

RANO RANO

Léa Thaïs Genoud

RANO RANO

**NAMING, LISTENING TO, REFUSING THE COLONIALITY OF
THE EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
PART I NAMING	15
PART II LISTENING	21
PART III REFUSING/RESISTING	29
CONCLUSION	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY	41
ANNEX	45

Comment le titre *rano, rano* (formule magique pour transformer les balles en eau [N.D.A: créée par les malgaches combattant les forces coloniales françaises en 1947]), s'est-il imposé ?

En 2013, lorsqu'on est allé faire la tournée [N.D.A: de la pièce *rano, rano*], même des gamins percutaient quand on disait « rano, rano », même s'ils ne faisaient pas le lien avec 47. La formule est restée dans les jeux d'enfants jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Notre enfance c'était le jeu des cowboys et des Indiens. Les Indiens disent « rano rano », et les cowboys plus rien. J'ai vu des enfants jouer à Matrix et dire « rano rano ». « Rano rano » vient de cette histoire de 47: le fait de dire « rano rano », c'est dire que la culture malgache est plus forte que ce qui l'agresse. Ce n'est pas seulement une histoire de formule, mais aussi comment le dominé arrive à résoudre le fait qu'il est dominé, et donc en disant « rano, rano », on n'est plus dominé.

Entretien avec l'écrivain et poète Jean-Luc Raharimanana par Anne Bocandé (Africultures) et Virginie Brinker (La Plume francophone)

INTRODUCTION

I don't remember when I started feeling haunted by the ghosts. The ghosts from a past I had never known. Were they always there/present in the stories I heard about when my grandmother met my grandfather? The "biological one" they always specified. Or was it when I found old Malagasy learning method books in my mum's library and understood that, even though she never talked about it, she had once tried to learn her father's mother tongue?

I don't remember when I started feeling haunted by the ghosts, but they are here now. And they make themselves louder each time I learn more about my fragmented family history. They are here, in each fragment of memory, in each fragment of History.

Studying at the Ecole du Louvre, there was never any question about why objects from the past should be collected and put behind sealed glass, no awareness that anyone could view that collecting as a strange activity. No questions, to understand why the white and clean museum spaces could feel threatening to someone. It was never addressed, that this school was part of a larger french imperialist project that started with the enlightenment and still continues today in various forms, the Louvre Abu Dhabi of Jean Nouvel being one neo-liberal continuation of it.

I write this thesis in a context where the police of the city of Lausanne kills Black people without having to answer for it,¹ where switzerland still has not officially recognized its participation in and profit from the Atlantic slave trade and doesn't plan to engage in any reparation work in the near future, where my mum after almost 50 years of straightening her hair almost every day realizes that this is not only a question of style but also of structural racism, where the Bolsonaros of the world are on the rise and my friends will be the first to suffer from it.

This research is fragmentary, not only because of the formal restrictions of the master thesis, but because thinking about colonial history and decoloniality, as the philosopher Seloua Luste Boulbina puts it, implies the irregularity of splits and rips:

Les processus de décolonisation ne sont pas tout d'un bloc. L'hétérochronie est la loi du genre, ce qui signifie concrètement que la décolonisation s'effectue par pans, de façon aléatoire et irrégulière, par déchirures simultanées ou successives, sans former cette belle linéarité dont la pensée rêve en idéalisant le déroulement du temps et le développement de l'histoire. En outre, que l'on soit d'un côté ou de l'autre de la frontière coloniale, dans l'ancienne métropole comme dans l'ancien territoire dominé, la décolonisation commence et finit par soi-même, comme tout effort d'émancipation, tout combat de libération, tout travail de désaliénation.²

My writing will therefore sometimes feel fragmented and broken up. In the cracks, the ruptures, it will follow the path of Fred Moten and Fugitivity³ as well as the methodology that Françoise Vergès addressed in her latest book *Féminisme décolonial*, where she borrows from the work of Darren Lenard Hutchinson on *Multidimensionality* and applies it to her approach of the coloniality of the banana.⁴ In this specific research, she asks: when, why and how has the banana been transformed into a racialized fruit? From the

1. Collectif Jean Dutoit, "Rapport pour les droits et la mobilité des personnes migrantes noires africaines en Suisse et en Europe", December 2017.

2. Seloua Luste Boulbina, "Décoloniser les institutions" in *Mouvements*, n°72 (April 2012): 131-141.

3. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Minor Compositions, 2013).

4. Françoise Vergès, "Bananas: Racism, Sex and Capitalism" in *The Funambulist*, n°6 (July-August 2016): 34-39.

historical object, Vergès analyses how various political forces materialized and built up a cartography of the banana through a plurality of prisms such as colonial slavery, multinationals, military coups, sexuality, and consumption. This thesis is an attempt to borrow from these methodologies and open up similar threads, departing from the museum exhibition.

The first part will thus focus on what Tony Bennett has coined as the exhibitionary complex. I will argue that it is still a useful concept to grasp the contemporaneity of coloniality of exhibitions. The second part of the thesis consists of the re-written version of a text that was first conceived for a performance that took place in January 2019 during our Jury session and was again performed in March 2019 at the independent art space *one gee in fog*. It brings a more situated approach to the question of coloniality and opens up the field of photography as another form of exhibition or exposing moment. The third and last part is dedicated to the practices of two artists and researchers, Adrian Piper and Jota Mombaça.

It is important to note that this thesis is not an answer to the need of european museums and curators to find solutions, in order to reform the western museum.⁵ Instead, this thesis questions how coloniality is inherent to the format of the exhibition and considers the forms by which the exhibitionary complex unfolds itself, from the museum space to photography, as well as through written descriptions or ekphrasis.

... their search for some form of christian redemption ?

coloniality/marronage

This thesis shares the foundational observation that Sylvia Wynter, as well as other scholars such as Walter Dignolo, Paul Gilroy and Françoise Vergès, have already thoroughly studied: that Modernity is fundamentally complicit with and generative of racial slavery and colonialism and thus its aftermath, i.e. the different forms of coloniality that developed into our contemporary world. Unfolding from the concept of coloniality of power from the Latin American decolonial thinker Anibal Quijano, the Caribbean writer and theorist Sylvia Wynter addresses what she calls the “Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom.” In her famous article of the same name, Wynter exposes how, from the fifteen century onwards, the present hegemonic ethnoclass (i.e. white western bourgeois man) was able to secure an overrepresentation of itself – “human, Man,” as a normative representation of all humans/ the “human itself.” This overrepresentation created a power imbalance over centuries. Therefore, in order to unsettle the coloniality of power, Wynter writes, we need to unsettle this overrepresentation. She purposefully chooses the verb “to unsettle,” which means to make something unstable, and, at the same time, refers to one of the oldest forms of the colonial project, settler colonialism. The settler, unlike the soldier or the trader, aims literally to take over the place of the indigenous population, to ensure its ongoing elimination and to secure the control over its land permanently. To unsettle, then, is to destabilize, unroot the ongoing and permanent control over people and land, as well as over knowledge produced outside of europe, starting by attacking its un-questioned stance of power.

Political theorists Neil Roberts and Barnor Hesse propose powerful ways to question and trouble this hegemonic logic.⁶ Both inscribe their thinking in a genealogy of Maroon and Black Fugitive thought. Departing from the fugitive slave or the Maroon, the body that haunts, unsettles the plantation system

5. See Iain Chambers, Alessandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello, Mariangela Orabona (ed.), *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History* (Farnham : Ashgate, 2014) or Natalie Bayer, Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński, Nora Sternfeld (ed.), *Kuratieren als antirassistische Praxis* (Berlin : Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

6. Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015) and Barnor Hesse, “Escaping Liberty: Western Hegemony, Black Fugitivity,” *Political Theory* 42, n°3 (June 2014).

at its very historical core, they construct a critique of conceptions of freedom in European and North American political theory. On one hand, Barnor Hesse focuses on the foreclosure in Western liberal and republican meaning of liberty of its entanglement with colonialism and race governance. The consequences of this foreclosure lead directly, in my understanding, to what Wynter calls the “Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom.”

Foreclosure itself, Barnor Hesse explains, is actually “a structural feature of all discourse,” what really needs problematization are its hegemonic effects. What does the foreclosure of racial slavery and colonialism in the conceptual construction of freedom produce? To what end(s) is it foreclosed? How can freedom be conceived as a “universal” concept that should apply for all if it doesn’t take into account the unfreedom of some? And how is the freedom of some actually constructed upon the unfreedom of all others?

Parallels can be drawn between two different concepts that are serving the same ideology: the mechanisms of foreclosure and what German activists call *Entinnerung*,⁷ unremembering. Unlike a complete memory erasure, *Entinnerung* designates a process of actively selecting and forgetting or relativizing part of historical narratives. Germany is today well known for its work of *Erinnerungskultur* (commemorative culture) in relation to the Holocaust. But what is often left unsaid is that this work of memory is quite selective (as well as self-serving, in rehabilitating the German nation-state after 1945). That is why many anti-racist activists and researchers have started to work with the term *Entinnerung*. It underlines the fact that while memory work is being done, it is often coupled with processes of unremembering, as it was the case for the genocide of the Herero and Nama that the German Empire committed between 1904 and 1908.⁸ In the political process of the recognition of the genocide, the representative of the Herero and Nama pointed out to the German government the need to return the bodies that are hidden in German cellars.⁹ The human remains were used since the 1900s to produce so-called racial research and were brought to Germany after the genocide. In spite of active remembrance work concerning the Nazi period, the links between this “racial research” and the ideology that supported the Holocaust are still never fully exposed or acknowledged. In this sense, both, foreclosure and *Entinnerung*, allow the hegemony of white Christian European power to perpetuate itself against questions and challenges.

However, the foreclosure of racial slavery and coloniality addressed by Hesse goes beyond the mechanisms of *Entinnerung*. It makes the work of Black thinkers on Fugitivity and Freedom completely unconceivable, as it lays outside the Western liberal epistemology of liberty, developed by canonical thinkers such as Isaiah Berlin. In order to expose this process and move beyond it, Hesse opens up a path of escape “from the restraints of white-accountable historiography.”¹⁰ He thus draws upon the work of Black political thinkers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Aimé Césaire and David Walker in order to make visible a lineage of Black Fugitive thought that enables a thought of escapology. Escapology, Hesse writes, “insinuates a commitment to eluding, revealing and interrogating the liberal-colonial suturing of Western lib-

7. Kien Nghi Ha, Lilia Youssefi, Deborah Feldman, among others.

8. It was only recognized as such by the German government in 2015. The reason given was that the UN Genocide Convention took effect only in 1948. But as Germany recognized the Armenian genocide of 1915, they had to change their assessment/judgment on the genocide of the Herero and Nama. But the German government still stated that the use of the term genocide alone would not have any legal consequences for Germany. Read Kassel Postkolonial, “Grundlage: Er-/Entinnerung,” accessed April 28, 2017, <http://kassel-postkolonial.de/2017/04/07/grundlage-er-entinnerung/>.

9. Such as those of the Charité as well as the University of Freiburg, the University of Frankfurt, the University of Leipzig and the Völkerkundemuseum Dresden, etc.

10. Barnor Hesse, “Escaping Liberty: Western Hegemony, Black Fugitivity”, *Political Theory* 42, n°3 (June 2014): 307.

erty as whiteness.”¹¹ He thereby calls for a refusal of the unspeakability of this western hegemonic foreclosure and its violent effects by reanimating a lineage of Black Fugitive thought in order to “augment [...] our intellectual and cultural capacities to embody the meaning of freedom subversively.”¹²

Working on building up a political and intellectual genealogy of Black thinkers is also part of Neil Roberts’ work. In *Freedom as Marronage*, he explains how the Maroon and more specifically the act of *marronage* should at the same time be recognized as formed in a precise historical context, but also understood in its strong trans-historical utility.¹³ He urges us to complexify the binary commonplace of freedom vs. slavery and to engage in the liminal space of escape:

[...] not only by situating slavery as freedom’s opposite condition but also by investigating the significance of the equally important liminal and transitional space between slavery and freedom. [...] Political theorists, therefore, must pay more attention to the experience of the process by which people emerge from slavery to freedom.¹⁴

Marronage is here conceived as a liminal space, a space of transition, of resistance, but also of possibilities. This perspective is what links Neil Roberts’ thinking with artist and curator Olivier Marboeuf’s practice. In an interview I held with him,¹⁵ Marboeuf explains that *marronage* is important for understanding our contemporary times because, among other reasons, it implies the conditions of what he calls a “*dispositif plantationnaire*”¹⁶ which “has something in common with our contemporary globalized capitalism”¹⁷: for slaves who were born and raised in the plantations, there was no conception of an outside/exteriority of the plantation system. That’s why we can call it a “*système total*.”¹⁸ The existence/presence of the maroon communities, be it through tales/gossip or real experience/encounter, was what made the conception of an exteriority possible.¹⁹ For Marboeuf though, the Maroon was not the fugitive slave. In the plantations situated on islands, as it was the case in the *Antilles*, the Maroons were forced to flee to the inhospitable mountains or forests, because the coasts were all occupied by the colonial settler. Occupying the forest or the mountains surrounding the plantations, the maroon was constantly threatening the master, by stealing food, materials or their most precious piece of property, what allowed the plantation to prosper, the slaves themselves. Therefore Marboeuf tells us, the Maroons embody the question of the “*tourment*.”²⁰ They embody what most radically unsettles european modernity, and therefore, opens the possibility for what Françoise Vergès in *Féminisme décolonial* calls “a radical promise.”²¹

11. Barnor Hesse, “Escaping Liberty: Western Hegemony, Black Fugitivity”, *Political Theory* 42, n°3 (June 2014): 307.

12. *Ibid.*, 208.

13. Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 4.

14. *Ibid.*

15. In January 2018, I went to Paris to meet with Olivier Marboeuf with whom I had once worked in the past. I wanted to start a longer conversation of his understanding of *Marronage* and the role it played in his practice as a curator and writer. We met, not at the art center Khiasma that he directed at the time, but at the office of Spectre, the film production company that he co-founded, in the XXème arrondissement. You can find extracts of the 2-hours long interview in the annex.

16. Translation of the author: plantational dispositive, apparatus.

17. Interview of Olivier Marboeuf by Léa Genoud, January 29, 2018.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. Translation of the author: turmoil/trouble.

21. Françoise Vergès, *Féminisme décolonial* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2019), 37.

A radical promise would mean the possibility to open a fugitive trail,²² where we can gather accomplices to haunt, worry and unsettle racial capitalism.²³ With these accomplices, we will work at undoing the principles of non-questioning that hold western normative positions in power. Where the foreclosure analyzed by Hesse is called upon by artists like Jota Mombaça in the fragment of their performance “Towards a Gender Disobedient and Anticolonial Redistribution of Violence: Naming the Norm”:

Naming the norm is the first step towards a redistribution of violence which is gender disobedient and anti-colonial, because the norm is that which is not named, and this is what its privilege consists of. The absence of a mark is what endows privileged (normative) positions with their principle of non-questioning, that is their ontological comfort, their ability to understand themselves as the norm and the world as their mirror.²⁴

22. Stefano Harney and Valentina Desideri, “A Conspiracy Without A Plot,” in *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, ed. by Jean-Paul Martinon (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 127.

23. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

24. Jota Mombaça, “Fragment of “Towards a Gender Disobedient and Anticolonial Redistribution of Violence”: Naming the Norm,” accessed October 6, 2018, <http://www.nightschool.at/de/jota-mombaca/>.

To name the exhibition is to start by addressing its birth in the western museum, as well as its productive part in the European modern project and its imperialist, nationalist and progressive incentives:

Museums, galleries, and, more intermittently, exhibitions played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state and are fundamental to its conception as, among other things, a set of educative and civilizing agencies.²⁵

The European museum constituted itself from princely collections, mostly accumulated during war expeditions and symbolizing of the power of the ruler. The museum transformed those formerly private collections into state-owned public collections.²⁶ The objects and artworks that were at first hidden/kept from the gaze of the non-ruling class would now be exhibited to a larger public, understood as a group of national citizens. This new kind of display thus engendered what the English sociologist Tony Bennett has coined as the exhibitionary complex.²⁷ Constructing its argument from Foucault's analysis of the relations between power and knowledge in the institutional frame of the asylum, the clinic and the prison, Bennett proposes to question these relations of power and knowledge in the frame of the birth of the European museum and more specifically through the development of technologies of vision encompassed in the format of the exhibition. Bennett's main argument is that the exhibition forms a kind of civilizing machine, controlled by the state power and its nationalistic binary discourse of exclusion/inclusion, where the display is used to self-regulate the bodies of the visitors and the knowledge they are allowed to appropriate.

The exhibitionary complex was [...] a response to the problem of order [...] which worked [...] in seeking to transform that problem [of order] into one of culture - a question of winning hearts and minds as well as the disciplining and training of bodies. [...] in seeking to render the forces and principles of order visible to the populace - transformed, here, into a people, a citizenry.²⁸

The exhibition display, organized in what Bennett calls "object lessons in power," sought to place the people on the side of power, understood as belonging/being subject to a common nationalized citizenry. Thus enabling and marking:

[...] the distinction between the subjects and the objects of power not within the national body but, as organized by the many rhetorics of imperialism, between that body and other, 'non-civilized' peoples. [...] This was, in other words, a power which aimed at a rhetorical effect through its representation of otherness rather than at any disciplinary effects.²⁹

The exhibitionary complex was also shaped by its relation with new disciplines and knowledge such as history, art history, archaeology, geology, biology, and anthropology. In the context of late 19th Century European imperialism, Bennett argues, anthropology played a central role in shaping the ideology of

25. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 419.

26. Carole Duncan, "From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum," in David Boswell and Jessica Evans, *Representing the Nation: A Reader. Histories, Heritage and Museums* (London: Routledge, 1999).

27. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

28. *Ibid.*, 415.

29. *Ibid.*, 420.

the exhibitionary complex.³⁰ Articulating a rhetoric of progress with rhetorics of nationalism and imperialism,³¹ it reinforced the separation of a national homogenous body of white citizens vs. the either undefined or over-defined “others.” The representation and construction of the “other,” the Black/Brown/non-white body was used to reinforce the rhetoric of a “progressive western civilization” that would have surpassed earlier stages of development³² – a logic that still echoes in today’s European programs of economic development in the so-called third world/global south. This hierarchy of development was shown via the exhibition of the racialized body.

Here I had first started to describe some modes of exhibition of racialized bodies that happened throughout history, mechanically re-using the language of most European history and art history scholars. Taking the time to re-read the passage I had written, I realized I was reproducing another form of exhibition/exposure of violence, this time through the form of an ekphrasis, a literary description of a visual object. I was thus being confronted with what Saidiya Hartman addressed in *Scenes of Subjection* when problematizing the “terrible spectacle” or “horrible exhibition” of Frederick Douglass first Chapter of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845):

I have chosen not to reproduce Douglass's account of the beating of Aunt Hester in order to call attention to the ease with which such scenes are usually reiterated, the casualness with which they are circulated, and the consequences of this routine display of the slave's ravaged body. Rather than inciting indignation, too often they immure us to pain by virtue of their familiarity—the oft-repeated or restored character of these accounts and our distance from them are signaled by the theatrical language usually resorted to in describing these instances—and especially because they reinforce the spectacular character of Black suffering. What interests me are the ways we are called upon to participate in such scenes. [...] At issue here is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator. Only more obscene than the brutality unleashed at the whipping post is the demand that this suffering be materialized and evidenced by the display of the tortured body or endless recitations of the ghastly and terrible. In light of this, how does one give expression to these outrages without exacerbating the indifference to suffering that is the consequence of the numbing spectacle or contend with the narcissistic identification that obliterates the other or the prurience that too often is the response to such displays?³³

Hartman refuses to further look at explicit scenes of terror and chooses, throughout her book, to analyze those where “terror can hardly be discerned.”³⁴ “By de-familiarizing the familiar,” she writes, “I hope to illuminate the terror of the mundane and quotidian rather than exploit the shocking spectacle.”³⁵ As Fred Moten points out in *In the Break*, the refusal to reproduce the description of the scene by Hartman is somehow “illusory.”³⁶ By denying it, she thus has to refer to it, which inevitably leads to some form of reproduction of the account. But, as Moten underlines, Hartman’s account creates a disruption/disturbance, which opens up a possibility of a reflexive

30. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 430.

31. *Ibid.*, 433.

32. *Ibid.*, 431.

33. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 4.

and critical re-reading of the original/primal ekphrasis. “[A] space,” Moten describes, “[that Hartman] leaves for the ongoing (re)production of that performance in all its guises and for a critical awareness of how each of those guises is always already present in and disruptive of the supposed originarity of that primal scene.”³⁷

(Re)production of violence through the exhibition can thus take different forms. This Foucauldian reading of the formation of the exhibitionary complex in the frame of the birth of the European museum, and in parallel to the birth of Nation states, is important if we want to understand the contemporary implication of the coloniality of the exhibition. It is important to understand how the gaze through technologies of vision was used not only to control bodies and knowledge inside national borders but also to separate bodies and justify violence and power imbalance inside and outside of the national border. Those mechanisms are still at work today, be it more broadly in the racialized system of surveillance that is studied by Simone Browne in her research called *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, but also in a more specific context, which belongs to the same logic as the former, in the frame of the art institutions. It is the latter that will be addressed in this thesis, following the thoughts of Olivier Marboeuf in his *Préambule* to the performance *L'institution gazeuse* that I attended at the Centre Pompidou in June 2016:

L'institution d'art n'est pas qu'une forme, mais également la traduction d'un projet de contrôle de certains régimes de présence; présence des œuvres et autres artefacts mais aussi, et c'est ce qui nous intéresse ici, présence des corps. Une main-mise sur l'ordre des choses, des mots, des affects, des histoires et des devenirs. Ordre dont le siège n'est pas le White Cube, ses vitrines et collections, mais le corps lui-même. L'institution ordonne les corps dans ce qu'ils engagent avec l'art et comme pour les autres objets, en autorise certains, en fait disparaître d'autres. Ce qui est montré et ce qui est soustrait au regard, ce qui est devant, qualifié, autorisé et visible, ce qui est derrière, se tient dans l'ombre de la réserve, en silence, l'impensé, le sans-visage, l'innommable. Le musée est ainsi un flux continu et contrôlé de récit au travail et ce n'est pas seulement un autre lieu qu'il nous faut chercher dans un futur proche, mais un autre corps, queer, capable de s'enfuir, de marronner dans les marges de la plantation globalisée que suppose l'institution.³⁸

37. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 4.

38. Olivier Marboeuf, *Préambule/L'institution gazeuse* in *Afrikadaa: Museum on/off Musée l'ont leux, hors-série n°8*, Paris, 2017. Translation from the author: “The institution of art is not only a form, but also the translation of a project of control of certain regimes of presence; the presence of artworks and other artifacts but also, and this is what is of interest to us here, the presence of bodies. A control over the order of things, words, affects, stories and futures. An order whose headquarters is not the White Cube, its display cases and collections, but the body itself. The institution orders the bodies in what they engage with art and as for other objects, authorizes some, makes others disappear. What is shown and what is hidden from view, what is in front, qualified, authorized and visible, what is behind, stands in the shadow of the reserve, in silence, the unthought, the faceless, the unspeakable. The museum is thus a continuous and controlled flow of narrative at work and it is not only another place that we must look for in the near future but another body, queer, capable of escaping, of marooning in the margins of the globalized plantation that the institution implies.”

In much new, exciting cultural practice, cultural texts – in film, black literature, critical theory – there is an effort to remember that is expressive of the need to create spaces where one is able to redeem and reclaim the past, legacies of pain suffering, and triumph in ways that transform present reality. Fragments of memory are not simply represented as flat documentary but constructed to give a “new take” on the old, constructed to move us into a different mode of articulation. [...]

I heard the statement “our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting”; a politicization of memory that distinguishes nostalgia, that longing for something to be as once it was, a kind of useless act, from that remembering that serves to illuminate and transform the present.

bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness” in bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 147-148.

PART II

The silence of the space couldn't have been louder.
Tina Campt

What form do colonial ghosts take and how do they interact with what has been made out of the excolonies? How is coloniality present in the bodily relationship marked by the racialized geopolitical? What forces do these ghosts move? What fictions materialize? They are embodied ghosts, inscribed in the unavoidable latency of the colonial wound: like a muscular tension or a sting felt in the bone, in body's bone structure and in the former colonial land.

Jota Mombaça, Fragment of "The postcolonial does not exist"

Few months ago, I was visiting the Museum of Ethnography of Geneva for the first time. Having majored in European Art History and Museology, practicing and analyzing European museum settings has become quite usual to me, but I experienced this visit somehow differently.

Afrique. Les Religions de l'extase was the title of the actual temporary exhibition. We were there with members of the university group PostCit to prepare for a workshop on the ethnographic museum and its postcolonial critique. The whole setting was quite similar to what in French museology class I learned to call the "Quai Branly effect" or "wonder effect": dark rooms and dramatic lightings. The first space was dedicated to monotheisms on the African Continent, predominantly Christian monotheisms. There, one showcase particularly caught my attention. It displayed colonial and missionary games: *La roue des colonies*, *atlas giratoire des pays colonisés* and *Nouveau jeu des familles, jeux de cartes édités par la société des missions*. On the lower part of the showcase, lay a sacred talisman from Madagascar.

The notice said:

Rakelimazala Sampy, Sacred Talisman, Madagascar, Ambohimajy (Antananarivo), Merina, 19th Century.

I am missing a lot of information about my maternal grandfather, but one thing I have learned is that he was living in the region of Antananarivo before leaving Madagascar with a scholarship to study in Paris at the end of the 1950s. Listening to my grandmother's partial memories, his family was probably partly Merina.

I read the notice further:

This little set of wickerwork objects and short sticks today incomplete and apparently innocuous had a sacred function and represented Rakelimazala, one of the Merina's twelve protective royal talismans. It bears witness to the "idol hunting" of missionaries and their agents. Taken from the village of Ambohimajy, this tutelary, protective object was brought to Pastor Rusillon in 1904 by one of his Malagasy evangelists.

It was my first encounter with a historical object of Madagascar, in Europe.

I further walked into the exhibition and entered a spacious and even darker room where a spectacularly big reproduction of a black and white photography was staged. It depicted a sculpture made of stone. An *Orimbatu*. A sculpture for the dead. The Ancestors.

Next to this imposing image, hang several other similar pictures arranged in a format that resembles a contact sheet.



Taking the time to look more closely to each of them, one particularly struck me. Unlike the other funerary wood sculptures representing mostly bodies without clothing, this one was dressed. As a soldier.

*Io lay sambo de Gera
Nentin'i dada
Niady tany an-dafy an ! (2)
Misy vazaha mena sofina be iray
Mitondra ny sambo an ! (2)*

E ! e ! e ! e ! (2)

Extract of the song Sambo de Gera (English translation: Warship), written by Zafimahaleo Rasolofondraosolo a.k.a. Dama, musician, sociologist and politician, member of the band Mahaleo. He was also a presidential candidate for the 2018 elections.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TwPK36068k>

Tina Campt in her work *Listening to images* invites us to listen rather than look at what she calls “quiet images.” Her material of study consists of mostly images that archive and capture history of Blackness, be it UK citizen pass photography from the ‘40s till the ‘80s or ethnographic photography taken in South Africa in the 19th Century. She inscribes her thinking in the path opened up by Fred Moten on photography and Black Mo’nin’/mo(ur)nin(g). In the article by the same name, Moten invokes the story of Emmett Till, a teenage Black boy, who, in 1955 in Money, Mississippi, was tortured and murdered by white supremacists. After his death, his mother, Mamie Till Bradley, chose to have an open casket funeral for the “all world to witness the atrocity’.”³⁹ A photograph of Emmett’s body was then published in a magazine and became “legendary.”⁴⁰ Following this account, Moten asks and answers a central question:

So I’m interested in what a photograph—what this photograph—does to ontology, to the politics of ontology, and to the possibility and project of a utopian politics outside of ontology. How can this photograph challenge ontological questioning? By way of a sound and by way of what’s already there in the decision to display the body, to publish the photograph, to restage death and rehearse mo(ur)nin(g).⁴¹

Campt thus picks up on Moten and conceives a listening practice that departs from an understanding of sound as frequencies, vibrations. In order to be able to listen to the sounds of archival images we need to, she writes, look “beyond what we see and attun[e] our senses to the other affective frequencies through which photographs register.”⁴² In other words, to let the image and its context resonate within our body and let ourselves be affected by it:

To a physicist, audiologist, or musicologist, sound consists of more than what we hear. It is constituted primarily by vibration and contact and is defined as a wave resulting from the back-and-forth

39. Elizabeth Alexander, “‘Can you be BLACK and look at this’: Reading the Rodney King Video(s)” in Thelma Golden, ed., *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994), 102.

40. Ibid.

41. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 196.

42. Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 9.

vibration of particles in the medium through which it travels. The lower frequencies of these images register as what I describe as “felt sound”—sound that, like a hum, resonates in and as vibration. Audiologists refer to such frequencies as infrasound: ultra-low frequencies emitted by or audible only to certain animals, such as elephants, rhinoceroses, and whales. While the ear is the primary organ for perceiving sound, at lower frequencies, infrasound is often only felt in the form of vibration through contact with parts of the body. Yet all sound consists of more than what we hear.⁴³

This small ethnographic photography, to me, resonated way higher and louder than the imperceptible low frequency it seemed to incarnate in the exhibition space. Already triggered by the epistemic violence of the first showcase, the quietness of those photographs and their scenography just loudly made visible the absence of information and problematization of these materials and the violent history it is silencing.

Here is the warship
that took my father
to fight wars overseas
A big white man with crimson ears
commanded the destroyer

Translation into English of the lyrics of the song *Sambo de Gera*

France, like other imperialist powers, not only colonized the land but also instrumentalized the bodies of the colonized subjects to fight its own battles. The “tirailleurs,” as they were called, were educated to french military fighting techniques as well as french language and french cultural habits.

Se raconte souvent cet exemple : un homme un jour entra dans ma maison, on dira de lui qu'il était blanc de peau, il avait traversé l'océan, il avait bravé les tempêtes, il était venu là, étranger, portant fusil et autres armes inimaginables, il massacra mon père, massacra ma mère, quelques-uns de mes frères, quelques-unes de mes sœurs, il me tendit ensuite un bol de soupe, du pain et des livres, me dit que je ne devrais plus vivre dans un tel taudis, et trempant ses bottes dans le sang de ma mère, dans le sang de tous les miens, il me prit par la main et me nomma boy, indigène, fils de la république. En retour, je devais le remercier et l'appeler aspect positif.⁴⁴

The colonized subjects, now turned into imperialist weapons, sometimes turned their back to the empire. That is what happened in Indochina, in Algeria, and, even though it is often forgotten by european history, in Madagascar. The revolt of 1947 lasted for months and the french repression was a slaughter. Not to mention the violent and long-lasting process of trials and the torture that framed it.

43. Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 7.

44. Pierrot Men, Raharimanana, *Portraits d'insurgés, Madagascar 1947* (Edition Vent d'ailleurs, 2011). Translation from the author: “This example is often told: a man one day entered my house, they would say of him that he was white of skin, he had crossed the ocean, he had braved the storms, he had come there, a stranger, carrying rifles and other unimaginable weapons, he massacred my father, massacred my mother, some of my brothers, some of my sisters, he then handed me a bowl of soup, bread and books, told me that I should no longer live in such a slum, and dipping his boots in my mother's blood, in the blood of all my kins, he took me by the hand and named me boy, indigène, son of the republic. In return, I had to thank him and call him positive aspect.”

I choose to reproduce here an extract of the book of the writer and poet Raharimanana and the photograph Pierrot Men *Portraits d'insurgés, Madagascar 1947* (2011) in its original language. We could question if this is not the repetition of what Hartman addressed with Douglass's account of the beating of Aunt Hester. Nevertheless, I choose to keep it because it is part of a memory work that accompanies photographs realized by the Malagasy photographer Pierrot Men, that I met in Antananarivo in 2016. It is this specific kind of work where it is important not to look away and do the work of remembering. It helps us understand that violence did not happen in vain because Malagasys fought for their life, for their freedom and for the independence of their land.

Rêve de Razafi, garçon de treize à quatorze ans :

« Il est poursuivi par des tirailleurs (sénégalais) qui en courant « font un bruit de cheval au galop », « ils montrent leurs fusils devant eux. » Le sujet leur échappe en devenant invisible. Il monte un escalier et trouve la porte de la maison... »

Rêve d'Elphine, fille de treize à quatorze ans :

« Je rêve d'un bœuf noir qui me poursuit avec force. Le bœuf est vigoureux. Sa tête, presque tachetée de blanc (sic), porte ses deux longues cornes bien pointues. Ah ! quel malheur ! me dis-je. Le sentier se rétrécit, que puis-je faire ? Je me penche sur un manquier. Hélas ! je suis tombée par les buissons. Alors il [s']appuie les cornes contre moi. Mon intestin sort et il le mange... »

Fragments of dreams of Malagasy subjects from Octave Mannoni's study *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* on the psyche of the colonized subject, retold by Frantz Fanon in *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* in chapter 4 titled "The So-Called Dependency Complex Of Colonized People."⁴⁵

As Fanon points out in his book *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, the white man releases himself from any responsibility by "racial distribution of guilt."⁴⁶ Whenever there have been attempts to overthrow the colonial power and gain independence, the French military specifically chose to send "men of color" from other colonized lands, thus invalidating any claims of liberation of other women and men of color and the solidarity that could emerge from it.⁴⁷

Nous savons par ailleurs que l'un des tortionnaires du bureau de police de Tananarive était un Sénégalais. Aussi, sachant tout cela, sachant ce que peut être pour un Malgache l'archétype sénégalais, les découvertes de Freud ne nous sont d'aucune utilité. Il s'agit de replacer ce rêve en son temps, et ce temps c'est la période pendant laquelle quatre-vingt mille indigènes ont été tués, c'est-à-dire un habitant sur cinquante; et dans son lieu, et ce lieu c'est une île de quatre millions d'habitants, au sein de laquelle aucune véritable relation ne peut s'instaurer, où les dissensions éclatent de tous côtés, où le mensonge et la démagogie sont les seuls maîtres.

Frantz Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, Chapter 4 "The So-Called Dependency Complex Of Colonized Peoples"⁴⁸

45. Frantz Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (Paris: Points, 2015), 9. Translation by Charles Lam Markmann, English edition of the same book by Pluto Press 1986: "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 black 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."

46. Ibid, 101.

47. Frantz Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (Paris: Points, 2015), 101.

48. Ibid, 101-102. Translation by Charles Lam Markmann, English edition of the same book by Pluto Press 1986: "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 demagoguery."

The Senegalese were present in great numbers in Madagascar. They were not only mobilized to repress the revolt of 1947 but also during the first moments of the so-called “pacification” just after the takeover of the french at the end of the 19th Century. It is around the same time frame that the general Gallieni implemented its infamous “politique des races.” Following the idea of “divide and rule,” Gallieni launched a large-scale campaign of ethnographical study of what he called the different “races” of Madagascar. In order to organize more efficiently the colonial government, they classified the different ethnic groups, assigning them to specific essentializing traits. Photography was then a fundamental instrument in the service of Gallieni’s politics.⁴⁹ It was used to “objectivize” the anthropological theory of races, thus forming another kind of civilizing machine through the gaze.⁵⁰

To refuse the objectification of this gaze and the violence it reproduces is thus to listen to these archival images.

Engaging these images as decidedly haptic objects is a method that requires us to interrogate both the archival encounter, as well as the content of archival collections, in multiple tenses and multiple temporalities and in ways that attend to both their stakes and possibilities. It is a method that reckons with the fissures, gaps, and interstices that emerge when we refuse to accept the “truth” of images and archives the state seeks to proffer through its production of subjects posed to produce particular “types” of regulated and regulatable subjects.

Tina Campt, *Listening to Images*⁵¹

To engage haptically, here in the sense of Tina Campt which includes a sonic approach that implies being touched by vibrations, frequencies, we can start by imagining the investigation that Fred Moten proposes in *In the Break* :

of the augmentation of mourning by the sound of moaning, by a religious and political formulation of morning that animates the photograph with a powerfully material resistance.⁵²

In the break, the rupture, of memory and history, to listen to images means to refuse another art historical analysis, to augment the silences and rehearse mo(ur)nin(g) of Malagasy fighters by showing/staging the phonic materiality of the archival image.

49. See Gilles Boetsch and Eric Savarese, « Photographies anthropologiques et politique des races », *Journal des Anthropologues*, 80-81 | 2000, accessed on April 24 2018, <http://journals.openedition.org/jda/3224>.

50. See Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008).

51. Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (London: Duke University Press, 2017), 8.

52. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 198.



2. Adrian Piper, *Cornered* (1988). Photo: Nathan Keay, MCA Chicago.

*Ô mon corps, fais de moi toujours un homme qui interroge!*⁵³
Frantz Fanon, Peau Noire, Masques Blancs

In her piece *Cornered* from 1988, Adrian Piper stages a video of herself projected on a tv screen, literally installed in a corner, behind an upturned table. On each side of the tv screen hangs one birth certificate of Piper's father: one dating from 1953, mentions him as "octoroon," the one dating 1965 as "white." Several ranks of chairs are arranged in front of this installation, in a triangular way, all facing the screen.

In the video, she addresses herself directly to the viewers:



3. Stills from "Adrian Piper: Deconstructing Race in the Indexical Present."⁵⁴

I'm Black. Now, let's deal with this social fact and the fact of my stating it, together.

Throughout the video, she informs the viewers, supposedly self-identifying white Americans, about the history of mixed ancestry in America⁵⁵, challenging them by asking:

So if I choose to identify myself as Black whereas you do not, that's not just a special personal fact about me. It's a fact about us. It's our problem to solve. So, how do you propose we solve it? What are you going to do?

The theatricality of such a staging places the viewer in, if not the impossibility, at least the difficulty of "averting one's gaze"⁵⁶ from Piper's address. Here she plays and overturns the mechanisms of the exhibitionary complex by exposing/exhibiting the viewer's internalized racism, what she calls a "visual pathology." By exposing how she is being exposed to categories of race and/or gender, Piper also inscribes herself in what Daphne Brooks described as "afro-alienation acts" in her study on 19-20th Century Black Performance in the US:

In Afro-alienation, the "strange" situation of "looking at one's self through the eyes of others" evolves into what Brechtian feminist Elin Diamond describes as the enlivened position of "looking at being looked at ness". [...] Just as Brecht calls for actors to adapt "socially critical" techniques in their performances so as to generate "alienation effects" and to "awaken" audiences to history, so too can we consider these historical figures as critically de-familiarizing their own bodies by way of performance in order to yield alternative racial and gender epistemologies.⁵⁷

53. Frantz Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (Paris: Points, 2015), 225. Translation from the author: O my body, make of me always a man who questions!

54. Adrian Piper: Deconstructing Race in the Indexical Present." Created for ART178: Black Aesthetics and the Politics of Representation, Pomona College. Accessed in April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKPtKrKvXyo>

55. "Between 5 and 20% of the ancestors of presumed white Americans are Black."

56. Adrian Piper, "Ways of Averting One's Gaze (1988)" in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Vol. II (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): 127-148.

57. Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 4-5.

The staging of *Cornered* furthermore recalls the aesthetic of a barricade, a form of self-defense that also echoes with Piper's speech in the video. Here I understand self-defense not as a reactionary protective act, but as a generative emancipatory practice that inscribes itself in what the political philosopher Elsa Dorlin calls an "epistemology of resistance" or "technique du tumulte pour déjouer la domination"⁵⁸:

What could be called an epistemology of resistance, i.e. a work to think how we can fight within the articulation of power relations, how to situate ourselves and how to produce forms of becoming subject in this context.⁵⁹

Those three points are also at the heart of Piper's artistic practice. Often reductively identified as a performance artist, Adrian Piper describes herself as a "first-generation Conceptual artist and analytic philosopher."⁶⁰ Working as a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Georgetown from 1987 to 2008, becoming the first tenured African American woman professor in the field of philosophy, and from the end of the 1960s developing an experimental artistic practice as a conceptual artist, as well as being an advanced Yoga practitioner since 1965, being, as she puts it, Black that can "pass for white," Piper has been always playing with social boundaries. Because of this she also often had to respond to reductive categorizations and misidentifications. In 1989, she wrote on the subject in her essay "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I":

I have frequently been misclassified as a "performance artist," although less than one-fifth of my work is in the area of performance. I identify myself, rather, as a conceptual artist, for two reasons. First, I define conceptual art as art that subordinates medium to idea (this follows Sol LeWitt's definition in "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 5, n°10 [Summer 1967], pp. 79-83). That is, I choose that medium that best realizes the ideas I am exploring. This results in great flexibility and a wide variety of available media in which to work, depending on the ideas or concepts in question. [...] So identifying myself as a conceptual artist is a good way to avoid getting pigeonholed or stereotyped – in the matter of art practice at least. (Of course it doesn't always work. Misidentifying me as a performance artist depends on disregarding my work in other media, just as imposing racist stereotypes depends on disregarding evidence of the other's complexity.)⁶¹

She produced numerous similar texts that she calls *Meta-Art*, a term she coined in 1972 and that she describes as:

[...] a kind of writing an artist may do about her work that examines its processes and clarifies its sociopolitical context and conceptual presuppositions from the first-person perspective (see "In Support of Meta-Art" [1973] in volume II).⁶²

In my understanding, this conceptual practice of producing a meta-text fur-

58. Elsa Dorlin, "De l'usage épistémologique et politique des catégories de « sexe » et de « race » dans les études sur le genre" in *Cahiers du Genre* 2005/2 (n°39): 93.

59. Excerpt from the meeting with Elsa Dorlin organized by the Oraibi+Beckbooks bookstore, CUAÉ and the TU, on April 11, 2018 at Uni-Bastions, Geneva. Translation from the author from: Ce qu'on pourrait appeler une épistémologie des résistances, c'est-à-dire un travail pour penser la manière dont on peut lutter dans l'articulation dans le rapport entre les rapports de pouvoir et comment se situer et comment produire des formes de devenir sujet dans ce cadre là.

60. Adrian Piper Official Website, Biography, accessed April 27, 2019, <http://www.adrianpiper.com/biography.shtml>.

61. Adrian Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay" in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Vol. I (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): 248.

62. Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Vol. I, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): xix.

Instead of self-defense, I propose to use the term “autodéfense”. It comes from feminist practices developed during training courses that do not only focus on the use of physical violence, but also on ways to reinforce the awareness of one’s own strength, between the work on oneself and a collective transformation.

thermore nourishes a reading of Piper’s work as, what I would call, a form of self-defense or “autodéfense”⁶³ practice. A practice that can also be related to what Fred Moten has coined as the “resistance of the object.”

As written before, I understand self-defense in a perspective that was developed in Elsa Dorlin’s work, notably in her book titled *Se défendre. Une philosophie de la Violence* (Self-defense. A philosophy of Violence)⁶⁴. Inspired by Afro-feminist thinkers, her practice of martial arts, as well as Foucault and Fanon, she offers a phenomenology of self-defense from slave resistance to the jiu-jitsu of the Suffragettes, as well as addressing self-defense techniques of the Black Panthers or the pink bloc and questions: which bodies have had the right to violence in order to defend themselves and which did not? Which bodies were “disarmed” and turned into “undefendable bodies” (*corps indéfendables*)? By interrogating those marginalized narratives of what she calls “*éthiques martiales de soi*”, she opens up philosophical questions around the idea of “becoming subject,” which resonate with feminist as well as anti-racist struggles: how to “*refaire corps avec soi*” and how to “*retrouver sa puissance d’agir*” in a controlled social context where you have unlearned your right and capacity to self-defense?⁶⁵

On this subject Adrian Piper writes:

In many ways, I regard my marginality as more of a blessing than a curse, as alienation, too, has its uses. In order to survive in a hostile environment, it is necessary to become familiar with its resources, understand the aggressor and anticipate his attacks, and develop adequate strategies for self-defense (yes, combat really does build character). My strategy of self-defense is to transform pain into meaning.⁶⁶

By bringing her practice of critical philosophy into performance work and making performance work that can open up critical philosophical questions, she allows us to, as Fred Moten puts it, “move beyond what she calls the ‘visual pathology’ of racist categorization” and thus shares with us “her belief in the liberatory value of an ongoing redefinition of necessarily incomplete categories and the therapeutic, self-transformational power her performances are intended to exert to that end.”⁶⁷

63. See Irene Zeilinger, *Petit manuel d’autodéfense à l’usage de toutes les femmes qui en ont marre de se faire emmerder sans rien dire* (Paris: Editions Zones, 2008) and Anne-Charlotte Millepiéd, “Le pouvoir des mots et des corps. L’autodéfense féministe, lieu de production de scripts sexuels alternatifs,” *Itinéraires* (2017-2018), Accessed 7 May 2019. <http://journals.openedition.org/itineraires/3818>.

64. See also Elsa Dorlin, “Les espaces temps des résistances esclaves: des suicidés de Saint-Jean aux marrons de Nanny Town. (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)”, *Tumultes*, n°27 (February 2006): 37-51.

65. Excerpt from the meeting with Elsa Dorlin organized by the Oraibi+Beckbooks bookstore, CUAE and the TU, on April 11, 2018 at Uni-Bastions, Geneva.

66. Adrian Piper, “Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay” in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Vol. I, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): 245.

67. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 234.

Be sure to attend very carefully to what I have to say to you. For if you do not, I will make a sincere effort to kill you. Adrian Piper

Years later, another generation, another context, I attend a performance at a Festival in a small swiss city next to Geneva by Rita Natálio and João dos Santos Martins titled “Anthropo-scènes.” Except for my mother and a few other spectators, most of the audience is supposedly white. At one point, in the middle of the show, a fake conference is staged. One of the first speakers is a swiss middle-aged white man who talks about the fauna and flora of the region of the Lemman lake, then enters Jota Mombaça, self-described “bicha non binaria” of the Northeast of Brazil (which, as my Brazilian friends will explain to me later in the context of Bolsonaro elections, is a political statement for itself). They enter the scenic space, dressed with a black dress, undress and climb onto the conference table, next to the first speaker, facing us with their asshole. From there, Jota Mombaça (a.k.a MC Katarina later in the show) spoke a powerful text/speech, that addressed coloniality and its effect on our bodies. The strong confrontational theoretical spoken text together with the presence of their Black/mestizo non-binary body clashed and enhanced the whiteness and swiss “neutral” context of the room. Later, even if I could not find any written version of this specific text, I was able to find other writings by Jota Mombaça online, all quite strongly resonating with my experience of their work at the festival. One was titled “Can a mestizo asshole speak?” and most directly addressed what had happened during the performance I attended. They write/speak:

[...] It is by territorializing the mouths of slaves as the place of speech taboo that the white colonizer ensures his control over the conceptual world of enslaving. In other words, silencing Black subjects allows the white colonial speech to consolidate itself as truth, without the interference of diverging speeches.

[...] When resorting back to Grada Kilomba’s “The Mask,” in which the author builds an analysis of the interdict of the mouth as the interdict of speech, we start to envisage a possible connection. If from her standpoint, the slavery regime produces the territorialization of mouth as a place of torture and non-speechlessness, the compulsory heterosexual norm produced the asshole as the place of excretion and non-pleasure. In both cases, we observe an arbitrary territorialization of the body, seeking to drastically reduce the possibilities of experimenting with such organs.

[...] since the interdiction of the mouth of biologically designated Black bodies was linked to the constitution of a non-Black hegemonic speech in the context of slavery, the interdiction of the asshole in bodies suited to the hetero-cis-sexist norm makes possible to maintain gender as the regulatory ideal attached to heterosexuality as a political regime.

[...] In this politically regulated realm, the asshole is left aside of the calculation: the counter-genital that misinforms gender, for it passes through the binary sexual distinction. Using the words of Solange, *tô aberta!*, it is “the hole everyone has.” In the Countersexual Manifesto, Paul B. Preciado, elaborates a political fiction centered in the dissolution of genders as correspondences to the biological categories of male/female, forging a notion of masculine/feminine as “open records at the disposal of *cuerpos parlantes* [talking bodies],” which are bodies free of the hetero-cis-sexist normalization. Faced with Pêdra Costa’s anal video-lecture, it is not safe to state that the subject of that speech is a man or a woman: the hetero-cis sexual intelligibility matrix simply cannot classify such body. And when the matrix gets confused, the artist’s *cuerpo parlante* manifests hers subaltern speech. Through the asshole.¹

1. Jota Mombaça, Fragments of “Can a mestizo asshole speak?”, accessed October 6, 2018, <http://www.nightschool.at/de/jota-mombaca/>.

It is in the break/the rupture/the interstice that both, the practice of Jota Mombaça and of Adrian Piper, are in movement, between a bodily practice and theory, between critical theory and “racial performance.”⁶⁸ They belong to a liminal space, a cultural *marronage* that feeds from the western art world but never fully belongs to it. I can still remember from my Art History introductory classes that Piper was present only through one or two iconic photographs of performances, but never with her Meta-Text and other of her philosophical writings. I was always missing what is central to Piper’s work and what Moten has described as “a clarity that is given by the force of the aurality.”⁶⁹ It is through this “force of aurality” that Mombaça and Piper resist to the objectifying process that is at work in the exhibitionary complex.

What if the beholder glances, glances away, driven by aversion as much as desire? This is to ask not only, what if beholding were glancing; it is also—or maybe even rather—to ask, what if glancing is the aversion of the gaze, a physical act of repression, the active forgetting of an object whose resistance is now not the avoidance but the extortion of the gaze?⁷⁰

Fred Moten, “Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper’s Theatricality” in *In the Break*

If you want to engage with their work, you cannot “avert [your] gaze,” as Piper addresses in her text on Cultural racism⁷¹, because you have to listen.

[...] Instead of asking whether the subaltern can or cannot speak, I invoke another one: what happens when a subaltern speaks? This way, I intend to relocate a longstanding crisis that de-potentiates us, the subjects not comprised in knowledge-making grammars. Rather than questioning our ability of forging speeches and knowledges from our subaltern standpoint, I choose to interrogate the capacity these hegemonically consolidated landmarks have to acknowledge our differences. In such a manner that in the borders of my own question, another one hints: can a domineering knowledge listen to a subaltern speech when it comes up?⁷²

Jota Mombaça, Fragments of “Can a mestizo asshole speak?”

68. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

69. Ibid, 234.

70. Ibid, 233.

71. Adrian Piper, “Ways of Averting One’s Gaze (1988)” in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Vol. II, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): 127.

72. Jota Mombaça, Fragments of “Can a mestizo asshole speak?”, accessed October 6, 2018, <http://www.nightschool.at/de/jota-mombaca/>.

CONCLUSION

The noun exhibition and its verb, to exhibit (*l'exposition/exposer*), can have multiple meanings in french. It can literally translate as “to exhibit,” but you can also use it in different contexts such as “to expose oneself to danger,” “the exposure time of a photography” as well as a “(narrative) exposition”. With this research, I argue that coloniality is inherent to the exhibitionary complex and that the latter goes beyond the museum realm. It can spread itself in a vast array of apparatuses involving different forms of looking or gazing at, be it literal, as through the practice of photography, or conceptually, through the written forms of ekphrasis or storytelling. I want to underline that the coloniality of the exhibitionary complex inscribes itself in a larger context of surveillance of the Black body and its commodification. From the racial slavery project onwards to the merchandising of Blackness and cultural appropriation, capitalism continues to sell Blackness.

Race is not skin colour. Skin colour is just the signifier that deceives us, rather it is a relation of difference and political power play.

Frank Okwedadi, “The Commodification Of Blackness” 2009

Now, as cultural practitioners, we have to ask ourselves how to continue working in this framework of euro-centered visual-centered regime of control? How to disrupt its logic of consumption? How to ensure that no one can “avert[...] one’s gaze” and, at the same time, refuse to reproduce new forms of “colonial flashbacks” as the artist Belinda Kazeem-Kaminski addresses in her work *Unearthing*⁷³?

On the move, between the thinking and practice of Fred Moten, Tina Campt, Olivier Marboeuf, Adrian Piper and Jota Mombaça, we shall search for a space of radical openness.⁷⁴

[T]his space of radical openness is a margin – a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a “safe” place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance.

bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness”

Spaces where artists, such as Adrian Piper and Jota Mombaça can object to the objectification of the exhibitionary complex and, as Daphne Brooks puts it, “use [their] dissonant condition to forge discursive as well as embodied insurgency.”⁷⁵

Spaces, like the laboratory of visionary fictions *We Cannot Build What We Cannot First Imagine* (WCB WCFI)⁷⁶ by Jota Mombaça and Thiago de Paula Souza, where we can generate more collective work of disruptive archiving and radical imagination.

Spaces, where we imagine emancipatory, self-transformational and healing practices of listening. Where we question how listening and sonic materiality can break apart the logic of the domineering gaze.

Spaces where we can not only develop together a practice of “autodéfense”

73. Natalie Bayer, Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński, Nora Sternfeld (ed.), *Kuratieren als antirassistische Praxis* (Berlin : Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

74. bell hooks, “choosing the margin as a space of radical openness” in bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 145-153.

75. Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 3.

76. *We Cannot Build What We Cannot First Imagine* (WCB WCFI) is a visionary platform created by Jota Mombaça and Thiago de Paula Souza that took place in March 2017 at the Kunstgebäude in Stuttgart. It had “the purpose of gathering works and perspectives from racialized artists and thinkers in Brazil and abroad on the topics of radical imagination, alter-futurisms, disruptive archives, queer politics and black philosophy.”

against what bell hooks calls the “imperialist white supremacist patriarchy,” but where we can unlearn our incapacity to know our power/strength and where we learn to re-embody our capacity for action and imagination.

Where we come together and build up what bell hooks calls a “community of resistance.”

[...] At times, home is nowhere. At times, one knows only extreme estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal and fragmentation as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become, an order that does not demand forgetting. “Our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting.”

bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness” in bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 147-148.

[...] I’m very interested in what it means for us to cultivate together a community that allows for risk, the risk of knowing someone outside your own boundaries, the risk that is love—there is no love that does not involve risk.

A Public Dialogue Between bell hooks and Laverne Cox at *The New School*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BOOKS** Afrikadaa. *Museum on/off: Musée l'ont leux*, hors-série n°8. Paris, 2017.
- Ahmed, Sara. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Azoulay, Ariella Aïsha. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008.
- Bayer, Natalie, Kazeem-Kamiński, Belinda and Sternfeld, Nora (ed.). *Kuratieren als antirassistische Praxis*. Berlin : Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 2017.
- Brooks, Daphne A. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*. London: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Browne, Simone. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Campt ,Tina M.. *Listening to images*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Chambers, Iain Chambers, De Angelis, Alessandra, Ianniciello, Celeste and Orabona, Mariangela (ed.), *The Postcolonial Museum : The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.
- Collectif Décoloniser les arts (Cukierman, Leïla, Dambury, Gerty, Vergès, Françoise, et al.). *Décolonisons les arts!*. Paris: L'Arche éditeur, 2018.
- Dorlin, Elsa. *La Matrice de la race : généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la nation française*. Paris: La Découverte, 2006.
- Dorlin, Elsa. *Se défendre. Une Philosophie de la Violence*. Paris: La Découverte, 2017.
- Duncan, Carole. "From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum.", In *Representing the Nation: A Reader. Histories, Heritage and Museums*, edited by David Boswell and Jessica Evans. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (1st edition 1952). Paris: Points, 2015.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Le Discours antillais*. Paris: Gallimard, 1981.
- Harney, Stefano and Desideri, Valentina. "A Conspiracy Without A Plot. " In *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, edited by Jean-Paul Martinon. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- hooks, bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston: South End Press, 1990.
- hooks, bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992.
- Men, Pierrot and Raharimanana. *Portraits d'insurgés, Madagascar 1947*. Edition Vent d'Ailleurs, 2011.
- Moten, Fred. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Moten, Fred and Harney, Stefano. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Minor Compositions, 2013.
- Piper, Adrian. *Out of Order, Out of Sight* (Vol. I and II). MIT Press: Cambridge, 1996.
- Roberts, Neil. *Freedom as Marronage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (2nd ed.). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Touam Bona, Dénètem. *Fugitif, où cours-tu ?*. Paris: puf, 2016.
- Vergès, Françoise. *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Vergès, Françoise. *Féminisme décolonial*. Paris: La Fabrique, 2019.

ARTICLES

- Adusei-Poku, Nana. "The multiplicity of multiplicities – Post-Black Art and its intricacies." In *Dark-matter Journal*. Accessed in March 2017. https://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2012/11/29/the-multiplicity-of-multiplicities-%E2%80%93-post-black-art-and-its-intricacies/#foot_1
- Bennett, Tony. "The Exhibitionary Complex." *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988).
- Boetsch, Gilles Boetsch and Savarese, Eric. "Photographies anthropologiques et politique des races." *Journal des Anthropologues*, n°80-81 (2000). Accessed on April 24, 2018. <http://journals.openedition.org/jda/3224>.
- Boulbina, Seloua Luste. "Décoloniser les institutions." *Mouvements*, n° 72 (April 2012).
- Brittingham Furlonge, Nicole. "To Hear the Silence of Sound": Making Sense of Listening in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man." *Interference Journal*, n°1. Accessed in April 2019. <http://www.interferencejournal.org/to-hear-the-silence-of-sound/>
- Collectif Jean Dutoit, "Rapport pour les droits et la mobilité des personnes migrantes noires africaines en Suisse et en Europe", December 2017.
- Dorlin, Elsa. "De l'usage épistémologique et politique des catégories de « sexe » et de « race » dans les études sur le genre," *Cahiers du Genre*, n°39 (February 2005).
- Dorlin, Elsa, "Les espaces temps des résistances esclaves: des suicidés de Saint-Jean aux marons de Nanny Town. (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)", *Tumultes*, n°27 (February 2006): 37-51.
- Hall, Stuart. "What Is This "Black" in Black Popular Culture?" In *Social Justice* Vol. 20, No. 1/2 (51-52), Rethinking Race (Spring-Summer 1993): 104-114.
- Hesse, Barnor. "Escaping Liberty: Western Hegemony, Black Fugitivity." *Political Theory* 42, n°3 (June 2014).
- kassel postkolonial, "Grundlage: Er-/Entinnerung." Accessed April 28, 2017. <http://kassel-postkolonial.de/2017/04/07/grundlage-er-entinnerung/>.
- L'Internationale Online, Decolonising Museums. Accessed in March 2017. http://www.internationaleonline.org/bookshelves/decolonising_museums
- Millepied, Anne-Charlotte, "Le pouvoir des mots et des corps. L'autodéfense féministe, lieu de production de scripts sexuels alternatifs," *Itinéraires* (2017-2018). Accessed 7 May 2019. <http://journals.openedition.org/itineraires/3818>.
- Mombaça, Jota. "Fragment of "Towards a Gender Disobedient and Anticolonial Redistribution of Violence": Naming the Norm." Accessed March 19, 2019. <http://www.nightschool.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Fragment-of-Towards-a-gender-disobediente-and-anti-colonial-redistribution-of-violence.pdf>.
- Nichols, Patrick. "Freedom as Marronage as Anti-capitalism." In African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS) website. Accessed in April 2017. <http://www.aaihs.org/freedom-as-marronage-as-anti-capitalism/>
- Okwedadi, Frank. "The Commodification Of Blackness (2009)." Accessed in April 2019. https://www.academia.edu/17549201/The_Commodification_of_Blackness
- Piper, Adrian. "Biography." Official Website. Accessed April 27, 2019. <http://www.adrianpiper.com/biography.shtml>.
- Vergès, Françoise. "Bananas: Racism, Sex and Capitalism." *The Funambulist*, n°6 (July-August 2016).

INTERVIEWS

- Glissant, Edouard. "Les hommes livres - Edouard Glissant, Entretien avec Patrick Chamoiseau". Réal. : Jean-René Christiani, Le Diamant, 1993. Accessed in March 2017. <http://www.edouardglissant.fr/marronage.html>
- Hall, Stuart. "Interview by Lynne Segal and Peter Osborne on Culture and Power." Accessed in November 2018. <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/interview/stuart-hall-culture-and-power>
- hooks, bell. "A Public Dialogue Between bell hooks and Laverne Cox at The New School." Accessed in April 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oMmZlJijgY>
- Piper, Adrian. "What Follows interview with performance artist Adrian Piper at the University of Colorado, Boulder." Accessed in April 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyie3doKyUw&list=PLUEYeFa0usQH3gHpVLdH7uPxekXhU1-n>
- Interview with the curator, producer and storyteller Olivier Marboeuf by Léa Genoud. Paris, January 2018.
- Interview with the artist Jephthé Carmil by Léa Genoud. Paris, January 2018.
- Interview with the head curator of the Museum of Ethnography of Geneva Carine Durand. Geneva, December 2018.

The CCC Master-Thesis 2019 is the result of the two-year educational process that trains the students in methods of doing “research by the means of the arts”, understood as a network of practices while being in (geo-)politics of the 21st century. The transdisciplinary and bilingual CCC-Curriculum consists of Writing Research Practice and Situated Art Practices seminars that discuss the students’ individual research while Critical Studies, Curatorial Politics, Political Studies, Theory Fiction seminars and the Reading Group foster the collective formation of new vocabularies.

Le Mémoire de Master CCC 2019 est le résultat d’un processus éducatif de deux ans qui forme les étudiant-e-s aux méthodes de « recherche par les moyens de l’art », entendue comme un réseau de pratiques tout en vivant dans les (géo-)politiques du 21^{ème} siècle. Le plan d’étude transdisciplinaire et bilingue du CCC consiste en des séminaires de Pratique de la Recherche/Écriture et de Pratiques Artistiques Situées qui discutent de la recherche individuelle des étudiant-e-s, tandis que les Politiques Curatoriales, Études Politiques, Études Critiques, Théorie-Fiction et le Groupe de Lecture favorisent la création collective de nouveaux vocabulaires.

RANO RANO	Léa Thaïs Genoud
Tuteur-trice de mémoire/Thesis Advisor	Gene Ray
Étudiant-e-s diplômé-e-s/ Graduating students 2018/19	Vinit Agarwal, Shima Asa, Yasmeen Chaudhry, Nadia Elamly, Boris Fernandez, Léa Thaïs Genoud, Gaël Goy, Max Léo Hauri, Hamlin Robert Jackson, Julie Marmet, Roland Virgile Mbessa, Chloe Sugden, Felix Toro, Laila Mendieta Torres, Sanja Vasić, Fatima Wegmann Guinassi
Étudiant-e-s M1 Students	Julie Tiffany Bellard, Giacomo Galletti, Loana Gatti, Mathilde Gaugué, Alexander Gence, Rebecca Glyn-Blanco, Clara Nissim, Julie Robiolle, Caspar Shaller
Comité de soutenance orale/ Committee of the oral defense	Federica Martini (HES-SO), Clémentine Deliss, Marwa Arsanios et/and Faculté CCC Faculty
Session de soutenance orale/ Oral defense	18-20 juin / June 2019)
Faculté/Faculty 2018/19	Professeur-e-s/Professors: Doreen Mende (responsable/responsible), Kodwo Eshun, Dora Garcia, Pierre Hazan, Anne-Julie Raccoursier, Gene Ray Professeure invitée/Guest-professor: Çağla Aykaç Assistantes/Assistants: Camilla Paolino, Julia Pecheur
Layout	Lucas Cantori and the Students/et les Étudiant-e-s
Impression/Print	Atelier typo/pao - HEAD Genève, mai/May 2019
Reliure/Binding	Finissimo - Genève

