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Séminaire collectif du Centre de
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Histoire du Japon moderne et contemporain : permanences et ruptures

« Endô Shûsaku reads Frantz Fanon: Deimperialization Meets Decolonization »

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Abstract

The Japanese novelist Endô Shûsaku and the Martiniquan anticolonial theorist and activist Frantz Fanon each studied in Lyon in the early 1950s. Endô's stories and essays from the time show that he was reading the then-obscure Fanon closely. While it is unclear how Endô encountered Fanon, the use he made of Fanon's work shows them examining the collapse of empires from asymmetrical positions, with Fanon writing about the struggle against European colonialism and Endô about the de-imperialization of Japan by countries struggling to maintain control of their own imperium. The encounter between Endô and Fanon illustrates not only unexamined connections in the history of imperialism but also the possibility of creating new transnational histories that deepen our understanding of a heterogeneous, polycentric world.