CHAPTER 12

TOO LATE

Fanon, the Dismembered Past, and a Phenomenology of Racialized Time[1]

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INTRODUCTION: RACISM, COLONIALISM, AND TIME

In the introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon notes the temporal architecture of the work and of the problem he is broaching:

> The architecture of this work is rooted in the temporal. Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time. Ideally, the present will always contribute to the building of the future. And this future is not the future of the cosmos but rather the future of my century, my country, my existence.[2]
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> *(Fanon, 1967, pp. 12–13; Fanon, 1952, p. 14)*

This is not an abstract future, for, as Fanon emphasizes, "[i]n no way is it up to me to prepare the world that will follow me. I belong irreducibly to my time. And it is for my own time that I should live" (1967, p. 13; 1952, p. 13, translation revised).

In this essay, I think of racialized experience in temporal terms. This means exploring both how racialization is lived temporally and how racism and colonialism structure our experiences and ontologies of time. As such, it requires attending to the ways in which colonialism and racism manage, skew, divide, and even reconfigure time. Racism and colonialism are temporal formations, as well as being geographical, economic, social, and imaginary ones. They manage not only territories and bodies, but also histories, pasts, and futures. They shape time not only by differentially molding the field of possibilities of the present, but also through colonial reconfigurations and constructions of the past. Indeed, I argue that it is in part through the colonial remaking of the past that racism structures our sense of possibility, framing the phenomenological field of the present and attempting to delimit the future.

Attending to the temporal dimensions of racialization raises the problem of method. To take racism seriously is to understand its *structuring* – and not merely accessory or additive – role in differentially molding lived experiences of time. In particular, if racism is reflected not only in economic, social, and political conditions, but also structures lived experience, then anomalies and breakdowns in experience cannot be studied as purely individual afflictions in racial societies. As Fanon notes, "anomalies of affect" are normal in racist societies (1967, pp. 10, 191; 1952, pp. 10, 185). The study of the ways in which racism is lived – of the "aberrations of affect" (1967, p. 8; 1952, p. 8), embodiment, agency, and temporality that accompany it – raises the question of how psychopathology may crystallize social pathology, and of how phenomenological method can do justice to racialized experience. How can phenomenology see more than individual anomaly, or psychopathology, in order to critically uncover and diagnose social pathology – and "sociogeny" (1967, p. 11; 1952, p. 11)? If colonization and its aftermaths touch our psyches and affect our bodily selves,[3]

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then, in societies built on the legacies of colonialism, slavery, or settlement, both racializing and racialized subjects will experience alienation, albeit in structurally different ways. The imbrication of the individual and the social in psychopathology presents challenges to any phenomenological study of racialized experience. Here phenomenology must attend not only to intersubjective and first-person constitution of meaning, but to social structures and historical and material conditions that may appear, at first sight, to lie beyond the scope of its description.[4] Just as a pure phenomenology may try to put these conditions in brackets, its failure to do so will reveal their affective weight and (de-)structuring power – the ways in which the social-historical has become ontological and in which psychopathology is symptomatic of this ontology of colonization. This means that phenomenologists will need to be not only *critical* – extending the scope of the phenomenological reduction to the naturalization of social oppression – and *interdisciplinary*, drawing on histories of colonialism and slavery to recognize their intransigence and, often covert, rephrasing in present experience, but also *decolonizing* in their method.[5]

I turn to Fanon and in particular *Black Skin, White Masks*, in order to analyze the temporal structures of racialized experience – what I am calling *racialized time*. I focus on Fanon for several reasons. Fanon proposes *Black Skin, White Masks* as a "clinical study" of racialization (1967, p. 12; 1952, p. 12) and a form of "sociodiagnostic," aimed at making "disalienation" possible (1967, p. 11; 1952, p. 11). In so doing, he joins phenomenology with decolonized psychiatry and anti-racist activism, at once grounding phenomenology in the social and adjusting its purpose.[6] In the chapter on the lived experience of the Black ("l'expérience vécue du Noir"), Fanon presents a first-person phenomenological account of how it feels to become racialized – to discover one's race. More than a description of a series of effects, the chapter unfolds a process of racialization that is affectively charged, embodied, vacillating, and ambivalent. The reader is asked to live with Fanon through the fragmentation of bodily affectivity and deferral of agency as the circles of racialization tighten.[7] While his account is often read in terms of embodiment and space, and while temporality remains implicit in his narrative (despite his references to time in the book), Fanon provides the signposts to understand the experience temporally. This is supported, I argue, by the structuring role that the past plays in the lived experience of racialization – a role that Fanon abbreviates in his reference to a "historico-racial schema" in the phenomenology he offers. In this essay, I take up Fanon's references to time and elaborate the work done by the past, in particular, in structuring racialized time.

We should be mindful from the start that what Fanon offers is *one* experience of racialization; the experience he describes is neither definitive nor exhaustive. Beyond it lies a multiplicity of racialized experiences, and Fanon acknowledges the limitations of his positionality – a Martiniquan, living under French colonialism and departmentalization (1967, p. 14; 1952, p. 14), a doctor, living in the memory and wake of slavery – and of his sensibility – socially and intellectually engaged. Black experience is "ambiguous," heterogeneous, and multiple, notes Fanon (1967, p. 136; 1952, p. 133). Certainly, Fanon's account is that of a Black man, and Black women are mostly unheard in the book. But as I read *Black Skin, White Masks*, its aim is also to draw out structural overlaps with other racialized experiences, while remaining cognizant of differences. Indeed, Fanon sees phenomenology as providing a method precisely for this; rather than collecting facts and behavior, he notes, it allows the understanding of a few concrete experiences in their structuring meanings (1967, pp. 168–169; 1952, p. 164, citing Jaspers). Significantly, it is when Fanon combines phenomenology and social critique that *Black Skin, White Masks* is most successful in my view. In the chapter on the lived experience of the Black, Fanon captures, I contend, a fragmenting tendency of racialization, its retrospective colonization of the past, that allows us to glimpse its temporal logic.

RACIALIZATION, EMBODIMENT, AND SOCIAL IMAGINARY

What is meant by racialization? In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon shows how racialization is not only a process by which the identities of self and other are constituted (an "othering" process *à la* Jean-Paul Sartre); it is a socially pathological *othering* with important structural features. This othering involves a projective mechanism by which what is undesirable in the self is projected onto the other; the result is a negative mirroring whereby the other is constituted as that which this self is *not*, or does not take itself to be.[8] "Black," "native," and "Arab" are oppositionally (yet differentially) constructed as that *other*, which "white" identity disavows. In this othering, difference is no longer relational. Difference becomes *Manichean* and exclusionary – a masked difference, wherein colonized subjects serve as the *foil* for what "modern European" identity takes itself to be. What allows this difference to be seen as a feature of the world, and racializing operations to remain hidden from view, is the way in which race is perceived as belonging to sensory features of the body (such as skin color). Racialization hence relies on the naturalization of projected and oppositional difference to the perceived body of the racialized subject.

Racialization not only structures the ways in which bodies are represented and perceived, it configures our affective, perceptual, and cognitive maps, the imaginary warp and weft of our lives. Racialization describes the ways in which colonialism and white supremacy divide bodies politically, economically, spatially, and socially in order to exploit and dominate them.[9] Racialization comprises, then, the historical, social, economic, epistemological, and affective processes – the (de-)structuring violence and colonizing formations – by which races are constructed, seen, and, when interiorized or "epidermalized," lived. The power of Fanon's account of racism is twofold, in my view, for he is interested both in the *naturalization* of race, its constitution in relation to perceived bodily markers[10] that come to unconsciously stand in for race, and in its *rationalization*, the ways in which racism takes itself to originate as a mere reaction to the racialized other. What Fanon reveals is that constructions of race in the social imaginary have more to do with drawing lines of domination and privilege than with the concrete racialized and colonized lives who are its ostensible objects.[11] There is an ignorance to racism that is not merely accidental, but that sustains its operations – a forgetting which actively hides racializing mechanisms and misconstrues its objects. Racism is ambivalent, structurally relying on an "epistemology of ignorance" (to use a term from Charles Mills, 2007).[12] As Fanon notes, "[t]he European knows and he does not know" (1967, p. 199; 1952, p. 192) – both at the same time.

Racism is both recalcitrant and mobile. Its recalcitrance relies on an ability to adapt to its social time and place, taking on the guise of prevailing norms – becoming ambient or atmospheric.[13] Yet racism also covers over this rephrasing; it represses the histories and operations of power which constitute it and instead scapegoats or blames its victims (1967, p. 194; 1952, p. 188). More precisely, what is disavowed in the process of racialization is not some ahistorical essence; rather, the very guilt and corrosive de-structuring, which colonization brings about, is blamed on its *colonized others* – what Fanon refers to elsewhere as the "racial redistribution of guilt" (1967, p. 103; 1952, p. 101, translation altered). Racialized bodies are, at once, the material and affective labor, the disposable and consumed lives that colonization exploits – the "fertilizer" that nourishes colonialism, says Fanon, recalling Aimé Césaire (1967, p. 216; 1952, p. 209) – and they are the scapegoats upon which the *need* for colonization and its constitutive violence are projected.

It is important to remember that the racial imaginary to which Fanon refers – the imaginary mapping of racial dichotomies, hierarchies, and exclusions along lines of othering – is differentially shared by subjects living in a racial society. While Fanon describes it as a kind of "collective unconscious," he argues, against Jung, that "[it] is cultural, which means acquired" (1967, p. 188; 1952, p. 182). This imaginary persists as unreflected habit or acquisition, or as Fanon notes, *as cultural imposition* (1967, p. 191; 1952, p. 185). This imaginary constellation, this cultural view of the world, is acquired through childhood education, scholarly manuals, language, media, comic books, stories, films, and images.[14] As a result, particular ways of imagining, thinking, and perceiving become normative. It is for this reason that Fanon calls the racial imaginary "white." This is not to imply that it is restricted to phenotypically white subjects but rather that it upholds a social mapping of ways of being where habitually "white" forms of perceiving and being are privileged as normatively desirable for all subjects. Significantly, this account allows for racial imaginaries to be both historically dynamic and multiple, to differ for different racial societies as well as within each society. What is defining of a racial imaginary is *how* it draws borders that attempt to stabilize social categories of othering and manage racial formations; even as those borders shift, in policing who is included/excluded, the othering mechanism remains in force. Racial imaginaries are not coherent wholes; there is fragmentation with differential temporalities at play. That it draws borders means that within a racial imaginary a certain splitting takes place; "two frames of reference" come into effect (1967, p. 110; 1952, p. 108). These frames not only define different subject-positions along racial lines, but also differentially configure the kinds of past and fields of possibility available to subjects, as we will see below.

Since a racial imaginary is split according to "two frames of reference" – just as a racial world is a divided world – the pathological effects and affects of racialization are felt by both racializing and racialized bodies, albeit in structurally different ways. I have described the pathologies of racializing ways of being and seeing in a previous paper (Al-Saji, 2014); here my focus will be experiences of becoming racialized – that is, experiences in which racialization is felt and *en-fleshed*, or, to use Fanon's tactile term, "epidermalized" (Fanon, 1967, p. 11; Fanon, 1952, p. 11). This is not necessarily the experience of every person of color in racial societies. As Fanon notes, it is possible, however paradoxically, to live in the Antilles without "discovering" one's Blackness; one enacts and identifies with normatively white ways of being, while one's race is not explicitly brought into question. Racism remains implicit. However, an encounter with a racializing gaze transforms this state of affairs, for this gaze interpolates the Black subject by identifying him with his skin color and positioning him within a racialized frame of reference (bound to a colonized and enslaved Black past). This makes racism explicit in ways that are consciously and affectively lived (though not, as yet, necessarily reflectively worked-through). What is experienced is bodily transfiguration or transubstantiation – or, to use Fanon's terms, "tearing out *[arrachement]*" (1952, p. 110), disjointing, dismemberment, and disassembly (1952, p. 111). Looking closer at Fanon's phenomenological narrative in *Black Skin, White Masks*, I will argue that a temporal transformation or fragmentation is also at stake.

"Tiens, un nègre! [Look, a Negro!]" (1967, p. 109; 1952, p. 107). It is beginning with these words that Fanon recounts his experience of the racializing gaze. This gaze, we discover, is that of a child on a train, directed at Fanon as he is traveling through France. Prior to this racializing encounter, Fanon tells us, one might have lived one's body unreflectively, with movements and gestures implicitly known. Fanon refers this lived embodiment to a body schema [*schéma corporel*], tacitly structuring one's relation to the world. In a seemingly Merleau-Pontian vein, he describes this as a "slow composition of my *self* as a body

[within] a spatial and temporal world" (1967, p. 111; 1952, p. 109, translation corrected) – an optimal (and implicitly white) sensory coordination. But Fanon's account diverges pointedly from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, for Fanon notes that another schema already underlies the body schema and coexists in tension with it. This is the unconscious racial imaginary, the map of enduring and structuring racism that orients perception and delimits embodiment in a racial society – and this already at the pre-reflective level. Fanon calls this a "historico-racial schema." While its elements, he says, had been provided for me "by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories" (1967, p. 111; 1952, p. 109), Fanon emphasizes its historicity (1967, p. 112; 1952, p. 109). This schema, in other words, has to do with the past.

Although the racializing gaze does not create this schema (racism pre-existed the encounter on the train and made it possible, after all), this gaze displaces Fanon's positionality in that schema and relates him explicitly to a Black past. Whereas prior to his interpolation as Black, Fanon could imagine all "civilizational" history as his own, he was now limited to those historical elements that made up a stereotyped Black past. Thus, he says, "my eardrums were bursting with cannibalism, mental retardation, fetishism, racial taints, slave-traders, and above all, above all 'Y a bon banania.'"[15] Affectively and palpably lived in this way, the historico-racial schema undermines the (idealized Merleau-Pontian) body schema. As Fanon notes, "assailed at various points, the body schema crumbled, giving way to a racial epidermal schema" (1967, p. 112; 1952, p. 110, translation corrected). This final schema is that of the naturalization of race to one's lived body. Race is no longer simply a historical construction or a concept, but is lived as sensations of one's body, and specifically for Fanon, of one's skin; more so, these sensings – tearing, spasming, dismembering, wearing out – make one racialized, or epidermalize, flesh.[16] History, in other words, has been naturalized. The past is no longer lived at a distance, as past, but is experienced as an overdetermining and proximate, stuck and sticky, dimension of the present. To understand this, I look more closely at the historico-racial schema, before asking after the temporal experience at stake in the crumbling of racialized bodies that Fanon describes.

THE HISTORICO-RACIAL SCHEMA, OR THE COLONIZATION OF THE PAST

How does the historico-racial schema erode and fragment racialized embodiment? Although we may at first be tempted to understand this disruption as the effect of the historico-racial schema becoming conscious – the dissonance created when racism becomes explicit – this consciousness does not sufficiently account for the feeling of *belonging* to a stereotyped Black past that Fanon describes (a belonging that does not entail uncritical acceptance). More so, it does not account for the ontological weight, fixity, or obduracy with which this past is felt to bear on the present – the way it glues or bogs us down.[17] What is required, in order to answer this question, is an understanding of how the historico-racial schema constitutes a racial past within which it places the racialized subject, at once displacing other pasts. More specifically, we need to ask how the past itself is colonized and racialized.

In attempting to explain how "[t]he black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man," how he lacks a sense of existence, Fanon notes:

> Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place himself. His metaphysics, or less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which

> they were based, were abolished because they were in contradiction with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him.
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> *(1967, p. 110; 1952, p. 108, translation revised)*

Racialization takes place, in other words, not only in the present but also at the level of the past. There is a form of othering within the past that splits it into "two frames of reference," dichotomously constructed. While the dominant frame is that of white "civilizational" history, the second frame positions colonized and racialized peoples as foils to this history, as swept up in it without contributing to it. We would lose the tension and complexity within this past were we to understand one of the frames as representative of an authentic Black past. Fanon's point is that colonization of the past occludes other pasts, even attempting to efface and rewrite them.

While Fanon tries not to dwell on the past (precisely because of the affective loss and disempowerment it engenders), Latin American decolonial thinker, Aníbal Quijano (2000), probes the transformation that takes place at the level of the past in colonialism and racism. Quijano describes the colonial construction of time, a construction that is also a constitution and molding, since it has economic, social, and political dimensions, as well as representational and imaginary ones.[18] His concern is to explain how a Eurocentric civilizational history and modernity were formed. He discerns three processes, which I can only sketch briefly here: (1) The expropriation of the cultural discoveries of colonized peoples as positive acquisitions of colonialism; (2) the elision and repression of pre-colonial pasts, construed as empty, pre-historical, or primitive lands; and (3) the re-inscription of a linear timeline in which colonized peoples are relocated as perpetually past to European cultures that are seen as modern, futurally directed, and open (Quijano, 2000, pp. 541, 552). What were coexistent cultures, and simultaneous temporalities, in the colonial encounter become temporally distributed as successive moments along a linear civilizational time. While Europe and its settler states are seen as the "mirror of the future" of humanity and seat of modernity, colonized peoples are projected backward as past (Quijano, 2007, p. 176).[19]

In my reading, this past with which we, colonized peoples, are identified is no longer our past[20] – for the pre-colonial past has been occluded, and the time of colonized reaction and resistance has been flattened, disjointed, caricatured.[21] Rather, the past to which we are colonially tethered is a past of stereotyped remnants, isolated fragments, and violent distortions extrapolated back from one's alienated and stagnant state under colonialism. This is hence a *closed* past, incapable of development on its own terms and cut off from invention and the creation of alternate possibility. This is a past, moreover, that serves to retrospectively justify the need for colonial domination and paternalism, the "white man's burden." Linear colonial history thus, paradoxically, assumes a duality of times ("two frames of reference" as Fanon said): the *closed* and perpetual past, in which colonized peoples are stuck, is subordinated to the *open* time of Eurocentric modernity – which is understood to have been "autoproduced" (or, at least, to have arisen out of a Greece already belonging to Europe) (Quijano, 2000, p. 552). Yet, the economy of theft upon which European modernity was built – its debt to colonial expansion and slavery – is rendered invisible in this duality of open and closed times, eliding the violence that consumed lives and impoverished and stagnated cultures. Here, the closed past of the colonized forms an ahistorical or prehistorical time, irrelevant to the present; it is empty landscape or material resource, awaiting colonial impetus to infuse meaning. But obfuscated, too, is how the *open time* of Western modernity, "white destiny" to use Fanon's words (1967, p. 10; 1952, p. 10), is an aspirational, teleological schema without issue, built on exploitation, racialized debilitation, and Black death. (I argue in section four that this

schema repeats but does not create, since the possibilities it maps are exhausted, lacking leeway and mobility, an ankylosed colonial time.)

Quijano's account is complex, but it is important to note that he is describing more than a representational or psychological process (although he is also describing this). The colonization of time, which he describes, is a cultural, economic, political, and material molding that was part of Iberian, French, and Anglo-Saxon colonialism, the effects of which endure in the racial societies that issue from them. In a certain sense, the power of this representation of history comes from the ways it has actualized and justified itself in intersubjective and cultural existence – assimilating peoples through what Quijano calls "a long period of the colonization of cognitive perspectives, modes of producing and giving meaning, the results of material existence, the imaginary, the universe of intersubjective relations with the world: in short, the culture" (Quijano, 2000, p. 541). The colonized, in other words, were forced to learn the dominant culture in ways that reproduced modes of domination and justified them (recalling Fanon's notion of cultural imposition) – although this "internalization" was not without bodily resistances and spasms (see section four). The closed past, with which colonized and racialized peoples are identified, is *instituted* and *inhabited*; it is a lifeworld of habitualities and not merely a representation. This past has taken on reality; it has *been made* through the very processes of colonization and ongoing racialization and by means of the distortions and reactions they produce.

I mean to point to how the construction of a colonial past (in its "two frames of reference," open and closed) is underwritten by ongoing colonial violence that is much more than representational. But the ontological weight and epistemic flatness of this past also rely on hiding the violence that its institution requires. Forgotten is material and cultural dismemberment, where land, bodies, and air are exploited as empty resource and consumed as fodder – their possibilities foreclosed to make real (and univocal) colonial time – and meaning-making.

Thus, the ontological complexity of our pasts as colonized peoples – with their impositions, elisions, and resistances, their depths of foreclosed possibility – is *dismembered* and reduced to the flatness of a self-contained and in-itself colonial past.[22] It becomes the past of a (decontextualized) people, solely attributed to them in forgetfulness of both colonialism and their resistance to it.[23] As through a selective and distorting mirror, one recognizes elements of the past: Singular traits generalized, reactions to racism taken out of context, protective rigidity, violence and anger stereotyped.[24] This sense of recognition – the vexed and painful belonging to an alienating and alienated past – means that this past cannot simply be shrugged away, or its closure easily re-imagined.[25] We are stuck in, and weighed down by, this past. It is felt in the possibilities we, colonized subjects, have for living the present; it is lived in racialized ways of being in time. This brings us back to Fanon.

"TOO LATE": RACIALIZED WAYS OF BEING IN TIME

What if, rephrasing Du Bois' question "how does it feel to be a problem?" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 7), one were to ask Fanon: How does it feel to be racialized? The answer I think would come along these lines:

> Too late [*Trop tard*]. Everything is anticipated, thought out, demonstrated, made the most of [*Tout est prévu, trouvé, prouvé, exploité*]. My trembling hands take hold of nothing; the vein has been mined out [*le gisement est épuisé*]. Too late! But once again I want to understand.
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> *(Fanon, 1967, p. 121; Fanon, 1952, p. 118)*

And then the response from the perspective of the racializing other and white time: "You come too late, much too late. There will always be a world – a white world – between you and us" (1967, p. 122; 1952, p. 119).[26] But what does it mean to feel that one has come too late to a world?

Possibility

This feeling of lateness cannot merely be understood in terms of the pre-existence of the world, a pre-existence which characterizes the phenomenological experience of a world.[27] The feeling of coming to a world that was *always already there*, that contains meanings sedimented through other lives, gives the sense of that world as "intersubjective" and real. But this intersubjective world is not perceived as a completed reality; it is felt to be inexhaustible and only incompletely given, open to the creation of new possibility. This is not the world of exhausted and used-up possibilities that Fanon describes. In order to understand the feeling of arriving "too late," which Fanon expresses, I take up Matthew Ratcliffe's (2012) suggestion of exploring the distinct structuring of possibility at stake in different experience. But I want to do so without assuming the normativity of relationality – specifically of Black–white reciprocity – in the constitution of this world; that is, I wish to eschew taking intersubjective coexistence (with whiteness) for granted, since it is questionable how much this can be realized in an anti-Black world. Indeed, I argue that Fanon does not express a sense of limited or truncated possibility, but a different configuration of the field of possibility: *Structured by lateness*. Racialization, on my account, would also be about managing and mediating the configuration of possibility – a mediation in which the colonial past plays a structuring role. (Thus, while Fanon refers to a "white" world and "white" others, it is important to eschew taking these as normative touch-stones, unproblematized or ideal referents, in reading his phenomenology – and to remember their "affective ankylosis," a concept I return to below.)

The world that Fanon experiences is one where everything has been foreseen and discovered; all appears to be given. It is not that this world lacks possibility, but that the field of possibilities has already been defined in relation to other (white) body schemas. More so, white subjects have already used up these possibilities, worn them out, and eroded them; they have moved on and left the *ruins of possibility* behind. As Fanon notes earlier in the same chapter, the white other is "absent, has disappeared" (1967, p. 112; 1952, p. 110, translation revised). Indeed, this other is always ahead of Fanon, oriented toward an unlocalizable and vanishingly general futurity that cannot be caught up with. This positions Fanon as anachronistic. But, more importantly, it means that the encounter with the white other is a *missed encounter*, that there is no coexistence in a lived present upon which reciprocity could be built. What Fanon experiences is temporal non-relationality or disjuncture.

Hence, Fanon perceives a field of possibility structured according to the past and exhausted possibles of an absent other. As past, these possibilities lose their contingency and virtuality; they become factical and necessary, the routes to their realization fixed. More precisely, the field of possibility loses its playfulness and imaginary variability.[28] Though Fanon may sometimes be able to take up the structured possibilities already defined, and follow through their realization according to the routes deposited by the other (to the degree that this is permitted a Black body in an anti-Black world), he does not see them as allowing variation, as being able to be worked out *differently*. The structure of possibility allows *repetition* but neither invention, variation, nor leeway; it is a *closed map*. Without leeway to take

them up, possibilities are not genuinely felt as *mine*, on Fanon's account, and this explains his description of the white world as an indifferent and cold world (1967, p. 113; 1952, p. 111). This goes deeper than saying that the moral values and norms of the world are defined by a dominant group to which I do not belong. Fanon's description extends, I think, to the practical significances of things, to the organization of lived space, and to our affective landscape. For he implies that the perceptual and practical norms of the white world call for a virtual (white) subject capable of living and acting according to them, one whose body schema provides a system of possible actions that can take up these norms dextrously in responding to the beckoning of the world – that can coordinate movements and sensations to bring the future "optimally" into grasp.[29] Crucially, this white body schema is conditioned by an *ankylosed* affectivity, actively indifferent to racialized suffering, quickly moving on and forgetting slavery and colonialism. The racialized subject is delayed in regards to this virtual (absent but posited-as-real) subject, structurally incapable of catching up.

This means that the openness of a "white world," or Eurocentric modernity, is a deceptive aspirational schema, a treadmill where colonized subjects are structurally destined to fall, to be tripped up.[30] Indeed, we find ourselves, again and again, in a persistent past – a fragmentary past of shifting stereotypes that continually slips away under our feet, so that we lack the traction to make a difference in the field of possibility of the present. Portrayed as a "time before time," the time of the colonized is split off – shears away – from the linear civilizational (white) time that is supposed to flow into the living present and have a future.[31] This perpetual deferral of possibility, the lack of traction or coevalness, results, in Fanon's words, not merely in a feeling of inferiority, but in depersonalization and "a feeling of nonexistence" (1967, p. 139; 1952, p. 135). This recalls the racialized subject's lack of "ontological resistance" (1967, p. 110; 1952, p. 108), and brings us back to the role of the past. For the past is a *dimension* that structures existence – in the sense of being *that according to which* we perceive, sense, and act; it is with the past, by taking it up, reconfiguring it, and playing on its relations, that we can act in the present. Whether instituted dimension, memory, or unconscious habituality, this past is a resource for agency. But when it is a colonized past that mediates our relation to the world, this dimensionality is *dismembered*, *de-structured*. While colonial ways of being are dug out, as grooves and ruts, and mapped as "objective" possibilities of the world, colonized ways of being and resistance are submerged and foreclosed as possibilities, their routes to realization blocked. I think that this foreclosure of possibility can help us understand how the colonization of the past is also temporal fragmentation and *de-structuration*[32] – or, to think with Saidiya Hartman, *dis-membering*.[33]

Taking seriously the *de-structuring* violence that colonialism and slavery wrought means also understanding how this violence *structures* the societies, of wealth and predatory accumulation that issue from them. The lines of possibility mapped out in a "white world" are, hence, inseparable from the exploitation, impoverishment, and mining out – and from "the weight of cannons and swords"[34] – that exhaust colonized and racialized peoples, wear us down, and delay entry into "development." What Fanon says of hunger is telling: "It is utopian to expect the black man or the Arab to exert the effort of embedding abstract values in their *Weltanschauung* when they have barely enough food to survive [*alors qu'ils mangent à peine à leur faim*]" (1967, p. 95; 1952, pp. 92–93). Because, he adds, they "lack the possibility [*n'en ont pas la possibilité*]" (1967, p. 95; 1952, p. 93). There are several levels to this foreclosure of possibility. On the one hand, it is the *dimension* of conceptual thinking that is foreclosed and not this or that concept, and this blockage is part of colonial domination (psychological and material). While hunger is an obstacle to abstract thinking, Fanon's point is deeper: Colonization turns the bodies of the colonized into instruments against them – kept barely

alive while being digested and used up, "walking manure [*un fumier ambulant*]" he says, citing Césaire (Fanon, 1952, p. 95; Césaire, 2017, p. 114). They are sapped of the energy and time for thinking and revolt. On the other hand, we need to remember the economy of theft, of exhausted life and land, that was needed to free up abstract thinking; abstract thinking requires the labor of others, often forced, to institute the material conditions that allow some bodies to disengage from the needs of survival. The affects of colonized hunger may need *alternative forms of thinking*, creating concepts from the affective texture of lived experience (as I think Fanon is doing in *Black Skin, White Masks*). This needs to hold together sustenance and invention, material-vital conditions and ontology – but also to invent sociality and ways of living and dying, on one's own terms, from the reconfigured ruin of foreclosed and dead possibilities.[35]

This reading of possibility may shed light on Fanon's claim that "every ontology is rendered unrealizable [*irréalisable*] in a colonized and civilized society" (1967, p. 109; 1952, p. 107, translation corrected). Foreclosed possibility can be understood as those dimensions – systems of reference – that colonialism tries to abolish when it institutes the two frames of reference of colonial time (monumental colonial and caricatural colonized) as the only lines of possibility that can count in the map of the real. Its routes to realization suspended, colonized possibility is put in abeyance and cut off from the present.[36] Here, I think of possibility as de-structured, but not destroyed; its temporality dismembered, not erased.[37] The irreparability of colonial wounds, the breach of the Middle Passage, the ruptures of slavery and colonialism mean that there is no going back to an intact past, where such possibility can be recuperated sound and whole; it remains in the past subjunctive of "what could have been," a tense wherein the pain of dismemberment continues to be heard.[38] Could foreclosed and dismembered possibility be felt in racialized affect, sensibility, and spasm? I turn to this question at the end of the essay, after carefully distinguishing them from the *ankylosis* of colonial/white affectivity.

Affective Ankylosis

In rehearsing the ways in which racism responds – repeatedly, adaptively, and intransigently – to attempts to argue against it, Fanon writes:

> You come too late, much too late. There will always be a world – a white world – between you and us … This impossibility for the [white] other to liquidate [*liquider*] the past once and for all. In the face of this affective ankylosis [*ankylose affective*] of the white, it is understandable that I could have made up my mind to utter my Negro cry [*mon cri nègre*]. Little by little, putting out pseudopodia here and there, I secreted a race.
>
> *(Fanon, 1967, p. 122; Fanon, 1952, p. 119, translation revised)*

This ankylosed past refers back to a story told by Fanon one page earlier: "A dog lies down on the grave of his master and starves to death. We had to wait for Janet to demonstrate that the aforesaid dog, in contrast to man, simply lacked the capacity to liquidate [*liquider*] the past" (1967, p. 121; 1952, p. 118). For Fanon, this ankylosis explains, at least in part, the non-relationality of the "white world" that keeps racialized subjects in abeyance or postponement.

It is worth dwelling on the concept of "affective ankylosis [*ankylose affective*]."[39] It is one of the more puzzling socio-diagnostic neologisms Fanon invents. *Ankylosis* should be read in medical, anatomical, and metaphorical senses at once. It describes a condition where joints become fused and coalesce (fusion that is bony or fibrous), so that articulations are restricted, and movement is limited or no longer possible between them. Fanon associates

affective ankylosis with an inability to liquidate the past – playing on the sense of "*liquider*" as both liquidating and making fluid. While this might make us think that what he advocates is an abolition of the past (and Fanon's discomfort with the past sometimes moves in this direction), I think that it is important to remember that what he is talking about on these pages is colonial nostalgia and the recalcitrance of racism (a "white world"). Colonialism has *already* tried to abolish pre-colonial cultures and colonized ways of being, dismembering their links to the present; abolishing the past as that which registers and remembers colonization (in its *longue durée*) would, yet again, exculpate colonialism and naturalize the stagnancy of the colonized.

Fanon is clear that what is ankylosed is colonial or white affectivity – a "white world" – that holds racialized subjects in abeyance through fused and immovable articulations of time (which foreclose and redraw the map of realizable possibility). What are fixated on are the "beneficial" effects of colonialism, hagiography, and monumental history, and the backwardness of the colonized that justifies colonization (the two frames of reference, above). But ankylosis is not simply a question of fixity; as an organic pathology, ankylosis diagnoses a past that coalesces and adheres, repeatedly over time, but that may also numb, inflame, or become gangrenous.[40] Indeed, in "Racisme et culture," Fanon shows how the *longue durée* of racism has to do with an intransigence that is adaptive – repeating itself under the guise of prevailing ambient norms; *that according to which* we are othered changes, but othering remains in place.[41] More than just fusion or ossification, ankylosis points to repetition, consolidation, and festering – to an organic pathology of colonial (white) life. The temporal schema of ankylosis highlights both the recalcitrance and insensitivity, or disregard, that structure colonial affectivity. (And it can be contrasted to the *sensitivity* of colonized affect, below.) This *colonial* ankylosed past needs liquidation or liquification. I understand this to mean that the colonial past (with its two frames of reference) needs to be made fluid: To be reconfigured, re-articulated, and felt differently. More deeply, it needs *lysis* and not just fluidity;[42] it needs to be dissolved in its structuring of the past, and not simply questioned in this or that representation or stereotype.

What makes the colonial past – the historico-racial schema – ankylosed? I think that there are at least three features that can help us understand this, extending my analysis in section three: (1) The colonial compartmentalization and dichotomous mapping of lives, cultures, and times produces a fragmentation of the past into, on the one hand, isolated events selectively memorialized, and on the other hand, "empty" spans or gaps when nothing of import is supposed to have happened (where colonized resistance, suffering, and agency are made invisible). (2) This fragmentation is paradoxically accompanied by a flattening of time. What were multiply intertwined, complex, and contentious pasts are unwoven, simplified, dismembered, and re-ordered in a linear and uniform time. Simultaneity is made into the historical succession of datable and demarcated epochs. (3) It should be noted that this linear time relies on a particular temporal orientation, whereby futurity is ontologically privileged over pastness. Emptily projected into an abstract future, white subjectivity can absent itself from coexistence in the present (1967, p. 112; 1952, p. 110). Indeed, the linearization of time depends on a mode of active and skewed forgetting that relegates the past to the bygone and the ineffective. Forget, we are told, and move on (except for those memorable events of colonial history that are worth memorializing in the present). While the past is a tissue woven of memory and forgetting, and though forgetting can be a productive condition for habit formation and sedimentation, the kind of forgetting I am describing operates according to a differential economy that disavows the weight and agency of the past, at once fossilizing it. What is elided is the continuing role that the past

– unconsciously, habitually, in memory, and through institutions – plays in the present: The past as a dimension according to which we live the present, a dimension that submerges us, bogs us down, or buoys us up.

To recognize the dimensional role of the past is to understand its ontological and affective weight and the harm its ankylosis effects in the structure of possibility of the present. As an ankylosed dimension, the colonial past is closed to reconfiguration or reinterpretation in the present, to "liquidation" as Fanon says. The possibilities of this past appear fixed, "in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye" (1967, p. 109; 1952, p. 107); there is little leeway for new possibility to be inscribed, or invented, in this past. What the ankylosed past lacks is the ability to be reconfigured, worked through, and made sense of differently. It does not *hesitate*; it lacks imaginary and creative leeway. It is important to note that affective ankylosis is *a pathology of colonialism and whiteness*. Here, I correct a misreading by recent readers of Fanon, who have projected ankylosis onto racialized subjects – thereby equating the colonized with that which colonialism seeks to make of us.[43] While the ankylosed colonial past puts racialized and colonized subjects in abeyance, our response is not that of numb affect, repetition, or immobilization. Indeed, according to Fanon, colonized reaction is one of sensitivity and spasming.

Racialized Sensitivity and the Burning, Dismembered Past

What is an ankylosed past for whiteness and colonialism is a dismembered, de-structured, and "burning past [*passé cuisant*]" for the colonized. Fanon uses this evocative term in "Le 'syndrome nord africain'" to describe the past that Maghribans living in France feel as chronic and unlocalizable pain (Fanon, 2006, p. 12). This recalls *Black Skin, White Masks*: "all this whiteness that burns me [*me calcine*]" (1967, p. 114; 1952, p. 111). Here, the very sensibility of racialized flesh registers the weight of colonial duration – immanently woven into its texture through tactile, pain, and kinaesthetic sensings – and responds to the de-structuring violence, the "absolute wound" of colonization (1967, p. 97; 1952, p. 94, translation corrected). Racialized flesh is "susceptible" (1952, p. 114), Fanon says, "sensitive" (1967, p. 120; 1952, p. 117) – hypersensible and prickly. Significantly, tactile sensings that burn, tear apart, dissect, dismember are not localized on one part of a coordinated body schema (as would be assumed in a Merleau-Pontian phenomenology). This sensitivity extends all over, through skin and folds, giving that through which a racial-epidermal body is formed.

Caught between perpetual past and dismembered possibility, the interval in which colonized subjects live is affectively overloaded, sensitive, and "tetanised." Fanon diagnoses "affective tetanisation" as the useless spasming of the muscles of the colonized. "*Tétanisation affective*" is used by Fanon in medical and metaphorical senses inseparably (1952, p. 110). While a simple reading of *tetanisation* equates it to the rapid or hyper-stimulation of muscles whereby successive contractions fuse together, it is possible to deepen this by recalling Fanon's characterization of colonialism as pathogen, toxicity, and infection. If colonization is *tetanus*, then it is a (bacterial) infection that penetrates colonized flesh through colonial wounds, generating toxins. It leads to spasms that may look externally like paralysis but that hide, in their depth, intense activity and (appropriate) sensitivity to the violence, toxicity, and hostility of the white world.

In *Damnés de la terre*, Fanon notes how the colonized are treated as "quasi-mineral background [*un cadre quasi minéral*]" (2002, p. 53), material resource on a par with land, water, desert, or as he says in "Le 'syndrome nord africain,'" the Arab is like "stone [*pierre*]"

(Fanon, 2006, p. 21). While it may be tempting to understand this as a form of ankylosis, we need to remember the difference between affect and imposition that continues to structure colonized experience. Tetanisation, facial and muscular spasms may, in their repetitiveness and movement in place, resemble ossification, but the affective experience of spasm holds, as both Dariek Scott (2010) and Fred Moten (2018) have argued, a potential for activity and reservoir of power. Ankylosis, on my account, is what colonialism is and projects onto the colonized; auto-protective spasms, muscular contraction, and tension are the colonized, lived and oneiric, reactions to this imposition. In appearance both resemble paralysis, but the two phenomena are affectively and phenomenologically distinct (in what they do and how they feel, in their tactile and kinaesthetic dimensions). While such muscular contractions and ticks were constructed in colonial psychiatry to be symptomatic of Arab inactivity and "paresse," Fanon diagnoses their inner trembling and hesitation as movement in place, that remembers, refuses, and waits.

The past with its colonial impositions and foreclosed depths of possibility is felt in these sensings, spasms, and tension without teleology or utility. Suspended in an unrealizable time (outside of linear time), the interval of racialized sensitivity is that of refusal and waiting.[44] It *remembers* the affects of slavery and colonialism, the weight of their recursive and snowballing durations. But it *refuses* the ankylosed prosthesis of pastness with which colonialism tries to replace this affect, to supplant and give the illusion of wholeness to the dismembered past of the colonized.[45] It refuses the push to move on, to catch up to a "white destiny."[46] But what of *waiting*? Waiting ("en attente") can be a search for an opening towards another, as yet unrealized, reconfigured past and re-imagined time.[47] But before this reconfiguration, the interval needs to be felt. When flesh refuses the touch of the white world and the prosthesis of a colonial past, it *spasms* in response. I would like to think of spasms as ways of *dwelling with* the wounds of colonization and slavery – in their duration and material memory. Waiting would be a modality of affective dwelling. I think of this as the concrete form of sensitivity that Fanon proposes, of pushing out affective pseudopodia in response to the ankylosis of the white world: "if I had to define myself, I would say that I wait; I interrogate the surroundings, I interpret everything in terms of what I discover, I become sensitive [*sensitif*]" (1967, p. 120; 1952, p. 117) This waiting is not measured in terms of a timeline, of immediacy or simultaneity with colonial time. It involves, rather, inventing one's *own time*, one's own ways of mourning, dreaming, living, and dying. Foreclosed and hungry possibility may act here as an affective fulcrum, the hesitation or leeway within the past for this invention to occur – not to be brought back to life, but to permit the leap to another dimension of possibility as yet unrealizable and unforeseen.

NOTES

1 The revisions on this paper stem from several conversations I have had since the first publication of "Too Late" in 2013. My thanks to Linda Martín Alcoff, Amy Allen, Mickaella Perina, Falguni Sheth, Jan Slaby, and George Yancy. I also wish to acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for this research.

2 Since I often re-translate Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), I cite the pagination from both the Markmann translation (1967) and the French original.

3 See Kelly Oliver, *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

4 For ways of using phenomenology to critically understand racialization, in addition to Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre, see Linda Martín Alcoff (2006) and Robert Bernasconi

(2012). Significantly, phenomenology is no longer simply a "pure" method for these authors, but productively combines with decolonized psychiatry (Fanon), a hermeneutics of horizons (Alcoff), and historical studies of racism (Bernasconi).

5 "Neutrality" with respect to colonialism is built on a turning-away from acknowledging it, and reinforces the colonial status quo.

6 For more on Fanon's decolonized or revolutionary psychiatry, see Françoise Vergès (1996) and Hussein Bulhan (1999). See also Fanon (2001).

7 See Fanon (1967, p. 112; 1952, pp. 109–110).

8 See Fanon (1967, p. 191; 1952, p. 185). Such undesirability is, of course, itself constituted in the collective unconscious for Fanon.

9 This is what Falguni Sheth (2009) calls technologies of race. As I will show in this essay, this racial mapping is also temporal.

10 Perceptibility is constituted within a colonial horizon, wherein visible, audible, and other signs of "race" are overdetermined (phenotype, skin color, facial features, but also mannerism, accent, cultural-religious dress, and practice).

11 See Robert Bernasconi (2012).

12 José Medina (2013) argues that this is "active ignorance." Ann Laura Stoler (2011) calls this "colonial aphasia."

13 For the way in which racism becomes "atmospheric," see Fanon's "Racisme et culture" (2006, p. 40).

14 "[I]l y a une constellation de données, une série de propositions qui lentement, sournoisement, à la faveur des écrits, des journaux, de l'éducation, des livres scolaires, des affiches, du cinéma, de la radio, pénètrent un individu – en constituant la vision du monde de la collectivité à laquelle il appartient" (Fanon, 1952, p. 150). See also Fanon (1952, pp. 25, 143–144) and (1967, pp. 28, 146). For more on the concept of social imaginary, see Medina (2013, p. 68).

15 Fanon (1952, p. 110); I have re-translated this passage using Macey (2012, p. 164). The French phrase "Y a bon banania," which Fanon employs, is difficult to translate. It recalls to the French reader a well-known brand of cocoa drink mix that uses in its advertising and on its tin the caricature of a grinning Black man (supposed to represent a Senegalese *tirailleur*, a colonial infantry soldier). But it also replaces the "correct" French of "c'est bon" with "y a bon" – amplifying the racialization of the Senegalese soldier by making him speak "*petit-nègre*," racializing through visible, audible, and linguistic dimensions.

16 The fragmentation of the past is *accompanied* by a fragmentation of flesh, so that we may wonder how the sequential ordering of schemas that Fanon gives could be maintained, given what I would characterize as the non-linear temporality of his phenomenology. I am thinking *flesh* with Hortense Spillers (1987), in tension with Merleau-Ponty. Elsewhere, I question whether the optimally coordinated and seamless (Merleau-Pontian) body schema, with which Fanon begins his narrative, was not but an idealized "white" origin story, or "white destiny" (Fanon, 1967, p. 10; Fanon, 1952, p. 10); rather than describing how bodies are primarily experienced, it would be a vexed and unattainable norm.

17 Fanon says "engluer," see *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952, pp. 32; 224). I delve into this "gluey" or sticky past more deeply in Al-Saji (2019).

18 Drawing on Quijano, Alejandro Vallega calls this "the coloniality of time" (2014, p. 100).

19 Johannes Fabian (1983) calls this denial of coevalness to other cultures "allochronism."

20 I think of colonialism as enduring and continuing, under different guise, not only in settler colonial states but also in countries that have formally decolonized. Colonialism endures economically, militarily, materially, and culturally. In my case, for Iraq, to use the term "formerly colonized" would be to obscure the reality of rephrased colonization over a *longue durée* and its weight in the present.

21 A note on my voice as *diasporic Iraqi*. As I move in this essay from *Black Skin, White Masks* to colonization and back – as the circles of colonization wind tighter, through pastness and possibility – I shift to using "we" when referring to colonized and racialized subjectivities. This is to stem a tendency to eschew, or disidentify with, colonized non-being for diasporic subjects and to forget the colonial roots of current (U.S. and "western") imperial wars and

"foreign" policy. I want to insist on the continuation, repetition, and reconfiguration of colonization, not only in the Americas but globally. But I do not want to imply a homogenous identity. Quijano's and Fanon's philosophies cover a multiplicity of shifting and overlapping positionalities. Quijano's starting point is Latin America. *Black Skin, White Masks* moves between *Blackness* (distinguishing but sometimes blurring Antillean, African, and African-American), *colonization* (Algeria, Madagascar, Vietnam), and different *racializations* (Arab). But this is not to ignore the different mappings of racisms, and the rupture that anti-Blackness institutes in being.

22 I am indebted for the concept of the "dismembered past" to Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997, pp. 11; 72–77).

23 Yet this is not without resistance and agential reaction, nor is it simply in the image that colonial culture projects, as I argue in section four. In his critique of Quijano, Vallega notes that colonization should be understood to have an outside (2014, p. 129).

24 To give an example from Fanon's *L'an V de la révolution algérienne*: When some Algerian women return to veiling under French colonialism, this is seen by colonizers as part of the inherent closure and backwardness of that culture. The complex uses of and motivations for veiling are thus elided, whether as an expression of cultural or national resistance (2001, p. 29), a protective reaction against the violence of French colonizers, or a cover for smuggling weapons for the FLN (2001, pp. 44–45) – to name but a few motivations.

25 Fanon evokes this sense of recognition several times in *Black Skin, White Masks*, most poignantly when he describes watching a film in the cinema and waiting for *himself* to appear on the screen (1967, p. 140; 1952, p. 138). Fanon also mentions this "hint of recognition" in an example contrasting the reception of a Tarzan film in the Antilles and in Europe (1967, pp. 152–153; 1952, p. 150). See Al-Saji, "Glued to the Image" (2019).

26 In his prescient reading, Homi Bhabha takes up this phrase to develop a concept of "post-colonial belatedness" (1994, p. 237) that interrupts the time of modernity. My account diverges both in my use of phenomenology and in the desire to dwell in and wait with this time-lag, without as yet making it productive. This hesitant reading tries to feel the lived weight of racialized lateness.

27 As Oliver points out, Fanon's sense of arriving "too late" differs from the Sartrean notion of being thrown into a world that is not of one's own making but in which one can nevertheless make meaning (2004, p. 15). She proposes "double alienation" as an alternative.

28 To borrow from María Lugones (1996) and her non-agonistic concept of playfulness.

29 Here I draw on and rephrase Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (2012, p. 261; 1945, p. 298).

30 See David Marriott, 2013.

31 "Time before time" comes from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968, p. 243; 1964, p. 292).

32 For Fanon's concept of colonization as "*destructuration*," see Fanon (1952, pp. 92, 94).

33 See Hartman (1997, pp. 11, 77). Hartman is herself drawing on "re-memory" from Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (2004). Dismemberment in slavery and colonialism can also be thought with Spillers as "high crimes against the *flesh*": "That [socio-political order of the New World], with its human sequence written in blood, *represents* for its African and indigenous peoples, a scene of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile" (1987, p. 67; original italics). Relatedly, I note that both Hartman and Fanon speak of "amputation," albeit in different directions. While I believe that Markmann's translation of Fanon (1967) may overstate the use of this term as an ableist metaphor, it is important to remember the pain and wounding of *amputating*, hamstringing, and mutilating the body that Fanon is encoding in his writing. "Amputation," then, is a difficult term that needs to be parsed and to which I return in another work.

34 Says Fanon in "Racisme et culture" (2006, p. 42).

35 The power of the affect of hunger in slavery, not only for food, but for kin, memory, love, and intersubjective touch can be read in Morrison (2004). Also see Weheylie (2014). I add the affect of mourning here – to be able to take time to mourn, without having to move on. In

this vein, we should remember the ways in which French colonialism instituted restrictions in Madagascar on Malagasy death rituals.

36 Conceptually, the possible and the real go together (while the virtual and actual are a different pairing). This means that in "inventorying the real," we cannot stay on the surface. We need to excavate dimensions of possibility that have been torn apart and submerged.

37 Fanon's "Racisme et culture" allows us to understand how the de-structuration of colonized systems of reference is not erasure but breaking, sacking, crushing – indeed, "agonie continue" (2006, pp. 41–42).

38 See Saidiya Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts" (2008, p. 11).

39 Here I want to deepen an analysis that I began in Al-Saji (2014), where I understood ankylosis as constitutive of racist, "racializing affect" (pp. 140–142).

40 This recalls Aimé Césaire's description of colonialism as gangrene and rot (1955, pp. 12; 31).

41 Fanon, "Racisme et culture" (2006, p. 40).

42 See Fanon (1967, p. 10; 1952, p. 10) and Moten (2018, pp. 221–222).

43 Cf. Christopher Chamberlin (2018) and Shiloh Whitney (2018).

44 For a different thinking of the interval in Fanon, see Kara Keeling (2003).

45 I am reading Fanon here with Saidiya Hartman.

46 See Helen Ngo, in this volume.

47 See Fanon (2002, p. 54).

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