

The Paradox of Black Life: Discourses of Urban (Un)livability

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies.
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

July 25, 2020

Jamilla Mohamud, MES Candidate

Stefan Kipfer, Supervisor

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements | i |
| Abstract | ii |
| Foreward | iii |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter Overview | 5 |
| Chapter 1: Discourses of Urban Livability | 8 |
| Livability for Whom? | 10 |
| Continuities of Anti-Black Racism as Racialized Residential Segregation | 13 |
| Foundations of Settler Colonialism in Canadian Town Planning | 15 |
| Modern Planning's Entanglements with Anti-Black Racism | 18 |
| Chapter 2: Theoretical framework | 21 |
| The Black Radical Tradition | 21 |
| Racial Capitalism | 23 |
| Theorizing Anti-Black Racism | 26 |
| Frantz Fanon | 28 |
| Christina Sharpe | 30 |
| Chapter 3: The Paradox of Black (Un)Livability | 33 |
| The Making of the Black Subject | 33 |
| An Anagrammatical Blackness | 38 |
| In Search of Black Freedoms | 42 |
| Chapter 4: More Humanly Livable Futures | 46 |
| Culture and Struggle | 50 |
| Towards a Different Ethics of Livability | 51 |
| Concluding Thoughts | 54 |
| A Black Test | 55 |
| Black Urbanism | 57 |
| References | 60 |

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This major paper is inspired by the scholarship of Black radical thinkers in the field of Black Geographies, who have been an invaluable source of knowledge that have given me the necessary grammar to speak back to normalized pathology of Blackness and reflect on the spaces produced by Black labour as alternative geographies of social and spatial transformation.

Thank you to my supervisor, professors, colleagues and friends, whose advice, patience and support has helped sustain me throughout the process of completing this major paper.

Finally, I am especially grateful to my family for their love and support throughout the two years of completing this program. Your love has shown me that “the love of the family, the love of one person can heal. It heals the scars left by a larger society. A massive, powerful society” (Maya Angelou).

ABSTRACT

The question of livability in the city has inspired plenty of debate amongst urban planning practitioners and scholars who have tried to define what constitutes a livable city and question, for whom is the livable city planned? (Okulics-Kozaryn, 2013, p. 438; Southworth, 2003). This research paper is concerned with thinking through the ways in which livability discourse fails to capture the lived experiences of low-income Black peoples and raises the question, how can a different ethics of livable city discourse – one that attends to the paradox of Black (un)livability – be imagined? This research paper applies a conceptual framework that brings into conversation discussions of urban livability with debates in various strands of Black radical traditions that discuss the paradox of Black life as both livable and unlivable. In doing so, this paper turns to Frantz Fanon’s theory of the zone of nonbeing in relation to Christina Sharpe’s theory of the wake, as part of an ethical and political project that reorients urban planning practices to more humanly livable future that considers the ways in which Blackness, “within and after the legacies of slavery’s denial of Black humanity”, inhabits/occupies and dwells in and across the dividing lines of livability and un-livability (Sharpe, 2016, p. 14 & 20).

Keywords: Livability, Urban Planning, Black Subjectivity, Anti-Black Racism

FOREWARD

This major paper is reflective of the knowledge I acquired in order to meet the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Studies and obtain the skills necessary to meet the program requirements of the Canadian Institute of Planners and Ontario Professional Planners Institute for Candidate membership. In accordance with my plan of study, my major research, internship experience and course work over the past two years have focused on three key areas of concentration, which include: understanding how Blackness is conceptualized in various strands of the Black radicalism; understanding how systemic anti-Black racism in planning practices and policies shape socio-spatial disparities; and exploring the possibilities and limits of Black urbanism as a praxis for more livable cities. Each of these components is touched upon in this major paper, and speak to my own imperative to speak back to normative urban planning practices that reinforce hegemonic and colonial notions of Blackness and to re-imagine a different ethics for urban planning and development processes by engaging Black radical thought.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the Toronto chapter of BlackLivesMatter, also known by the shorthand BLMTO, was founded in response to the police killings of 18-year-old Mike Brown, a Black teenager from St. Louis, Missouri and the subsequent homicide of Jermaine Carby, a 24-year-old Black man from Brampton, Ontario (Hudson and Diverlus, 2019 p. 7; BLMTO, 2019). In the following year, BLMTO engaged in direct action protest after a Toronto police officer killed another Black man, Andrew Loku, a 45-year-old South Sudanese immigrant and father (Hudson and Diverlus, 2019). In the subsequent years since its emergence BLMTO has grown into a visible collective presence in the city that has, in many ways, ruptured Toronto's global image as a multicultural, world class livable city, by making visible the pervasive and institutionalized anti-Black racism that negatively impacts Black livability (Hudson and Diverlus, 2019).

Over the years, BLMTO's calls for Black lives to matter have manifested as a vision for an ethically different and more livable Toronto centered on Black radical conceptions of liberation and care. This vision has translated into a concrete list of demands as listed on BLMTO's website. The demands are extensive and organized into five key areas of focus: governance, policing and incarceration, education, pride Toronto, and end islamophobia and white supremacy (BLMTO, 2019). Moreover, the demands demonstrate the depth of BLMTO's overall vision to create "crucial systemic changes that can make life far more livable for Black and Afrikan people of Toronto" (BLMTO, 2019). In rejecting the long-standing claim that Toronto is one of the most livable cities in the world, BLMTO is engaging in an act of Black refusal that asserts that this city has not been planned to be livable for Black lives (Hudson and Diverlus, 2019; BLMTO, 2019).

Moreover, BLMTO has also forced a discussion on the dehumanization of anti-Black racism and the need to think through what constitutes Black livability (Hudson and Diverlus, 2019). In *BlackLife: Post BLM and the Struggle for Freedom*, Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdillahi (2019) use the term “BlackLife” as one word to emphasize the ways that “living Black makes BlackLife inextricable from the mark of its flesh, both historically and in our current time” (p. 9). For Walcott and Abdillahi (2019), “Black” is not only a prefix but a pre-condition for how livability “in all its multiplicities” is “marked by the Black flesh” (p. 9). Thus, using the term BlackLife also speaks to the ways that living Black is differentiated from normative conceptions of human life and livability (Walcott and Abdillahi, 2019).

Julie Tomiak (2016) explains that normative conceptions of what constitutes the city “rely on a common sense that asserts space from a white settler point of view” whereby the city is understood as “an innocent container of social relations” (p.10). As Tomiak (2016) points out, such a perspective neglects the ways that cities, in their various conceptualizations, are sites of erasure, displacement and dispossession for Black and Indigenous peoples. In settler colonial cities like Toronto, city building practices and discourses of livability have been and continue to create a paradox of (un)livability for low-income, Indigenous, Black and racialized “others” (Tomiak, 2016, p. 9). Moreover, as Tomiak (2016) explains, normative conceptions of “the city” ignore the realities of these spaces as a “deeply contested ground” marked by “persistent anti-colonial Indigenous [and Black] struggles for life, land, and self-determination” and the various ways that Black and Indigenous communities think of cities and the social relations that govern these spaces (p. 9).

In attending to the question *for whom is the livable city planned*, Ash Amin (2013) argues that livability objectives applied in modern planning practices fail to meet the diverse needs in the

city as they rely on these normative conceptions that “cater to wealthy, educated, cultural elites that cast aside the diversity of human needs present in cities” (p. 479 & 480). The consistent negation of Black life in modern planning has resulted in the reproduction of an incomplete conceptualization of livability that renders the “pain that Black people are collectively living with and under...mostly out of view” (Walcott and Abdillahi, 2019, p. 72; Rutland, 2018). Speaking to “the relatively uneasy relationship Black people have had with the modern capitalist city”, James A. Tyner (2007) explains that urban planning has not fully come to terms with its “Black problem” (p. 224) nor has it confronted the normative conceptions of livability that continue to articulate what Ted Rutland (2018) describes as a “deep-rooted structure of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism” (p. 4).

This research paper argues that urban livability discourse fails to capture the lived experiences of low-income Black peoples as it ascribes to an anti-Black racist and settler colonial illogic that informs a normative conception of livability which centres the socio-economic interests of white settler populations, at the expense of Black and Indigenous communities. Moreover, the dehumanization of Black people that is characteristic of anti-Black racism, has produced a paradox for Black people having to navigate socio-spatial inequities as unintended residents of the livable city while at the same time trying to find new ways to reproduce Black livability in the urban. This paper also argues that by attending to this paradox of urban (un)livability, where Black lives are lived while simultaneously being rendered unlivable, offers insights for a different ethics of livable city discourse, one that decentres the socio-economic interests of white settler populations and attends to Black (un)livability.

Here, it is important to unpack the meaning of the paradox of Black (un)livability as it is used in this paper. The term paradox is defined in the Merriam-Webster (n.d.) dictionary in several ways:

1. “a tenet contrary to received opinion
2. a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true
 - a. a self-contradictory statement that at first seems true
 - b. an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction from acceptable premises
- 3: one (such as a person, situation, or action) having seemingly contradictory qualities or phases”.

Each of these definitions are relevant and capture the intent of the use of the term “paradox” in this paper, which is to describe the ways that anti-Black racism dehumanizes Black lives so that they are assumed as contradictory, impossible and difficult to comprehend in urban theory. Thus Black (un)livability can be inferred as a “state of being inhabited/occupied and also being or dwelling in” that is contradictory, impossible and difficult to understand in relation to normative notions of livability (Sharpe, 2016, p.20). To attend to the paradox of Black (un)livability then, is to recognize, to use the words of Christina Sharpe (2016), the ways in which Blackness signifies “to live in those no’s, to live in the no-space” that rejects Blackness, affirms and centers whiteness and the ways that Blackness continues to resist by inhabiting, occupying and dwelling in these impossible and difficult realities within anti-Black societies (p.16).

Chapter Overview

This research paper begins with a literature review on the conceptual history of urban livability in North America in order to think through the question “for whom is the livable city planned?”. This chapter draws on critical urban scholarship to argue the ways in which structural anti-Black racism and settler colonialism, have been and continue to be, foundational to both the theoretical and practical application of urban livability that produce socio-spatial inequities in the form of racialized residential segregation. In discussing the continuities of anti-Black racism in the form of racialized residential segregation, this chapter also highlights the ways in which Black and Indigenous populations have radically resisted the dehumanization of anti-Black racism and settler colonialism in Canadian cities. To conclude, this chapter emphasises the need for urban theory to think beyond normative conceptions of livability that center white settler interests and calls for meaningful engagement with the possibility of Black radical perspectives to reorient urban (un)livability towards more humanly livable futures.

The second chapter proposes a theoretical framework that discusses urban livability in relation to debates in various strands of Black radicalism that inform understandings of dehumanization related to anti-Black racism. This chapter explains key concepts such as The Black Radical Tradition, racial capitalism and anti-Black racism and situates the work of Frantz Fanon and Christina Sharpe, as two critical scholars whose work informs this ethical and political project to reorient urban planning practices away from Eurocentric and white supremacist conceptions of livability and to attend to Black (un)livability.

The third chapter brings into conversation Fanon and Sharpe, foregrounded in a discussion of dehumanization related to anti-Black racism to understand how the concept of the Black subject emerged from the cruelty of the transatlantic slave trade and continues to inform contemporary

understandings of Blackness. Of particular significance to this chapter, is relating Fanon's theory of the zone of nonbeing to Sharpe's theory of the wake, in order to consider the ways in which Blackness, "within and after the legacies of slavery's denial of Black humanity", "inhabits/occupies and dwells in" and across the dividing lines of livability and un-livability (Sharpe, 2016, p. 14 & 20). Both Fanon and Sharpe offer insights on the potential of reimagining the Black being through the power of language that can create a new grammar that speaks to the real lived experiences of Black peoples and the shifting meanings of Blackness. This chapter concludes with a discussion on Black liberation and the tension between a false sense of liberation in the form of Black inclusion and Black refusal which seeks more radical and liberating outcomes.

The discussion of liberation is further elaborated on in the fourth chapter through a discussion on Black culture as it relates to Black struggles for freedom. Fanon and Sharpe both engage in a discourse on culture and struggle presenting similar, yet different perspectives on how to move towards new futures. Here I am referring to firstly, Frantz Fanon's conceptions of new humanism that is birthed through political struggles against racism in addition to other systems of oppression. Moreover, Fanon's new humanism proposes a postracial theory that works towards a radically new understanding of what constitutes a living being and hence livability. This Fanonian concept of universal humanism is discussed in relation to Sharpe's concept of aspiration that is not necessary concerned with reconceptualizing human-ness but attends to Black cultural expressions that articulate the ways in which Black people struggle "to keep breath in the Black body" and reproduce Black livability despite the totalizing climate of anti-Black racism (p.109). Here, both Fanon and Sharpe place importance on the centrality of resistance and struggle that can inform a political and/or cultural and artistic expression of resistance to an imposition of Black non/being. This chapter concludes with a call for more human work to be done in urban theory by engaging

with these philosophical debates within Black Radical Traditions that attend to and care for the paradox of Black (un)livability.

The paper concludes with observations about a praxis of care located in grassroots anti-racist struggles that center the needs of low-income Black people, in reorienting urban livability discourse. Such a praxis of care is discussed in relation to what Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) describe as a Black Test and is also found in scholarship on Black urbanism that speak to the paradox of Black (un)livability. Both the Black Test and Black Urbanist thought contemplate the possibilities of a universalizing characteristic of Blackness, that emerges out of anti-racist struggles, that could “move these things that are usually dismissed as survival techniques of the marginalized or the lower classes and closer to the 'centre' of our understandings of how cities look and function” (para.16).

CHAPTER 1: DISCOURSE ON URBAN LIVABILITY

Arguably, the conceptual history of “livability” that inspires North American urban planning today has been attributed to Dutch spatial planning and its concerns for questions of rural citizenship (Kaal, 2011). In the 1950s, Dutch geographers and rural sociologists explored the potential of improving the livability of rural areas experiencing declining populations and struggling to remain a viable alternative to city life. While recognizing that livability is subjective, Dutch scholar Groenman put forward a guiding framework for creating livable rural communities that consisted of: “proper housing and utilities, opportunities to communicate, social security, permanent employment, good health care, opportunities for social activities, sports, education [...] and availability of shops” (Kaal, 2011, p. 536).

During the 1960s and 1970s, this concept of a livable city was embraced by different urban social movements in North American cities to “contest the excesses of the prevailing growth-centered urban politics and the doctrine of modern functionalism” (Kaal, 2011, p. 538). Urban social movements can be understood as “social movements through which citizens attempt to achieve the control over their urban environment” which includes “the social fabric of the city, built environment and the local political process” (Prujit, 2007, p. 1 as cited in Domardzka, 2018, p. 608). During that time, this included groups struggling for civil rights, environmental justice, women’s rights, queer liberation and anti-poverty organizations such as the Black Power movement that worked towards enhancing the quality of life for Black peoples (Calliste, 1995; Kaal, 2011). As Calliste (1995) explains, the phrase ‘Black Power’ grew out of the Black radical movements that embodied a vision for “Black economic and political power as well as a redefinition and reaffirmation of the Black self at the centre of its politics” (p. 126). In Canadian

cities, organized groups such as the Black Writers Collective, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Black United Front and Afro-Canadian Liberation Movement, engaged in the necessary work to “create a Black identity in combating racism and in community development” (Calliste, 1995, p. 132).

As Mohamad Kashef (2016) explains, the body of literature in urban design that speaks to livability is often concerned with questions related to maintaining the quality of life in cities through “the esthetics and physical characteristics of buildings, streets and development blocks” (p.241). Moreover, Kashef (2016) explains that urban livability through design is discussed as a “creative design process” that embodies the “economic and social functions of urbanity” (p.241). To explicate this point, Kashef (2016) draws from the writing of Jane Jacobs, an U.S.-American urbanist and activist who in her 1961 publication *Death and Life of Great American Cities* argued that “healthy cities required fine-grained gridiron urban blocks, high densities, and a mix of residential and commercial uses” as central to the quality of life in cities (p.241). One of the most cited research studies on livability is Donald Appleyard’s (1978) research entitled *Livable Streets: Protected Neighborhood* which examined the effects of traffic on the lives of local residents in U.S. cities. In this study, Appleyard (1978) explains that planning and design practices could improve the livability of residents in cities by creating “livable environments” described as the availability and accessibility of “places to sit, converse and play” (p.107). Moreover, Appleyard (1978) viewed streets as “dangerous, unlivable environments” that could be improved through traffic control and street management to contribute to protected neighbourhoods (p. 107).

Many researchers since have applied Appleyard’s concept of livability, grounded in built form and urban design, to study the quality of life of urban dwellers. Through a mixed methods approach, Michael Biddulph (2012) conducted a study that compared the relative livability of

seven recently completed new-build projects. Each of the projects was assessed based on data collected by walking through neighbourhoods, mapping, time-lapse cameras and photographing people and their activities to determine if the street design encouraged livability. In this study, Biddulph (2012) argues that livability is determined by the presence of a variety of street users and activities.

The concern for urban livability has also produced a body of literature from urban ecologists who have argued that the urban be understood as an “ecosystem considered vital to the well-being of humanity” and that in order to ameliorate “the livability of a region, cities must minimize their influence on the environment” as it relates to the physical health of urban dwellers (Biddulph, 2012, p.242). However, by the 1980s and 1990s, as the political landscape changed in North America due to the spread of neoliberalism, many North American cities such as Toronto, embraced a livability discourse that shifted from improving cities for people, as was the case in the 1960s, towards a highly institutionalized conception of livability, appropriated by municipal planning regimes, that equated the livable city with economic viability and competitiveness (Kaal, 2011).

Livability for Whom?

In Toronto, neoliberal approaches to municipal governance led to what Kipfer and Keil (2002) explain as an “as-yet-incomplete process of consolidating the competitive city” (p. 234). The competitive city as defined by Kipfer and Keil (2002) refers to “a set of policies, ideologies and state practices that articulate strategies of accumulation, patterns of class formation and forms of social control” (p. 234). At the same time, Toronto embraced New Urbanism models of density, social mix and sustainability as livability discourse began to take the form of “generalized policies

of walkability, public space upgrades, cycle lanes, rapid transit, sustainability” that related to global livability indexes and performance metrics (McArthur and Robin, 2019, p. 1721; Ruggeri et al., 2018). Some of the most popular livability indexes far exceed the aforementioned emphasis on urban form and physical design. They include the indexes compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the Mercer Quality of Living Index, ECA International’s Location Ratings for Expatriate Living Conditions and Monocle’s 25 Most Liveable Cities Index, that rank the livability of cities based on how well each city scores in standardized categories of quality of health care, education, infrastructure, stability and culture (Conger, 2015). The reliance on global livability rankings, as a means to attract investments into municipalities has “lead to a misapplication of quality of life indicators as benchmarking tools for intercity comparisons” (Conger, 2015, p.5). In Toronto, this has resulted in physical changes to the downtown core, which were achieved through “major capital investments into the built form” in the form of urban revitalization projects and large-scale development processes (Lehrer and Laidley, 2008, p. 787).

Brian Conger (2015) argues that livability rankings have limited utility as “there are methodological biases inherent in quality of life indexes that favour the interests of executives, academics and researchers engaged in surveys” and that this bias “informs how city rankings are framed to emphasize the significance of top-ranking cities” (p. 5). Similarly, Holden and Scerri (2013) have been critical of framing livability based on global performance measures and argue that it tends to “obfuscate the reality that cities fail to deliver on livability goals for all residents” (as cited in McArthur and Robin, 2019, p. 1713). This includes concerns raised by Toronto’s Black communities and grassroots groups such as the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC), who had been organizing against systemic forms of anti-Black racism in policing to create safer communities and ameliorate the conditions for Black lives in the city (Posner, 2011). However,

the competitive city-ness in Toronto reproduced urban inequity, “social difference” and failed to resolve concerns raised by anti-racism social movements, such as BADC, struggling for urban reform (Kipfer and Keil, 2002, p. 240). The concerns raised by Kipfer and Keil (2002), in many ways, speak to Holden and Scerri’s (2013) critique of livability discourse and stress the need to critically challenge normative conceptions of livability by asking the following question: *for whom is the livable city planned?* (Okulics-Kozaryn, 2013, p. 438; Southworth, 2003).

In attending to this question, it is important to interrogate the ways that normative conceptions of livability, as determined by “expertise through livability rankings”, are problematic for ascribing to an objective, colorblind, race-neutral concept that is disconnected from “urban theory’s entanglements with asymmetrical powers in knowledge production” (McArthur and Robin, 2019, p. 1713). The use of normative conceptions of livability has resulted in a narrow framing of livability that has amounted to what Ash Amin (2013) refers to as a form of telescopic urbanism which “has no regard for the city as a social whole” but instead embraces a “politics of severed society and space” and “leaves out all the myriad of hidden connections and relational typographies that hold together the contemporary city as an assemblage of many types of spatial formation” (p. 484). The social cost of relying on a narrowly defined understanding of livability is that it ignores the ways that processes of anti-Black racism, settler colonialism and capitalism, as well as other interlocking systems of oppression, render life unlivable for low-income, Black and Indigenous populations, who are always ranked lowest in all socio-economic indicators (Tyner, 2007; Walcott and Abdillahi, 2019).

McArthur and Robin (2019) explain that it is necessary to take into consideration “counterfactuals to urban livability” to understand the limitations of this theory (p. 1723). In confronting these limitations it also highlights the need to bring into conversation urban thinking

“across differences by interrogating the modes of production of urban knowledge” (McArthur and Robin, 2019, p. 1724). Moreover, McArthur and Robin (2019) explain that “the flexibility of livability discourse” provides opportunities for “new lines of thinking” based on situated knowledges of “urban dwellers affected by urban development that may steer livability discourse to a more beneficial set of outcomes” (p. 1724). Similarly, June Manning Thomas (1994) has stated that “it is important to draw upon all the intellectual tools possible in order to understand the way urban theory often gives inadequate preparation for understanding the relationship between planning and race” (p. 1). This is the focus of this major paper, which is also concerned with thinking beyond a telescopic urbanist lens by raising the question, how can a different ethics of livability – one that attends to the paradox of Black (un)livability and moves urban planning practices towards a more humanly livable future – be imagined?

Continuities of Anti-Black Racism as Racialized Residential Segregation

One of the ways that urban theory can better attend to the paradox of Black (un)livability is by interrogating the ways in which the racialization of both material and imaged spaces, work to “strengthen social bonds or differentiate through othering certain racialized populations” (Watkins, 2015, p.511). The problem with racially segregated spaces is that they reproduce social relationships of difference that make particular claims of belonging to the urban for some and not others (Watkins, 2015, p.511). In settler colonial, racist and capitalist societies, these claims to the urban have been, as Frantz Fanon (2008, p.23) has described, “compartmentalized” through racialized residential segregation, whereby the places that Black and colonized subjects “inhabit/occupy and dwell in” is perceived as “not complementary” to that of white settler populations and thus physically separated (Sharpe, 2016, p.16).

While these qualitative analyses of racialized residential segregation, put forward by Fanon and others, add a layer of deep understanding of the impact of racial disparity, much of the research on racialized residential segregation that informs urban policy decisions have relied on quantitative analysis (Reed Jr and Chowkwanyun, 2012). Of particular significance to highlight is the work of Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1988) who have defined racialized residential segregation as “the degree to which two or more racial populations live separately from one another, in different parts of the urban environment” (p. 282). While Massey and Denton’s (1988) research has proven valuable in measuring the degree of segregation between various population groups, there have been some methodological concerns raised by Adolph Reed Jr and Merlin Chowkwanyun (2012) regarding the “almost exclusive reliance on quantitative data sets” in the discourse of racial disparity in the form of racialized residential segregation (p.152).

Reed Jr and Chowkwanyun (2012) explain that Denton and Massey’s approach, which has been framed as “the presumptive common-sense approach to inequity” by policymakers and scholars interested in racial disparity, actually “limits researchers to pre-defined administrative and demographic variables while ignoring consideration of forces not captured by that data” such as “the story of race and residence within the urban political economy” (p.153-157). Moreover, Reed Jr and Chowkwanyun (2012) explain that this occurs when racial disparity is taken “as a starting point” that “precludes attention to many overarching class dynamics” (p.160). As such, univariant quantitative data should not be thought of as the “default framework for characterizing racial disparity” but rather should be part of a multi-dimensional research approach that aims to contextualize “racially disparate impacts” through qualitative analysis related “to more fundamental dynamics of metropolitan economies, particularly those linked to the political

economy of land use, labour markets and the politics of social service distribution” (Reed Jr. and Chowkwanyun, 2012, p.153 & 167).

By understanding the impacts of racial disparities in relation to other structural forces such as economic inequity, there is an opportunity to frame racialized residential segregation in a way that avoids “the perception (however erroneous) that certain social problems are primarily “racial” — and therefore of concern only to supposed minority interest groups” and instead situates the disparate outcomes of racialized residential segregation “in the context of material resource deprivation caused by low socio-economic status”, settler colonialism and systemic anti-Black racism (Chowkwanyun and Reed Jr., 2020, p.2). It is within this context, that this paper engages in the following discussion on residential segregation by drawing from qualitative observations about the pervasiveness of racialized residential segregation to highlight the impacts of racial disparities related to economic inequities, settler colonialism and systemic anti-Black racism, in shaping the Canadian urban landscapes from the past to the present.

Foundations of Settler Colonialism in Canadian Town Planning

Racialized residential segregation has been a foundational principle in the early 17th and 18th century town planning in Canadian cities (Stelter, 1980). As Gilbert A. Stelter (1980) explains, colonial town planning was guided by “European new town building principles” that reinforced spaces of difference based on economic and racialized hierarchies of human value (p. 149). This was most evident in the ways that town building practices prioritized defensive mechanisms “both to protect the [settler] residents of a new town and to subjugate the Indigenous population of a region” (p. 148). When the township of York was established in Upper Canada by the British colonists in 1793, the town’s layout “mimicked the British class system”, in that, “the

lots at the front of the town facing the harbour were the largest and granted to officials of important status” (Stelter, 1980, p. 148). Thus, colonial town planning reinforced both racialized and economic segregation.

Though slavery existed in Canada at a far smaller scale than the United States, enslaved Indigenous and Black labourers nevertheless contributed to the “colonial economic enterprise” in many ways including helping to build infrastructure (Trudel 1960, p. 137-156 as cited in Maynard, p. 20). Both British and French colonies relied on enslaved Black and Indigenous forced free labour to sustain the economic vitality of cities and its white settler populations. At the same time, the abject conditions of slavery reduced the life expectancy of Black and Indigenous enslaved peoples with many enslaved peoples dying before the age of twenty-five (Trudel, 1960, p. 160 as cited in Maynard, p. 21). Put in another way, early colonial town planning embraced livability objectives that improve the lives of European colonial settlers and advance the economic viability of settler towns at the expense of Black and Indigenous lives (Maynard, 2017, p. 21).

As Robyn Maynard (2017) explains, the abolition of institutionalized slavery in 1834 rarely materialized into a true acceptance of Black and Indigenous peoples as “white male settlers were seen as the rightful inheritors of Canadian lands, wealth and social and political rights” (p. 32). The dehumanization of anti-Black racism and anti-Indigeneity, which were most explicitly expressed under institutionalized slavery, persisted in different arrangements during post-slavery including in the form of legal (*de jure*) segregation and informal (*de facto*) segregation (Maynard, 2017, p. 33). In Nova Scotia, Black Loyalists who had escaped U.S. enslavement to fight for the British and gain their freedom, were denied access to colonial land grants promised to them (Nelson, 2008). In the event that land was allotted to Black Loyalists, the quality and size of the plot was always less than that given to white residents (Nelson, 2008; Maynard, 2017). Moreover,

these lands were physically segregated spaces from white settlements (Nelson, 2008; Maynard, 2017). In Western Canada, racialized segregation was further compounded by white companies and landowners refusing to sell or lease land to those described as having “African features” (Silverman, 1985, p. 152 as cited in Maynard, 2017, p. 37).

Of particular significance to note are the formal institutionalized state policies like the Indian Act of 1867, which were introduced the same year Canada became an independent nation, and forced “Indigenous peoples into reserves, instituted patriarchal governance and destroyed cultural practices while legislating the annexation of territory” (Smith, 2005 as cited in Maynard, 2017, p. 31-32). The Indian Act was also coupled with the newly independent government of Canada’s racially exclusive immigration system that encouraged the settlement of European and white Americans under the pretext of “securing the settlement and nation state” (Maynard, 2017, p. 31& 32; Johnson, 2013).

Black life within the urban centres, such as St. John’s Ward in the Township of York, was also characterized by “physical exclusion and economic, social, legal, and residential segregation” (Gosine and Teelucksingh 2008, p. 42). Speaking to the private rental market, Jared Toney’s (2010) study on Afro-Caribbean migration and settlements in Toronto, sheds light on the forms of anti-Black racism that Afro-Caribbean peoples experienced in Toronto’s housing market between 1914 to 1929. Toney (2010) concludes that, similar to experiences in the United States, the most powerful force behind socio-spatial transformations in the urban realm was the unwillingness of white Canadians to rent to Black tenants. This form of anti-Black racism created a racially restrictive housing market that constrained access to choose rental locations for Black people that also characterized the US landscape (Toney, 2010; Lipsitz, 2018).

In terms of homeownership, Darden and Kamel (2000) have noted that over time “Black homeownership rates grew disproportionately lower in comparison to whites with equivalent household type, education level, occupational level and age in Toronto” (p. 66). In the subsequent decades, studies on the public housing system have also demonstrated that Black tenants have experienced forms of discriminatory constraint choices, in part, due to tenant placement systems that concentrate Black tenants in the least desirable buildings and decades of divestment from social housing programs (Murdie, 1994).

Modern Planning’s Entanglements with Anti-Black Racism

Urban planning practices have also been instrumental in producing and reproducing livable cities that are, as Ted Rutland (2018) explains “rendered conceivable and achievable by the displacement of Blackness and Indigeneity through physical or symbolic process” that include exclusionary zoning practices and large-scale urban renewal projects carried out in predominately Black communities (p. 4). In Nova Scotia, Africville, a historical Black community established by Black Loyalists and their descendants, was razed to the ground by city officials (Nelson, 2008). These urban planning practices resulted in the displacement of a largely concentrated community of Black homeowners and subsequent relocation to public housing units as renters (Nelson, 2008; Rutland, 2018; Maynard, 2017).

In more recent times, amendments to zoning bylaws and secondary plans to allow for large-scale public housing revitalization has often resulted in the gentrification of low-income, racialized neighbourhoods whereby the newly built re-developments increase rental rates and price out low-income residents as the neighbourhood changes to accommodate the consumption and lifestyle patterns of a young, highly educated, professional class (Parker, 2004). Moreover, social mix

redevelopments in public housing communities have been described by urban scholars to embrace a form of racial liberalism that plays down race and at the same time deploys race to legitimize redevelopment (Kipfer and Petrunia, 2016). This is exemplified in the ways that socially mixed redevelopments become emblems of multiculturalism as the existing ethnic, cultural and racial demographics are altered to reflect an increased mix of white and non-Black residents (Mele, 2017).

In thinking through the continuities of racialized residential segregation, it is also important to acknowledge the various ways that Black and Indigenous communities have resisted and imagined a different vision of livability since the advent of European colonialism and transatlantic slavery. During the 18th century, over 40 Black communities organized themselves into supportive living arrangements and established segregated Black rural communities, on the periphery of white societies (Maynard, 2017; Johnson, 2013). In many instances, despite a sometimes-fraught history between some Indigenous and Black communities, solidarity between these communities as “co-resistors” have been enacted through a collective praxis of “refusal to centre and bow towards whiteness” (Maynard and Betasamosake Simpson, 2019, p. 78). Such acts of refusal have been central to Black radical traditions such as “the abolitionist organizing of the emancipation struggle, the pan-African internationalism of the mid-century anti-colonial struggles, and the movement to end the Apartheid regime in South Africa” (Hudson and Diverlus, 2019, p. 7). It is this long tradition of Black radicalism that informs BLMTO in their vision for a different ethics of livability in Toronto, one that refuses to center white settler colonial epistemologies and affirms Black liberation, healing, support, freedom to love and self-determination (BLMTO, 2019).

Increasingly important, though less recognized in urban theory, are these Black radical perspectives that, as Tyner (2007) explains “build from outside of Euro-American urban theory

and from an approach that foregrounds anti-Black racist understandings to develop a more complex level of awareness about racial injustice” (p. 419). Black radical perspectives provide a framework to disrupt normative conceptions of a livable city and discourses of livability that are unable to capture the paradox of (un)livability that low-income, Indigenous, Black and racialized “others” experience in the urban (Tomiak, 2016, p. 9). The following chapter discusses the possibility of a theoretical framework that brings into conversation discussions of urban livability with debates in various strands of Black radical traditions that discuss the paradox of Black life as both livable and unlivable.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In working through developing a theoretical framework that captures the paradox of Black (un)livability, this paper is concerned with what Ruddick et al. (2007) describe as discovering new lines of thinking by “returning to the past to build the future” (p. 388). More specifically, this paper is thinking through the lessons that can be retrieved from the long and sustained tradition of Black radical thought which has informed understandings of dehumanization as it relates to anti-Black racism.

The Black Radical Tradition

The term Black Radical Tradition, often discussed in the singular form, is actually an overarching term used to describe a multitude of theories and practices that are grounded in Black radical traditions of struggle against interlocking systems of oppression such as racism, capitalism and gender-based discrimination. One of the ways that Black radical tradition has been interpreted is through the writings of Cedric Robinson (1983), who used this term in his seminal book, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Robinson (1983) explains that, for him, the Black Radical Tradition is “a specifically African response to an oppression emergent from the immediate determinants of European development in the modern era and framed by orders of human exploitation woven into the interstices of European social life from the inception of Western civilization” (p. 73). Robinson (1983) traces these traditions back to a long history and “culture of liberation” that enslaved Africans fostered, through the transatlantic slave trade, under colonialism and continue to reproduce throughout generations in Africa, Europe and the Americas (p. xxxii). In short, for Robinson (1983), Blackness is not only ‘negative’, a result of modern slavery, racism, colonialism. It also refers to the many ‘positive’ traces and legacies left by

practices of survival and movements of resistance to these forces of terror, exploitation and oppression.

Extrapolating from Robinson's overall body of work on the Black radical tradition including *Black Marxism*, Yousuf Al-Bulushi (2019) has identified four key elements that constitute "the Robinsonian Black radical tradition" (p. 6). Firstly, Al-Bulushi (2019) explains that Black radicalism draws from the movements and thinking of "Black antecedents" and offers "correctives to white scholarship" (p. 7). Secondly, Black radicalism extends critiques to not only whiteness but also implicates "the Black middle-class and intelligentsia" who have hindered attempts to liberation or conspired to maintain or sustain white supremacist systems to their own benefits. Thirdly, Al-Bulushi (2019) explains that Black radicalism is "a rejection of the paradigm of sovereignty and state-based models of self-determination" (p. 7). Put in another way, for Al-Bulushi (2019), Robinson's interpretation of Black radicalism exceeded the confined borders of nation states and is rooted in a diasporic Black consciousness. Finally, Black radicalism, as Al-Bulushi (2019) argues, centers "culture and spirituality" in what he describes as "an excessively secular and materialist white Marxism" (p. 6). This is to say that the various forms of Black cultural production and spiritual (sometimes understood as religious) practices inform the continuities of Black radicalism.

While Al-Bulushi's (2019) extrapolation provides a coherent way of framing some key elements of the Black radical tradition as discussed by Robinson, this is by no means an attempt by Al-Bulushi (2019) or this paper, to argue for a reductive understanding of Black radicalism that the diversity in thought within the various strands of Black radicalism would not permit. In addition to what Al-Bulushi (2019) referred to as the "Robinsonian Black radical tradition" other Black intellectuals, both within and outside of the academy, have critically engaged with various

strands of Black radicalism in order to theorize about the dehumanization of racism that is experienced by Black people (p. 6). The enduring relevance of Black Radical Traditions is emphasized by Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) who explain that Black intellectuals “working with the long and sustained critique of capitalism” have thought foremost about “new forms of belonging and ways of life beyond capitalist organization and later modern articulations of the human” (p. 73). This interlocking relationship between race and class that Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) allude to, is a central concept in Black radical critique often referred to as “racial capitalism” (Robinson, 1983, p.9).

Racial Capitalism

The term racial capitalism refers to a critique of the interlocking systems of oppressions that are capitalism and racism (Robinson, 1983; Dorries et al., 2019, p. 2). More explicitly, Robinson (1983) employs racial capitalism as a term to describe the ways in which “the historical development of world capitalism is influenced in a most fundamental way by the particularistic forces of racism and nationalism” (p. 9). Put in another way, Robinson’s (1983) theory of racial capitalism demonstrates the limits of Marxist theory to comprehend the doubly racialized and classed dimensions of the world capitalist economy and complicates class-based struggles led by homogenized proletariat movements beyond an understanding of Europe’s transition from feudalism to capitalist production (p. 10). In critiquing the supposed universality of Marxism, Robin Kelley (2017) explains that Robinson argued that the proletariat classes of Europe, which consisted of Irish, Jews, Romas and Slavs, were already racial subjects and “were victims of dispossession (enclosure), colonialism, and slavery within Europe” (para.5). Thus, from this racial capitalism framework, when capitalism emerged it did not “homogenize”, as Karl Marx argued,

but further “differentiated” Europe’s already highly segmented societies “along class, linguistic and cultural lines” into “racial ones” (Dorries et al., 2019, p. 2; Robinson, 1983). Moreover, racial capitalism was for Robinson (1983) useful in delineating the various ways that “radical movements outside of Europe” organized against racism and capitalism. In *Black Marxism*, Robinson (1983) makes this point by drawing on twentieth century Black radical thinkers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James and Richard Wright (p. xxx).

While the term racial capitalism has been popularized by Robinson, Walter Hudson (2018) explains that the “lineage” of racial capitalism “predates Robinson even as it emerges from the same tradition of Black radical thought to which he belonged” (para. 3). As Hudson (2018) explains, racial capitalism was a term used by South African Marxists who argued that “modern manifestations of racism were historically contingent on the shifting regimes of capital accumulation in South Africa and the response of the South African state to it” (para. 5). According to Hudson (2018), South African Marxists Martin Legassick and David Hemson applied the concept of racial capitalism to critique white South African capitalists who argued that “apartheid was a ‘dysfunctional’ aberration of capitalism that could be abolished through the improvement and better organization of South African capitalism” (para. 6). Over time, as Hudson (2018) explains, South Africans involved in pan-Africanist and Black consciousness movements, such as Neville Alexander, began to embrace the idea of racial capitalism to argue that “apartheid will be eradicated with the system of racial capitalism” (para.6).

In comparing Robinson and Alexander’s uses of racial capitalism, Hudson (2018) notes a few distinctions. Firstly, Robinson applies a universalizing lens to racial capitalism as a “global phenomenon” that is “not limited to a particular nation-state and emerges out of European expansion” (Hudson, 2018, para. 8). This differs from Alexander who, as Hudson (2018) argues,

applies racial capitalism to the particular and “exceptional character of South Africa” through a political economy lens (para. 8).

In thinking with an intersectional Black feminist lens, Angela Davis’s (1983) *Women, Race & Class* offers an important intervention into notions of racial capitalism by extending her analysis in relation to the experiences of the enslaved Black woman, navigating multiple systems of oppression due to her intersecting identities as a Black woman, mother, wife and enslaved subject (p. 6). Davis (1983), also explains that Black women are denied status as fully human or woman as defined by the patriarchal white supremacist slave societies and exist in these paradoxical spaces where they are reduced to their potential profitability, at times inhabiting this genderless zone of nonbeing, being “locked into their exclusively female roles” or “exploited as if they were men” (p. 6).

Black feminism can be understood as “the dialectic of oppression and activism, the tension between the suppression of African-American women’s ideas and our intellectual activism in the face of that suppression, constitutes the politics of U.S. Black feminists thought” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 4). As Patricia Hill Collins (2000) explains, Black feminism, as a form of Black radicalism, applies an intersectional framework to understand the impact of racism, classism, heteronormativity, patriarchy and gender-based systems of oppression on the everyday lives of Black women. The term intersectionality first emerged as a legal argument coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to explain how “race and gender” factor into understanding “violence against women of colour” (p. 1242). Since then, intersectional frameworks have demonstrated the need for a Black feminist analysis as there was and continues to be a “lack of feminist and antiracist discourse” that “consider intersectional identities such as women of colour” (p. 1234).

Theorizing Anti-Black Racism

Akua Benjamin (2003) identifies the political philosophies and ideologies within Black Feminist thought as one of many strands of Black radicalism that contributes to the theorization of anti-Black racism. In her doctoral thesis, *The Black/Jamaican Criminal: The Making of Ideology*, Benjamin (2003) defines anti-Black racism to describe the distinct forms of racism directed at people of African descent, which differs from other forms of racism experienced by other non-white racialized groups. Other notable strands of the Black Radical Tradition that Benjamin (2003) attributes to informing the evolution of anti-Black racism theory in North American societies include the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist Black struggles rooted in “the political movements of Garveyism in the 1930s, Pan-Africanism in the 1960s, Black/Cultural Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s and Afrocentrism in the 1980s” (p. 66).

As such anti-Black racism theory emerges out of the struggles of Black people against anti-Black racism that includes “the politics of resistance engaged in by grassroots activists and working-class intellectuals” (Benjamin, 2003, p. 27). As Benjamin (2003) explains, during the 1990s Toronto’s Black community, organized and struggled against anti-Black racism in policing which lead to her own understandings of anti-Black racism theory which she describes as “the practices and procedures of dominant and hegemonic structure and systems of resistance against dominant power and power holders in society” (p. 62). Moreover, the saliency of anti-Black racism is evident in the ways that it continues to negatively impact the everyday lives of Black people in the form of individual interactions and/or systemic forms of anti-Black racism within “the criminal justice system, education, health, immigration and refugee protection” and other institutional spaces (Benjamin, 2003, p. 61; James et al., 2000, p. 26-27). As Benjamin explains, anti-Black racism manifests as “negative attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards

people of Black-African descent” that are founded on Eurocentric colonial worldviews used to justify the enslavement and colonization of African and Black people (as cited in James et al., 2000, p. 26-27).

In thinking with Black radical perspectives on anti-Black racism in the form of dehumanization, this paper proposes centring conceptions of livability as articulated by Black intellectuals who have been “working with the long and sustained critique of capitalism” and have thought foremost about “new forms of belonging and ways of life beyond capitalist organization and later modern articulations of the human” (Walcott and Abdillahi, 2019, p. 73). Put in another way, this paper does not seek to redeem livable city theory in its current normative manifestations that espouse neoliberal, capitalist and Eurocentric values, rather this paper attempts to engage in a “discursive retrieval”, that Ato Sekyi-Otu (2019) describes as “a labour of re-appropriation” and is an “invitation to the exacting practice of possibility; remembrance of things not yet done with promissory notes, inventive pursuit of their radical implications” (p. 1). In doing so, such a discursive retrieval would entail a radical shift in livability discourse that re-orient urban theory to “the politics of the dispossessed” (Walcott, 2016, p. 59).

Of particular significance for this labour of re-appropriation that this paper attempts to do, is the scholarship of Frantz Fanon and Christina Sharpe, whose works have contributed to Black radical understandings of the dehumanization of anti-Black racism. This paper turns to Fanon and Sharpe, as part of an ethical and political project that reorients urban planning practices back towards a more humanly livable future, in order to attend to the paradox of Black (un)livability.

Frantz Fanon

Frantz Fanon was born in 1925 in a French colony on the island of Martinique (Cherki, 2006). While much of his personal life is not widely known, Alice Cherki (2006) in *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait* explains that he grew up in “a petit bourgeois family of comfortable means” (p. 6). At 18 years old, Fanon joined the anti-Nazi struggle and soon after volunteered to join the Free French Army (Cherki, 2006). When Fanon returned from the war, Cherki (2006) describes him as marked by his experiences fighting “in a war for racial equality and human brotherhood only to find himself isolated, ignored, the object of contempt even” (p. 13). Shortly after his return Fanon left Martinique once again to study abroad in Lyon, France at a medical university (Cherki, 2006, p. 14). It is during this time that Fanon writes, what was intended to be his thesis, but instead becomes his first published book *Black Skin, White Masks*. During his studies, Fanon completed his residency at Saint Alban, where he practiced under François Tosquelles (Cherki, 2006). Tosquelles was a great influence in shaping Fanon’s understanding of the social determinants of mental health. Having completed his residency, Fanon eventually requested to be stationed in a hospital in Algeria, which was under French colonialism. Fanon practiced psychiatry at the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital where he treated French colonial soldiers and Algerians victims of torture (Cherki, 2006). In Algeria, Fanon joined the Algerian revolutionary movement, Front de Liberation Nationale, and eventually quit his posting at Blida-Joinville. During his time in Algeria, Fanon wrote two more books, *The Wretched of the Earth* and *A Dying Colonialism* (Cherki, 2006). Eventually Fanon left Algeria and moved to Tunis, Tunisia prior to his death in 1961. After Fanon’s passing, a series of his letters, writings and other communications were combined into a book, *Toward the African Revolution* (Cherki, 2006, p.190).

Fanon's complete body of work, or at least what has been made publicly available to read, is described by Sekyi-Otu (2019) as an ethical and political project that interrogates "the very idea, better the very question of the human" (p. 4). Throughout his writings, Fanon is in conversation with various philosophical traditions including Négritude, Black radical thought, (what is now called) Africana philosophy, European philosophical traditions as well as engaging with the psychiatric studies (Sekyi-Otu, 2019). Fanon's interdisciplinary thinking has made his writing appeal to a wide range of activists and scholars (Cherki, 2006; Sekyi-Otu, 2019).

However, in the decades after Fanon's passing in 1961, much of the resurgent interest and rereading of his writings were led by post-colonial critics who drew on the texts from *Black Skin, White Masks*, to engage with Fanon's more psychoanalytical thoughts on "otherness and marginality" that is rooted in a normative humanist vision (Sekyi-Otu, 1996, p.2; Kipfer, 2007). While recognizing the immense contributions of postcolonial theorists, such as Homi Bhabah, in advancing the discourse on Fanon and his scholarship, critics of the postcolonial discourse on Fanon have raised some concerns as to a particular privileging of the psychoanalytic, in relation to Fanon's conceptual body of work. In his seminal book, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, Sekyi-Otu (1996) writes that postcolonial critics led to "an almost exclusive concern of recent Fanon studies with the diaspora of the metropolis" that "deprives us of weapons with which to confront some of the urgent questions of the postindependence world: questions of class, ethnicity, and gender, of democracy and human rights, against assertions of cultural particularity and difference" (p. 3). This point is echoed by Stefan Kipfer (2007) who explains that for scholars such as Bhabha, "the postcolonial Fanon is not a liberationist intellectual situated in African and radical Black activist milieus but a skeptical cultural critic housed in metropolitan academic institutes shaped by the cultural and linguistic turn in social theory" (p. 703). In privileging Fanon's psychoanalytic

work over Fanon's revolutionary praxis, Kipfer (2007) argues, that Bhabaha's critiques miss Fanon's "attempts to tie utopian desires for a new nonliberal humanism to organizational and intellectual strategies of liberation" (p. 707). These arguments do not minimize the importance of Fanon's interest in question of psychology, and, of course, his professional work as a psychiatrist. They mean to say that Fanon's political writings, his clinical psychiatric work and his revolutionary militancy must be read together, for they all contribute to "the elaboration of his thought" so that one cannot be privileged above the other (Gibson and Beneduce, 2017, p.ix).

In light of these debates on Fanon, Sekyi-Otu (1996), proposes a methodology for re-reading Fanon, that he describes as "Fanon's dialect of experience" which allows for "a comprehensive understanding of the action of his [Fanon's] narrative" (p. 22). For Sekyi-Otu (1996), this means that "we need to read the discourse of race – the discourse of a racially divided Manichean world manifestly predominant in *Black Skin, White Masks* and the first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* - in its interactive relation with, say the discourse of class and of local forms of human universals which appears interstitially within these very texts and subsequently in other utterances" (p. 22). To apply Fanon's dialectic of experience is, as Gibson and Beneduce (2017) explain, "to read Frantz Fanon's work as the voice not just of a thinker on racism and colonialism but of a psychiatrist and an engaged researcher allows us to comprehend the interaction between the current dominant ideology of identitarianism, which excludes both the voiceless and their material and subjective suffering" (p.xiii).

Christina Sharpe

Christina Sharpe is an U.S.-American-born professor and leading interdisciplinary scholar of Black studies who currently teaches at York University in Toronto, Canada. Sharpe is a leading

scholar of Black Diaspora Thought and Cultures who applies an interdisciplinary lens to her writings and thoughts that focus on Black Diaspora Literature and Theory, Black Diaspora Visual Cultures, Black Feminist Theory and Black Queer Studies (York University, 2019).

It is hard to overlook the significance of Frantz Fanon in Christina Sharpe's writings. In both *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* and the more recently published *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Sharpe is in conversation with Fanon, drawing on his texts but also extending Fanon's analysis to formulate her own understanding of Black subjectivity and of the (un)livability that are shaped by the transatlantic slavery and the ways in which anti-Black violence persists into the present from the past. In *In The Wake*, Sharpe (2016) draws from her familial relations to describe how "racism, the engine that drives the ship of state's national and imperial projects cuts through all of our lives and deaths inside and outside the nation, in the wake of its purposeful flow" (p. 3). In doing so, Sharpe (2016) explores forms of Black artistic production "that take up the wake as a way toward understanding how slavery's continued unfolding is constitutive of the contemporary conditions of spatial, legal, psychic and material dimensions of Black non/being as well as Black aesthetic and other modes of deformation and interruption" (p. 20). Moreover, Sharpe's work is guided by a "Blackened consciousness" that she refers to as an alternative way of knowing, a praxis of care and a particular methodology for "attending to Black life and Black suffering that avails us particular ways of reimagining the world" that might be used "in responses to the varied and various ways that Black lives are lived unlivable" (p. 22).

In addition to Fanon, Sharpe's writings are often in dialogue with other Black radical scholars such as Dionne Brand, Rinaldo Walcott, Saidiya Hartman, Sylvia Wynter, Katherine McKittrick, Hortense Spillers and Frank Wilderson, whose works embody "the suffering of Black people" and attends to "the forgotten spaces of Blackness" to reimagine otherwise (Sharpe, 2016, p. 29).

Both Fanon and Sharpe can be, and have been, situated within various strands of Black radicalism, at times aligning with and diverging from the Robinsonian notion of the Black Radical Tradition and Benjamin's theoretical framework on anti-Black racism. However, Fanon and Sharpe in their own works, offer significant insights on the overarching themes of anti-Black racism and racial capitalism that characterize many strands of the Black radical tradition.

The following chapter brings into conversation Sharpe's theory of the wake and Fanon's theory of the zone of nonbeing, to explore how each scholar engages with the notion of the paradox of Black (un)livability as it relates to the dehumanization of anti-Black racism. We begin with a discussion on the power of language to create the Black subject and the need for a new grammar or vocabulary that is capable of articulating Black subjectivity that speaks to the ways that Black life is lived paradoxically in between living and unliving.

CHAPTER 3: THE PARADOX OF BLACK (UN)LIVABILITY

In the opening chapter of *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects*, Christina Sharpe (2010) introduces a quote from Frederick Douglass that reads: “the slave is [made] a subject, subjected by others; [while] the slaveholder is a subject but he is the author of his own subjection” (as cited in Sharpe, 2010, p. 49). Douglass, who escaped from slavery and became a prominent abolitionist and author, published these words in 1855 as part of his autobiographical book, *My Bondage, My Freedom*. In the 19th century, slavery was a legal and institutionalized practice in the U.S. that relied on the forced free labour of Africans and their descendants. As Sharpe (2010) explains, the transatlantic slave trade created the Black subject as a slave when the first enslaved Africans crossed the threshold of the door of no return on the continent, and into the Middle Passage. Therefore, when Douglass is writing about “the slave being made into a subject, subjected by others” he is speaking to the ways that the slave subject and the Black subject became interchangeable (as cited in Sharpe, 2010, p. 49).

The Making of the Black Subject

Prior to the transatlantic slave trade the slave subject was not always racialized as Black. In different geographies and times, what constituted a slave differed (Bledsoe, 2017). However, since the advent, and in the course, of the transatlantic slave trade, the slave subject, who was a source of forced free labour, became exclusively associated with African peoples who were bought, sold and traded into chattel slavery in North America, the Caribbean and much of South America (Sharpe, 2010; Bledsoe, 2017). Through a process of racialization, race signified a person’s status as free and/or slaveholder as ‘other’ to the slave subject.

Fanon (2008) explains in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the process of racialization, as experienced in white colonial societies, fixes Blackness and whiteness into hierarchical categories of human worth. Fanon describes this compartmentalization of the colonial society into zones of being and nonbeing (2008). The zone of nonbeing, as Fanon (2008) writes is “an extraordinary sterile and arid region, an incline stripped bare of every essential from which a genuine new departure can emerge” (p.xii). Although Fanon (2008) is using a spatial metaphor, the zone of nonbeing cannot be simply collapsed in to a geographical problem. Rather the zone of nonbeing provides a description of a specific form of dehumanization and alienation that is caused by a process of racialization and anti-Black racism. As Lewis Gordon (2015), who has written extensively on Fanon and the zone of nonbeing, explains, the zone of nonbeing can be understood as a state of “limbo”, referring to the ways in which anti-Black racism structurally “place[s] blacks below whites but above creatures whose lots are worse” in a socially constructed hierarchy of worth (p.3). Within this racialized hierarchy, whiteness is privileged and normalized as the ideal conception of human and positioned always as “other” to Blackness which is dehumanized (p. 91).

The dehumanization related to anti-Black racism which Fanon (2008) describes as “colour prejudice”, fails to recognize the Black “being-for-itself” that is a conscious, living, human with the agency and capacity for self-determination (p.1). Rather through anti-Black racism the Black subject is reduced to “being-for-others” by the white gaze (Fanon, 2008, p. 1). Fanon (2008) describes this concept of “being-for-others” as “it being understood that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other” (p. 1). This leads Fanon (2008) to conclude that “a Black is not a man” but is “woven out of a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories” by the normative white gaze (p. 91). Working through Lacan’s (2006) definition of imago Fanon (2008) develops a theory on sociogeny that explains racialization as a social process, whereby racial differences are constructed

by the dominant societies. As Fanon (2008) explains, the image of the Black person is socially constructed and “mediated by the other’s desire”, where the other is the white man or white societies (Lacan, 2006, p. 99). This is what Douglass meant when he wrote “the slaveholder is a subject but he is the author of his own subjection” (as cited in Sharpe, 2010, p. 49).

Fanon (1963) explains that “the fact of belonging to or onto belonging to a given race, a given species” determines the conditions of these lives, which are regulated to their respective zones (p. 40). Moreover, as much as the white gaze creates the Black subject, it also creates meanings for whiteness. Fanon (2008) explains that the image of the Black man created by the white man is one that haunts the Black person who is reduced to this image through stereotypes rooted in transatlantic slavery. As Gordon (2015) explains, “blacks find themselves...not structurally regarded as human beings” but rather “locked in a zone of nonbeing” (p.3) where “anti-black racism marks the black” as “anonymous which enables the black to collapse into ‘blacks’” (p.3). Here Gordon (2015) is referring to the ways in which the plurality of Blackness is reduced and flattened into a monolithic notion of “Black”.

Additionally, Gordon (2015) explains that the zone of nonbeing could also mean “the point of total absence, the place most far from the light that, in a theistic system, radiates reality, which would be hell.” (p.3). To exist within the zone of nonbeing is, as Fanon (2008) explains, “a descent into a veritable hell” (p.xii). However, the zone of nonbeing also speaks to the paradox of Black (un)livability, where struggle or revolt is possible since “what blacks want it is not to be problematic beings, to escape from that zone” (Gordon, 2015, p.3). Throughout *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (2008) details various ways in which those relegated to the zone of nonbeing revolt against anti-Black racism that include: cultural assimilation, linguistic adaptation, claims to reason, search for love, embracing structural notions of Blackness.

Thinking through this idea of assimilation, Fanon (1963) explains in *The Wretched of the Earth* that within the colonial city the possibility of true inclusion into the white/colonizing society is not possible for the Black/colonized subject as the colonial city is compartmentalized into demarcated social spaces. We can interpret Fanon to say that racial segregation is one possible way of enforcing the distinction between zones of being and non-being which is the heart of *Black Skin, White Masks*. These two zones are “opposed” and there is “no reconciliation” between these spaces as “the zone where the colonized live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the colonizers” (Fanon, 1963, p. 38). Thus, the zone of nonbeing is speaking to the hellish living conditions of the colonized subject which is segregated from and contradictory to the zone of the living beings. Consequently, those that are relegated to “inhabit/occupy and dwell in” this segregated zone of nonbeing, i.e. Black and colonized subjects, are themselves stereotyped and perceived as demonic, nonbeings or unliving (Fanon, 2008; Sharpe, 2016, p.20). At the end, Fanon concludes that assimilation will not grant liberation for those relegated to the zone nonbeing and that what is required to achieve liberation is eradicating all forms of racism and racialized categories that seek to differentiate human beings in order to unify the compartmentalized world (Gordon, 2015, p.46).

Similar to Fanon, Sharpe (2010) also describes this process of making the Black subject, which she refers to as “monstrous intimacies” or “as a set of known and unknown performances and inhabited horrors, desires and positions produced, reproduced, circulated and transmitted, that are breathed in like air and often unacknowledged to be monstrous” (p. 3). For Sharpe (2010), these monstrous intimacies linger after the end of institutionalized slavery and is experienced by Black peoples as “everyday mundane horrors that aren’t acknowledge to be horrors” (p. 3). As with Fanon, Sharpe’s (2016) conceptualization of monstrous intimacies spans across the space

time continuum in the ways that Blackness “inhabits/occupies and dwells in the wake of slavery’s afterlife” (p.20). Here, Sharpe (2016) draws on Fanon’s (1963) concept of zones of non-being in conversation with Saidiya Hartman’s (2007) theory on slavery’s afterlife to propose a polyvocal concept of “the wake” that considers the many ways that Blackness and Black life exists in-between states or “zones of living and unliving” (p. 20).

In “*Lose Your Mother*” Hartman (2007) explains “the afterlife of slavery” as the ways in which “Black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago” which result in “skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration and impoverishment” (p. 6). It is with this framework, that Sharpe (2016) uses the wake as an analytical method for understanding how slavery’s violence emerges within the contemporary conditions of spatial, legal, psychic, material, and other dimensions of Black non/being as well as in Black modes of resistance” (p. 14). For Sharpe (2016), “the wake produces Black death and trauma” at the same time “Black people everywhere and anywhere (we are), still produce in, into and through the wake an insistence on existing: we insist Black being into the wake” (p. 11). Sharpe’s (2016) articulation of the wake is paradoxical in that it attends to the ways that “Black life remains framed by close proximity to death” and “individual tragedies relate to historic injustices” while at the same time recognizing that “everyday modes of resistance create possibilities for rupture within the rupturing of the past to insist on Black being in the wake” (p. 11).

Thus, thinking through and with the wake in relation to the zones of nonbeing, is to recognize a paradox of living Blackness “within and after the legacies of slavery’s denial of Black humanity” (Sharpe, 2016, p. 14). It offers an opportunity to think beyond the current limitations of urban theory to articulate the ways in which Blackness “inhabits/occupies and dwells in” and

across the dividing lines of livability and un-livability (Sharpe, 2016, p.20). Moreover, this emphasis on the paradox Black (un)livability is also a recognition of the linguistic limitations of urban theory to articulate the lived experiences of Black people within the prevailing framework of urban livability. Here, it is important to reflect on Fanon and Sharpe, who in their respective ways, speak to the potential of reimagining a language or grammar that speak better to the conditions of Black lives lived paradoxically in the wake/zone of nonbeing.

An Anagrammatical Blackness

Sharpe (2016) explains, language as “spoken written and action” is “often a violent remaking of the Black being into the white world” (p. 69). At the same time the Black subject comes into being, Sharpe (2010) writes that “new forms of subjectivities” were also created for Africans, Europeans and others” constituted from these monstrous intimacies (p. 4). For Fanon (2008) Black subjectivity refers to a “Black consciousness immanent in its own eyes” and no longer “being-for-others” (p.135). However, as Sharpe (2016) explains *In The Wake*, Black subjectivities are not easily contained, expressed or understood within the available grammar “as the meanings of words fall apart” when confronted with these Black subjectivities (p. 75).

As such, Sharpe (2016) finds a new grammar in the “birth an anagrammatical Blackness” characterized by the use of asterisks, Black annotation and redaction to capture “Blackness anew, Blackness as a/temporal, in and out of place and time putting pressure on meaning and that against which meaning is made” (p. 75). For Sharpe (2016), to apply an anagrammatical Blackness is to recognize that Black life is always annotated so that it is distinguished from normative conceptions of life. This is to say that “Black lives [are] annotated” in the ways that words like “girl, child, mother and boy” signify something more, so that “Blackness becomes surplus” in the wake

(Sharpe, 2016, p. 80). Using the example of 'Black girl' Sharpe (2016) explains that "a Black girl is never conceived of as just a "girl", but 'prostitute' or 'felon' (p. 75). Through Black annotations, Sharpe (2016) is making visible "Black life through the optic of the door [of no return]" and the ways that "words and concepts fail to hold in and on Black flesh" (p. 123). As such Black lives can be read living with "the asterisked histories of slavery, of property, of thingification and their afterlives" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 29). Sharpe (2016) also uses the asterisk in trans*formation to underscore the multiple "configurations of Black being" that were created through "translation, transatlantic, transcontinental, transfixated, trans-Mediterranean, transubstitution transmigration, and more" (p. 30).

Speaking to the shifting meanings of Blackness and the power of language, Fanon (2008) explains that language, written and spoken, is instrumental in how man "proves himself through his language" (p. 8). In thinking with the transformative effects of language, in the opening chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (2008) is concerned with the ways in which Black Antilleans assimilate into the French language. This process of assimilation is not just a matter of gaining mastery of language in order to speak and communicate, rather, as Fanon (2008) describes, the Black Antillean's assimilation of the French language amounts to an (ultimately illusory) attempt to becoming closer to whiteness, and to make claims to the zone of being as "a true human being" (p. 2).

Through language, Fanon (2008) explains that the Antillean – racialized as Black – develops a complicated and at times transformational relationship to the French language. The transformational dimensions of this relationship to language are described in the example of the Antillean who leaves Martinique for France and after remaining some time, returns back to his home land. Upon his return from abroad, the Antillean appears transformed in both his attire,

mannerisms and most significantly in the way he speaks and articulates his words in the French language. Fanon (2008) describes this transformation as one specific to “the Black man that has been to the metropole”, having gained a new mastery of the French language and culture that elevates his status to that of a “demi-god” (p. 3). At the same time, as part of this assent to demi-god-hood, the new returnee “forgets creole and assumes a critical attitude toward his fellow islanders” leaving behind all its entanglements with Blackness (Fanon, 2008, p. 7).

This transformation expressed in a changed personality, as argued by Fanon (2008), is an attempt by the Black Antillean to shed the stereotypes associated with Blackness that are associated with “extremely toxic foreign bodies” by the white man. In other words, to not speak pidgin or Creole and to assimilate into the French language, and by proxy French culture, the Black man brings himself closer to being recognized by the white man as “culturally adequate” and of the French world, possibly even human (p. 21). On the other hand, Fanon (2008) explains that the Antillean who returns from France “still speaking pidgin signifies that nothing has changed” as he continues to be tied to “the eternal victim of his own essence” which is his Blackness equated with the bush and the non-human that continues to propel his descent into the zone of nonbeing (p. 3 & p. 10).

Recognizing the limitations of words allows for the possibility of reimagining new vocabulary or grammars that speak better to the conditions of Black lives. Moreover, in disrupting the normative conceptions of Blackness, as a subject and recognizing the potentials of Black subjectivities, these new grammars, as Sharpe and Fanon have both done, articulate the many ways that Black people have responded to the dehumanization related to anti-Black racism and sought a sense of freedom. For some Black people, this sense of freedom has manifested as a radical rejection of whiteness as acts of Black refusal. In thinking about what constitutes a practice of

refusal, Tina Campt (2019) writes that “practicing refusal names the urgency of rethinking the time, space, and fundamental vocabulary of what constitutes politics, activism, and theory, as well as what it means to refuse the terms given to us to name these struggles” (para.2). Black refusal not only rejects the authoritativeness of whiteness but creates room for a praxis of care that attends to the gendered, classed and spatial plurality of Blackness (Campt, 2019).

For Sharpe (2016), a praxis of care is described as “sound[ing] an ordinary note of care” that “weather[s] the contemporary conditions of Black life and death” (p.132). It is a praxis of care that rejects whiteness in order to attend to Blackness and the realities of Black people living and dying in the wake of anti-Black racist societies (Sharpe, 2016). Similarly, Fanon (1954) alludes to the possibilities of a praxis of care, through his observations of the nurses working in Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital. In a journal entry, Fanon explained that the nurses demonstrated a form of “care for someone” that gave patients “the possibility not to die” but gave “the possibility to live” (as cited in Khalifa and Young, 2018, p.321). In other instances, Fanon’s (2008) conceptualization of care, when framed in relation to his body of work on liberation, thinks with and beyond anti-Black racism, to consider the ways that all forms of colour prejudice (including anti-Arab sentiment and anti-Semitism) can be eradicated across the broader colonized world to liberate both Black and non-Black subjects from these ascribed zones of being/nonbeing.

The possibility of Black liberation has not always been grounded in Black refusal. In some instances, Black liberation has been framed around the notion of Black inclusion which creates a false sense of freedom that fails to produce more liberating outcomes from the zone of nonbeing and the wake. Both Fanon and Sharpe are critical of strategies of Black inclusion that require Black people to assimilate and integrate into white society as detailed in the following section.

In Search of Black Freedoms

In *Monstrous Intimacies*, Sharpe (2010) tells the story of Essie Mae Washington-Williams, who was the daughter of Carrie Butler, a Black woman and Strom Thurmond, a white man. Drawing from Essie Mae's memoir entitled *Dear Senator*, Sharpe (2010) explains the circumstances that surrounded her birth in 1925 (p. 4). When Essie Mae was born, Carrie was sixteen years old and Carrie sent Essie Mae to live with her older sister Mary and her husband John Henry Washington, who would raise Essie Mae as their own child. Essie Mae's father, Strom was twenty-two years old and never publicly acknowledged Essie Mae as his child. As Sharpe (2010) explains, when Essie Mae turned sixteen-years old, her mother Carrie sent for her and eventually took her to meet her biological father Strom.

Over the years, Essie Mae and Strom remained in contact and their interactions often revolved around Strom offering Essie Mae some sort of financial support. Strom eventually became a U.S. senator and built his political career as an opponent of the Civil Rights Act and supporter of racial segregation (Sharpe, 2010). Nearly six months after Strom's death, Essie Mae, who was seventy-eight years old, "spoke out loud what had been privately acknowledged for sixty-two years, that Strom Thurmond was her father and more importantly had fathered a child with a Black woman" (Sharpe, 2010, p. 22). In sharing the hidden truth of her bloodline, Essie Mae, as Sharpe (2010) describes, feels a sense of liberation that is articulated in the sentence "and at last I am completely free" (p. 14). As Sharpe (2010) explains, Essie Mae's conception of freedom rests on "her claims to her father's white lineage" and "her embrace of being rewritten as biracial" (p. 22). Moreover, Sharpe (2010) relates Essie Mae's decision to not be "recognized as not being fully Black" to "twenty-first century struggle over what Blackness looks like" and "which the ability to

pass into and pass on the signatory power of (future) whiteness appears as the only space of ‘complete freedom’ that can be imagined” (p. 22).

Sharpe’s discussion of Essie Mae’s *Dear Senator* relates very much to Fanon’s (2008) chapter on the woman of colour and the European man as described in *Black Skin, White Masks*. In thinking about the relationship between the woman of colour and the European man, Fanon (2008) introduces the book *I am a Martinican Woman* written by Mayotte Capécia as a point of discussion. The story, as explained by Fanon (2008), is one of a Creole Martinican woman and her relationship with her white lover. Mayotte, the creole woman, has since her early childhood admired whiteness and actively sought a relationship with a white man explaining that “all I know is that he had blue eyes, blond hair, a pale complexion and I loved him” (Fanon, 2008, p. 25). This concerns Fanon (2008) who describes Mayotte’s desire for whiteness as “striving for lactification” – a kind of whitening of oneself (p. 29). The goal of lactification or becoming white is not unique to Mayotte, as Fanon (2008) explains, rather it is an objective that some Black and Creole women aspire to because “the Black woman feels inferior” (p. 41). For Mayotte, as Fanon (2008) explains, lactification is a means to “gaining admittance to the white world” achieved by accepting a white lover (p. 41). Fanon describes this as “affective erethism” (p. 41). Having said that, a connection can be drawn to Fanon’s discussion on the Black Antillean man who returns from the French metropole, Essie Mae and Mayotte the Black/Creole woman. All three are seeking entrance into the white world through physical, linguistic and relational proximity to whiteness through a disassociation from Blackness (Fanon, 2008). They are, in their own troubling ways, trying to escape the everyday mundane monstrous intimacies and indignities that are experienced by Black peoples in the wake and zone of nonbeing (Sharpe, 2010, p.3; Fanon, 2008).

Part of the attachment to whiteness for Mayotte, Essie Mae and the Black Antillean who has returned from Europe is the relationship between race and class. Whiteness is not necessarily reduced to only phenotypic features but also is quantifiable in a monetary sense. Fanon (2008) discusses the connections between whiteness and class by stating “it is accepted that one is white if one has a certain amount of money” (p. 26). This means that the desire for whiteness is intimately tied to the material benefits of being perceived and recognized as white. In the colonial context where the legacy of a slave/master dynamic persisted beyond formal institutions of slavery, the Black enslaved and colonial subject who were imagined as “the frightened, humiliated nigger trembling in front of the white master” was also impoverished (Fanon, 2008, p. 43).

In another chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (2008) discusses how the desire to be white impacts the man of colour and the white woman. To begin, Fanon (2008) draws the following conclusion “by loving me, she [white woman] proves that I am worthy of a white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man” (p. 45). Similar to Mayotte, in her quest for validation into the white world through her white lover, the Black man who engages in an interracial relationship is also seeking entrance into the white world, to be amongst and equal to “the other” (Fanon, 2008). This is exemplified in the case put forward by Fanon (2008) of Jean Veneuse, who sees “the other as the white man” (p. 57). For Veneuse, who wants to marry a white woman, he “doesn’t want to be a Negro” and through his correspondence with his future bride’s brother he is assured that he is indeed not a Black man but only a dark, dark man who is “one of us [i.e. French]” (Fanon, 2008, p. 51-52).

In thinking through the case of Veneuse, Fanon (2008) concludes that he is displaying the symptoms of “abandonment neurosis” which include a “form of neurosis based upon the tripod of the anxiety aroused by any abandonment, the aggressiveness to which it gives rise, and the resultant

devaluation of self” (p. 54). Building on Lacan’s thesis on constitution and replacing it with a concept of “structure”, Fanon (2008) develops a theory of abandonment neurosis whereby “the neurotic structure of an individual is precisely the elaboration, the formation and the birth of conflicting knots in the ego, stemming on the one hand from the environment and on the other from the entirely personal way this individual reacts to these influences” (p. 62). Put another way, the “ego” as described by Lacan (2006) in *Ecrits*, refers to the “ideal I that recognizes self as other” through a process of “misrecognition” which is formed “in the broadest definition of neurosis” (Lacan, p. 99&100). This misrecognition causes a struggle at the psychic level. Fanon’s (2008) contemplation of ego is closely aligned with Lacan in the ways both think of the “I” formation as a social process and not individualistic. Fanon (2008) explains this best in stating that “man is what brings society into being” and “the alienation of the Black man is not an individual question” (p. xv). And in achieving some similitude of whiteness through lactification, Fanon (2008) argues that the Black colonial subject is attempting to “avenge the imago that had always obsessed him” (p. 43).

While both Fanon and Sharpe linger with the Black subject’s “abjection from the realm of the human” and the multiple ways that anti-Blackness exists as “total climate” which refers to the specific history of the Black diaspora and ongoing forms of racial capitalist violence, Fanon and Sharpe also recognize the importance of resistance that makes it so that “racism is not the whole” (as in not the only system of oppression nor is racism impenetrable) (Sharpe, 2016, p. 21; Fanon, 1964, p. 32). The following chapter explores what it would mean to work from this knowledge that anti-Black racism is pervasive and that is also an incomplete project which has been resisted.

CHAPTER 4: MORE HUMANLY LIVABLE FUTURES

In the final chapter of *In The Wake*, Sharpe (2016) describes the “pervasive climate of anti-Black racism” as “weather” that “trans*forms Black being[s]” and poses a critical question: “what must we know in order to move through these environments in which the push is always toward Black death?” (p.106). Working with Dionne Brand’s *Ruttier for the Marooned in the Diaspora* and NourbeSe Philip’s *Zong!*, Sharpe (2016) thinks about resisting this Black death and what it means “to stay safe and to defend the dead...those whom are actually dead and those whom the state refuses to grant life” (p.108). In doing so, Sharpe (2016) turns to “aspiration” as a form of resistance that responds to” the necessity of breath, to breathing space, to the breathtaking spaces in the wake” and the ways in which Black people struggle “to keep breath in the Black body” (p.109). In thinking through the weather, Sharpe (2016) explains, “aspiration” as “that keeping breath in the Black body” (p. 111) and relates aspiration to Fanon’s writings to delineate the ways in which anti-Black climates are breathtaking.

For Fanon, as Sharpe (2016) explains, the inability to breathe, both literally and figuratively, under the overbearing burden of colonialism incites “revolt” (p.108). As such, Sharpe (2016) argues that, aspiration or the act of “keeping and putting breath back in the Black body” (p.113) is a form of resistance that relates very much to what Fanon (1965) describes in *A Dying Colonialism* as: “the individual’s breathing is an observed breathing. It is a combat breathing” (as cited in Sharpe, 2016, p.113). While Sharpe (2016) is drawing from Fanon’s discussions on breath and breathing to describe her own analysis of Black life and death in the wake, for Fanon, the inability to breathe is a relevant metaphor for describing comparable political struggles against colonialism engaged by different populations across various geographies. In the above quote from

A Dying Colonialism on “combat breathing”, Fanon (1965) is speaking to the experiences of the Algerian Woman who is doubly suffocated by patriarchal cultural and religious traditions and Eurocentric colonial fetishization of the North African/Arab/Muslim woman. In another instance in *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (2008) speaks to the suffocating effects and affects of colonialism in Southeast Asia that create an atmosphere of political resistance: “It is not because the Indo-Chinese discovered a culture of their own that they revolted. Quite simply this was because it became impossible for them to breathe, in more than one sense of the word” (p.201). Thus, the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism that is breathtaking, for Fanon (1964), is “one element of a vaster whole: that of the systematized oppressed of a people” who engage in political struggles against racism, colonialism, imperialism and gender discrimination (p.33). Anti-Black racism is a crucial aspect of colonial capitalism within which one can find, to use current terminology, interlocking systems of oppression that include, but are not limited to, gender discrimination and class exploitation.

Sharpe (2016) raises a similar point when she discusses racism, gender discrimination and classism as intersecting factors in the “shippability and containerization” (p.30) of Blackness which, Sabine Broeck (2018) explains as the violent making of the Black being into “a usable, shippable, transactable, disownable, atomizable, brandable, breedable, and inheritable item, a being severed from kinship genealogy and a proper name” in the hold of the slave ship and through the transatlantic slave trade (p.120). Moreover, Broeck (2016) explains that the practice of “enslavism”, that is defined as the “ongoing afterlife of social, cultural and political anti-Blackness in the future that the transatlantic enslavement has made” (p.44) created “financial networking, crediting, speculation, insuring, of profit and calculation” through the commodification of Black labour (Broeck and Junker, 2014, p.122). For Sharpe (2016), Black “shippability and

containerization” are part of an ongoing structure of racial capitalism that continues to reproduce the “slave ship hold” in the form of “the so-called migrant ship, the prison and the womb that produces Blackness” (p.27 & 30). In referencing the womb, Sharpe (2016) is highlighting the genderless dimensions of “the afterlife of property” (p.79) in which the Black child (irrespective of gender) inherits the status of non/being of the Black mother and the gendered ways in which “Black women’s insistence on sustaining Black life, despite the likelihood of adverse outcomes become acts of transgression...that destabilizes the logic of anti-Blackness” (Brown, 2019, p.16). Moreover, Sharpe (2016), drawing from Omise’eke Tinsley’s *Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage*, explains that “Blackness throws into crisis” heteronormativity so that “Black life in and out of” trans*Atlantic slavery “is always queered and more” (p.30).

The slave trade, as Sharpe (2016) explains, also trans*formed beings and “made some people into things, some into buyers, sellers, owners...and breeders of that Black flesh” (p.30). Sharpe (2016) refers to this as “the commodification and propertization” of Black labour, including labour as birthing, during and after the transatlantic slave trade, which encompass what Hartman (as cited in Sharpe, 2016, p.13) calls “a racial calculus” that creates “skewed life chances” for Black gendered and genderless bodies and “requires Black death” (Sharpe, 2016, p.13). For Sharpe (2016) this racial calculus that Hartman describes relates to what Katherine McKittrick (as cited in Sharpe, 2016, p.35) has described as the “mathematics of Black life”. Sharpe (2016) explains, that the mathematics of Black life, which “includes the killability”, dehumanization and devaluation of Blackness, undergirds Black (un)livability (p.30). As McKittrick (2015), explains, the mathematics of Black life raises several important questions including: “how do we come to

terms with...the mathematics of the unliving, the certification of unfreedom - and give shape to how we now live our lives?" (p.19).

Important for Fanon are not only these "acts of transgression" that "birth new Black life forms" that concern Sharpe (2016, p.75), but also "new forms of human life" (Wynter as cited in Walcott, 2016, p.57). As such, Fanon (2008) writes that in order to break free from these "vicious cycles" of racial capitalism that produce the conditions for Black disposability, what is required is "the birth of a human world, in other words, a world of reciprocal recognitions" that "restore to the other" and the self their "human realities" (p. 192). This is achieved by "inducing man to be *actional*, by maintaining in his circularity the respect of the fundamental values that make the world human" (Fanon, 2008, p. 197). In *The North African Syndrome*, Fanon (1964) describes this as "human work" which requires "that over the whole territory of the French Nation, there are tears to be wiped away, inhuman attitudes to be fought, condescending ways of speech to be ruled out, men to be humanized" so that "the man who is on this earth shall be more than a body, more than a Mohammed [i.e. Racial stereotype]" (p. 16).

For Fanon (1964) and Sharpe (2016), the terrain of struggle against dehumanization and anti-Black racism is vast geographically and temporally and interlocks with other systems of oppression, such as colonialism, capitalism, gender oppression and imperialism. Together, these systems encompass all matters of everyday life. Fanon's work has focused on political struggle in the form of decolonization and national liberation, a topic that is discussed in more detail below, whereas Sharpe (2016) scholarship sits with and thinks through struggle expressed in Black cultural and artistic forms of production that have grappled with and reimagined Black suffering and the possibilities it generates.

Culture and Struggle

Unlike Fanon, Sharpe (2016) is “not interested in rescuing Black being(s) for the category of the “Human” but instead writes about “imagining responses to the terror visited on Black life and the ways we [Black people] inhabit it, are inhabited by it, and refuse it” (p. 116). One of the ways that Sharpe (2016) does this is through an exploration of Black art, poetry, writing and thinking, that embodies a praxis of care which “[attends] to Black life and Black suffering that avails us [Black people] particular ways of reimagining the world” that might be used “in responses to the varied and various ways that Black lives are lived unlivable” (p. 22). Sharpe (2016) elaborates on this praxis of care as emerging from a “Blackened consciousness” that developed through the door of no return, into the Middle Passage and continues to grow and adapt to respond to the ever day terrors of anti-Black racism in the wake (p. 22). Through this Blackened consciousness, Black people can begin to plan for Black futures “positioned in the knowledge that we are living and undeclared state of emergency” in the wake which is “as pervasive as the weather or climate” (Sharpe, 2016, p.100 & p.106).

In order to tap into this Blackened consciousness Sharpe (2016) asserts that Black scholars and activist must engage in the necessary work, which she calls “wake work”, to “become undisciplined” and “rupture the colonial episteme” (p. 20). For Sharpe, Black cultural productions offer insights into the “material dimensions of Black non/being” and the “visualsonic resistance to that imposition of non/being” (p.20 &21). Thus, Sharpe’s (2016) appeal to Black intellectuals and artists to engage in wake work relates to Fanon (1963) who wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*, specifically addressing “native intellectuals” that “you do not show proof of your nation from its culture but that you substantiate its existence in the fight which the people wage against the forces of occupation” (p.223). For Fanon, whose intellectual thought was provoked by his mentor Aimé

Césaire and the Négritude movement that advocated for Black consciousness as the way towards liberation, explains that Black cultural production and spiritual/religious practices should be in sync with the struggles of the oppressed people seeking complete freedom (Fanon, 2008).

Moreover, Fanon (1964) notes that there is also a potential pitfall for “the inferiorized who discovered a spontaneous truth” that is “a culture abandoned, sloughed off, rejected, despised” (p.41). The risk is that this rediscovered culture is not a “culture that is lived” but rather “a culture once living” or a “cultural mummification” that “leads to a mummification of individual thinking” (Fanon, 1964, p.41 & 34). For Fanon (2008), this happens when reclaiming a past culture is perceived as a permanent redress which leads to a fixation on race and culture. This, Fanon (2008) finds in and of itself problematic for indicative of “a drama of narcissistic proportions, locked in our own particularities” (p. 28). In order to avoid these pitfalls, Fanon (1964) explains that national culture should be considered something new, a product of anti-colonial liberation movements and a dynamic, living force that follows the rhythms of the everyday struggles of the oppressed that de-centre whiteness and move towards ethically different conceptions of livability.

Towards A Different Ethics of Livability

For Fanon (1963) a vision for a new humanism is one that is liberated from the prevailing doctrine of racialized human hierarchies that perpetuate the idea of inferior or superior races and cultures (p.38). Accordingly, this old, colonial and racialized humanism, must be discarded and “we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man [human]” (p.316). Here, Fanon (1963) is referring not to the false and impossible universalism of bourgeois and colonial humanism but to a genuinely universal humanism that breaks free from class stratification and racial hatreds (p.315) and that is no longer centred on the imperial

heartlands of the world. It is a “universality” that is made possible by political and social revolution and then found in a “decision to recognize and accept the reciprocal relativism of different cultures, once the colonial status is irreversibly excluded” (Fanon, 1964, p.44). Sekyi-Otu (2019) describes Fanon’s new humanism as a particular understanding of *postracialism* or “*le niveau racial et raciste est dépassé*”, which translates as “the racial and racist framework of thought and practice is to be superseded” (p. 7). As Fanon (1964) explains, “the end of race prejudice begins with a sudden incomprehension” of racist arguments used by the dominating nation to “legitimize racial prejudice” (p.43&44).

Sekyi-Otu (2019) explains that this Fanonian post-racial theory differs from both “eliminativist” perspectives that argue that “race should never have mattered because it doesn’t exist” and colour-blind perspectives that argue “race no longer matters in the determination of social position and life prospects” (Seyki-Otu, 2019, p. 6). Moreover, Seyki-Otu (2019) writes that the Fanonian postracialism “functions as the contingent historical foundation of his (Fanon’s) humanist vision of the postcolonial world’s social ordering and ethical imperatives...a call to humanism is here no ‘intellectualist circumvention of reality but rather it says to us, particularly in the postcolonial context, that this entails the arduous and even traumatizing achievement of social and political consciousness and ultimately humanism” (p. 9). Put in another way, for Fanon, Black consciousness is one step towards a broader postracial humanist vision that is grounded in a praxis of anti-Black racism.

One of the ways that Fanon (1964) conceptualizes this necessary action is through decolonization understood as a struggle for both the liberation of the colonized subject’s mind and lands. Fanon (1964) describes the struggle of the colonized as “situated on a markedly more human level” with a specific objective to “fight all forms of exploitation and alienation of man” (p.43). In

the colonized nation, as Fanon explains (1964), this struggle for liberation is decolonization in the form of national liberation. Through national liberation a national culture is developed as “the very heart of the struggle for freedom” against colonialism (p.233). For Fanon (1964), national culture “is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence” (p.233). As such, Fanon (1964) explains that decolonization is a praxis that links theoretical work of rupturing epistemological colonialism, which refers to the disciplinary practices that reinforce “thinking with the norms of a colonial system” (Gordon, 2017, para.2), to more material outcomes of revolutionary movements and political struggles in the form of national liberation. It is also a form of “human work” that both the colonized and the colonizer must do so that a new human can come into existence (Fanon, 1964, p. 16).

Both Sharpe and Fanon offer similar and yet different perspectives on what the process for achieving Black liberation could mean. It is these kinds of philosophical debates within Black radical perspectives on dehumanization related to anti-Black racism that can provide insights on the possibility of reimagining a different ethics of livability that attends to Black (un)livability.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

How then can urban theory engage with the works of Sharpe and Fanon, and other Black radical perspectives on dehumanization, in a meaningful way? To begin, urban theory must confront its entanglements with settler colonialism and anti-Black racism that, as Rutland (2018) explains, reproduce livable cities “rendered conceivable and achievable by the displacement of Blackness and Indigeneity through physical or symbolic process” (p. 4). Therefore, new words and meanings for livability are needed to reflect the ways that “Black lives [are] annotated” with surplus meaning (Sharpe, 2016, p. 75). Through Black annotations, we can make known that urban livability is never just “livability” for Black lives but is a paradox of (un)livability, where, in the afterlife of slavery, Black lives exist through the wake and in the zone of nonbeing.

Fundamental to advancing a discourse of urban (un)livability is how “recognising the constitutive anti-Blackness of modern planning necessarily re-routes intellectual and political efforts to transform planning in the present through strategies of inclusion or acts of Black refusal” (Rutland, 2018, p. 25). Strategies which focus on Black inclusion often fall short in producing “conditions for the necessary radical work required” to bring about a substantive transformation that attends to the paradox of Black (un)livability (Rutland, 2018, p. 25). In many instances inclusionary anti-Black racist strategies tend to privilege the interests of the dominant group as well as what Robinson (1983) referred to as “the Black intelligentsia”, those Black elites of society who are invested in reproducing capitalist and colonial systems that continue to harm low-income Black lives and silence the radical voices that are calling for more material changes to improve Black lives.

As Fanon (2008) explains, “the Black problem is not just about Blacks living among whites, but about the Black man exploited, enslaved and despised by a colonialist and capitalist society that happens to be white” (p.178). Here Fanon (2008) is speaking to racial capitalism which can be related to Robinson’s point about the importance of recognising class distinctions as an important factor in the experiences of Blackness. Due to class inequality, the struggle of the low-income Black is not the same as the middle- and upper-class Black. The struggle of the working class or the priorities of grassroots activists may differ from those of the Black professional class. As Amilcar Cabral also (1973) explains, “there may be individuals or groups of individuals who join the liberation movement” (p.46) and who “place above all principles or demands of a cultural nature – and against the aspirations of the people – their own economic and social privileges, their own class interests” (p.47). Cabral is raising this point “not to minimize the positive contribution which privileged classes may bring to the struggle” but to emphasize that “the liberation movement must on the cultural level just as on the political level, base its action in popular culture” which is to say the interest of the masses of low-income and Black people and not the few Black elites. (p.47). For those concerned about professional urban planning this means that the voices of grassroots anti-racist struggles who center the needs of low-income, Black and Indigenous people must be the ones that inform the theoretical and practical aspects of planning.

A Black Test

In *BlackLife: Post-BLM And The Struggle For Freedom*, Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) propose a “Black test” as a social measure for anti-racist policies to meet the material needs of all Black people. A Black Test, as Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) explain, would determine that “any policy that does not meet the requirement of ameliorating the dire conditions of Black people’s

lives (i.e. The Black Test), is not a policy worth having” (p. 91). Here, Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) are enacting a praxis of care that has been embodied in the work of various Black radical movements and thinkers, such as Sharpe, that “place Black lives at the centre of efforts to eradicate all forms of oppression and, indeed, all forms of privilege” (Rutland, 2019, p. 14). Through acts of care, Black communities and social movements find ways to resist normative conceptions of livability and reproduce Black livability that reimagine ethically different Black futurities in the wake and zone of nonbeing. At the same time, Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) explain that the Black Test is an invitation to “liberal and left organizers and policy makers working on the larger context of inequality” to “make their political rhetoric rudely clear in regards to BlackLife” (p.92 & 93). Here, Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) are in agreement with Fanon (1964), who has written about the need for both white liberals and leftists to engage in the necessary “human work” of dismantling racial prejudice.

At the same time, Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) in arguing that “any contemporary political project that does not clearly address Black people will be a failed political project” (p.93) are also alluding to the fact that strategies that work against anti-Black racism have universalizing implications. For instance, Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) state that “in the Canadian context, we cannot adequately deal with unemployment, housing, education, justice and crime, migration, health care and so on without directly engaging Black people and their everyday lives” (p.93). Put in another way, the Black Test not only carries the possibility of setting a standard for improving BlackLife but also the lives of others who suffer at various interlocking systems of oppression that can lead to new urban futures.

Black Urbanism

The idea that anti-Black racist strategies could lead to “something more universal” in the Fanonian sense of universal humanism, has been explored by urban scholars and practitioners in the emerging field of Black Urbanism who have drawn on Black spatial knowledges to think about the paradox of Black (un)livability and imagine of more just cities (Goodwin and Oduro, 2008, p.4; Simone, 2016).

In *Peckham Rising*, Paul Goodwin (2007) discusses a curated photography exhibition featuring the works of artists Daniele Tamagni, Thabo Jaiyesimi and Janine Lai. The images of Peckham, a neighbourhood in South-London, illustrate what Goodwin (2007) calls paradox of Black urbanism. Goodwin (2007) writes that in these images Peckham is displayed as “the other city” contradicting the negative media portrayal of this neighbourhood as a “ghetto” and reframing it as a place where “Black people and immigrants have created their own urban worlds; their own urbanisms” (p.4). The paradox of Black urbanism articulates “the contradictory nature of the present conjuncture where ‘Blackness’ informs what it means to be ‘urban’ in a cultural sense even as many Black communities are still living in economically and socially marginal and precarious conditions throughout the world” (Goodwin, 2007, p.6). In thinking through Peckham and other Black urban spaces as paradoxical Goodwin (2007) is challenging the reductive tendencies that ignore the ways that Black lives are lived paradoxically in the wake and the zone of nonbeing. As AbdouMalik Simone (2004) explains, Black Urbanism “welcomes without reservation and a more committed engagement with the twists and turns of how Black people took on the city just as it was, and both succumbed to and exceeded its supposedly determinant functions” compared to the various ways that normative planning tends to erase and pathologize Blackness across time and space. (p.218).

Black urbanist and trained urban planner Pete Saunders (2018) has also thought about Black Urbanism as a set of principles that differ from normative planning approaches in four distinct ways. For Saunders (2018), Black urbanism is distinguished in the ways it pushes for pragmatic urban planning solutions in response to spreading inequality, addressing the needs of current residents directly and developing community-focused and egalitarian approach to decision making (para.8&11). Through this set of principles, Saunders (2018) positions Black Urbanism as an invitation to “a universal understanding of the particular impact of Black culture, Black life and Black thought on cities” (para.16) which could lead urbanism towards a “path to stronger, vibrant, and more inclusive cities” (para.20).

Similarly, Sara Zewde (2010), in her thesis *Theory, Place and Opportunity*, turned to Black cultural expression to articulate a Black urbanist design strategy that draws from “the deeply engrained improvisational art-of-making do” found in everyday Black American artistic expressions (p.99). Moreover, Zewde’s (2010) focus is on “historic Black architecture and urban design in the earliest Black American neighbourhoods” that have “turned the dilemma of ‘Black’ in Black Urbanism” as an ideology “birthed from a culture considered infertile, incapable of bearing any fruitful standard for urban design” into a new design theory that “attempts to liberate conceptualizations of cities from the confines of disciplinary thinking” (p.15 &99).

Simone (2004), Zewde (2010), Saunders (2018) and Goodwin (2007) are all, in their own unique ways, speaking to the plurality of Black Urbanism thought that register at various scales with the scholarship of Fanon and Sharpe. For instance, central to a discourse on Black Urbanism are forms of Black refusal, which seek to engage strategies of resistance that speak back to normative urban theory by drawing from knowledges outside of Euro-American epistemologies as an ethical and political project. Additionally, Black Urbanism is not fixated on a singular

biological notion of Blackness but is concerned with how socially constructed ideologies of Blackness “reside[s] in the functional realm and [are] acknowledged by the vast and broad silence that usually precedes [them]” (Zewde, 2010, p.15). Moreover, Black Urbanism thought draws from Black cultural expressions and political struggles that have sustained Black life in the wake and zone of nonbeing and works with that knowledge to reimagine more universally human futures.

As so-called world class, livable cities, like Toronto continue to grow in uneven ways and the urban geography is marked by ever increasing trends of economic polarization and racialized residential segregation, there is an urgency for urban scholars and practitioners to think through and with Black Urbanism as a process that aims to “arrive at a discourse which will move these things that are usually dismissed as survival techniques of the marginalized or the lower classes and closer to the 'centre' of our understandings of how cities look and function” (para.15). Black city building and design knowledges rooted in Black artistic expressions and political struggles against anti-Black racism present the possibilities of applying a universalizing framework of Black Urbanism that could inform a discourse on urban (un)livability that not only rejects race-neutral, growth centric and neoliberal ideologies but also embraces Black radical reimaginings through the wake and zone of nonbeing: more humanly livable urban futures that attend to the ways in which low-income Black, Indigenous and other racialized masses continue to “live in the unlivable” (McKittrick, 2006, p.6 & 7).

REFERENCES

- Al-Bulushi, Y. (2019). Thinking Racial Capitalism and Black Radicalism from Africa: An Intellectual Geography of Cedric Robinson's World-System. *Geoforum*, Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0016718520300208>
- Amin, A. (2013). Telescopic Urbanism and the Poor. *City*, 17(4), pp. 476–492. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13604813.2013.812350>
- Benjamin, L. A. (2003). *The Black/Jamaican Criminal: The Making of Ideology*. [Doctoral dissertation, Department of Sociology in Equity Studies in Education Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto].
- Black Lives Matter Toronto. (2019). *Demands*. Retrieved from: <https://Blacklivesmatter.ca/demands/>
- Broeck, J. (2018). *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Broeck, S. and Junker, C. (2014). *Postcoloniality – Decoloniality -Black Critique. Joints and Fissures*. Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag
- Brown, N. (2019). Labor of Love: Black Women's Birth Work in the Wake [Master's thesis, Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas]. Retrieved from: <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/77432/BROWN-THESIS-2019.pdf?sequence=1>
- Cabral, A. (1973). *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*. New York and London: Africa Information Service.
- Calliste, A. (1995). The Influence of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement in Canada. *Race, Gender & Class*, 2(3), 123-139. Retrieved June 3, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/41674712
- Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). Livability. In *Cambridge.Dictionary.org dictionary*. Retrieved July 6, 2020 from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/livability>
- Campt, T. (2019). Black Visuality and the Practice of Refusal. *Women & Performance*. Retrieved from: <https://www.womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt>
- Cherki, A. (2006). *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Chowkwanun, M. and Reed, A.L., JR. (2020). Racial Health Disparities and Covid-19: Caution and Context. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Advanced online publication. Retrieved from: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2012910>
- Conger, B. (2015). On Livability, Liveability and the Limited Utility of Quality of Life Rankings. *School of Public Policy SPP Communique*. University of Calgary. Retrieved From: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2614678

- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039?seq=1>
- Darden, J.T. and Kamel, S.M. (2000). Black and White Differences in Homeownership Rates in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area: Does Race Matter? *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 28(2), pp.53-76. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1007/s12114-000-1017-6>
- Davis, A. (1983). *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books A Division of Random House.
- Domaradzka, A. (2018). Urban Social Movements and the Right to the City: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Urban Mobilization. *Voluntas*, 29, pp.607–620 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-0030-y>
- Dorries, H., Hugil, D. and Tomiak, J. (2019). Racial Capitalism and the Production of Settler Colonial Cities. *Geoforum*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S001671851930226X>
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld.
- Fanon, F. (1964). *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, F. (1965). *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press
- Gibson, N. and Beneduce, R. (2017). *Frantz Fanon: Psychiatry and Politics*. London : Rowman and Littlefield).
- Goodwin, P. (2007). A Manifesto for Black Urbanism. *Diffusion*. Retrieved from: <http://diffusion.org.uk/>
- Goodwin, P. and Oduro, J. (2008). Re-Visioning Black Urbanism and The Production of Space. *This Is Not A Gateway Post-Salon Essay*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/cucr/research/revisioning-Black-urbanism/>
- Gordon, L. R. (November 4, 2017). Decolonization Matters. *Rowan & Littlefield International*. Retrieved from: <https://www.rowmaninternational.com/blog/decolonization-matters>
- Gordon, L. (2015). *What Fanon Said: A philosophical Introduction To His Life And Thought (First edition.)*. Fordham University Press.
- Gosine, A. and Teelucksingh, C. (2008). *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction*. Toronto: Edmond Montgomery Publications.

- Hartman, S. (2008). *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Hill Collins, P. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, Second Edition*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Holden, M. and Scerri, A. (2013). More Than This: Liveable Melbourne Meets Liveable Vancouver. *Cities*, 31, pp. 444-453. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264275112001400>
- Hudson, S. and Diverlus, R. (2019). The Origin Story of Black Lives Matter Canada, In (Editors) Rodney Diverlus, Sandy Hudson and Syrus Marcus Ware (edits) *Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada*, pp.3-18. University of Regina Press.
- Hudson, P. J. (2018). Racial Capitalism and the Dark Proletariat. *Boston Review*. Retrieved from: <http://bostonreview.net/forum/remake-world-slavery-racial-capitalism-and-justice/peter-james-hudson-racial-capitalism-and>
- James, C., Este, D. Thomas Bernard, W. Benjamin, A., Lloyd, B. and Turner, T. (2010). *Race & Well-Being: The Lives, Hopes, and Activism of African Canadians*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.
- Johnson, W. (2018). To Remake the World: Slavery, Racial Capitalism, and Justice. *Boston Review*. Retrieved from: <http://bostonreview.net/forum/walter-johnson-to-remake-the-world>
- Kaal, H. (2011) A Conceptual History of Livability. *City*, 15(5), pp. 532–547. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13604813.2011.595094>
- Kashef, M. (2016). Urban Livability Across Disciplinary and Professional Boundaries. *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 5, pp.239-253. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S209526351630005X>
- Kelly, R.D.G. (2016). Cedric J. Robinson: The Making of a Black Radical Intellectual. *Counterpunch*. Retrieved from: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2016/06/17/cedric-j-robinson-the-making-of-a-Black-radical-intellectual/>
- Kelley, R. (2017). What Did Cedric Robinson Mean By Racial Capitalism? *Boston Review*. Retrieved from: <http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism>
- Khalifa, J. and Young, R.J.C. (2018). *Alienation and Freedom*. Bloomsbury Publishing [ebook].
- Kipfer, S. and Petrunia, J. (2016). “Recolonization” and Public Housing: A Toronto Case Study. *Studies in Political Economy A Socialist Review*, 83(1), pp.111-139. Retrieved from:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/19187033.2009.11675058?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

- Kipfer, S., and Keil, R. (2002). Toronto Inc? Planning the Competitive City in the New Toronto. *Antipode*, 34(2), pp. 227-264. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-8330.00237>
- Kipfer, S. (2007). Fanon and Space: Colonization, Urbanization, and Liberation from the Colonial to the Global City. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25(4), pp.701-726. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1068/dkipfer>
- Lacan, J. (2006). *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (Bruce Fink Translation). New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Lehrer, U. and Laidley, J. (2008). Old Mega-Projects Newly Packaged? Waterfront Redevelopment in Toronto. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(4), pp.786-803. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00830.x>
- Lipsitz, G. (2018). *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics*. Tokyo, Philadelphia, Rome: Temple University Press.
- Lee Kong, S. and Elder, S. (April 16, 2020). How Communities Can Stop Gentrification From Erasing GTA. Culture. *Love Local*. Retrieved from: <https://locallove.ca/issues/how-communities-can-stop-gentrification-from-erasing-gta-culture/#.XtKg9S0ZPOQ>
- Manning Thomas, J. (1994). Planning History and the Black Urban Experience: Linkages and Contemporary Implications. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 14(1), pp.1-11. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0739456X9401400101>
- Massey, Douglas S. and Denton, Nancy A. (1988). The Dimensions of Residential Segregation, *Social Forces*, 67(2), pp.281-315. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2579183?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Maynard, R. (2017). *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.
- Maynard, R. and Betasamosake Simpson. L. (2019). Towards Black and Indigenous Futures. On Turtle Island: A Conversation In (Editors) Rodney Diverlus, Sandy Hudson and Syrus Marcus Ware (edits) *Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada*, pp.75-95. University of Regina Press.
- McArthur, J and Robin, E. (2019). Victims of their own (definition of) success: Urban discourse and expert knowledge production in the Liveable City. *Urban Studies*, 56(8), pp.1711-1728. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330612110_Victims_of_their_own_definition_of_success_Urban_discourse_and_expert_knowledge_production_in_the_Liveable_City

- McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and The Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- McKittrick, K. (2015). Mathematics Black Life. *The Black Scholar*, 44(2), pp.16–28. Retrieved from: https://journals-scholarsportal-info.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/pdf/00064246/v44i0002/16_mbl.xml
- Mele, C. (2017). The Strategic Uses of Race to Legitimize ‘Social Mix’ Urban Redevelopment. *Journal of the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*. 25(1), pp.27-40. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13504630.2017.1418603?needAccess=true>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Livability*. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved July 6, 2020, from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/livability>
- Murdie, R. (1994). Blacks in Near Ghettos? Black Visible Minority Population in Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority Public Housing Units. *Housing Studies*, 9(4), pp.435-457. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02673039408720799>
- Nelson, J. (2008). *Razing Africville: A Geography of Racism*. University of Toronto Press.
- Okulicz-Kozaryn, A. (2013). City Life: Rankings (Livability) Versus Perceptions (Satisfaction). *Social Indicators Research*, 110(2), pp. 433–451. Retrieved from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-011-9939-x>
- Parker, S. (2004). *Urban Theory and the Urban Experience Encountering the City*, Second Edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Posner, J. (May, 2011). Crusading Social Activist Dudley Laws Dies. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/crusading-social-activist-dudley-laws-dies/article596861/>
- Reed Jr, A. and Chowkwanyun, M. (2012). Race, Class, Crisis: The Discourse of Racial Disparity and Its Analytical Discontents. *Socialist Register*, 48, pp.149-175. Retrieved from: <https://socialistregister.com/index.php/srv/article/view/15650>
- Robin, E. and Acuto, M. (2018). Global Urban Policy and the Geopolitics of Urban Data. *Urban Geography*, 66, pp. 76–87. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629817302184>
- Robinson, C. J. (2000). *Black Marxism: The Making of The Black Radical Tradition, 2nd Ed.* Chapel Hill: The University Of North Carolina Press.
- Ruggeri, D., Harvey, C. And Bosselmann, P. (2018). Perceiving the Livable City: Cross-Cultural Lessons on Virtual and Field Experiences of Urban Environments. *Journal of The American*

Planning Association, 84(3-3), pp.250-262. Retrieved from:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01944363.2018.1524717>

- Rutland, T. (2018). *Displacing Blackness: Planning, Power and Race in Twentieth-Century Halifax*. University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division.
- Saunders, P. (March 27, 2018). Black Urbanists, Part 7: A Definition of Black Urbanism. *The Corner Side Yard*. Retrieved from: <http://cornersideyard.blogspot.com/2018/03/Black-urbanists-part-7-definition-of.html>
- Seyki-Otu, A. (1996). *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Seyki-Otu, A. (2019). *Left Universalism, Africentric Essays*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Sharpe, C. (2010). *Monstrous Untimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Simone A. (2004a) People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg. *Public Culture*, 16, pp. 407–429. Retrieved from: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/173743>
- Southworth, M. (2003). Measuring the Liveable city. *Built Environment*, 29(4), pp.343–354. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23288885?seq=1>
- Stelter, G.A. (1980). Urban Planning and Development in Upper Canada. *Urban History Review*, pp.143-155. Retrieved from: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1020703ar>
- Tomiak, J. (2016). Unsettling Ottawa: Settler colonialism, indigenous resistance, and the politics of scale. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 25(1), 8-21. Retrieved from: <https://cjur.uwinnipeg.ca/index.php/cjur/article/view/23>
- Tyner, J. A. (2007). Urban Revolution and the Spaces of Black Radicalism, in Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods (Eds.), *Black Geographies and the Politics of Space*. Between the Lines: Toronto.
- Walcott, R. (2016). *Queer Returns: Essays on Multiculturalism, Diaspora, and Black Studies*. London, Ontario, Canada: Insomniac Press.
- Walcott, R. and Abdillahi, I. (2019). *Black Life: Post-BLM and the Struggle for Freedom*. Winnipeg: ARP Books.
- Watkins, J. (2015). Spatial Imaginaries Research in Geography: Synergies, Tensions and New Directions. *Geography Compass*, 9(9), p.508-522. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/gec3.12228>

York University. (2020). *Christina Sharpe*. Faculty Profiles. Retrieved from:
<https://profiles.laps.yorku.ca/profiles/cesharpe/>