No Common Measure: Lacan, Fanon, and a Non-Western Critique of Neoliberal Identity

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Abstract This essay examines how neoliberal commodification of identity operates through a fantasy of equal exchange that fundamentally misrecognizes the structural dynamics of racial and sexual differences. Drawing on Fanon's analysis of colonial subjectivity and Lacan's theory of sexual difference, I argue that neoliberalism's promise of market-mediated recognition fails precisely because it presupposes a universal exchangeability that colonial and patriarchal orders render impossible. Through an analysis of how political demands for recognition are transformed into market demands for representation, I demonstrate that neoliberal frameworks intensify rather than resolve the paradoxical position of marginalized subjects. The conversion of identity into an entrepreneurial project generates what Lacan terms jouissancea cycle of enjoyment/suffering centered on the constitutive impossibility of achieving recognition through market participation. This theoretical intervention reveals how neoliberalism's presumption of homogeneous exchange conceals fundamental antagonisms that commodification cannot resolve, suggesting that effective resistance must begin by exposing these constitutive contradictions rather than seeking recognition within market logic.

Keywords neoliberalism; identity; Lacan, Fanon; psychoanalysis; resistance; subjectivity; Deleuze and Guattari

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Introduction

Neoliberalism fundamentally reshapes how we understand and experience identity

by reframing systemic inequalities as matters of individual choice and responsibility. Under this framework, social problems that were once viewed through the lens of collective action and structural change become issues of personal management and market participation.

Neoliberalism's approach to rights and identity is distinctly market-oriented. Civil rights are increasingly transformed into consumer rights, with solutions to inequality often presented through market-based mechanisms like educational choice and voucher programs. This shift has profound implications for how marginalized groups pursue justice and equality as political demands become reconceptualized as market demands.

The neoliberal emphasis on self-regulation and personal responsibility has transformed identity itself into an entrepreneurial project. Individuals are expected to manage their own risks and outcomes, with success or failure attributed primarily to personal choices rather than structural conditions. This individualization process can weaken collective political mobilization around shared identities, emphasizing individual achievement over group solidarity.

This dynamics create significant tensions between individual empowerment and collective action, market solutions and structural change, and personal responsibility and systemic accountability. While neoliberalism presents itself as offering solutions to identity-based inequalities, it often obscures systemic barriers and structural inequalities, effectively depoliticizing identity-based struggles while reinforcing existing power structures.

The Lacanian framework provides a potent theoretical perspective for interrogating the psychic economy of neoliberal subjectification, particularly concerning the commodification of identity. Through this lens, we can discern how neoliberal ideology operates not merely at the level of political economy but fundamentally structures the psychic landscape of contemporary subjectivity.

The neoliberal articulation of identity can be analyzed through the three registers of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Neoliberalism constructs a scene of self-actualization within the Imaginary order through market participation and self-regulation. This misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) echoes the mirror stage, wherein the subject becomes alienated in an idealized image, perpetually pursuing an impossible wholeness through practices of consumption and self-optimization. The imaginary identification with market-mediated identity positions serves to mask the fundamental split in subjectivity that Lacan identifies as constitutive.

In masking the split in subjectivity, neoliberal discourse affects a profound restructuring of the signifying chain. The Master Signifier of "freedom" becomes

evacuated of its radical political potential and is instead articulated within a chain of signification that reduces liberty to market participation. This dismantled symbolic restructuring transforms traditional social bonds into market relations, producing what Lacan might term a "university discourse" that obscures its own ideological operations through appeals to neutral technical knowledge.

However, the anxiety and dissatisfaction that haunt the subject despite perfect market performance point to the impossibility of achieving wholeness through neoliberal prescriptions. The compulsive pursuit of self-improvement and optimization can be understood as a form of jouissanceexcessive enjoyment/sufferings that circle around the constitutive lack of subjectivity without ever filling it.

This Lacanian approach reveals how neoliberal commodification of identity functions as a fantasy structure that simultaneously promises and forecloses the possibility of wholeness, masking the fundamental splits and lacks inherent in subject formation. The "responsibilization" of the individual can thus be read as a symptomatic response to the anxiety of lack, one that paradoxically intensifies rather than resolves the fundamental alienation of the subject.

To interrogate the contradictions embedded within neoliberal mechanisms of identity commodification, this analysis deploys a theoretical framework that synthesizes Fanon and Lacan. By examining the intersecting matrices of sexuality and race through Fanon's creolization of Lacanian theory, we can better understand how colonial/neoliberal power structures both produce and are destabilized by singular forms of subjectivity. Fanon's radical re-articulation of psychoanalytic conceptsparticularly his emphasis on the socio-historical constitution of the unconscious and his theorization of colonial traumaprovides crucial analytical tools for understanding how neoliberal commodification operates at the level of racialized and sexualized identity formation.

This theoretical intervention allows us to examine not only the mechanisms of subjection but also the possibilities for resistance that emerge from the very contradictions inherent in neoliberal processes of identity commodification. By bringing together Fanon's analysis of racial psychology with Lacan's theory of sexual difference, we can better understand how neoliberalism shapes identityand where it might break down. What is revealed is how people are subjected to market forces and how the contradictions in modifying identity create opportunities for resistance.

Humans and Race

I would like to start the discussion by sharing my own experience. It was an after-party event of a lecture organized by a civic organization. The lecture was about

Asian modernity, and there was a lot of discussion about the topics that came up during the lecture. At one point, a man said with a serious look on his face, "Korean women seem to like white men too much these days." The man was a so-called "woke liberal," the kind who usually follows political news and gets attentive to critical issues through social media. Immediately, counterarguments came out. They ranged from saying that love has no borders to pointing out that such a view could be racist and misogynistic. The man who first spoke up looked perplexed and said, "We can never be white, can we?"

Maybe this episode is just one of the blips on the radar, but to me, the man's thoughts did not feel isolated and subjective. The man's words were not just a reflection of his personal taste or morality. Why did the "woke" say, "We can never be white?" On the surface, this statement seems to be a rejection of "whiteness," but it is a manifestation of a desire longing for whiteness. Of course, in this case, longing for whiteness means rejecting oneself as a subject who cannot be white."

At this point, we need to recall Franz Fanon, who preoccupied himself with the question of whiteness comes to mind. Among other things, Fanon argued that the rejection of the white man actually meant revenge against the white female (Fanon 69). Thus, according to Fanon's logic, a subject who cannot be white can never reject "whiteness." Fanon's statement that "what is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact" proposes the unconscious of the subject, who cannot be white (Fanon 16). To interpret Fanon's description of "whiteness," perhaps it can be read to mean that the white man invented the unconscious of the black man. This issue can be further explored through Lacan's analysis of anxiety (*l'angoisse*).

Fanon's foundational question "What does the black man want?" deliberately echoes and complicates psychoanalysis's preoccupation with feminine desire. This parallel interrogation reveals how the ostensibly universal subject of classical psychoanalysis implicitly presupposes whiteness, just as it presupposes masculinity. Yet Fanon's intervention demonstrates that race is not merely an addition to psychoanalytic theory but rather is already operative within its fundamental logic. By excavating this racial dimension, Fanon radicalizes psychoanalysis, transforming it into a tool for analyzing colonial subjectification.

Fanon's pioneering contribution lies in his appropriation of Lacanian theory, particularly the mirror stage, to theorize how black subjectivity is constituted through the internalization of whiteness. Fanon's theoretical move allows us to draw productive parallels between Lacan's analysis of feminine subjectivity and Fanon's examination of racial subjectification. Both Lacan and Fanon deal with subjects constituted through their relationship to a dominant symbolic order that

simultaneously excludes them.

The question of black desire, or the desire of non-white subjects, can be understood through two crucial observations in Fanon's work. First, the assumption of white superiority structures the entire field of racial relations. Second, the black desire produces a compulsive drive in the black subjects to demonstrate their intellectual and cultural equality to whites (Fanon 12). This dynamic reveals how the supposedly universal category of human is always already racialized because while white subjects can claim this universal position, black subjects find themselves caught in an impossible desire for whiteness itself. The human, purportedly universal, reveals itself as fundamentally particularmarked by both whiteness and masculinity.

This analysis of the relationship between the black desire and the white superiority illuminates how the very structure of desire under colonialism produces an impossible subject position for black individuals: the universal human they are called to become is precisely what excludes them. This paradox parallels Lacan's analysis of feminine desire while introducing the crucial dimension of racial difference.

For Fanon, the only thing more disgusting than a black person who wants to be white is a black person who spreads hatred of whiteness For Fanon, because the two kinds of blackness are sharing a fantasy in the sense that longing for and loathing of whiteness are two sides of the same fantasy. Fantasy is the refusal to acknowledge the fundamental fact that something is lost because we believe that we can always restore it.

Lacan's fantasy formula ($ ◇ a) may be instructive. This means that the subject barred finds itself complicatedly entwined within a circular dynamic with the *objet petit a*, wherein one aspect is shaped by the process of alienation, while the other is delineated by separation, showing how a split subject desires *object a* through its relationship with the signifier. Since the ◇ is a circuit that desires *object a*, it can never fill the void of its absence (*Seminar VIII* 374). Nevertheless, since the absence is something that once belonged to us and then disappeared, we think we can have it again one day. This lost thing that we believe we can restore at any time is an *object a* that does not exist and yet exists. This *object a* appears in the subject's relationship with the Other, the way the subject relates to the Other constitutes the fantasy.

The Black Soul as an Invention of a White Man

If we look at Fanon's proposition from this Lacanian perspective, "whiteness" can

never disappear because it is a substitute for blackness. A black person who hates "whiteness" is not so much rejecting "whiteness" as he is enjoying the symptoms of his lack of it. The subject constantly seeks to derive pleasure from the symptom; only when the symptom fails to provide pleasure does the subject experience a fantasy crisis. The black man is not foreclosing the white man from the beginning; rather, he is a subject who has already entered the "father's name" and has been created. This subject is a narcissistic container of libido, wherein "even narcissistic structure may be glimpsed in the glass spheres in which the exhausted partners of the 'Garden of Earthly Delights' are held captive" (*Écrits* 86). This container is revealed as the image of the body (*i' (a)*) in the mirror of the Other. Here, the *object a* that causes anxiety in the subject, unlike the Freudian iceberg metaphor, intervenes and operates in a relationship with anxiety rather than being an anxiety-producing stratum at the base of consciousness. Lacan speaks of anxiety as a "signal" that emerges from the subject's relationship with *object a*. In other words, if the "signal" of anxiety is turned on, there is a problem in the subject's relationship with *object a* (*Seminar X 13*).

In a Spinozist context, Lacan defines "anxiety" as an affect rather than an emotion. For Spinoza, an affect is "an affection that increases or decreases, facilitates or hinders, the capacity of the body, and at the same time an idea of that capacity" (Spinoza 154). In this sense, the affection is both the modification itself and the idea. If we ourselves are the cause of this transformation, we are active; otherwise, we are passive. In this way, our bodies and minds are both acting and being acted upon. There is no one-sided relationship because the same goes for the body and mind that define black and white. Lacan's fantasy formula also shows the flow of desire oscillating between subject and object. This flow is represented by the vector from $ to a (∨) and from a to $ (∧).

We can say that Lacan created this fantasy formula ($ ◇ a) with the symbols of mathematical logic in mind. In mathematical logic, ∨ stands for "or": A ∨ B is true if either A or B is true, and false if both are false. Meanwhile, A ∧ B is true only if both A and B are true. Otherwise, it is false if only one is true. This means that a vector flowing from "$" to "a" can be true if only one of them is true, but a vector flowing from "a" to "$" cannot be true unless one of them is true. For this reason, the structure of the cycle looks like an equality, but it is a formula that shows that the subject and object are not interchangeable. The vectors below and above imply different logics. The relationship between blacks and whites can also be seen as an example of this non-exchangeable equivalence, in the sense that each sets up the other as an object.

If affect refers to a state of mind and body that is unrestrained and unable to be contained, then we can say that the black psychology of "whiteness" that Fanon analyzes also implies an affective state of anxiety. If Fanon is right, "whiteness" is anxiety because it imposes a castration complex on black people. Castration in the complex does not mean "genital mutilation." Rather than "cutting" the "penis," castration is the utterance itself, saying, "we are going to cut it off." This statement creates anxiety, which is the effect of castration. According to Lacan, castration refers to the fact that "jouissance has to be refused in order to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire" (*Écrits* 700).

Castration is a pre-emptive rejection of jouissance. Only then can it be placed under the Law of desire. But this process is always "unsettling" because it turns the Idea upside down. In this context, the Idea refers to the *idealized structure* of symbolic order: the fantasy that the Law of desire is coherent, complete, and fully stabilizing for the subject. The subversiveness of jouissance can upset the Law of desire at any moment. Castration, therefore, does not literally "cut off" the "genitals," but through the implication of that "cutting off," it points to the "residue" of jouissance that remains. It is not necessary to eliminate all possible enjoyment of every pleasure. As with circumcision, this effect can be achieved by excising a part of the 'genitals' rather than the whole.

The identity of the body originates from this loss of parts. With the partial loss, the subject can think they can lose everything. This is the structure of the subject. We can see here that the subject appears to exist through symbolic exchange, but in reality, it is not like that at all. What is lost in this process of castration can never be the object of symbolic exchange. This is why we, or black people, cannot be "white." These are things that came into being due to *object a* before the common, communicative, social object was constituted (*Seminar X* 91).

At this point, let us return to Fanon's statement that "the black soul is an invention of the white man." According to Fanon, black people have different attitudes towards whites than they do towards fellow black people because "whites" can never be black. In other words, 'whiteness' proves to be an irretrievable loss for blackness. In Lacan's words, the phallus must be concealed because it causes "anxiety" when it is revealed. The phallus is a colossal deficiency that creates anxiety rather than power. The phallus is one of the objects "from before the constitution of the status of the common, communicable, socialized object" (*Seminar X* 91). This is something to do with *object a.*

The *object a* is what Lacan calls the cause of desire, but it is also the leftover from the subject's entry into language and the symbolic order. It is not a real object

but a kind of gap or void around which desire circulates. The phallus, in this sense, is structurally related to *object a*: it is an index of lack, but one that gets invested with libidinal weight. Both the phallus and *object a* induce anxiety when they come too close to being directly encounteredbecause they expose the subject to the Real: the inassimilable kernel of experience that the symbolic cannot fully account for.

In this sense, "whiteness" is a phallus that must be hidden from blackness. When this phallus becomes visible as "white," the black man is thrown into "anxiety." It is for this reason that the black people try to become like whites in an attempt to quell their wandering insecurities or reinforce their fantasies of whiteness by expressing feelings of disgust. At this point, however, the way to politicize this "anxiety" is through the variable X that cuts across the fantasy of whiteness, a "*passage á l'acte*." If this "passage to the act" signifies a decolonial trajectory that calls for rearticulation in terms of desire, what remains to be addressed is the question of how this trajectory is to be envisaged and structured. I now turn to this question.

Sexuation and Decolonizing Subjectivities

It is worth taking the infamous example of Fanon here. In discussing the love between a white man and a black woman, Fanon refers to the difference between whiteness and blackness as divided by skin color. For the black woman, the world is "white and black represent two poles of a world" (Fanon 44). The Manichean logic of black and white is something that has already been said and must be remembered, so the question of being white or black is ontological, not ethical.

> I am white: that is to say that I possess beauty and virtue, which have never been black. I am the color of the daylight…
>
> I am black: I am the incarnation of a complete fusion with the world, an intuitive understanding of the earth, an abandonment of my ego in the heart of the cosmos, and no with man, no matter how intelligent he may be, can ever understand Louis Amstrong and the music of the Congo. If I am black, it is not the result of a curse, but it is because, having offered my skin, I have been able to absorb all the cosmic effuvia. I am truly a ray of sunlight under the earth… (Fanon 45)

Here, whites and blacks form an exquisite binary opposition between culture and nature. Fanon sees this binary opposition as a product of the devaluation of indigenous cultures, as he developed his view of negritude by referencing the work

of Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor (McCulloch 37). Of course, Fanon's early affirmation of blackness is indebted to Jean-Paul Sartre's *Orphée noir*. However, this initial perspective gives way to a critique of blackness itself in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

In discussing the romantic relationships between white men and black women, Fanon points to a fundamental imbalance. Analyzing Lucette Ceranus's autobiographical novel *Je suis Martiniquaise*, which was written under the pseudonym Mayotte Capécia, Fanon says:

> Mayotte loves a white man to whom she submits everything. He is her lord. She asks nothing, demands nothing, except a bit of whiteness in her life. When she tries to determine in her own mind whether the man is handsome or ugly, she writes, "All I know is that he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin, and that I loved him." It is not difficult to see that a rearrangement of these elements in their proper hierarchy would produce something of this order: "I love him because he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin." We who come from the Antilles know one thing only too well: Blue eyes, the people say, frighten the Negro. (Fanon 42-42)

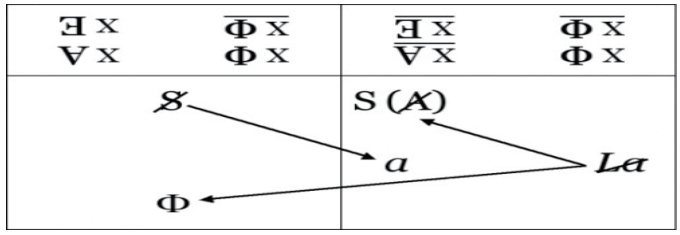
Fanon's analysis always already presupposes the inferiority of black women. However, although this issue of superiority is reproduced through skin color, but it is actually based on the dichotomy of whiteness as civilization and blackness as nature. The black woman loves the white man because he is white because what she loves, Fanon points out, is not a particular white man but whiteness itself. At this point, we can understand Fanon's assertion that the black soul is a white invention. In this sense, the black unconscious is structured like the white language. Referring to white attitudes toward French-speaking blacks, Fanon says, "A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (Fanon 18).

By focusing on language, Fanon's aim is not only to describe the international political system of mother country-colony relations but also to reveal how black people internalize whiteness. After discussing Sartre's anti-Semitism, Fanon applies Lacan's theory of the mirror stage in a lengthy footnote to show how the white imaginary of blackness can be established from childhood. Extrapolating from Lacan's mechanism of the mirror stage, "the real other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man" (Fanon 161).

A recurring theme in Fanon's work is the question of the appearance of

blackness as a construct. Like gender, which distinguishes male desire from female desire, blackness is first distinguished from whiteness through appearance. "With the Negro," Fanon asserts, "the cycle of the *biological* begins" (Fanon 161). Race is, in his view, a visual perception. It is this appearance that race, and sex differences share with each other. In the visual image, race and gender are first ontologized, but the appearance does not indicate that there are men and women, or that there are whites and blacks; there are only men and only whites. In the sense that all humans are male and white, there are no women and no blacks.

Fanon's framing of blackness as a "biological" issue can be more deeply explored through Lacan's ontology of sexuation. His engagement with mirror stage theory, in examining the formation of black subjectivity, may thus be seen as an early gesture toward an ontological account of racialization. Let us first examine Lacan's formula of sexuation, which discusses the ontology of sexual difference, and then apply it to Fanon's ontology of race. Lacan illustrates the topology of sex difference with the following diagram (*Seminar XX* 78).



Lacan uses this diagram to reveal that the relationship of desire to the phallus determines sexual difference, but the Φ in the diagram does not signify the presence of the phallus, but rather its castration. In its absence, the phallus is transformed into Law, which is universal to all beings. This castration takes place on a symbolic level, as it is the murder of the primal father. As is well known, Lacan distinguishes between the penis and the phallus, which does not refer to the penis in the biological sense. In this context, we can say that the phallus has a similar symbolism to Fanon's concept of whiteness. When Fanon says that the biological being begins with the Negro, what he implies is that the skin color that defines the biological being of blackness is symbolic. Since it is the Symbolic that dominates the biological, what Mayotte loves is not the biological being of a white male but the blue eyes, blond hair, and white skin that make the 'human animal' white. These elements have a biological origin but have acquired a symbolic meaning that is not reducible to that origin.

The equations at the top of the diagram show a deadlocked structure in the symbolic system. The equation on the left is said to represent masculinity, and the equation on the right represents femininity, which, as mentioned earlier, are symbolic, like Fanon's whiteness, while the symbols in the lower layers of the diagram refer to the subjects in relationship to the main ideal. The 'a' at the bottom of the feminine does not mean that women are *object a* to men, but rather that men consider women to be objects; however, 'there is no such woman ($L/\ a$).' In the equation at the top left, '∃' is an existential quantifier, a predicate symbol in set theory referring to the number of beings that are equal to one, many, or some. Let us solve the equation in the top left corner, where 'Φ x' stands for negation. As mentioned earlier, this symbol does not refer to an actual penis or phallus but rather to castration, which represents submission to the Law, and, consequently, to the subject's way of pursuing the master ideal by submitting to Law and language. Thus, the equation at the top can be interpreted as "There is at least one male (M) who does not submit to the law (∃)." With this equation, Lacan expresses the logic of exceptionality, which reveals the fact that all beings are subject to the Law except for at least one man who is not subject to the Law: the primal father. In the sense that no one can be that father, the one male who is not subject to the Law is the Law.

The equations in the upper left corner represent variables. ∀ is a "universal quantifier" used in set theory which means "everything." This equation can be interpreted as "For all beings, x depends on the phallic function." In line with the logic of exceptionality mentioned above, this equation completes the proposition that everyone else is subject to the phallic function except for one exceptional man who does not obey the Law. In other words, this logic creates the fantasy that men are able to enjoy the full subject-ideal by submitting to the Law. This is the formula of masculinity. If we were to translate Fanon's proposition "all men are white" into this equation, it would be $\forall x\ Hx \rightarrow Wx$. This means 'for all beings, if x is human, then x is white.' With this appropriation of the equation, we can easily understand Fanon's statement that the black soul is a white invention because in order to invent a black soul, there must first be a white person. As such, the white man is presupposed as all beings and it is the white man who first exists as Lacan's universal man. Therefore, Fanon's whiteness is a further refinement of Lacan's critique of "man" predominant in Western philosophy. For Fanon, the universal man is always already a "white man."

Black people have no place in this equation. First of all, black people are not white; they are reproduced through white people. In this sense, it would make more sense to assume that black people are on the right side of the gender equation. The

equation on the top right represents femininity. Femininity adopts the logic of the "not-all," as opposed to the logic of exceptionality represented by the top left. If the whole, the not-all, is the feminine, then blackness occupies the same place as this feminine because, as Fanon states, blackness is the otherness of whiteness. Let us analyze the meaning of blackness by examining the equation in the upper right corner.

The top equation in the upper right-hand corner means, "there is nothing that does not depend on the Phallus function" while the equation below means "not all x is subject to the Phallus function." With this, Lacan wanted to indicate that there is something that escapes the Law, castration, or the Phallus function, and he called it 'the woman.' As mentioned earlier, in this sense, all humans are male, and to paraphrase this proposition, all "[modern] men" are "white men." If masculinity is a universality achieved through exception, then femininity represents a singularity without exception that resists or deviates from this. In this sense, the "non-total" that does not belong to all is infinitely expandable. The non-all is the structure of immanence, another infinity name, which is an annihilation of the existing order and a state of infinite becoming.

Conclusion

This essay has examined how neoliberalism's commodification of identity rests on a fantasy of symmetrical exchange that fails to account for the structural asymmetries revealed in Lacan's theory of sexuation and Fanon's analysis of racialized subjectivity. By exploring how blackness and femininity mark points of rupture within the symbolic order, we have seen how these positions resist incorporation into the normative circuits of recognition and representation. Rather than being fully integrated into the market logic of visibility and equivalence, they expose the limits of that logicand in doing so, point toward a different horizon of subjectivation.

The neoliberal commodification of identity operates through a fantasy of equal exchange that fundamentally misrecognizes the psychic economy of racial and sexual difference. While neoliberalism presents the market as a neutral space where identities can be freely exchanged, traded, and validated through consumption, this presumption of equivalence conceals the fundamental asymmetries that Fanon and Lacan reveal in their respective analyses of black and feminine subjectivity.

The neoliberal promise that marginalized subjects can "purchase" legitimacy or recognition through market participation recapitulates the impossible desire Fanon identifies in colonial subjects. Just as the black subject's desire to "become white" reveals the particular masquerading as universal in colonial discourse, the neoliberal

fantasy of identity as a commodity reveals how market exchange cannot resolve the fundamental non-equivalence at the heart of racial and sexual difference. The "equal exchange" promised by commodification merely displaces these asymmetries into individual responsibility and consumer choice.

This dynamic between the individual and identity becomes especially apparent in the way neoliberalism recasts political demands for recognition as market-driven demands for representation. The logic of commodity exchange suggests that adequate representation in media, workplace, or consumer markets can compensate for structural exclusion. However, this commodification of recognition fails precisely because, as Fanon demonstrates, the desire for recognition operates within a structure where whiteness (and, by extension, masculinity) occupies the universal position. The neoliberal market cannot resolve this asymmetry because it is predicated on the very logic of equivalence that the colonial/patriarchal order renders impossible.

Moreover, the neoliberal emphasis on self-regulation and personal responsibility intensifies rather than resolves the paradoxical position of marginalized subjects. When identity becomes an entrepreneurial project, the impossibility of achieving recognition through market participation generates what Lacan would term jouissance a form of excessive enjoyment/sufferings revolving around the constitutive lack of subjectivity. The compulsive pursuit of market-mediated recognition thus reproduces the very alienation it promises to overcome.

This analysis suggests that resistance to neoliberal commodification must begin by recognizing how the fantasy of equal exchange obscures the fundamental non-equivalence that structures both racial and sexual differences. Rather than seeking recognition through market participation, such resistance might instead work to expose and exploit the contradictions inherent in neoliberalism's promise of universal exchangeability.

The theoretical conjunction of Lacanian and Fanonian insights reveals how neoliberalism's presumption of homogeneous exchange fundamentally misrecognizes the structural non-equivalence inherent in both gender and racial differences. While neoliberal ideology posits a universal market where all identities can be freely exchanged, valued, and validated through commodification, this fantasy of equivalence breaks down precisely at the points where Lacan and Fanon locate the irreducible asymmetries in symbolic and colonial orders. The impossibility of establishing genuine equivalence in systems structured by sexual and racial differences exposes neoliberalism's market universalism as not merely dysfunctional but constitutively impossiblea fantasy formation that attempts to

paper over fundamental antagonisms through the logic of commodity exchange. This theoretical understanding suggests that the failure of neoliberal modes of recognition is not contingent but necessary, emerging from the very structure of difference that neoliberalism simultaneously depends upon and disavows.

The conceptual distinction between masculinity and femininity in psychoanalytic theory can be productively reframed through Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical apparatus. While masculinity operates through a logic of transcendence, presupposing an outside to the symbolic order and Law, femininity functions as what Deleuze and Guattari term a "plane of immanence" a surface of pure multiplicity that does not require or generate transcendental exceptions. This feminine logic of immanence, crucially, extends beyond biological determinations to encompass forms of difference that resist universal categorization.

In this theoretical framework, blackness emerges as a particular form of specificity that problematizes universal categories. Constructed through white colonial discourse, blackness names a mode of difference that cannot be subsumed within the logic of universal representation. A theoretical conjunction develops that illuminates the profound resonances between Fanon's analysis of racial formation, Lacan's theory of sexual difference, and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of difference. The latter's discussion of faciality in *A Thousand Plateaus* explicitly engages with Fanon's work precisely because facial recognition systemsboth literal and metaphoricaloperate through the same logic of difference and specificity that characterizes the construction of racial categories.

The resulting theoretical assemblage allows for an understanding of how both feminine and racial modes of difference operate outside the masculine logic of transcendence and exception, instead functioning through what we might call an immanent logic of multiplicity and specificity. This conceptual framework provides crucial tools for analyzing how systems of sexual and racial difference intersect and operate within contemporary social formations. Faciality consists of a white wall and a black hole, and Deleuze and Guattari note that in equating modern whiteness with capitalism, this symbolic construction has achieved an interpenetration of signification and subjectification (Deleuze and Guattari 182). Faciality is a mixture of whiteness and blackness, no longer in conflict but mixed together like "black wine dripping into white water" (182). Following Deleuze and Guattari, whiteness and blackness are inextricably linked in the construction of the signifier. If the white wall is signification, the hole is subjectificationthe two act as limits that neither can cross.

Deleuze and Guattari could be said to extend Lacan's question of femininity

by pushing it to its structural limit in their analysis of faciality. While Lacan treats femininity as a position that escapes full inscription in the symbolic orderwhat he calls the "not-all"Deleuze and Guattari approach this limit through the concept of faciality, which describes how faces function as surfaces that organise visibility and encode social meaning.

In Lacan, femininity marks a point of symbolic inconsistency, challenging the universality of the phallic function. Deleuze and Guattari similarly examine how the face does not simply represent identity but is produced by an abstract machine that combines signification (the white wall) and subjectivation (the black hole). This machine does not capture all subjects equally; instead, it stratifies them according to racial, gendered, and colonial codes. Their theory of faciality, then, can be read as an attempt to rethink the limit posed by femininity in broader political and semiotic terms—not as a fixed identity but as part of a machinic process that determines how bodies appear and relate to systems of power.

In a way, they can be said to have found in Fanon's discussion a clue to radicalize Lacan's formulation of gender difference. If Lacanian femininity is an extension of the infinity, then women are also black and all minorities who do not submit to the Law. It becomes clear at this point what the decolonization of madness means: For a white person who has otherized blackness, the very manifestation of blackness is madness. Becoming a "black woman" who does not submit to the symbolic Law of the phalluswhich functions to regulate and normalise madness—can be understood as a process of decolonial subject formation, one that resists assimilation into dominant structures of meaning and identity. One could argue that Lacan's formulation of gender difference plays a role similar to that of race, in that both serve as structural mechanisms for organising identity and social relations. This is because x, who does not follow the Law of the phallus function, is both female and black. The intersection of gender and race marks the emergence of a sense of the *demos* that disrupts or neutralizes the phallic function. This *demos* introduces an aesthetic dimension in which the boundaries between "me and us" and "me and you" become porousallowing for a form of collective subjectivity that is at once singular and shared.

This call for the impossible, which briefly surfaced in May 1968, signals a profound demand to reexamine the politics of immanence through the intersecting insights of Lacan and Fanon. Its significance lies in how it disrupts the symbolic law and colonial structures upon which neoliberalism has continued to sustain itself. By challenging these foundations, the call gestures toward a form of subjectivity and collective life that exceeds the limits of representation, resists the capture of identity

by market logics, and reclaims an aesthetic and political space of becoming not yet fully imaginable.

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