled because he cannot accept men as they are. Rejection of that world is combined with an urge to dominate, an urge which is infantile in origin and which social adaptation has failed to discipline. The reason the colonial himself gives for his flight—whether he says it was the desire to travel, or the desire to escape from the cradle or from the "ancient parapets," or whether he says that he simply wanted a freer life—is of no consequence. . . . It is always a question of compromising with the desire for a world without men.³⁶

If one adds that many Europeans go to the colonies because it is possible for them to grow rich quickly there, that with rare exceptions the colonial is a merchant, or rather a trafficker, one will have grasped the psychology of the man who arouses in the autochthonous population "the feeling of inferiority." As for the Malagasy "dependency complex," at least in the only

35. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

form in which we can reach it and analyze it, it too proceeds from the arrival of white colonizers on the island. From its other form, from this original complex in its pure state that supposedly characterized the Malagasy mentality throughout the whole precolonial period, it appears to me that M. Mannoni lacks the slightest basis on which to ground any conclusion applicable to the situation, the problems, or the potentialities of the Malagasy in the present time.