

Fanon and Rancière on Racialized Guilt and the Distribution of the Sensible: An Affective-Aesthetic Regime of Exclusion

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Abstract: This paper theorizes the unexplored intersection between Frantz Fanon's account of racialized guilt and Jacques Rancière's theory of the distribution of the sensible, situating their convergence within what I term the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion. While Ciccariello-Maher has argued that Fanon's decolonized dialectic spans both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, and Macleod, drawing on Al-Saji, has illuminated the affective weight of the colonial past and the dangers of specularization, scholarship has yet to synthesize these insights with Rancière's embodied politics of dissensus. Building on Demandante's emphasis that "a subject is an embodied subject, a physical subject made of flesh, bones and blood" and Quintana's recognition of corporeality in *Proletarian Nights*, this paper demonstrates how affective paralysis and perceptual erasure collaborate to sustain racial domination. By naming this dual mechanism as a regime, I advance a novel analytic framework that explains why domination persists even under conditions of formal equality: it operates not only through institutions but through psychic burdens and perceptual partitions that render resistance irrational and exclusion natural. Finally, the paper shows how practices of rupture—whether through Fanon's cleansing violence, Rancière's dissensus, or their shared pedagogical interventions—can dismantle this regime. Beyond clarifying the conceptual stakes of Fanon and Rancière's dialogue, the framework provides a tool for analyzing contemporary struggles, from Black Lives Matter to postcolonial movements in the Philippines, where guilt and invisibility continue to structure exclusion.

Keywords: *affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion, distribution of the sensible, Fanon, Rancière, racial distribution of guilt,*

Introduction

What does it mean to be made guilty for one's own dehumanization? What does it mean to be excluded from the very domain where that guilt could be named, heard, or contested? I will begin this paper with the contention that modern forms of racial domination operate not only through law and violence but through affect and perception. Frantz Fanon's theory of the racial distribution of guilt and Jacques Rancière's concept of the distribution of the sensible, though developed in vastly different traditions, converge in their critique of these subtler, yet no less coercive, mechanisms of exclusion.

Frantz Fanon, writing in the context struggle for decolonization, exposes how colonial systems impose guilt upon the colonized as a means of psychic control. Through what he describes

as a process of affective alienation, the colonized internalize their own inferiority and bear the moral burden of their subjugation. Fanon highlights how guilt structures the racial drama, leaving the black man unable to repress its effects. Building on this, I argue that such manufactured guilt disables subjectivity, renders resistance irrational, and permits the colonizer to appear morally clean.¹ Meanwhile, Jacques Rancière analyzes how political subjectivity is determined by perceptual regimes. His theory of the “distribution of the sensible” describes how certain bodies, voices, and gestures are rendered visible or invisible, audible or silent, according to pre-existing aesthetic and political orders.² In this schema, those excluded from the “sensible world” are not merely ignored: they are uncounted, illegible, denied the status of political agents.³

This paper advances a framework I call the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion. By bringing Fanon’s account of racialized guilt into dialogue with Rancière’s distribution of the sensible, I argue that domination operates simultaneously through affective paralysis and perceptual erasure. Naming this convergence provides not only conceptual clarity but also a tool for analyzing contemporary struggles where guilt and invisibility continue to structure exclusion. This framework not only clarifies the conceptual stakes of Fanon and Rancière’s dialogue but also provides a tool for analyzing contemporary struggles, from Black Lives Matter to postcolonial media in the Philippines, where guilt and invisibility continue to structure exclusion. The argument unfolds in five stages. I begin with Fanon’s account of the racial distribution of guilt, then turn to Rancière’s theory of the distribution of the sensible. I next develop their convergence as the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion, before examining practices of resistance—violence, dissensus, and pedagogy—as ruptures that reconfigure both affect and aesthetics. Finally, I ground this synthesis in two case studies, Black Lives Matter and postcolonial struggles in the Philippines, to demonstrate how the framework illuminates contemporary forms of exclusion and their contestation.

Racial Distribution of Guilt

Fanon’s critique of colonialism is both psychological and structural. From his earliest writings, he insists that colonization does not merely rob the subject of land, labor, or law: it seizes their interiority. “In the colonial situation, the social dichotomy reaches an incomparable intensity.”⁴ He thus declared that “decolonization is quite simply the replacing of certain ‘species’ of men by

¹ In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes, “Since the racial drama is played out in the open, the black man has no time to ‘make it unconscious.’ The white man, on the other hand, succeeds in doing so to a certain extent, because a new element appears: guilt. The Negro’s inferiority or superiority complex, or his feeling of equality, is conscious. These feelings forever chill him. They make his drama. In him, there is none of the affective amnesia characteristic of the typical neurotic.” Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 116.

² The distribution of the sensible produces a system of self-evident facts of perception based on the set horizons and modalities of what is visible and audible, as well as what can be said, thought, made, or done. Strictly speaking, ‘distribution’ therefore refers both to forms of inclusion and to forms of exclusion. The ‘sensible,’ of course, does not refer to what shows good sense or judgement but to what is *aisthêton* or capable of being apprehended by the senses. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. by Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), 85.

³ In *Disagreement*, Rancière refers to those excluded from society as “those who have no part.” He writes, “Whoever has no part—the poor of ancient times, the third estate, the modern proletariat—cannot in fact have any part other than all or nothing.” Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. by Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 9.

⁴ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 71.

another ‘species of men,’⁵ since colonization alters the emotional and cognitive conditions through which a person comes to see himself and others. Moreover, “this Manicheism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal.”⁶ Nowhere is this more sharply expressed than in his formulation of racial guilt. The racial distribution of guilt is essentially manufactured by the “superior,” colonizing race. “Unable to stand up to all the demands, the white man sloughs off his responsibilities. I have a name for this procedure: the racial distribution of guilt.”⁷

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon recounts the moment when a white child exclaims, “Look, a Negro!” and in doing so, calls the Black subject into a position of non-being. “I was an object among other objects,”⁸ Fanon writes. “Locked in this suffocating reification, I appealed to the other so that his liberating gaze might lift me out of my objecthood.”⁹ But the gaze does not liberate—it imprisons. In the presence of the white, the Black subject “begin[s] to stutter” for he is considered as “a brute beast...hav[ing] no life in the world.”¹⁰ The Black subject is constituted through a series of images, fantasies, and myths produced by colonial “discourse.” He is not guilty of a crime, but of a racialized existence that is always already marked as failure. Fanon writes,

[The Black man] lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; [he, then, must be] put in a position to choose action with respect to the real source of the conflict – that is, toward the social structures.¹¹

This guilt is not personal, but structural. It is the guilt one bears for being what the world has defined as lack: lack of whiteness, culture, intelligence, or even humanity. Fanon calls this “an epidermal racial schema,” a script that is imposed on the skin and operates like a second soul. The colonized thinks that he must apologize for his speech, his body, his gestures. Even when he masters the colonizer’s language, when he speaks French “properly,” he is not rewarded with equality, but with further alienation. “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax,” Fanon further writes, “to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization.”¹² This “weight of civilization” becomes a psychic burden. Here, guilt is affective ideology. It is a feeling that sustains a lie. It is the moment when “language fails” and becomes a site of violence. The colonized subject finds himself in a world where translation is impossible.¹³ This is not because his thoughts are incoherent, but because the symbolic order does not recognize him as a speaker. Speech, like vision, is racialized.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon moves from clinical description to revolutionary prescription. He declares that the colonized subject must reject this imposed guilt, even though

⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin*, 77.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 95.

¹³ For the full discussion of “translatability,” and role of language in Fanon’s philosophy, see Lucie K. Mercier, “The Translatability of Experience: On Fanon’s Language Puzzle,” in *Critical Times*, 6:1 (2023), 15-38, <10.1215/26410478-10235923>.

violence is necessary. Violence, for Fanon, is not merely a strategic act but a redemptive one since it reclaims dignity, agency, and existential presence. “At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force,”¹⁴ Fanon writes. “It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.”¹⁵ Liberation, in this sense, is not just material but also ontological.

Fanon’s analysis reveals how the colonized subject is made to feel culpable for the very system that subjugates him. Hence, he writes, “the problem of colonialism includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitude toward these conditions.”¹⁶ Guilt is not the aftermath of a moral failure; it is a strategy of domination. It disables resistance by internalizing the terms of exclusion. Moreover, as Michael Allan notes, “the problem of appearance returns us to another type of looking...: the possibility of being watched in language.”¹⁷ The colonized experiences a denial of embodied experience that cannot be spoken in the grammar of the colonizer. Thus, Fanon’s racial distribution of guilt must be understood as both a psychological condition and a political structure. It is a way of organizing affect to sustain colonial power.

Distribution of the Sensible

While Fanon’s account of guilt emphasizes the internalization of colonial violence, Jacques Rancière shifts the focus toward the external structures that determine who can be seen, heard, and recognized within a political order. In *Disagreement*, he argues that politics does not arise from consensus or institutional stability but from disruptive moments when those rendered invisible insist on their equality.¹⁸ As he puts it, “Politics exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part.”¹⁹ This interruption is not merely symbolic; it marks the emergence of a political subject who contests exclusion by demanding recognition.²⁰ Politics, therefore, is not a settled domain of governance but an activity of disruption,²¹ an intervention that unsettles the given distribution of roles and voices. Rancière names this process “political subjectivization,” a polemical act in which subjects constitute themselves through dissensual practices that verify the axiom of equality.²² In this light, politics is always an interruption of order, a refusal of silence, and a reconfiguration of what counts as intelligible. This external, structural emphasis complements Fanon’s analysis of internalized colonial violence by showing that emancipation requires both the dismantling of psychic subjugation and the public assertion of equality in the space of collective reason.

¹⁴ Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 94.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁶ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 62.

¹⁷ Michael Allan, “Fanon and the flesh of language: Towards a material linguistics of colonial subjection,” in *A Graduate Journal of French and Francophone Studies*, 3 (2004): 4.

¹⁸ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 30.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰ Darlene O. Demadante, “The Political Subject and Its Experiences: An Alternative Reading of Rancière on Political Subjectivity,” (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2019), 2.

²¹ Samuel Chambers, *The Lessons of Rancière*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 38.

²² Jessie Joshua Z. Lino, “The Politics of Intellectual Emancipation: An Introduction to Rancière’s Radical Egalitarianism, Aesthetic dispositif, and Dissensus Democracy (Second of Two Parts),” in *Suri*, 12:2 (2024): 175, <https://suri.pap73.site/files/lino_suri_october2024.pdf>.

Central to this account is Rancière's notion of the "distribution of the sensible," his distinctive way of framing the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics.²³ In *The Politics of Aesthetics*, he defines the "distribution of the sensible" as he writes:

The system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts.²⁴

From this framework, Rancière theorizes how political subjects emerge and realize their place in the socio-political realm.²⁵ The phrase "those who have no part"²⁶ is crucial here. It names the way societies allocate visibility and audibility: who counts as a speaking being, whose words are heard as speech rather than noise, whose suffering is legible, and whose presence matters. For Rancière, the *dèmos* is not a fixed social class or group but the dynamic, fluctuating "part that has no part." By its very appearance and assertion of fundamental equality, this disruptive force exposes the arbitrariness and exclusions inherent in any given police order, thereby making politics proper possible.

Importantly, the "sensible" in Rancière's usage is not confined to narrow sensory perception but refers to the entire field of intelligibility. To be excluded from this field is to be politically nonexistent. This distribution is therefore aesthetic as well as political. As Rancière writes in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time."²⁷ Domination, then, is not only enforced through coercion or law but also through the organization of experience that dictates what can appear and what must remain hidden.

Within this context, the poor, the racialized, and the colonized are not simply disenfranchised; they are misperceived, misheard, and misrepresented. Their exclusion is pre-political, occurring at the level of sense itself. Rancière has been criticized for his relative indifference to colonial and racial contexts, as his theory of equality often abstracts from historical specificity.²⁸ This paper does not deny that limitation. Rather, it argues that when read alongside Fanon's contextualized account of racial guilt, Rancière's framework can be re-situated as a grammar of perceptual exclusion. Fanon supplies the historical and affective depth that Rancière lacks, while Rancière provides the aesthetic-political vocabulary that Fanon anticipates but does not systematize.

²³ Darlene O. Demadante, "Aesthetics, Politics, and the Embodied Political Subject," in *Kritike*, 14:1 (2020): 142, <https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_26/demandante_june2020.pdf>.

²⁴ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.

²⁵ Jessie Joshua Z. Lino, "The Politics of Intellectual Emancipation: An Introduction to Rancière's Radical Egalitarianism, Aesthetic dispositif, and Dissensus Democracy (First of Two Parts)," in *Suri*, 12:1 (2024): 59, <https://suri.pap73.site/files/lino_suri_april2024.pdf>.

²⁶ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 9.

²⁷ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 13.

²⁸ Holloway Sparks argued that while Rancière's notion of democratic dissensus is useful, his work remains marked by a relative indifference to race, gender, sexuality, and colonial histories. She cautions that the celebration of Rancière as a "fresh" theorist risks sidelining feminist, queer, critical race, and postcolonial traditions that have long theorized dissent and disruption. In her view, his abstract account of equality and "democratic quarreling" obscures the lived realities of marginalized groups, reproducing epistemic hierarchies by failing to engage with the scholarship and struggles of those most affected by oppression. For the full discussion, see Holloway Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Democratic Disruption," in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 49:4 (2016): 432, <[10.5325/philrhet.49.4.0420](https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.49.4.0420)>.

Having established Rancière's theoretical grounding in the distribution of the sensible, we can now turn to Fanon's psychoanalytic method. Whereas Rancière maps the external structures of visibility and audibility, Fanon probes the internal psychic life of the colonized subject. Reading them together reveals not only a methodological divergence but also a productive complementarity: domination is sustained both by perceptual regimes that erase subjects from the political field and by affective structures that fracture subjectivity from within.

Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics: A Methodological Divergence

Fanon's analysis of colonial domination is grounded in psychoanalysis. His clinical training and practice led him to emphasize the psychic structures through which racism is internalized: guilt, shame, and inferiority. For Fanon, colonialism does not simply impose external constraints; it penetrates the subject's interiority, producing a fractured self that experiences its own identity as a burden. The colonizer arrives to impose his values through racial, economic, and spiritual violence.²⁹ The colonized subject, then, is compelled to see themselves through the eyes of the colonizer, a process that generates what Fanon calls the "racial epidermal schema." In this sense, Fanon's method is diagnostic: it uncovers the affective and unconscious mechanisms by which domination is reproduced within the psyche.

Rancière, by contrast, explicitly avoids psychoanalytic categories. His concern is not with the unconscious or the interior life of subjects but with the aesthetic-political regimes that determine who can be seen, heard, and recognized as a political actor. For Rancière, exclusion is not primarily a matter of psychic repression but of perceptual distribution: "the phenomenon of recognizability is determined by the institutional order that fixes the distribution of the sensible."³⁰ Rancière's method is not diagnostic but cartographic: it maps the distribution of the sensible, thereby "placing the problem of recognizability and visibility at the center of his concerns, equating recognizability with visibilization within the sensible and political fields."³¹

Fanon's psychoanalytic method and Rancière's aesthetic-political framework may appear, at first glance, to be incommensurable. Fanon works from the inside out: he begins with the psychic life of the colonized, showing how domination is internalized as guilt, shame, and inferiority. His concern is with the affective structures that fracture subjectivity and disable agency. Rancière, by contrast, works from the outside in: he maps the distributions of the sensible that determine who can be seen, heard, and recognized as a political subject. His concern is with the perceptual and institutional arrangements that police identities and regulate belonging.

This divergence is not a weakness but a productive complementarity. Fanon reveals how domination is interiorized—how the colonized come to carry the burden of their own exclusion in the form of guilt. Rancière reveals how domination is exteriorized—how the state and its institutions continually redraw the boundaries of visibility and audibility. Taken together, they show that racial domination is not reducible to either psychic repression or structural policing, but is sustained by the interplay of both.

²⁹ George J. Sefa Dei, "Chapter One: Rereading Fanon for His Pedagogy and Implications for Schooling and Education," in *Counterpoints*, 368 (2010): 5, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42980664>>.

³⁰ Danielle Petherbridge, "Recognition, Perception, and the Distribution of the Sensible: Rancière, Honneth, and Butler," in *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 27:2 (2019), 64, <10.5195/jffp.2019.894>.

³¹ Petherbridge, "Recognition, Perception, and the Distribution of the Sensible," 66-67.

The significance of this complementarity is twofold. First, it prevents a reductionist reading: Fanon alone might risk psychologizing domination, while Rancière alone might risk abstracting it into structures of perception. When read together, they illuminate how domination operates simultaneously at the level of affect and aesthetics, of interiority and exteriority. Second, this dual perspective provides the conceptual ground for theorizing what I call the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion, that is, a regime that paralyzes subjectivity through guilt while erasing it from the perceptual field of politics. Far from being an obstacle, the methodological gap between Fanon and Rancière is precisely what enables this synthesis, since it allows us to grasp the full spectrum of racial domination as both psychic and structural, both intimate and institutional. The methodological complementarity between Fanon and Rancière becomes even more pronounced when we consider Rancière's later reflections on racism as a state logic. Having seen how Fanon diagnoses the psychic burden of guilt and how Rancière maps the distribution of the sensible, we can now examine how Rancière extends his framework to theorize racism as a rationalized practice of exclusion.

In his reflections in *The New Racism: A Passion from Above*,³² Rancière insists that racism today is not primarily a working-class passion but a state logic, a “cold racism” produced by the rationality of institutions. Far from being the irrational residue of the masses, racism is an intellectual construction, legitimated by appeals to universality, equality, and secularism. This insight allows us to bring Rancière closer to Fanon, who likewise understood racism not as a spontaneous prejudice but as a structural and affective regime imposed from above.

Rancière's Argument: Cold Racism

In *The New Racism: A Passion from Above*, Rancière challenges the widespread assumption that racism is primarily a “working-class passion,” an irrational residue of backward or fearful populations.³³ Against this view, he insists that contemporary racism is first and foremost a state logic: a rationalized, institutional practice that produces categories of exclusion under the guise of universality. Far from being a concession to popular prejudice, racism is engineered “from above” through laws, administrative measures, and discursive strategies that continually redraw the boundaries of belonging. Rancière names this process as cold racism: not the heated passion of the street, but an intellectual and bureaucratic construction that legitimizes itself in the language of equality, secularism, and republican universality.³⁴

This “cold racism” operates by creating what Rancière calls floating identities—categories of people who are simultaneously included and excluded, visible and invisible.³⁵ The Roma, for instance, are European citizens yet treated as if they were not “really” European; similarly, the category of “French of foreign origin” produces a class of citizens who are never fully French. Such measures reveal the paradox of the state's universalist discourse: on the one hand, all citizens are equal before the law; on the other, distinctions are continually introduced that mark some as suspect, deficient, or precarious. The effect is to maintain a permanent border within citizenship itself, a shifting line that can demote insiders into outsiders at any moment. Racism, in this account, is not a deviation from the rationality of the state but one of its central techniques of governance.

³² Jacques Rancière, *Uncertain Times*, trans. by Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2024), 3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

By reframing racism as a police logic—a system that fixes identities, manages visibility, and produces insecurity—Rancière exposes how the state legitimizes exclusion while presenting itself as the guardian of universality. The figure of the “undesirable” is not discovered but manufactured, continually reconstituted through legislation and public discourse. In this sense, racism is not the irrational passion of the masses but the calculated passion of the intelligentsia and the state apparatus itself. This insight complicates the critique that Rancière is indifferent to colonial or racial contexts: while he does not engage them in the same register as Fanon, his analysis of “cold racism” provides a powerful account of how exclusion is rationalized and institutionalized in modern democracies.

Placed alongside Fanon, the convergence becomes clear. If Fanon shows how colonial power implants guilt and shame in the colonized subject, Rancière shows how the state reinforces that inferiority by refusing to acknowledge the colonized as political actors. Guilt disables self-perception; the sensible disables public perception. The colonized is both ashamed and unseen. Together, these insights reveal how domination operates simultaneously at the level of affect and perception, interiority and exteriority.

This convergence also gestures toward the question of pedagogy. For if, as Rancière suggests, equality must be presupposed rather than taught, and if, as Fanon insists, liberation requires the colonized to reject imposed guilt, then the terrain of education and formation becomes central to resistance. I will return to this in the discussion of rupture, where pedagogy will appear alongside violence and dissensus as a practice that reconfigures both affect and aesthetics.

The Affective-Aesthetic Regime of Exclusion

Positioning the Affective-Aesthetic Regime

Scholars have long noted resonances between Fanon and Rancière, but the precise nature of their convergence remains contested.³⁶ George Ciccariello-Maher, for instance, cautions against separating Fanon’s dialectical overtures along historical lines, arguing instead that “his decolonized dialectic is not only present in *The Wretched of the Earth*, but also in *Black Skin, White Masks*.”³⁷ This insight underscores the continuity of Fanon’s project, but leaves open the question of how his affective analyses might intersect with Rancière’s aesthetic politics.

³⁶ See for example, Matthias Pauwels, “Portrait of the Artist as Colonised Subject Fanon, Rancière and the Struggle Toward Decolonisation on the Aesthetic Front,” in *Theoria*, 65:2 (2018): 72-97, 10.3167/th.2018.6515504.

³⁷ Ciccariello-Maher challenges readings that divide Fanon’s work into an “early” psychological phase and a “late” political space. While Ciccariello-Maher’s formulation of Fanon’s decolonized dialectic has been widely influential, it has also attracted critical responses. Elyse MacLeod, in her article “Frantz Fanon’s Decolonized Dialectics: The Primacy of the Affective Weight of the Past,” offers a significant critique, arguing that Ciccariello-Maher’s focus on rupture and presentness risks obscuring the affective and ethical dimensions of Fanon’s work. Drawing on the critical phenomenology of Alia Al-Saji, Christina Sharpe’s notion of “the wake,” and Jan Slaby’s work on affect, MacLeod contends that Fanon’s experience of racialization is deeply affective and temporally complex. The past, as structured by colonialism and slavery, is not a static backdrop but an active force that shapes the present and future possibilities for racialized subjects. MacLeod argues that Fanon’s final prayer in *Black Skin, White Masks*, “O my body, always make me a man who questions!” should be read as a call for an embodied ethics of questioning, a “disclosive posture” that remains open to the affective weight of the past and its implications for the present. For the full discussion, see Ciccariello-Maher, quoted in Elyse MacLeod, “Frantz Fanon’s Decolonized Dialectics: The Primacy of the Affective Weight of the Past,” in *Ergo*, 8:42 (2021): 504, <<https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.2243>>.

Recent work has begun to address this gap. Elyse Macleod's study, *Frantz Fanon's Decolonized Dialectics: The Primacy of the Affective Weight of the Past*, emphasizes that Fanon's phenomenology of racialization resists being turned into spectacle. Drawing on Alia Al-Saji, she warns against "the risk of specularization."³⁸ For Al-Saji, the colonial past exerts an "affective weight" that is "felt more than reflectively known."³⁹ This affective sedimentation clarifies how racialized guilt operates as a colonial weapon that paralyzes subjectivity from within.

Parallel to this, scholarship on Rancière has highlighted the embodied dimension of dissensus. Demadante's thesis insists that "a subject is an embodied subject, a physical subject made of flesh, bones and blood, who engages in politics by mobilizing bodily experiences and affects."⁴⁰ Similarly, Laura Quintana identifies in Rancière's *Proletarian Nights* "the role of corporeality in his [Rancière's] notion of emancipation."⁴¹ These readings reinforce that exclusion in Rancière is not merely symbolic but deeply tied to the lived, bodily dimension of politics.

Taken together, these interventions provide the scaffolding for my argument. While Macleod and Al-Saji illuminate the affective paralysis of racialized subjects, Demadante and Quintana underscore the perceptual erasure that forecloses recognition. My paper advances this conversation by naming their convergence as an affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion. This framework demonstrates how domination sustains itself across registers of feeling and perception: guilt makes the colonized doubt their legitimacy, while perceptual foreclosure ensures their words fail to register as political speech. Together, these readings illuminate how racialized subjects are burdened by affective paralysis and perceptual erasure.

The Affective-Aesthetic Regime of Exclusion

Bringing Fanon's account of racialized guilt into dialogue with Rancière's theory of the distribution of the sensible reveals a deeper convergence. For Fanon, guilt is not a private emotion but a colonial weapon: it is imposed to render the colonized politically submissive and ontologically unstable. As Alia Al-Saji explains, "the colonial past has uneven affective weight—disregarded, indifferent, or 'ankylosed; from white, Eurocentric or U.S.-centric perspectives, yet intensively structuring the everyday for the occupied, racialized, and 'formerly colonized.'"⁴² This affective sedimentation clarifies why Fanon insists that guilt paralyzes subjectivity from within.

For Rancière, exclusion is not simply legal disenfranchisement but a perceptual foreclosure: the sensible order denies certain subjects visibility, speech, and participation in the shared world. Demadante emphasizes that for Rancière, subjects have bodies that feel and suffer, minds that dream and express themselves in material forms of discourse.⁴³ This feelings, in fact can be the beginning of politics.⁴⁴ Similarly, Laura Quintana identifies Rancière's insistence on corporeality as

³⁸ Alia Al-Saji, quoted in Elyse Macleod, "Frantz Fanon's Decolonized Dialectics," 506.

³⁹ Alia Al-Saji, "SPEP Co-Director's Address: Hesitation as Philosophical Method—Travel Bans, Colonial Durations, and the Affective Weight of the Past," in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 32:33 (2018): 338, <<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/704667>>.

⁴⁰ Demadante, "The Political Subject and Its Experiences," 10.

⁴¹ Laura Quintana, quoted in Demadante, *ibid.*, 6.

⁴² Al-Saji writes, "the weight of the past at work (pre-reflectively) behind the back of consciousness – felt more than reflectively known – a past that submerges, bogs us down, or buoys us up. Al-Saji, "SPEP Co-Director's Address," 338.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

central to emancipation, noting that the role of corporeality in his notion of emancipation is indispensable to understanding dissensus.⁴⁵ Taken together, these insights illuminate a dual structure of domination in which the racialized subject is made to feel undeserving from within and unrecognizable from without. One disfigures affect; the other disfigures perception.

This dual mechanism is what I call the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion. It does not operate solely by denying rights or enforcing laws. Rather, it manipulates how people feel about themselves and how others see, or fail to see, them. It constructs a world in which the colonized subject feels too ashamed to speak and, even if they do, is heard as noise rather than logos. Fanon's analysis of shame and guilt shows how subjectivity is paralyzed from within; Rancière's framework shows how perception is programmed from without. Together, these mechanisms collaborate to foreclose political agency.

The regime is powerful precisely because it is self-reinforcing. Guilt makes the colonized doubt the legitimacy of their own suffering, while perceptual erasure ensures that even when they speak, their words fail to register as political speech. Macleod warns that racialized experience risks being turned into spectacle, a danger Al-Saji calls "specularization," or "the tendency to take phenomenology to be equivalent to making experience visible."⁴⁶ This specularization "converts the experiences of racialized subjects—suffering, enjoyment, reaction, redress, and resistance, even 'the feeling of nonexistence'—into phenomena available to a racializing and surveilling gaze."⁴⁷ In this sense, the affective-aesthetic regime is not merely an addition of Fanon and Rancière's insights, but a synthesis that reveals how domination sustains itself across registers of feeling and perception.

Concrete examples from Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* illustrate this dynamic. The Black subject who speaks impeccable French is still treated as inferior, his words unrecognized as legitimate speech. This is not a communicative failure but a political foreclosure: the regime of the sensible cannot accommodate his voice, not because it is unintelligible, but because it is unauthorized. Rancière captures this paradox in his description of "extreme disagreement," when one party cannot even recognize the other's utterances as language. Here, Fanon's "epidermal racial schema" and Rancière's "distribution of the sensible" converge: visibility is not presence, and audibility is not agency.

The significance of this framework is twofold. First, it explains why racial domination persists even under conditions of formal equality because domination is sustained not only by institutions, but also by affective burdens and perceptual partitions. Second, it clarifies why resistance must target both registers at once. To dismantle the regime requires more than recognition or representation; it requires a reconfiguration of the sensible itself, a new way of organizing perception, emotion, and agency. This is why both Fanon and Rancière emphasize rupture, interruption, and disidentification as the conditions of political emergence.

⁴⁵ Quintana writes, "To think of emancipation from the perspective of corporeality, or more precisely, as we shall see, to think of it as the torsion of a body, makes it possible to challenge a) voluntarist readings that interpret intellectual emancipation as the liberation of a subjective will, and offers some elements to begin to problematize (b) dichotomous readings of emancipation that interpret it as a completely excessive moment, entirely outside of police logic and (c) approaches that consider emancipation to be insubstantial [pp.2-3]." For the full discussion of the role of corporeality in emancipation, see Laura Quintana, "Jacques Rancière and the Emancipation of Bodies," in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (June 2018): 1-27, <10.1177/0191453718780529>.

⁴⁶ Alia Al-Saji, quoted in Elyse Macleod, "Frantz Fanon's Decolonized Dialectics," 506.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 506.

Finally, this synthesis contests liberal theories of recognition and inclusion. If the problem is not simply that marginalized groups are unheard, but that their speech is not recognized as speech, then more visibility or representation will not suffice. What is needed is a transformation of the very conditions of intelligibility. The affective-aesthetic regime thus names the terrain on which struggles for liberation must be fought: not only against laws and institutions, but against the psychic burdens and perceptual orders that make domination appear natural and resistance appear irrational.

Resistance as Rupture: Violence, Dissensus, and Pedagogy

If the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion sustains domination by paralyzing subjects through guilt and erasing them through perceptual policing, then resistance must operate on both registers. It must dismantle the psychic burden of shame while simultaneously reconfiguring the sensible order that renders some voices as noise. Both Fanon and Rancière insist that emancipation does not emerge from gradual inclusion or recognition but from rupture—a break that interrupts the logic of domination.

Fanon: Violence as Cleansing

For Fanon, the psychic burden of guilt cannot be reasoned away or reformed through appeals to recognition. The colonized subject, trapped in a world that defines them as inferior, cannot simply be taught their worth within the terms of the colonial order.⁴⁸ Fanon's cure of the colonized is the cultivation of a decolonial attitude, which is profoundly epistemological as well as ethical, political, and aesthetic.⁴⁹ Fanon then insists that liberation requires a radical break, a violent rupture that shatters the internalized structures of shame and the external structures of domination. The transformation of society, together with the superstructure resting on it, will result mainly from the violent confrontation between the oppressor (the colonizer) and the oppressed (the colonized).⁵⁰ "Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding."⁵¹

Violence, in this sense, is not reducible to instrumental force; it is a transformative act that reconstitutes the colonized subject's relation to themselves, their body, and the world. In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon writes

⁴⁸ This is in reference to separate quotes from Fanon. The exact quotes state, (1) "Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known." See Fanon, *Black Skin*, 87. (2) "The goal of his behavior will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for The Other alone can give him worth. That is on the ethical level: self-esteem." *Ibid.*, 119. (3) "Now the inferior thinks that he has acquired worth...and the superior is determined to conserve the old hierarchy. 'You haven't changed a bit ...still as stupid as ever.'" *Ibid.*, 164. (4) "He who is reluctant to recognize me opposes me." *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴⁹ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "Frantz Fanon and the decolonial turn in psychology: from modern/ colonial methods to the decolonial attitude," in *South African journal of Psychology*, 47:4 (2017): 439, <10.1177/0081246317737918>.

⁵⁰ L. Adele Jinadu, "Some Aspects of the Political Philosophy of Frantz Fanon," in *African Studies Review*, 16:2 (1973): 260, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/523409>>.

⁵¹ Fanon, *Wretched*, 36.

The breaking down of colonial structures are the result of one of two causes: either a violent struggle of the people in their own right, or of action on the part of surrounding colonized peoples which acts as a break on the colonial regime in question.⁵²

In the terms of the affective-aesthetic regime, violence functions as a refusal of imposed guilt. Violence can also be a form of resistance and a response to the perpetuation of the inferiority complex syndrome.⁵³ It is a cleansing force not because it purifies in a moral sense, but because it disrupts the affective economy that has rendered the colonized ashamed of their own existence. Fanon writes, “At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.”⁵⁴ This is not a celebration of brutality—to be understood in terms of the Algerian war of independence and not, like in Kedouri’s view, as a lyrical celebration of violence as such⁵⁵—but a recognition that under conditions of total dehumanization, the assertion of one’s being may take the form of physical confrontation. Violence becomes the language through which the colonized reclaims their right to appear, to speak, and to feel without shame.

Moreover, Fanon’s emphasis on violence can be read as a form of embodied dissensus. In a world where the colonized are rendered invisible and inaudible, the act of violent resistance forces a perceptual reordering. It demands recognition not through appeal but through interruption. The colonized body, once marked as docile or criminal, becomes a site of political emergence. In this way, Fanon’s violence is not only affective but aesthetic: it reconfigures the sensible by making visible what the colonial order has rendered invisible. It is a rupture that exposes the lie of colonial innocence and asserts the presence of those who have been excluded from the field of political intelligibility.

Rancière: Dissensus as Redistribution

While Fanon emphasizes the affective and ontological force of violence, Rancière locates political rupture in the practice of dissensus: the moment when those who have “no part” in the political order assert their equality by disrupting the distribution of the sensible.⁵⁶ Dissensus is not a demand for inclusion within the existing framework; it is a reconfiguration of what counts as speech, who counts as a subject, and what counts as a political act. It is the appearance of a subject where none was supposed to be, the transformation of noise into speech, and the reoccupation of space that had been reserved for others.

In the context of the affective-aesthetic regime, dissensus functions as a perceptual rupture. It interrupts the aesthetic order that renders certain bodies invisible or unintelligible. When the excluded speak, not in the language of the dominant, but in their own idiom, they force a crisis in the sensible. Their speech is not merely content; it is form. It alters the coordinates of what can be seen and heard, and in doing so, it exposes the exclusions that structure the political field.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵³ Sefa Dei, “Rereading Fanon,” 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁵⁵ Jinadu, “Some Aspects,” 260.

⁵⁶ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 9.

Dissensus also carries an affective charge. It is not a cold assertion of rights but a passionate refusal of misrecognition. The act of speaking out, of occupying space, of refusing to be silent, is itself a form of affective resistance. It cleanses not through violence but through visibility and the insistence that one's presence is not a disruption of order, but the beginning of politics. In this way, dissensus complements Fanon's violence: both are ruptures, but where Fanon's violence purges the internalized shame of the colonized, Rancière's dissensus reorders the external field of perception that sustains exclusion.

Together, these practices reveal that rupture is not a singular event but a multidimensional process. It must address both the affective and aesthetic dimensions of domination. Dissensus, like violence, is a way of making the world otherwise—of asserting that those who have been rendered guilty and invisible are, in fact, equal and present.

Pedagogy: Presupposing Equality

If violence and dissensus represent dramatic ruptures in the affective-aesthetic regime, pedagogy offers a quieter but no less radical form of interruption. For Rancière, education is not the transmission of knowledge from the enlightened to the ignorant, but the presupposition that every subject already possesses the capacity for thought and speech. Explanation presumes inequality. It assumes that the learner is incapable of understanding without the superior insight of the teacher. As Rancière writes, "I explain to him that if I did not explain he would not understand... I explain to him, in short, that he is less intelligent than I am."⁵⁷ Thus, every act of explanation reinforces a hierarchy of minds. The principle of explication is the principle of enforced stultification. "There is stultification whenever one intelligence is subordinated to another."⁵⁸ D.J.v.R. Postma, in his analysis of Rancière's *emancipatory* pedagogy and Freire's *liberating* pedagogy, emphasized that decolonial pedagogy must therefore begin not by teaching equality, but by presupposing it: "'ignorant' educators have a very important role to play in emancipatory education."⁵⁹ To avoid stultification, "the whole project of educating the oppressed soul is to help learners not necessarily to 'receive' an education but to reclaim education that is about their past, history, sense of self-worth, and pride."⁶⁰ This inversion directly contests the colonial logic that casts the oppressed as deficient, in need of correction or salvation. Instead, pedagogy becomes a dissensual practice: it interrupts the hierarchy of intelligence and reorders the sensible by treating every subject as already capable.

This emphasis resonates with Fanon's insistence that liberation requires the colonized to reject imposed guilt and assert themselves as agents of history. Pedagogy, in this sense, is not merely instructional but affective: it dismantles the psychic burden of shame by affirming the colonized as thinkers and speakers in their own right. It is also aesthetic: it reconfigures who can appear as a political subject, shifting voices from the register of "noise" into that of speech. In this way, pedagogy complements violence and dissensus by working at the level of everyday formation, cultivating new modes of perception and relation.

⁵⁷ Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, trans. by Liz Heron. (London: Verso, 2021), 83.

⁵⁸ Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. by Kristine Ross Brown (California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 13.

⁵⁹ D.J.v.R. Postma, "Decolonial Pedagogical Practices: Engaging with Rancière and Freire," in *South African Journal of Higher Education* 33:5 (2019): 9, <10.20853/33-5-3583>.

⁶⁰ Sefa Dei, "Rereading Fanon," 24.

Sergio Calderón Harker underscores this point by describing politics as “a community of interruptions.”⁶¹ Pedagogy is one such interruption: it unsettles the distribution of the sensible by refusing the roles assigned by the police order—teacher and student, knower and ignorant, colonizer and colonized. Rancière’s radically egalitarian thoughts render the ability to emancipate minds towards real political activity and diminish political passivity that diminishes critical consciousness and social awareness.⁶² “Equality was not an end to attain, but a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance,”⁶³ from which politics emerges. In this sense, pedagogy is not a supplement to rupture but a form of rupture itself.

Yet the difficulty of this task should not be underestimated. As Saidiya Hartman reminds us, the suffering of the racialized is often “unsceneable,”⁶⁴ unable to appear within the available frames of intelligibility. Pedagogy must therefore grapple with the limits of representation: how to affirm equality when the dominant order refuses to recognize certain subjects as capable of speech at all. Here, pedagogy becomes a practice of re-sensing that cultivates new ways of seeing and hearing that can register what the existing order renders invisible or inaudible. It is precisely in the tension between the unsceneable and the presupposition of equality that pedagogy finds its radical force. Pedagogy, then, alongside violence and dissensus, names a mode of rupture that dismantles guilt and reconfigures the sensible.

Having established the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion as the convergence of Fanon and Rancière, the task now is to see how this framework illuminates contemporary struggles. Theory, after all, gains its force not only in conceptual clarity but in its capacity to interpret lived realities. To test the portability of this framework, I turn to two case studies: the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and postcolonial struggles in the Philippines. Both contexts reveal how guilt and invisibility continue to structure exclusion, and both demonstrate how practices of rupture—whether through affective refusal, dissensus in public space, or pedagogical affirmation—can reconfigure the sensible. By examining these cases side by side, we see how the affective-aesthetic regime operates across different histories of racial domination, and how its disruption opens possibilities for political emergence. If BLM dramatizes these ruptures in the United States, the Philippine context reveals how similar dynamics unfold under postcolonial conditions.

⁶¹ Sergio Calderón Harker, “A Community of Interruptions: Thinking Postcolonial Rancière,” (Master’s thesis, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, 2019), 2.

⁶² Lino, “The Politics of Intellectual Emancipation,” 59-60.

⁶³ Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 138.

⁶⁴ Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2022), 20.

Black Lives Matter and the Rupture of the Affective-Aesthetic Regime

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement⁶⁵ offers a powerful illustration of how the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion operates in the present and how it can be disrupted through practices of rupture. The movement exposes how racial domination persists not only through legal and economic structures but also through the psychic burden of guilt and the perceptual erasure of Black suffering. At the same time, it demonstrates how resistance can dismantle both registers by cleansing affect, redistributing the sensible, and cultivating new pedagogical practices.

One of the most resonant slogans of the movement, “*I can’t breathe*,” captures this dual struggle. On one level, it names the literal suffocation of Black bodies under state violence. On another, it rejects the affective burden that has long been imposed on Black communities which insinuates that they are responsible for their own deaths, poverty, or marginalization. As Ben Okri aptly writes:

“I can’t breathe” suddenly equates racism with the deprivation of air, which is what it always was. Previously we saw racism, if we saw it all, as a diminishment of a person’s humanity. But that was always too vague. “I can’t breathe” goes beyond saying that you are depriving me of freedom, of humanity, of respect. It says: “You are depriving me of the right to air itself.”⁶⁶

In Fanonian terms, the chant is a refusal of imposed guilt. It transforms shame into solidarity, despair into collective affirmation. Here, affect is cleansed through collective expression, echoing Fanon’s insistence that liberation requires the shattering of internalized inferiority.

BLM also enacts Rancièrian dissensus by occupying streets, painting murals, and amplifying voices through chants and digital platforms. What was previously background noise, i.e., Black suffering rendered invisible or illegible, becomes the center of public attention. These acts interrupt the police logic that classifies Black voices as irrational or criminal and insist instead that they are political speech. In this way, BLM redistributes the sensible by altering who can be seen, heard, and recognized as a political subject. The aesthetic dimension of protest, the choreography of marches, the visibility of murals, the rhythm of chants, becomes inseparable from its political force.

Finally, BLM functions pedagogically by presupposing equality. Its decentralized structure, reliance on grassroots organizing, and emphasis on lived experience affirm that every participant already possesses the capacity to speak and act politically. This mirrors Rancièr’s notion of the “ignorant schoolmaster” and Fanon’s call for revolutionary self-assertion. Through teach-ins, community workshops, and digital networks, BLM cultivates new forms of knowledge and solidarity

⁶⁵ Black Lives Matter is a phrase, and notably a hashtag, used to highlight racism, discrimination and inequality experienced by black people. Its use grew in the US after high-profile killings by police, but it has also been used in the UK and elsewhere. The slogan was widely used after the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida, in 2012. The unarmed black 17-year-old was shot by neighbourhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman. Support grew following other police killings, including Eric Garner, who died in a chokehold, and Michael Brown, who was killed by an officer who said he acted in self-defence. In the summer of 2020 George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was murdered by a police officer who knelt on his neck. See Adina Campbell, “What Is Black Lives Matter and What Are the Aims?,” June 12, 2021, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53337780>>.

⁶⁶ Ben Okri, “‘I Can’t Breathe’: Why George Floyd’s Words Reverberate Around the World,” *The Guardian*, June 8, 2020, <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/08/i-cant-breathe-george-floyds-words-reverberate-oppression>>.

that dismantle the colonial logic of deficiency. Pedagogy here is not instruction from above but the collective reordering of perception and affect.

Taken together, these practices show how BLM ruptures the affective-aesthetic regime. It cleanses the colonized of imposed guilt, disrupts the perceptual order that renders them invisible, and cultivates new forms of recognition and solidarity. The movement demonstrates that resistance is not accommodation but interruption, not inclusion but reconfiguration. In this sense, BLM exemplifies how Fanon's violence, Rancière's dissensus, and their shared pedagogy converge in contemporary struggles for racial justice.

Postcolonial Struggles in the Philippines

The Philippine context provides a vivid and unsettling example of how the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion continues to operate in postcolonial societies. The proliferation of extrajudicial killings in the previous government's campaign against illegal drugs is not merely a domestic policy issue confined to questions of law enforcement or public safety; rather, it is a manifestation of the unfinished postcolonial struggle that continues to haunt the nation. Colonial legacies of domination persist in the way state violence disciplines the poor, reproducing hierarchies of guilt, shame, and invisibility that were historically imposed by colonial powers. What appears on the surface as a modern policy initiative is in fact deeply entangled with centuries of colonial governance, where violence was normalized as a means of maintaining order and where the lives of the marginalized were consistently treated as expendable. In this sense, the drug war is not an isolated phenomenon but a continuation of the colonial project, rearticulated in contemporary terms and directed at populations already marked by historical vulnerability.

Extrajudicial killings⁶⁷ function as a contemporary iteration of colonial control: they mark certain populations—the urban poor, the marginalized, the socially precarious—as disposable that echoes the colonial logic that treated native lives as expendable for the maintenance of order and the preservation of elite interests. The state's rhetoric frames these killings as necessary sacrifices for national discipline, but beneath this justification lies a familiar colonial script that divides society into those deemed worthy of protection and those condemned to elimination. Families of victims are

⁶⁷ Extrajudicial killings, or extrajudicial executions, happen when someone in an official position deliberately kills a person without any legal process. Such arbitrary deprivations of life, which can also be carried out by militias, death squads or other non-State actors, often target political opponents, activists, or marginalized groups. See Our Name is Mud Ltd, "Extrajudicial Killings," in *OMCT*, April 23, 2025, <<https://www.omct.org/en/what-we-do/extrajudicial-killings>>.

Rodrigo Duterte's presidency (2016–2022) was marked by the controversial "war on drugs," a campaign that resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, disproportionately affecting poor, urban men. While authorities often claimed self-defense, human rights groups documented widespread evidence of extrajudicial killings, falsified reports, and planted weapons. International concern culminated in an ICC warrant for Duterte, citing crimes against humanity. Allegations surfaced that police were financially incentivized per killing, though Duterte denied authorizing such payments. Notably, he admitted to running a death squad as mayor and later declared full legal responsibility for the crackdown, despite persistent denials of extrajudicial orders. The campaign exemplifies the tension between state-led security measures and human rights accountability, raising enduring questions about impunity, justice, and the ethics of governance. Rebecca Ratcliffe, "Rodrigo Duterte's 'War on Drugs' in the Philippines – Explained in 30 Seconds," in *The Guardian*, March 11, 2025, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/04/rodrigo-dutertes-war-on-drugs-in-the-philippines-explained-in-30-seconds-ntwnfb>>.

often made to feel complicit in the violence, framed as negligent, irresponsible, or morally deficient, as though their poverty or social condition were themselves crimes. This affective burden of guilt mirrors Fanon's account of psychic domination: the colonized subject is made to bear responsibility for their own dehumanization, internalizing the violence as a reflection of personal failure. The result is paralysis, a discouragement of resistance, and the transformation of grief into a form of shame. By making mourning appear as weakness or failure, the state ensures that grief does not become a site of collective political mobilization but remains privatized, silenced, and depoliticized.

At the same time, victims of extrajudicial killings are rendered invisible in official discourse, their presence acknowledged only in the most reductive and dehumanizing ways. They appear in statistics, in blurred images on television, or in anonymized police reports, but rarely as political subjects with voices, names, and histories. This reflects Rancière's notion of the distribution of the sensible: their suffering is not recognized as speech but as background noise in the maintenance of order. The poor are hyper-visible as bodies—as corpses, as mugshots, as “suspects”—but politically inaudible as agents capable of speech, thought, or resistance. This paradox of visibility without recognition illustrates how the sensible order forecloses political subjectivity and ensures that the marginalized remain present only as objects of governance rather than participants in the political community. In this way, the drug war perpetuates a continuation of colonial erasure in the postcolonial present, where the poor are simultaneously overexposed and silenced, seen but not heard, counted but not acknowledged.

Yet these exclusions have not gone uncontested. Grassroots memorials, independent journalism, and human rights documentation have enacted dissensus by naming victims, displaying their photographs, and staging vigils in public spaces. These practices reconfigure the sensible by insisting that the dead and their families be seen and heard as part of the political community. Similarly, community organizations and church-based groups have engaged in pedagogical practices that presuppose equality. Rather than treating the poor as deficient, they affirm their capacity to narrate their own experiences and to organize collectively. Workshops, testimonies, and solidarity networks cultivate new forms of perception and relation and dismantle the affective burden of shame and reconfiguring who can appear as a political subject.

Taken together, these practices show how extrajudicial killings are not an aberration but a facet of the postcolonial struggle: they reproduce colonial hierarchies of guilt and invisibility, while resistance against them enacts rupture and reconfiguration. Guilt and invisibility continue to structure exclusion, but affective refusal, dissensual reappearance, and pedagogical affirmation open spaces for political emergence. As in Black Lives Matter, liberation here is not a matter of inclusion into the existing order but of rupture and of reconfiguring the sensible so that those once unseen and unheard can appear otherwise.

Toward a Philosophy of Affective and Aesthetic Liberation

Having examined Fanon's racial distribution of guilt and Rancière's distribution of the sensible in their respective contexts and synthesis, I now ask: what kind of politics emerges from this conjoined critique? What does it mean to resist not only institutions but the feelings and images that sustain them?

First, we must reframe political exclusion not as a failure of participation, but as the result of a preemptive structuring of perception and emotion. The colonized subject is not merely denied

access to institutions of power; they are denied recognition as a speaker and a feeler. Their suffering is illegible, their voice is filtered through racial assumptions, and their affect is misread as disorder. Fanon and Rancière together suggest that any emancipatory project must therefore begin by disrupting both perception and affect. This disruption cannot be purely rational. It must engage the entire sensorium, including the body, the image, and the rhythm of speech. In this sense, both thinkers affirm a kind of aesthetic politics, but one grounded in lived experience rather than abstraction. For Fanon, the colonized must reclaim their body from the gaze that has distorted it. For Rancière, the oppressed must appear in spaces and modes where their presence has been denied. This requires new forms of storytelling, protest, and pedagogy that will undo the existing aesthetic regime.

Consider, for instance, the use of murals, chants, and public grieving in contemporary movements. These are not ornamental additions to political claims, rather, they are the claims. They remake what counts as a public gesture, what grief looks like, and what defiance sounds like. They are dissensual in the strictest Rancièrian sense: they disturb the field of common sense. In pedagogical contexts, this also means rejecting the model of the explicator, the teacher who presumes the ignorance of the student. Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* argues that emancipation begins when we assume the equal intelligence of all.⁶⁸ Fanon, too, was a teacher, not just in his psychiatric work, but in his writings, which seek not to explain the world to the oppressed but to arm them with language to name their condition.

Yet the challenge remains: how do we dismantle a regime that has taught people not only what to see but how to feel? The answer, perhaps, lies in the shared emphasis both thinkers place on rupture. Guilt is not overcome by apology or reconciliation but rather broken by a refusal to accept the terms of shame. Invisibility is not remedied by better representation but rather contested by a redistribution of the sensible. This is the philosophical wager of this paper: that Fanon's insights into racialized affect and Rancière's theory of aesthetic exclusion are not only compatible but mutually necessary. One reveals the emotional interior of domination; the other maps its exterior architecture. Together, they could offer a powerful critique of how racial orders are built and sustained and how they might be dismantled.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the convergence of Fanon's account of racialized guilt and Rancière's theory of the distribution of the sensible can be understood as an affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion. This regime paralyzes subjectivity from within through the imposition of guilt while simultaneously erasing that subject from the perceptual field of politics. By naming this dual

⁶⁸ Rancière's philosophy stands in sharp contrast to Habermas's consensus-driven model as it privileges dissensus, the disruption of established orders of speech and visibility, as the ground of intellectual equality. Drawing on Joseph Jacotot's 19th-century experiment, Rancière argues that "one can teach what one doesn't know," since explanation itself presumes inequality and enforces intellectual hierarchies. Jacotot's success in teaching French, piano, and chemistry without expertise illustrates Rancière's principle of the equality of intelligences: all people possess the capacity to think and learn, though at different manifestations and paces. The pedagogical shift lies not in proving equality but in acting upon it, thereby transforming education into emancipation. This radical claim repositions the marginalized not as passive recipients of knowledge but as autonomous thinkers capable of participating in the shared space of meaning. For a more thorough discussion, see Yves Citton, "The ignorant schoolmaster: knowledge and authority" in *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Deranty (New York: Routledge, 2014), 25-37.

structure, I have sought to show how domination sustains itself across registers of feeling and perception, and why resistance must target both at once.

The practices of rupture examined here—Fanon’s cleansing violence, Rancière’s dissensus, and their shared pedagogical interventions—demonstrate that emancipation does not emerge from gradual inclusion or recognition but from interruption. Violence cleanses the affective burden of guilt, dissensus redistributes the sensible by making the inaudible heard, and pedagogy presupposes equality where the colonial order insists on deficiency. Together, they reveal that liberation requires a transformation of the very conditions of intelligibility.

The case studies of Black Lives Matter and postcolonial struggles in the Philippines illustrate how this framework travels across contexts. In BLM, the refusal of imposed guilt, the occupation of public space, and grassroots education enact ruptures that reconfigure both affect and aesthetics. In the Philippines, the drug war’s affective burden of shame and the invisibility of its victims reveal the persistence of the regime, while counter-media, memorials, and community pedagogy enact ruptures that affirm equality and reconfigure the sensible. Both cases show how guilt and invisibility continue to structure exclusion, and how their disruption opens possibilities for political emergence.

By theorizing the affective-aesthetic regime of exclusion, this paper contests liberal theories of recognition and representation. The problem is not simply that marginalized groups are unheard, but that their speech is not recognized as speech. What is needed is not more visibility within the existing order but a reconfiguration of the sensible itself. Fanon and Rancière, when read together, remind us that politics begins when those who are ashamed and unseen appear otherwise by rupturing the order that renders them guilty and inaudible, and in doing so, make a new world perceptible.

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