

Funk the Clock: Transgressing Time While Young, Prescient and Black

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I explore how racialized youth in urbanized space reckon with time. I specifically study how race, racialization and racism condition the time perspectives of black youth in urbanized space. I draw on data from thirty in-person interviews and ethnographic fieldwork conducted over the course of one year with youth at Run-a-Way – a shelter and outreach center for youth in the Twin Cities. I make the case that whiteness and white life prefigure time, thus denying the coevalness of racialized youth, particularly black youth. Thus, “time use” among racialized youth is a misnomer. Racialized youth are more likely to owe time than own it. In using time that does not belong to them, several black youth in this project detailed the way their “time use” is read as “time theft” and thus criminalized. Youth’s accounts suggest that racialized violence is responsible for significant time theft. In other words, racialized violence *takes* time. Racialized violence proved to be less of a life course transition and more of a *life course constant*. Despite the overrepresentation of white time as time itself, I show how racialized youth at Run-a-Way turn the tables on time, ensuring their temporalities were most culturally relevant and “up to date,” while casting whiteness into a “played-out” past. I make the case that urban ethnographic representations of racialized youth in poor urbanized space as “present oriented” elide their prescience. Because they choose not to entertain liberal futurities directed towards “freedoms” associated with whiteness and a “post racial era” did not make them present oriented. It made them prepared. In sum, my research forges new directions in the study of race and time by examining how time is racialized, how race is temporalized, and how racialization and racism condition youth’s perspectives on time.

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Introduction

To ask “What time is it?” is to orient one to time and space. The banality of this question should not excuse what are arguably serious sociological limitations. Rather than using an adjective (i.e. “what”), it may be more sociologically productive to use a determiner (e.g. “whose”). Asking “Whose time is it?” exposes the possibility that some may own time, while others can only owe it. Not only does the question help distinguish between time’s owners and borrowers, but it demands explanations for temporal exploitation and violence. What if time was not as communal as we may think? To what extent does possession of time require dispossession? Posing such a question taints time’s reputation as a universally and indivisibly shared concept. Fissures eventually emerge from time’s taint, revealing the possessors and dispossessed within existing temporal orders.

“Whose time is it?” is not only grammatically correct, but also empirically accurate. Reframing the question engenders possibilities to problematize what Michael Flaherty (1999) describes as temporal experience.¹ The singularity and indivisibility of “temporal experience” precludes analysis of the divisible – those rendered illegible and/or nonexistent within time. As an application of ethnographic and sociological insights, this dissertation aims to make what is most mundane about time matter by revealing what is hidden in plain sight.

¹ Flaherty is more concerned with agency, self-determination, autonomy, and a host of other terms signaling a potential to become effective neoliberal subjects and users of time. Flaherty emphasizes “temporal autonomy” as a means of modifying experiences with time, and in doing so legitimates the indivisible and universal quality of time itself. Ultimately, Flaherty exonerates time from the charges of modernity, the Enlightenment, and whiteness, all of which continue to harm racialized subjects.

In this project, I explore how racialized youth in urbanized space reckon with time. I specifically study how race, racialization and racism condition the time perspectives of youth in urbanized space. To address questions of measurement validity, more specifically conceptualization, I offer some clarity around language beginning with the title of this dissertation. A funk is perceptible through several senses. Some may *see* someone “in a funk” or a sad emotional state. Some may *smell* a funk or foul odor. “Funk” is also transmitted through sound. Funk is not only a genre of music, but it is a style (i.e. funky beat). Though the meaning of “funk” is contingent on time and space, it is located squarely within black culture.

Consider the introduction to “Make it Funky” (1971), by James Brown. During their jam session, Bobby Byrd asks James Brown what he is “gonna play now”; James Brown says, “Bobby, I don’t know but what’s it ever I play, it’s got to be funky.” “Funk” also represents a euphemism for “fuck.” Hence, to “funk with” someone is to tease or annoy them. Similarly, when things are “fucked up,” they are usually out of order. In *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013: 132) reference Frantz Fanon’s use of the term ‘*lyse*,’ lysis. Like Harney and Moten, I am interested in transforming the “call to order” into “a call to disorder, to complete lysis.” To funk with the clock is to resist the call to order, the call to capitalism, the schedule of white time, and the call to maintain what Wynter (2003: 271) calls “‘descriptive statements’ or governing master codes” supporting the “overrepresentation of Man as Human.” Many of the racialized youth who contributed to this project funk with time by refusing a call to order, synchronized to a clock that denies their coevalness.

By “racialized youth,” I am referring to persons typically classified as “youth of color.” The majority of youth I interview for this project identify as black, with the exception of one Native and one “Hispanic” youth. I prefer “racialized youth” over “youth of color” to avoid eliding a violent classification process that distinguishes between “humans,” “not quite humans,” and “nonhumans.” I do not avoid “youth of color” simply out of concern of euphemizing a dynamic, hybrid, and heterogeneous group of racially-marginalized persons. Rather, both “youth of color” and “people of color” signal an activated assemblage aware of broader forms of systemic violence, including white supremacy, settler colonialism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia.

What concerns me is the potential for “people of color” to flatten difference, in service of mutuality, equilibrium, equivalence, commensurability, and consistency. In such cases, employing “people of color” obscures the need for those disproportionately harmed to disproportionately benefit. Too great an emphasis on “people of color” conceals the way anti-blackness and colonization exceed conceptual containment within “discrimination” or even “racism.” As hauntings,² slavery and settler colonialism condition black and Indigenous persons’ life chances and chances at life. Here, I am making a distinction between life chances and chances at life. “Life chances” is a familiar term among sociologists seeking to illustrate structural inequalities between individuals and groups. Differential life chances is no longer a novel concept, but rather, common sense. What is less accepted is the impact of institutions (i.e. educational

² I would be remiss not to acknowledge the limitations of “hauntings” – a term that evokes the presence of something or someone from the past. However, throughout this dissertation, I make clear the past is always present for racialized, particularly black and Native, youth. My critique warrants further inquiry into the haunting capacity of the present.

enclosures, the criminal-legal system, police terror, low-wage work) reducing the chances at life of those within urbanized space.

I use “urbanized” rather than “urban” to attend to the ongoing construction of space. There exists a mutually-constitutive relationship between urbanized space and suburbanized space. In other words, the suburbs cannot exist without the many ghettos around the country and around the world. It is worth noting that “urban space” is just a few letters short of “suburban space.” “Urban space” ignores the ongoing and processual character of urbanization. The reification of “urban space” as such obscures systematic construction of the ghetto and suburbs through white suburbanization, blockbusting, block bombings,³ restrictive covenants, redlining, zoning laws and “urban renewal” or what James Baldwin calls “Negro removal.” In short, a compost of institutional artifice, private actions, and racialized policy catering to a white public yields arable terrain for the co-construction of “white habitus” (Bonilla-Silva 2010) within white habitats and nonwhite suffering in spaces not meant for living.

Because racialization is itself a value-making process (Martinot 2010; Melamed 2011; Weheliye 2014; Rodriguez 2015), the racialization of time reinforces a dichotomy of “deviance” (Coser and Coser 1963: 641) and decency, whereby white people reap rewards for remaining on (white) time and nonwhite people pay the price for remaining off it. Racialization involves more than what Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994: 82) describe as the institutionalization of particular groups into “a politically organized racial system.” Racialization also exceeds “the extension of racial meaning to a

³ I am specifically referring to the 1921 Greenwood Massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma. During the massacre, a white mob murdered as many as 300 black residents and bombed one of the most thriving black business sectors in the US at the time.

previously racially unclassified social relationship, social practice or group” (Omi and Winant 2014: 111). Racialization is a process of ontological ordering in which life-value is guaranteed for some, ascribed to a select few, and denied to others. Racialization is also relational. Thus, differential racialization occurs within an uneven biopolitical distribution, whereby specific categories of the human to gain value through the devaluation of others.

To better illustrate the “structure of racialization,” I draw on Steve Martinot’s conceptualization of racialization as a cultural structure—a structure of social categorizations of people. Racialization, according to Martinot (2010: 172) has “nothing to do with blood or the inheritance of appearance. It is a social status that is imposed on people through political definition.” Martinot goes on to identify three levels of social activity associated with racialization: (1) individual, (2) institutional, and (3) cultural. At the individual level, racialization involves what Frantz Fanon describes as “epidermalization” (Fanon 1952: xv)—the inscription of race on the body. It is a process of being “overdetermined from the outside” (Fanon 1952: 95). As Martinot (2010: 172) notes, racialization requires the construction of a threat in order to produce and protect the purity of whiteness. Once overdetermined as inferior racialized subject and thus a “threat,” racialized subjects are at an even greater risk of violence.

Racialization, however, is not limited to micro-level interactions. Martinot makes clear that racialization is part of the standard operating procedure of virtually all social institutions. Racialization has no fixed spatial, temporal, or institutional location.

Schools; hospitals; the criminal-legal system;⁴ poor, urbanized space; wealthy,

⁴ While this term is widely accepted in some anarcho-socialist literature, its conceptualization is largely left open to interpretation. However, I feel it effectively captures the perfunctory, technocratic, cold, and

suburbanized space; and the state are among the many institutions in which racialization resides.

Finally, at the cultural level racialization takes form in the “white para-political state, its periodic white vigilantism, the general support for police harassment and brutality against black and brown people, and support for U.S. interventionism” (Martinot 2010: 173). It is within the cultural level where ideology thrives. For example, the criminal-legal system maintains its status as a necessity, while criminalizing black and brown people and decriminalizing whites. At all three levels, racialization constitutes whiteness. In other words, white people need racialized others to know they are white, and thus not racialized.

Racialization is further complicated by Nandita Sharma’s (2015: 175) reference to “negatively racialized persons.” Though the term is left un-conceptualized, Sharma seems to suggest racialization’s role in constructing an ontological order through selective ascription of value and humanness. Though “negative” reinforces an absolute state of abjection, if left alone “racialization” possesses a universal application across all racialized groups. While “positive racialization” may sound absurd, differential racialization ensures some categories of the “human” gain value at the devaluation of others. “Negative racialization” attends to other factors ordering racial hierarchies including socioeconomic status and space. Based on self-identifying information⁵

impersonal nature of a system that remains not just devoid of “justice,” but antithetical to it. Because the criminal-legal system functions to decriminalize white supremacy, racialized violence and the perpetrators of both, it can never be a site of justice. When “justice” itself “produces and requires Black exclusion and death as normative” (James and Costa Vargas 2012: 193), it will always elude its own point of reference (i.e. black people).

⁵ In some cases, parents, guardians, social workers, and/or staff assigned youth’s racial and ethnic identities.

acquired during intake processes, I use the term “racialized youth” to refer to youth of color.

Embodying innocence, vulnerability, and boundless potential, children and youth are synonymous with future possibilities. Adults treat children as having the freedom to explore a world that promises protection and security. Investments in the future begin when we invest in children, or so they say. In short, “save the children” is also a call to save the future. The impetus behind this project does not rest in a shared belief that the “children are the future,” or even that “the future is the child.” What concerns me, rather, is who the child is not. In other words, who is not innocent, but rather found guilty before proven less guilty; who is not free to explore, without being charged with “walking up to no good”; who is not vulnerable, because they are already said to “look like an adult.” I am concerned with the children already relegated to an anti-future and thus, out and outside of time. These are the children deemed always already expendable within time. Teachers are more likely to fail these youth because they “aren’t going to amount to anything,” hence remain non-investments in the venture-capitalist future. Doctors are more likely to ignore these children’s symptoms because they “mature faster” than their peers, thus making them less susceptible to “childhood illness.” Police are more likely to kill these youth because they look like a “demon” with the strength of “Hulk Hogan.” I am concerned about those youth consistently warned that they will likely either end up dead or in jail. In short, I am concerned with those who exceed containment within the category of “youth” because the innocence, vulnerability and boundless potential of the Child function as exclusionary criteria.

In *No Future: Queer Theory and Death Drive*, Lee Edelman (2004: 3) describes the “Child” as the “perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention.” It is the innocence of the Child that “solicits our defense” (Edelman 2004: 2). What concerns Edelman is the potential of the Child to render the queer outside of time and thus the future. As Edelman (2004: 28) notes, “The sacralization of the Child thus necessitates the sacrifice of the queer.” As compelling as Edelman’s argument is, I am left wondering about the eligibility criteria required to access the category of the Child and whether all children are capable of “sacralization.” In other words, whose children are the future?

I argue that in prefiguring the Child as white, sociology is left with a narrow conception of youth development. Insofar as the Child is emblematic of futurity, the queer cannot exist (Edelman 2004). However, within one elision exists many more. What concerns me are those left unprotected and largely outside of the category of the Child. I am referring not only to racialized youth, but also queer and trans children of color. If, as Edelman argues (2004) the queer exemplifies a threat to “reproductive futurism” and the Child is “the obligatory token of futurity,” where and when does this leave racialized youth, particularly black queer and trans youth? My research attends to their experiences. For example, how do racialized youth fit into the “future,” when racialized and structural violence squeezes them out? How do racialized youth read themselves into the future, when the future is so illiterate that it equates “child” with whiteness? As I wrestle with these questions, I wrest the “Child” from the clutches of whiteness and “Man” (Wynter 2003), while demanding racialized youths’ coevalness in the study of space and time.

The intersection of race and time remains a largely unexplored topic within sociology, while explorations of the racialized temporalities of youth are nearly unprecedented. Because of this empirical void within sociology, an undertaking of this magnitude is most fruitful when engaging with a range of disciplines. Hence, in addition to sociology, this research is informed by a variety of fields including black studies, queer theory, ethnic studies, critical anthropology, cultural studies, American studies, critical geography, history, and English. I place these various disciplines in conversation to describe how time is racialized and how race is temporalized and how racialized violence shapes youth's perspectives on time. Johannes Fabian (1983: 74) refers to "temporalization" as "the various means a language has to express time relations."

...Semiotically, it designates the constitution of sign relations with temporal referents. Ideologically, temporalization has the effect of putting an object of discourse into a cosmological frame such that the temporal relation becomes central and topical (e.g. over and against spatial relations).

While not explicit in the excerpt above, temporalization is wrought with power relations and Fabian critiques anthropology's approach to locating its object within time. Sociology is also complicit in denying the coevalness (Fabian 1983: 31) of racialized objects in space and time. Fabian is specifically concerned with social scientists' refusal to allow "the other" or the exoticized object of social research to inhabit the same (modern) space and time as the researcher. By contrast, this work acknowledges the coevalness of racialized youth, while respecting the power of youth to defy the "here and now" in favor of what José Esteban Muñoz (2009) describes as a "then and there." The following section details the unique contributions I make to three sociological subfields: (1) the sociology of time, (2) urban ethnography, (3) the life course perspective. I build on key theories within each subfield in order to create a more

inclusive and sustainable theoretical scaffolding. Before building can begin, though, *disassembly is* required.

The sociology of time

Sociologists approach the study of time from several different angles. Some use time as an intervening variable between labor and capital (Marx 1867; Bourdieu 1963; Thompson 1967; O’Rand and Ellis 1974; Sirianni 1987; Thrift 1980; Nyland 1986; Negri 2003). Others privilege clock time over its subjective side situated in “social time” (Sorokin and Merton 1937; Coser and Coser 1963; Schwartz 1975; Lewis and Weigart 1981; Jaques 1982; Glassner 1982; Merton 1984; Blanka and Filipec 1986; Elias 1992; Aminzade 1992; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Durkheim 2001; Zerubavel 2003). Still others consider how social location shapes future orientations and “temporal perspectives” (Coser and Coser 1963; Glassner 1982; Merton 1984).

Social time is a product of individual and group relations and thus differs from clock time. Calibrated to sociality as opposed to chronology, social time expands the realm of “temporal experience” (Flaherty 1999). Émile Durkheim, for example (2001: 12), distinguishes between “the complex of sensations and images that serve to orient us in duration and the category of time” and social time—qualitatively different interpretations of time based on shared group beliefs. Similarly, the Greek notions of *chronos* and *kairós* share a similarly distinct relationship. *Chronos* is most commonly associated with clock time, while *kairós* reflects temporal experience.

Despite the sociological contributions of “social time,” scholars of time have yet to consider who can claim access to the “social.” Neither have they considered the extent to which the “social” is racialized. Is time simply applied as a universal, indivisible

variable orienting our lives equally? How do sociologists attend to the role of racialization and racism in conditioning youth's time perspectives? Presenting a racial critique of time itself opens up epistemological space to explore what Pierre Bourdieu (1997: 227-8) calls "temporal power"—"power to perpetuate or transform the distributions of various forms of capital by maintaining or transforming the principles of redistribution."

"Temporal power" is inextricably linked to racial power and what Michael Hanchard calls "racial time." Hanchard (1999: 253) argues that racial time thrives off the power relations between the racially dominant and subordinate. Racial time troubles "social time" through an analysis of power relations between the racially subordinate and racially dominant. To the extent that "social time" requires exploitation and extraction, all social time is racial time. "Unequal temporal access to institutions, goods, services, resources, power and knowledge," guarantee that the racially dominant will keep pace with time, while the racially subordinate will lag behind (Hanchard 1999: 253). In short, "social time" was and still is racial time.

Not only is all time "racial time," but according to Charles Mills, time is also white. "White time" Mills (2014: 7) represents a "'sociomental' representation of temporality shaped by the interests and experience of the White 'mnemonic community'" (Mills 2014: 27). White time, like racial time, requires dispossession of the already dispossessed. Mills also makes the case that, as a social construct, race cannot be divorced from the social. "Race does not ontologically preexist the social; race is ontologically dependent on the social" (Mills 2014: 36). Just as race is dependent on social construction, racial time requires the "representational production of white time"

(Mills 2014: 29) by the social. “White time” and “racial time” both suggest that “social time” is perhaps more anti-social. In offering unconditional deference to white time, sociologists have effectively denied the coevalness of race, racialization and racism.

Urban sociology and urban ethnography

Through interpretation of the ideas, worldviews, and experiences of marginalized populations and subcultures, ethnography serves as a useful tool to help make what is most mundane matter. Urban ethnography in particular makes significant gains in investigating how different dimensions of inequality condition the way racialized persons understand their lives in relation to broader social structures. Researchers in this subfield immerse themselves in complex social settings to show how particular groups make sense of their racial realities. Despite its attempt to acknowledge what is most taken for granted, urban ethnography still neglects one of the most banal dimensions of social life—time.

Within most urban ethnographic research in sociology, temporality is an important, yet neglected, area of study. Rather than treat time as a product of what Fabian (1983: xl) calls the “political economy of relations between individuals, class and nations,” urban ethnographers legitimate time as an indivisible and universal concept. In depoliticizing the “Politics of Time” (Fabian 1983: xl), urban ethnographers ignore what it means for racialized people to use a time that does not belong to them – namely white time. Similarly, urban ethnography lacks an appreciation of the possibility for people to be used by, as opposed to use, time. In turn, urban ethnographers privilege future orientations, while castigating those living in the “here and now.” Esteeming particular

groups as effective managers of time, however, comes at the devaluation of alternative temporal orientations under the ethnographic ruse of “culture.”

Urbanized space represents the locus of culture-of-poverty arguments. Urban sociologists suggest that families living in poor, urbanized space reproduce an intergenerational transmission of maladaptive values, beliefs, and cultural repertoires (Lewis 1961; Moynihan 1965; Wilson 1987). Urban ethnographic research suggests that poverty structures temporal orientations in adverse and unproductive ways, especially among racialized youth (Wilson 1987; Burton et al. 1996; Anderson 1999). Racialized youth in urbanized space become the target of a sociological spurn for remaining preoccupied with the “present” (Willis 1977; Sánchez-Jankowski 1991; Kotlowitz 1991; Wacquant 1993; Burton et al. 1996; Anderson 1999; Harris, Duncan and Boisjoly 2002; Young 2004; MacLeod 2009). Both urban sociologists and urban ethnographers deny racialized youth the capacity to think for the future because of the instability of their present. The constructions of such “imagined geographies” (Said 1979: 52) naturalize the distinction between modern and pre-modern space, despite supposedly occupying a similar time. Consequently, urbanized space becomes “empty,” “wild,” and/or “backwards.”

In its absorption of the immediacy of everyday life, ethnography tends to limit itself to an analysis of the present or what Fabian (1983: 80) calls the “ethnographic present.” According to Fabian (1983: 81), “...the present tense ‘freezes’ a society at the time of observation; at worst, it contains assumptions about the repetitiveness, predictability and conservatism of primitives.” The study of the racialized temporalities of youth, however, requires an engagement with more fluid conceptions of time.

Engagement with urban sociology and urban ethnography does not obviate the need for departure. Hence, my research challenges conventional representations of poor, urbanized space. Rather than understanding urbanized spaces as hegemonic sites of social reproduction, precarity and inequality, my research places a greater emphasis on the role of “racialized social systems” (Bonilla-Silva 1997) including education, employment, and the criminal-legal system, in making life uncertain. In an ethnography of the political process of waiting for medical care in Argentina, Javier Auyero (2012: 82) notes, “Subjective uncertainty finds its roots in objective unpredictability.” In short, the state is largely responsible for constructing uncertainty – uncertainty that is transmuted into desperation, necessitating the certainty of state surveillance, repression and violence in poor communities of color. Conceptualizing uncertainty as a product of structural violence as opposed to “cultural repertoires” (Wilson 1987) yields new possibilities for analyzing time and temporal orientations within urbanized space.

Unlike previous urban ethnography with a greater focus on micro-level interactions, this research uses time as a central analytical category. In contrast to ethnographers focusing on the relationship between labor and time (Willis 1977; Newman 1999), time use (Lareau 2011), or temporal orientations (Anderson 1999; MacLeod 2009; Young 2004), this research attends to the racial dimensions of time itself. If sociology prides itself on attempting to “make the familiar strange,” then ethnography’s construction of “the Other” engenders the prospect of “making the strange familiar.” This research is deeply sympathetic to both these aims, which is why I aim to make what is most familiar to sociologists (i.e. white time) strange.

In revealing the racial character of time itself, I complicate already complex stories of the young and racialized. Race, racialization, and racism condition subjective perceptions of life chances as well the “objective” opportunity structures. The interstices of inequality makes analyses of race a multilayered process. Scholars expand the conceptual capacity of race through intersectional analyses of gender and class (Stack 1974; Crenshaw 1990; Collins 2000; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Miller 2008; Pattillo 2008; Ritchie 2017). Yet there remain ways to further complicate the lived experiences of racialized youth.

Just as women of color feminists have challenged racialized subordination within masculinity (e.g. blackness as male), temporal analyses must attend to the specific ways time is gendered. An intersectional analysis of time helps to de-universalize existing conceptions of time. Both black feminists (Alexander 2005; McKittrick 2006; Weheliye 2014; Sharpe 2016) and queer of color theorists (Ferguson 2004; Wright 2004; Muñoz 2009; Keeling 2019) share reservations over progress narratives that require the elision of black people, Indigenous persons, and people of color, including queer and trans people of color. Those marginalized along the lines of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and citizenship recognize that time is not strictly linear. Rather, the presence of the past, the oppressive present, and foreclosed futures requires imagination of and experimentation with new, often nonlinear, spacetimes. As Michelle Wright writes,

Epiphenomenal time understands one spacetime: the moment of the now, through which we imagine the past and also move into the future possibilities (walking, thinking, talking.”...once located in the now on that linear timeline, the moment is freed for exploring a broad variety of intersecting spacetimes for Blackness, some of which contradict interpellations that make sense in other moments. Linear progress narratives are, as it were, “allergic” to contradictory interpellations, almost forcefully expelling them from discourse, especially when they fail to cohere to the cause-and-effect dynamic that drives their spacetime.

Because they cannot interpellate dimensions of Blackness that offer nonlinear or nonprogressive interpretations...forcing nonprogressive narratives into linear narrative frameworks will cause a qualitative collapse of Blackness. Rather than capturing the full multidimensionality of Blackness, linear spacetime generates paradoxes that manifest through failed interpellation, or qualitative collapse, which can create and either/or Blackness according to which one must choose one interpretation over the other to reposition Blackness as a linear spacetime (Wright 2015: 145-6).

By not only asking what is blackness, but “where and when is blackness,”

Wright expands the possibility of interpellating Blackness outside of progress narratives that inevitably require negation within an already negated category. Intersectional spacetimes make possible the recognition that within progress narratives exists violence – a violence that equates blackness with maleness and femininity or womanhood with whiteness (hooks 1981; King 1988 Wright 2004). As Deborah King (1988: 45) notes, “It is mistakenly taken for granted that either there is no difference in being black and female from being generically black (i.e. male) or generically female (i.e. white).” In short, racial realities cannot be divorced from gendered realities. Looking at either as separate perpetuates additive models of social difference which are ultimately anti-intersectional. To “bring race into the conversation” is not license to silence other instruments (gender, sexuality, class, ability) playing within the orchestra of oppression. Intersectional analysis behooves scholars to acknowledge how various forms of social difference work in concert with one another to produce and reproduce violence. It is no surprise those whose lives lie at simultaneous, cumulative and multiplicative intersections of oppressions recognize the exigent need to commit to a more just future through anti-oppressive work in the present.

Urban ethnography has historically privileged the experiences of young men, particularly young black and Latino men in urbanized space (Liebow 1967; Hannerz

1969; Anderson 1990; Sánchez-Jankowski 1991; Kotlowitz 1991; Duneier 1992; Bourgois 2003; Young 2004; MacLeod 2009; Harding 2009; Rios 2011). Calling for more inclusive analyses of race, a host of sociologists and criminologists direct their attention to issues of poverty (Stack 1974), pregnancy and motherhood (Geronimus 1996; Edin and Kefalas 2005), low-wage work in the inner city (Newman 1999), adolescent development (Burton, Obeidallah and Allison 1996), and gender violence (Miller 2008). Despite its breadth and depth, this subset of urban sociology lacks an intersectional analysis of time as a construct wrought with simultaneous and multiplicative power relations.

Wanting of a serious critique of temporality, urban ethnographic research in sociology privileges linear, androcentric time, while ignoring the many contributions within feminist studies, queer theory and queer of color critique (Alexander 2005; McClintock 1995; Forman and Sowton 1989; Halberstam 2005; Muñoz 2009; Keeling 2019). The neglect of time as both a gendered, sexualized and racial construct in sociology is no coincidence. To present time in such terms threatens its status as an indivisible and universal element. Sociologists generally, and urban ethnographers in particular, must begin to reckon with what Bourdieu (1997) calls the “imperialism of the universal.” In other words, time is not a one-size-fits-all concept. Through meaningful engagement with women of color feminist theories and queer (of color) critiques, this research resists overthrow by the “universal,” while attending to particulars of race, racialization and racism.

Unlike many urban ethnographers, my research does not privilege androcentric conceptions of time or race. In other words, I attempt to deconstruct both racialized

marginality and time as male, by attending to the lived realities of young women, trans girls, and femmes of color. My focus on the role of race, racialization and racism as important factors conditioning the time perspectives of youth is not lost within an intersectional approach. On the contrary, girls, including queer and trans girls of color, demonstrate the importance of attending to simultaneity, multiplicity and cumulation in studies of inequality. In making visible the connections between race, gender, sexuality and class, there emerge new avenues for studying how racialized youth reckon with time. The need to explore the temporalities of racialized youth becomes more exigent given that most lead lives along largely uncharted territory.

The life course perspective

As a paradigm oriented to processes of change and continuity over time, the life course perspective evolved in response to early social and intellectual transformations of the early 20th century. Remaining true to its Chicago School lineage, the life course perspective hones in on “the multiple problems of a rapidly changing society-waves of immigrants to cities, high rates of delinquency and crime, and family disorganization” (Elder 1985: 24). The life course perspective seeks to explain correlations between particular events and subsequent pathways in the life course. Compared to other theories on the life cycle, the life course perspective appreciates the intersection between biography and history in shaping human development (Elder et al. 2004; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). In other words, the life course perspective seeks to distinguish itself from other theories of human development by acknowledging the role of social structure.

My research on racialized temporality departs from conventional perspectives on the life course in a few different ways. First, this research deviates from conventional theories on the life course in rethinking the relationship between transitions and trajectories. Early life course transitions, according to Shanahan and Macmillan (2008: 81), “can have lifelong implications because of behavioral consequences that set in motion cumulative advantages and disadvantages, with radiating implications for other domains.” Transitions that lead to a “dramatic change” in life, such as “desistance from criminal activity” are what life course scholars refer to as “turning points” (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008: 82-3). Trajectories, by contrast, “provide a dynamic view of behavior and achievements, typically over the life span” (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008: 78). Commonly referenced life course trajectories include educational and career paths, marriage, and/or parenthood.

In short, the life course perspective seeks to explain current and future behavioral patterns (i.e. trajectories) by analyzing earlier life events (i.e. transitions). Even in its efforts to think sociologically by highlighting the relationship between the individual and society, the life course perspective privileges explanatory hypotheses:

Research on the life course must better explore how an individual’s present has been shaped by the past, and how an individual’s anticipated future is shaped by both the past and the present, especially from a subjective standpoint (Settersten 1999: 155).

Explanation, while compatible with whiteness and linear logic, is not the goal of this research. As a second point of critique, I argue the life course perspective cannot attend to the everyday impacts of racialization and racism for racialized youth in urbanized space. I make the case that racialized violence belies the theoretical underpinnings of the life course perspective. Racialized violence exceeds the conceptual

capacity of life course transitions and trajectories precisely because it is not a singular event over the life course, but an ongoing and constantly unfolding process. In other words, racialized violence is not a life course transition or trajectory, but a *life course constant*.

The interdependent (i.e. cause-effect) relationship between transitions and trajectories is highly compatible within linear logic and linear time and a third point of critique. Similarly, linear time is predicated on “temporal order,” ensuring transitions typically precede trajectories. However, time in the life course is not strictly linear (Settersten 1999). A third objective of this research, then, is to highlight the way in which the life courses of racialized youth are structured according to nonlinear time.

My fourth point of concern deals with the tension between timing as opposed to time (Elder 1985; Neugarten 1968; Settersten 1999; Brückner and Mayer 2005; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). The life course perspective takes pride in its predictive power with respect to the relationship between transitions and trajectories. The timing of transitions are said to matter as much as the type when seeking to make sense of life course trajectories. Studying when a turning point or transition occurs, however, is very different than an analysis of the system used to measure timing itself. The contemporary life course is less structured in terms of the order of transitions and trajectories (Arnett 2000). The leisurely pace at which many life courses now unfold, however, privileges those privileged along the lines of race, class and gender (Furstenberg 2008; Hartmann and Swartz 2007). Though the principle of “time and place” (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008; Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2004) accounts for the role of historical

circumstances and contexts in shaping transitions and trajectories, life course scholars privilege timing, while ignoring the question of whether time is itself racialized.

My fifth and final point critiques the life course perspective's white, middle-class orientation. Privileging white logic and white life as the central referent for all racialized groups results in biased interpretations of what constitutes transitions and trajectories. Prefiguring white time and white life as key metrics for the life course warrants research on racialized persons. For example, racialization and racialized violence cannot be contained in either transitions or trajectories because neither concept can fully attend to the routinized and perpetual cycle of harm against racialized people. Just as racialization is required to constitute white life, it is essential for designing the white life course.

I draw on these three distinct sociological subfields not because I am invested in the possibility of greater collaboration between them. As already demonstrated, the sociology of time, urban sociology, urban ethnography, and the life course perspective have difficulty working with (racialized) others. Rather, I am committed to revealing absences within each subfield, while establishing new epistemological foundations within a time not synchronized to whiteness and a space inclusive of the dysselected. Having offered a preview of my larger critiques of central paradigms within each subfield, I now describe the tools and strategies used to begin the disassembly process.

Data and Methods

Exploring the temporalities of racialized youth in urbanized space requires the use of complementary research methods. I rely primarily on qualitative methods to explore the temporalities of racialized youth as they exceed containment within predefined response categories and numeric values. While time is itself a quantifiable

concept, racialized subjectivities and temporal perspectives are not as easily measurable. Ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews, when used effectively, fill several voids within quantitative research. First, exploring how racialized youth reckon with time through ethnography and in-depth interviews expands the possibility of de-naturalizing time as a universal concept. In this research, racialized youth described what it means to both “use” and be used by white time. Quantitative analyses preclude such nuanced analysis precisely because scholars treat time as a neoliberal universalism, accessible to all, yet individually managed according to racially-gendered-capitalist standards of efficiency and productivity.

Second, participant observation and in-depth interviewing further destabilize rigid conceptions of time through greater attention to inequality and systemic oppression. Many racialized youth, and black youth in particular, are acutely aware of the demand to work twice as hard as their white counterparts to be half as good. Nonwhite youth recognize that working twice as hard to be half as good means that they will inevitably have less time than their white counterparts. Quantitative analyses of time lack the methodological capacity to account for such disparate assessments of time and its availability because whiteness, racialization, and racism are treated at best as control variables and, at worst, unaccounted for altogether. However, because their effects *constantly* condition the experiences of racialized subjects, whiteness and racialized violence cannot be held “constant.”

Third, ethnographic observation and interviews reveal the incommensurability between the experiences of racialized youth and time-use studies. For example, the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) lacks any adequate measures of either racialization

or racism to consider how such social processes infringe on the everyday schedules of racialized youth. Within time-use studies, researchers are effective in “controlling for race,” but not racism. What does it mean though to use time that does not belong to you? It means, as I argue in Chapter 2, that your “time use” will be read as “time theft,” and thus criminalized. Racialized youth in poor, urbanized space are more likely to *owe* than *own* time. Racialization and racism exceed the conceptual capacity of “time diaries” commonly used in youth time-use studies. The youth I worked with recounted multiple and often similar instances of racialized violence, and many viewed the relationship between time and racism as a subtractive one. In other words, the labor involved in processing racialized violence *takes* time. If the ATUS cannot account for the time youth spend processing acts of racialization or racism, then it is inevitably capturing but a fraction of this group’s “time use.”

Run-a-Way

The reckoning with and wrecking of time I observed took place at Run-a-Way,⁶ a multi-service center in the Twin Cities providing support to youth in crisis.⁷ I began working as a volunteer with Run-a-Way in December 2014. Run-a-Way’s targeted age group is youth ages 10–17. Sixty-seven percent of youth served are between the ages of 15–17. Thirty percent are between 12 and 14. Two percent are between ages 10 and 12 and 1% is age 18. While the white–nonwhite ratio is fairly equivalent among staff,

⁶ “Run-a-Way” is a pseudonym.

⁷ Youth came to Run-a-Way for a variety of reasons, including homelessness, family disputes, and diversion from the juvenile detention. Some youth entered the program because they “needed a break” from their parents. Others were brought by social workers and used Run-a-Way as an interim placement between moves to other systems of care (e.g. foster home, group home). The majority of youth entered the program because of conflict at home. Parents and youth participated in family counseling, while working towards “family reunification.”

volunteers and interns, most youth served are nonwhite, with a significant overrepresentation of black/African American youth. The racial and ethnic demographics of youth are as follows: 50% black/African American; 22% white; 16% “bi-racial”; 4% Native American; 2% Hispanic; 2% Asian; and 4% Other. Girls have a slight majority (55%) over boys (44%) at Run-a-Way. The overrepresentation of queer and trans youth in homeless programs was consistent with Run-a-Way’s demographics.⁸ In 2018, Run-a-Way served 833 youth (15% of total number of youth served) who identified as LGBTQ. Among its many services, Run-a-Way offers access to a 24-hour crisis hotline, an emergency shelter program for youth ages 10–17, a transitional living program for 16- and 17-year-olds, individual and family counseling, community education and outreach, and weekly support groups for boys, girls, and queer and trans youth. Each service supports Run-a-Way’s larger mission to provide a “brighter, safer, and more stable future” for youth marginalized along the lines of race, gender, class, sexuality and ability.

Run-a-Way is located in a bustling, commercial district in the Twin Cities comprised of mostly white yuppies, hipsters, college students, and older, white home owners. All of Run-a-Way’s services are housed in a 3-story brick building. I spent the majority of my time at Run-a-Way in the emergency shelter program, located on the second floor. The third floor houses the independent living program, the kitchen, and a small cafeteria, as well as an annex designated for additional office space. Most office

⁸ According to the 2018 Minnesota Homeless Study Fact Sheet created by Wilder Research 2018, “Twenty-two percent of youth (age 24 and younger) and 10% of adults (18 and older) experiencing homelessness identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ).” <http://mnhomeless.org/minnesota-homeless-study/reports-and-fact-sheets/2018/2018-homeless-characteristics-fact-sheet-5-19.pdf>

space, including the case management office, the health clinic/medicine room, individual and family therapists, as well as several rooms used to conduct intakes with new youth, can be found on the ground floor. The basement holds a conference room, which functions as an activity space in the evening. As part of their contractual agreements, several local youth-based organizations visit Run-a-Way to facilitate weekly workshops and activities. The conference room has hosted dogs for pet therapy, graffiti artists, performance artists, meditation groups, and the occasional video game tournament. The basement also houses a makeshift gym, with dilapidated machines that most youth were reluctant to use out of fear of injury. By far, the most popular places in the basement are the donation closet and the food pantry. The donation closet is filled with hygiene products, linens, bedding, and several shelves of new and used clothes. In warmer weather, youth spent recreation time in the backyard, where they had the option of playing basketball using a portable and adjustable hoop on a small concrete patio that matched the dimensions of two parking spaces. Those that opted out usually spent time hanging out together at picnic tables on a similarly sized area of grass. When in the program, youth made the rounds through all of these spaces, but spent most of their time on either the second or third floor.

Racialized youth at Run-a-Way

The racialization of time works to enhance the temporal worth of some, while forbidding others a place and space in time. Most of the youth I interviewed at Run-a-Way came from poor urbanized communities – space often denied coevalness within modernity and white time. While this research is based on my work with over one hundred youth from December 2014–January 2016, most data comes from formal

interviews conducted with just under one third (i.e. thirty) of this total population, including twenty-one African American/Black youth, seven mixed race youth⁹, one Native youth, and one youth who identified as “Hispanic.” The sample included fourteen boys, thirteen girls, two transgender youth, and one non-binary youth. Youth ranged in age from 13–18. The majority were enrolled in high school or an alternative high school program. Five youth were not enrolled in any formal education program at the time of the interview. Out of the 25 youth enrolled in school, 23 were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Interview structure

Regardless of whether you are a caseworker, teacher, doctor, or other professional, interviewing youth is not an easily adaptable skill. My experience as a former youthworker and social worker reminded me that many youth have legitimate reasons to remain tightlipped around adults. While my interview schedule did not include many sensitive questions related to family or personal experiences with various forms of trauma, an abstract topic like time is not a popular conversation starter. However, the lack of empirical evidence about the temporalities of racialized youth is precisely why this research is not only warranted, but desperately needed.

Interviews presented the opportunity for youth to elaborate on what is so often obscured in quantitative research methods, namely the incommensurability between white and nonwhite experiences and the false equivalence between control variables and racialized reality. Youth were eager for the opportunity to make legible experiences routinely rendered illegible within quantitative data, such as racialized bias in schools or

⁹ The majority of mixed-race youth reported having one black and one white parent.

at Run-a-Way, whiteness, and police violence. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes, with most averaging about 1 hour. With permission from each youth, all interviews were audio-recorded. The interview schedule contained a series of questions related to (1) opportunity structures; (2) perceptions of time and space; (3) race, racialization and racism; and (4) life course transitions and trajectories. In return for their participation, each youth received a \$10 gift card. At the end of each interview, youth completed a one-page sheet with several demographic questions related to race, ethnicity, school, and eligibility for free or reduced lunch at school.

Ethnographic observation

The multiple valences of youth sociality¹⁰ made it difficult to construct any single youth as a clear and coherent subject. Pursuing such levels of intelligibility is not only antithetical to the multiplicity of youth development, but it also undermines my central contribution of not only dislocating linear logic, but also transgressing linear (white) time. Linear logic, like linear time, leaves little room for detours, setbacks, U-turns, and other contradictions that illustrate a more nonlinear and ambiguous picture. Drawing on Renato Rosaldo's (1989: 93) notion of "processual analysis," I resist frameworks that monopolize the "truth" and challenge essentialized claims that preclude "heterogeneity, hybridity and multiplicity" (Lowe 1991).

Rather than feed into the empirical obsession to construct coherent and intelligible understandings of racialized temporality, I situate my participant observation within the subfield of "cubist ethnography" (Auyero and Swistun 2009). Within cubist

¹⁰ I use George Herbert Mead's (1932: 27) definition of "sociality" offered in *Philosophy of the Present*. According to Mead, sociality is the "process of readjustment in which an object maintains itself in each system, through being also in the other."

ethnography “the essence of an object is captured only by showing it simultaneously from multiple points of view” (Auyero and Swistun 2009: 16). Attempting to understand how racialized youth reckon with time requires a similar willingness to embrace the heterogeneity, inconsistencies and contradictions of temporality.

A significant amount of my time at Run-a-Way was spent observing how the youth spend *their* time. I volunteered four days a week for approximately six hours a day. I spent much of my initial ethnographic research observing youth’s comportment to personal and programmatic schedules. I paid close attention to their punctuality, comparing their physical deportment in meetings with staff to their demeanor with peers. Jottings helped capture how youth responded to programmatic benchmarks such as chores, job applications, medical appointments, I spent approximately 3–4 hours translating jottings into ethnographic fieldnotes after each shift at Run-a-Way. The combination of research methods, procedures, and sampling strategy produced rich findings and contributions to the sociology of time, urban ethnography and the life course perspective.

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters, each offering independent interventions, but collectively presenting opportunities for a paradigmatic shift toward a new sociology of time. In Chapter 1, I illustrate how time is racialized and race is temporalized by troubling normative conceptions of time within classical and contemporary sociology. The “social” in “social time,” I argue, belies unity, equivalence, equilibrium, mutuality and any possibility of creating a time shared by all. Instead, white time prefigures social time. In turn, social time requires the systemic marginalization of racialized subjects from the existing temporal order and the social

itself. I introduce the concept of “CP Time” (Colored People’s Time) as way black people and other racialized persons resist white time, while creating an internally-functional metric to cope with the timelessness of racialized violence. CP Time aids black people and other racialized persons in their efforts to contend with “racialized social systems” (Bonilla-Silva 1997) that take *their* time. In Chapter 2, I ask what it means for racialized youth to use a time that does not belong to them. It means that their “time use” will be read as “time theft,” and thus criminalized. For racialized youth in poor, urbanized space, it means they are more likely to *owe* than *own* time. Several youth provided examples of how their “time use” was read as “time theft” and thus criminalized. Charges of “time theft” ranged from “walking up to no good” to “fitting the description.” Storeowners, the police, as well as deputized whites charged with carrying out the mandates of racial terror all participated in stealing racialized youth’s time. I argue that racialized violence not only “takes time” (i.e. time required to process racialized violence), but in structural form routinely *takes* (i.e. steal) time away from an already temporally-dispossessed group. In the transition to Chapter 3, I attend to the other dimension of time – space. I take on the role of detour guide helping readers navigate the unceded, Indigenous territory of “Mnisota” (Dakota Sioux name for “Minnesota”). The history of Minnesota is one of violated treaties, conquest, genocide, and racial capitalism. Racialized violence, however, is never past, but present. Hence, I explore how systematic neglect, underdevelopment, and divestment of majority black communities in the Twin Cities is key to the construction of what 15-year-old Devon¹¹ describes as a “maybe environment.” In Chapter 4, I present a racial critique of the life

¹¹ All names, including this one, have been changed and replaced by pseudonyms.

course perspective and the overrepresentation of white time as the metric for the life course. I explain why racialization and racism exceed the conceptual capacity of transitions and trajectories and instead function as *life course constants* for racialized youth. Prepared to begin a long and hard road filled with roadblocks at every conceivable level of opportunity, racialized youth in urbanized space learn various shortcuts and detours along the life course. Based on their perceptions of the systemic delays in legitimate opportunities and having to work twice as hard to be half as good, racialized youth in urbanized space sought expedited pathways to make money. Being more prescient than “present oriented,” some youth revised their life course trajectories according to the insurgent time of the “fast life.” Chapter 5 investigates how racialized youth interpret time in relation to whiteness and their assessments of white youth. Despite the temporal inequalities between them and their white counterparts, youth at Run-a-Way discovered ways to invert the terms of temporality to ensure that their culture was always most relevant and “up to date.” Although whiteness is linked to modernity and that which is future oriented, racialized youth viewed their white counterparts as behind time, lame, or just plain “wack” (uncool). In Chapter 6, I make the case that urban ethnographic representations of racialized youth in poor urbanized space as “present oriented” elide their prescience. Having a preview of the multiplicative forms of oppression yet to come over the life course, racialized youth retain a unique ability to foretell their futures. With limited life chances and limited chances at life, youth at Run-a-Way saw the future as fugitive. It is, then, not as though racialized youth have not thought about the future. It is precisely because youth have cogitated so deeply over their futures that they reject what is constantly on the run—“equal opportunity”

within a highly unequal world. Because they choose not to entertain liberal futurities directed towards “freedoms” associated with whiteness and a “post racial era” does not make them present oriented. It makes them prepared. In sum, my research forges new directions in the study of race and time by examining how time is racialized, how race is temporalized, and how racialization and racism condition youth’s perspectives on time. Interpreting time as an iterative process incapable of being isolated to a finite past, present, or future allows racialized youth to construct their own spatial imaginaries where they can read themselves in answers to “Whose time is it?” by responding “It’s *me* o’clock.”

Chapter 1: Once Upon a White Time

Introduction: Whose time is it?

Within the sociology of time, the overrepresentation of white time¹² as time itself exceeds the problem of “measurement error.” Because, as Barbara Fields (2001: 53) notes, “whiteness leads to no conclusions it does not begin with as assumptions,” white time is simultaneously *telos* and *logos*. In other words, it represents an answer planted in the question; a conclusion rooted in an introduction; the punch line in the joke. How, then, do we take sociology of time scholarship seriously?

It is inaccurate and irresponsible to ask, “What is time?” or even “What time is it? More precise lines of inquiry are required. For example, how is time racialized? How is race temporalized? Who is legible within time? Who can claim ownership over time? Who can only *owe* time? What happens when you use time that doesn’t belong to you? What happens when your “time use” is read as time theft? How does time heal the same wounds it is complicit in creating? Is it possible to account for the time expended to process acts of racialized violence? Who benefits from such processing time? Who is harmed by it? What is the use in being future oriented when violent pasts are always present? What forms of time exist beyond a time that is always right for white and whiteness and wrong for the racialized and rightless?

¹² Time is a racial, gendered, and capitalist construct that precludes the “coevalness” (Fabian 1983) of Indigenous people, black people, and other racialized subjects. White time is synchronized to white life and asynchronized to nonwhite life. Hence, white people maintain a “possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz 2006) and time, while nonwhite people can only owe rather than own time. White time supports the construction of white people, mostly male/masculine identified, and whiteness as modern, civilized, and future oriented, while marking racialized subjects as backwards, premodern, and Other. Charles Mills (2014) describes “white time” as a product of the exploitation and extraction of nonwhite life.

To attend to these questions, I set out to study how racialized youth in urbanized space reckon with time. My aim, however, is not to help an “underrepresented category” go from dysselected to selected within the sociology of time.¹³ It is not as though the sociology of time underrepresents racialized youth. It is that white time itself precludes their selection as modern subjects. Hence, this project is as much about wrecking as it is about reckoning. I specifically seek to “catch wreck” on the mutually-constitutive relationship between a sociology of time and “white solipsism” (Rich 1979).

Without critically questioning the prefiguring of time as white, sociologists obtain license to treat time as an undervalued and underutilized factor in social research. To “make amends” for sociology’s dismissive stance towards time, the keepers of the canon suggest that (white) time is in crisis and in need of recuperation, resuscitation and re-centering.

The dominant research paradigm has been one favouring ‘slice-through-time’ investigations, and in particular studies whose conclusions are based on one-shot statistical correlations. In short, time has tended to be excluded as an explanatory variable, or else introduced only in post hoc justification (Hassard 1990: 1).

In bemoaning time’s exclusion as an explanatory variable, Hassard effectively makes an always already overrepresented appear underrepresented and thus, worthy of recognition. In other words, despite being a central reference category to make sense of time, whiteness and (white) time are supposedly at risk of empirical neglect and in need

¹³ The transition from the category of dysselected to selected comes with a variety of risks. For example, even when subjective experiences with racialized violence become more legible through scientific study, there exists the potential for further harm towards racialized people. For example, the overwhelming amount of research on the consequences of the prison industrial complex diminishes the pervasiveness of the problem, while also rendering invisible the routinized violence against those apparently missed by “reform efforts.”

of protection. Without serious reflexion¹⁴ over the “possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz 2006) and white time, sociologists increase the likelihood of creating larger empirical voids than those they attempt to fill. What are the implications of the keepers of the sociological canon defining “marginalized” or neglected areas of research? Because privilege is so easily ignored and actively denied by those possessing it, sociologists of time cannot delineate the margins they create. Calling attention to the “marginalization” of time in sociology should not result in systemic neglect of those marginalized by and rendered invisible within time itself (Said 1979; McClintock 1995; Hanchard 1999; Johnson 2000; Hartman 2002; Alexander 2005; Gilroy 1993; Wright 2004; Wildcat 2005; Halberstam 2005; Manzo 2006; Bhabha 2009; Wildcat 2005; Wilderson 2014; Warren 2016).

The study of “social time” (Sorokin and Merton 1937; Coser and Coser 1963; Schwartz 1975; Lewis and Weigart: 1981; Jaques 1982; Glassner 1982; Merton 1984; Blanka and Filipec 1986; Elias 1992; Aminzade 1992; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Durkheim 2001; Zerubavel 2003) fulfills important dimensions of “the sociological imagination” by linking individual experiences to broader social structures. Émile Durkheim, for example (2001: 12), distinguishes between “the complex of sensations and images that serve to orient us in duration and the category of time” and social time¹⁵—qualitatively different interpretations of time based on shared group beliefs.

¹⁴ In *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian (1983: 91) expresses a preference for “reflexion” over reflection. Reflexion is a product of reflexivity which itself derives from memory and an appreciation of the way our subjectivity and social location informs our research. In contrast, reflection tends to reproduce observations as objective fact rather than understanding the role of the Self in constructing the Other.

¹⁵ Antonio Negri makes a similar distinction between “internal” and “external time.” “It then becomes possible to grasp the relation between *external time* (as the time of composition) and *internal time* (as the human time of the subjects that compose it)” (Negri 2003: 77).

Durkheim's distinction between modern time based on clocks and calendars and "social time" invokes the Greek notions of *chronos* and *kairós*. *Chronos* corresponds with linear, androcentric¹⁶ interpretations of time. As such, *chronos* becomes synonymous with clock time. Conversely, experiential dimensions of time are better interpreted through *kairós* or what Hassard (1990: x) describes as "existential-time."

Being of the belief that "all members of a society share a common temporal consciousness" (Hassard 1990: 3), Durkheim favors a homogenous conception of time, while eroding qualitatively different temporal experiences. Hence, Durkheim's universal conceptions of time are more selective than collective. Countless scholars carry on Durkheim's tradition of subsuming the particular within the universal by endorsing "social time," while failing to account for the experiences of those denied access to the "social" itself.

In their analysis of social time, Sorokin and Merton (1937: 61) note, "The system of time varies with the social structure." Absent from this "social structure" is any mention of race or racialized violence. The authors speak to the potential uneven distribution of time when stating, "Quantitatively equal periods of time are rendered socially unequal and unequal periods are socially equalised" (Sorokin and Merton 1937: 61). However, "socially unequal" periods of time obscures time's role as a tool of racialized violence. In other words, time is not a universal element capable of being used or misused to produce unequal periods. Rather, as an instrument of inequality, time is integral to the maintenance of a sociogenetic (Fanon 1952; Wynter 2015) order, in

¹⁶ As Frieda Johles Forman (1989: 4) notes, "In ancient Greek myth, Cronus, son of mother earth and father heaven, who devours his own children, is identified with Chronos, the personification of time: thus our chronology."

which racialization determines the extent to which life-value is guaranteed to some, conditionally granted to a few and completely denied to many others.

When sociologists do link race to time, they conflate whiteness with progress and non-whiteness with present-orientations and inertia.¹⁷ Lewis Coser and Rose Coser, for example, privilege adherence to white time as a way to distinguish between white and nonwhite “time perspectives.” According to Coser and Coser (1963: 202), “one is more likely to find a tendency to accept passive chiliastic visions...among the peasants of the European Middle Ages and Negroes in the *antebellum* South.” The authors juxtapose “passive chiliastic visions” to “dominant, active, individualistic” time perspectives associated with the progress narratives of “Western” culture (Coser and Coser 1963: 193). Such representations deny black people’s self-determination to define their “time perspectives,” as well as their “coevalness” (Fabian 1983).

Within Coser and Coser’s racialized bias exists a cruel irony. Coser and Coser construct millenarian visions of the future in direct opposition to Western culture. The same “Western culture” Coser and Coser privilege for remaining future oriented, however, is what John Mbiti blames for political instability in many African nations:

Partly because of Christian missionary teaching, partly because of western type education, together with the invasion of modern technology with all it involves, African peoples are discovering the future dimension of time. In the secular level this leads to national planning for economic growth, political independence, extension of education facilities and so on. But the change from the structure build around the traditional concept of time, to one which should accommodate this new discovery of the future dimension, is not a smooth one and may well be at the root of, among other things the political instability of our nations. In Church life this discovery seems to create a strong expectations of the millennium. This makes many Christians escape the challenges of this life into the state of merely hoping and waiting for a life of paradise (Mbiti 1969: 27-8).

¹⁷ Michelle Wright, for example, reveals Thomas Jefferson’s presuppositions of “Black inertia” and “white activity.” According to Wright, Jefferson believed “Black inertia...can be altered when mixed with white blood” (2004: 58).

As Mbiti demonstrates, Africans on the continent and of the diaspora remain in a no-win situation. They are castigated for thinking for the future and thinking in the present. Lost within such critiques is the importance of a concept that defies the conceptual limitations of both “future-” and “present orientation” – hope. Though Coser and Coser (1963: 201) seek to establish a correlation between “Utopian orientations” and those “alienated from the prevailing cultural values,” they ignore how firmly rooted such orientations are in the past and present.¹⁸

The equation of whiteness with progress leaves many racialized subjects both out and outside of time. Coser and Coser’s typology of “dominant and divergent time perspectives in American culture” perpetuates representations of racialized subjects in poor, urbanized space as “present oriented” (Liebow 1967; Hannerz 1969; Wilson 1996; Anderson 1999; Sharkey 2006; Wacquant 2007; Gans 2011). “Those who reject the activist future orientation of the dominant culture,” according to Coser and Coser (1963: 196), maintain “deviant time perspectives.” Similar to criminologists, sociologists of time construct “deviants” and “deviance” as nonwhite. Present orientations, lateness, delay and an audacious disregard for white time are defining characteristics of temporal deviance and deviants.

Within Coser and Coser’s typology of “dominant” and “deviant” time perspectives, the race of the “dominant culture” goes unnamed, precluding inquiry into the relationship between whiteness and future orientations. For example, why is whiteness so preoccupied with the future? Perhaps, the residency of settler colonialism

¹⁸ In Chapter 6, I demonstrate how racialized youth in urbanized space remain ahead of time, as a result of their prescience within present orientations.

and slavery's afterlife¹⁹ (Hartman 2007) in the present leads many white people to relocate to a less burdensome and more abstract spacetime called the "future." Conversely, racialized subjects reject both whiteness and "liberal futurities" (Rodriguez 2015: 34) predicated on false promises of "equal opportunity" and neoliberal "freedoms."

Are the time perspectives of nonwhite groups "deviant" or defense strategies? White time is a violent time — one that necessitates colonization, enslavement, dispossession, conquest and genocide in order to distinguish those who own time and those who can only be owned by it. Similarly, "modernity," "progress," and "development" function as euphemisms for temporal violence. Paul Gilroy (1993: 163) holds, "Racial subordination is integral to the processes of development and social and technological progress known as modernisation. It can therefore propel into modernity some of the very people it helps to dominate." Gilroy makes clear that development and by extension, time, require subjugation and violence. The violence of time may be apparent to the "wretched of the earth" (Fanon 1963). But is the brutality of time apparent to its beneficiaries?

How white people, particularly those in the US, actively ignore the presence of the past (i.e. settler colonialism, "slavery's afterlife") is symptomatic of what Zerubavel (2003: 92) calls "mnemonic myopia" and what Renato Rosaldo (1989) defines as imperialist nostalgia.²⁰ Given its emphasis on progress, linear time complements such

¹⁹ Saidiya Hartman describes "slavery's afterlife" as a still unfolding process in the wake of "emancipation." The afterlife of slavery subjects black people to "skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment" (Hartman 2007: 6).

²⁰ According to Rosaldo (1989: 87), social scientists remain complicit in sustaining imperialist nostalgia based on the "curious phenomenon of...longing for what they have destroyed."

myopic thought. As Denise Ferreira da Silva (2017: 94) notes, “Linear temporality, as a rendering of separability and determinacy, accounts for the obscuration of how the colonial participates in the creation of capital.” In other words, linear time relies on progress narratives to conceal the role of primitive accumulation (Silva 2017: 100) required for capitalist modes of production.

Zerubavel (2003: 4) suggests membership within particular “mnemonic communities” allows individuals to share interpretations of historical events. The extent to which ongoing racialized violence factors into collective memories within “mnemonic communities,” however, goes unexplored and unmapped on *Time Maps*. By Zerubavel’s (2003: 10) own admission, “My ultimate goal in this book, therefore, is not to explain mnemonic variation, but to identify the common generic underpinnings of the social structure of memory.” Where Zerubavel takes a greater interest “common generic underpinnings,” I question the extent to which “common” is overrepresented as white. Hence, I direct my attention to the “uncommon,” or more specifically those denied from the concept of “common” and “coevalness.”

The absence of racialization and racism in sociological analyses of time reveals more than it conceals. Invested in a “white habitus” (Bonilla-Silva 2010) and absorbed in “white solipsism” (Rich 1979), the prospective gatekeepers of a sociology of time cannot behold the power structures to which they were beholden. Previous research on the sociology of time ignores how differing time perspectives can only exist when there is something (i.e. “dominant time”) to be different from (Coser and Coser 1963). White time (Mills 2014; Mahadeo 2019) remains the central reference category for most

sociological analyses of time. Prefiguring time as white arrests racialized subjects in an anachronistic realm of foreclosed life chances and chances at life.

Racialized youth at Run-a-Way refused to be located in anterior time. Instead, several youth resisted white time, while becoming innovators of temporalities with greater latitudinal breadth to encompass the entirety of their identities. Several youth found ways to violate white, western, “progressive time” predicated on a past, present, and future. Having acknowledged the incompatibility between their lived experiences and own racialized temporality, I argue that racialized youth in urbanized space subvert white time through (1) *transgressive temporalities* and (2) *insurgent time*. I conceptualize *transgressive temporality* as a broader, cultural notion of time, familiar to racialized persons. Transgressive temporalities reflect not only the capacity of racialized people to violate white time, but the violence of white time to resist racialized subjects’ access to modernity. Insurgent time encompasses the everyday strategies and tactics youth use to resist individuals and institutions synchronized to white time. Lateness to school or medical appointments and/or violating curfew were some of the most common ways youth generated insurgent time. As the hands of time turned, racialized youth gave the clock the finger. In short, transgressive temporalities reflect a disorientation to white time, while insurgent time is borne out of such disorientation and integral to the production of new temporalities. Hence, this introductory chapter places special focuses on how racialized youth defy space and time through the production of transgressive temporalities. I illustrate how racialized youth violate that which consistently violates them and argue that resisting white time is integral to the production of transformative and transgressive temporal relations/relationalities.

CP Time: The greatness of lateness and the importance of being off time.

Relegated to anachronistic space or erased from time and history altogether, racialized persons maintain a unique relationship to time. To what extent does time orient some, while oppressing others? Time does not only regulate labor, but also organizes racial orders. As white people amassed time through colonization and enslavement, nonwhite people, particularly black and Indigenous people, recognized that progression required oppression. In analyzing temporality within the African diaspora, Michael Hanchard (1999: 263) notes,

Time was the process through which British racism and imperialism moved in Ghana. These forces structured time to move more quickly for the extraction of capital, resources, and surplus value by colonizers but less so for the educational development of Ghanaian children and the training of teachers, or for the use of some of those extracted resources for positive national development.

Time, as Hanchard demonstrates, is not only constructed, but also managed and manipulated. Temporal concepts such as “duration, pace, trajectory and cycles” (Aminzade 1992) are calibrated to white time, white people, and whiteness. Hanchard makes clear that when the hands of time are in the hands of white people, nonwhite people are out and outside of time. We only need to examine the different response rates to the prospect of colonization and the calls for liberation. In the former, the prospect of dispossession and subordination prompts a hastened and efficient response among colonizers. In the latter, dilatory tactics of the colonizer preclude any possibility of redress for the colonized. The extractive and exploitative nature of imperial time gave rise to what Hanchard describes as “Afro-Modernity.”

[Afro-Modernity] consists of the selective incorporation of technologies, discourses, and institutions of the modern West within the cultural and political practices of African-derived peoples to create a form of relatively autonomous modernity distinct from its counterparts of Western Europe and North America.

It is no mere mimicry of Western modernity but an innovation upon its precepts, forces, and features...(Hanchard 1999: 247).

In conversation with Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*, Hanchard emphasizes the importance of "Afro-Modernity" as "a counterculture of modernity." At its core, "Afro-Modernity" negates the notion that black people are the antithesis of modernity (Hanchard 1999: 247). Divergent conceptions of modernity signal unequal access to time between racialized groups. Engendered by the antagonistic relationship between Western and Afro-Modernity is what Hanchard calls "racial time."

Racial time is defined as the inequalities of temporality that result from power relations between racially dominant and subordinate groups. Unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate groups produce unequal temporal access to institutions, goods, services, resources, power, and knowledge, which members of both groups recognize " (Hanchard 1999: 253).

"Social time" was and still is racial time. Racial time necessitates racialized violence against affectable²¹ subjects, particularly the racialized and rightless (Cacho 2012). In turn, racialized persons remain always already affectable because racialized violence remains *in full effect*. Racial time took on a distinct cultural meaning for black people living in the US. If capital was a metonym for black, how could black people claim ownership over time when time was/is also money?²² Disavowed from the social and "social time," black people sought to unsettle and expose the intimate relationship between time and power. Many saw the potential to eke out openings for resistance

²¹ Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007: xv) defines affectability as "the condition of being subjected to both natural (in the scientific and lay sense) conditions and to others' power."

²² As Frank Wilderson (2015: 136) notes, "For the slave, historical 'time' is not possible." In previous work, Wilderson (2014: 29) states, "the idea of 'going back' imbues Black suffering with a temporality that it doesn't have; emplots the slave in the arc of equilibrium, disequilibrium, equilibrium restored; when, in point of fact, Blackness and Slaveness are coterminous." My aim is not to introduce CP Time as an example of how black people reclaim ownership over time, as such an assertion would be disingenuous. Instead, I see CP Time as a way black people and other racialized persons transform white time into an internally-functional metric to cope with the timelessness of racialized violence.

within routinized economic exploitation and defied the logics of capital accumulation in favor of transformative temporalities. “CP Time” (Colored People’s Time) derives from the incommensurable relationship between time and racialized realities that literally and figuratively don’t count within categories of seconds, minutes, hours, etc. CP Time is not simply an appreciation of lateness, but a byproduct of the tension between expecting punctuality, when “racialized social systems” (Bonilla Silva 1997) ensure that black life chances are habitually late or absent. Ronald Walcott (1972: 8-9) explains why CP Time (or “CPT”)²³ occupies a unique niche in both popular culture and everyday parlance among black people in the US.

Black people always seem to be late and, in fact, have been late so often and so predictably that they themselves have coined a term for it: CP Time, Colored People’s time. CP Time is usually spoken of in tones of the profoundest dismay (by Blacks who lament their brothers’ “irresponsibility that will hold us all back”) or of outraged complacency (by whites who see this habitual lateness as yet further instance of our don’t-give-a-damn-attitude, “but really, what can you expect?”) or of amused tolerance (by the rest of us who are so accustomed to it we hardly notice it.) *CP Time actually is an example of Black people’s effort to evade, frustrate and ridicule the value-reinforcing strictures of punctuality that so well serve this coldly impersonal technological society. Time is the very condition of Western civilization that oppresses so brutally...*[emphasis added]

Not only was time wielded as a tool of racialized violence during slavery, but as Walcott ably demonstrates, time also became a catalyst for black resistance and fugitivity from “structures of subjection...that overdetermine freedom” (Moten 2017:

²³ CP Time is a general referent to the temporal patterns of black people living in the US. Among other racialized groups, there exist some comparable expressions including, “West Indian Time,” “Dominican Time,” “Indian Standard Time,” “Laos Time,” or “Cape Verdean Time.” The connotation of lateness, though, remains the same. I argue that these different conceptions of time reveal not only the discordant relationship between racialized subjectivity and time, but also resistance to white time. I would be remiss to ignore “Spirit Time,” familiar to Native and Indigenous peoples. Spirit Time emphasizes the communion between Native peoples, the Creator, land and space. As Daniel Wildcat (2005: 432) notes, “To the Western mind, human beings look backward and forward in time to get a sense of their place in history, whereas American Indians literally looked around the natural world to get a sense of their place in history.” “Crip Time” is yet another expression familiar to people with disabilities signaling the unique and often antagonistic relationship between disability and clock time.

76). One of many “structures of the subjection” was the clock. Mark Smith (1997: 5) details how time (via clocks) were used to “regulate labor both socially and economically,” while reinforcing the equation of whiteness as modern. To the slave, the whip and watch were synonymous (Smith 2016: 137). Henry James Trentham’s testimony is one of over two thousand former slave narratives in George Rawick’s *American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*. Here, Trentham exemplifies why time is such an oppressive force for enslaved people: “We hated to see the sun rise in slavery time, ‘cause it meant another hard day” (Smith 1997: 136). Among black people, time symbolized relentless brutality and suffering.

CPT is an example of “how African Americans as a class of laborers resisted planter-defined time during and after slavery” (Smith 1997: 130). African Americans, according to Smith (1997: 130),

...accommodated and resisted their masters’ attempts to inculcate a modern clock-based time sensibility during slavery...African Americans can adjust to white time sensibilities, which stress punctuality and are future oriented, but they can also reject these same sensibilities as a form of protest against democratic capitalism, generally white bourgeois sensibilities specifically, by eschewing the authority of the clock and adopting presentist and naturally defined notions of time, a tendency that sociologists and the public alike have come to call Colored People’s Time, or CPT.

Smith’s conception of CP Time coincides with Walcott’s in that both recognize a shared analysis of white time among black people. Both conceptions emphasize the importance of violating a violent system. Critical social theorists have also taken up the concept of CP Time to illustrate efforts to resist incompatible standards of white time and inaccurate representations of the “Other.” Renato Rosaldo, for example, makes clear the incompatible relationship between CP Time and “time discipline”:

Those in our society who fail to conform to the painfully imposed “time-discipline” are commonly described as living by C.P.T. (colored people’s time), Indian Time, or Mexican Time... “We” have “time-discipline,” and “they” have, well, something else (or, as we say these days, “Otherness”). The former quality of time can be described in relation to cultural artifacts such as clocks, calendars, appointment books, and the like. More significantly, it can be understood in connection with capitalists’ desire to discipline and synchronize the labor force, rationalizing production and maximizing profits, but probably not enhancing the quality of life (Rosaldo 1989: 110).

I use the concept of CP Time not as an example of how time is racialized, but as an example of resistance to racializing time (i.e. white time). Though there is some research on black resistance to time pre- and post-emancipation (Foner and Roediger 1989; Rosaldo 1989; Kelley 1994; Smith 1997; Hanchard 1999) there is negligible attention to how such “infrapolitics” (Scott 1990) survive within contemporary youth culture. I argue that racialized youth, similar to earlier generations, apply revised versions CP Time to strain, agitate and mock the higher temporal worth and status granted to white time. It is not enough though to simply highlight the incompatibility between white time and the temporal realities of racialized youth in urbanized space. Without illustrating the importance of creativity to challenging systems of power and domination, analyses of resistance remain incomplete. As innovative knowledge producers and culturesmiths, racialized youth, especially those in urbanized space, rely on non-normative temporalities not only as forms of resistance to power and domination, but also to ridicule the time as a racist, sexist, and capitalist construct. Contemporary forms of infrapolitics rest within a legacies of resistance.

Historian Robin Kelley (1994: 20) illustrates how black workers in the early 20th century resisted workplace exploitation through a variety of tactics used including “wiggling” – the use of company time and materials for personal reasons, “pan-toting” –

the practice of taking home leftovers, excess food, and utensils by domestic workers, footdragging, feigning illness, absenteeism and rigging company clocks to “steal time.” In using such tactics, black workers helped further expose the discordant relationship between black labor and white time. While these subtle forms of “industrial sabotage” may empower some, they were not exercised without reprove. In referencing Joe Trotter’s study of African Americans in West Virginia, Kelley (1994: 24) states, “...theft, sabotage, and slowdowns were two-edged swords that, more often than not, reinforced the subordinate position of black coal miners in a racially determined occupational hierarchy.”

Though CP Time represents a generative site for social movement scholars seeking to explore relations of power and resistance, investigations of racialized youth’s relation to CP Time remain underdeveloped. Perhaps CP Time’s appreciation of ambiguity and contradiction makes it antithetical to positivist sociology’s relentless and ruthless quest for “truth.” The neglect of CP Time generally, has left sociology wanting of a more complete analysis of the socialities and temporalities of racialized youth. Experience and expertise with white time limits sociologists’ capacity to exercise a “sociological imagination” (Mills 1959). This chapter addresses this shortcoming by making the familiar (i.e. white time) strange and making the mundane (i.e. whiteness) matter through a racial critique. However, the opposite is not true — I do not seek to make the strange (i.e. CP Time) familiar (to whiteness).

As a transformative temporality, CP Time belies uniformity and is not indicative of how all racialized persons use time. More specifically, not all black people use CP Time or use it in the same way. Nevertheless, CP Time remains an important cultural

construct to understand how power works, specifically how white time *works on* racialized persons. As an orientation constructed against white time, CP Time functions as a counterframe (Feagin 2010) to white time and whiteness.

Youth's analyses of CP Time are organized in four sections. In the first section, I describe why the boundaries of white time are impervious to many nonwhite people. As my conversation with 16-year-old Devon will illustrate, there remains a sort of temporal segregation sustaining qualitatively different experiences between white and nonwhite persons. White time promotes improved life chances among whites, while reducing the life chances, as well as chances at life, of racialized subjects. In the second section, I describe the importance of ambiguity and contradiction to CP Time. To be black in a state of white supremacy exemplifies a contradictory experience. Many youth recognized the contradiction of claiming to be on time when consistently beginning from behind/beginning from deficits. In the third and fourth sections, youth demonstrate how to effectively transgress and transform white time. CP Time exceeds the conceptual boundaries of a temporal dialectic. Self-determination and self-definition makes CP Time more than just an antithesis to white time. By transgressing white time, youth also produced new socialities capable of existing independent of antagonisms. Youth were adept at controlling and manipulating time according to their schedules. In short, time could not proceed without their permission. Regardless of the second, minute and/or hour, the timepieces of racialized youth were all set to the same dial — "me o'clock."

Racial and temporal boundaries

Based on my interviews at Run-a-Way, it was clear that "Colored Peoples' Time" or "CP Time" does not hold as much cultural relevancy among most youth today

as it did for earlier generations. The majority of youth were unfamiliar with either term, but a few likened it to what they called “black people time,” “nigga time,” and/or “POC time.” The “CP” in “CP Time” also required some unpacking. We discussed why “colored people” was and still is racist, while also examining the false equivalence between “colored people” and “people of color.” Youth’s limited understanding of “colored” is indicative of white, linear, progressive time’s capacity to conceal a racialized violence that is not only past, but present. Youth did not need to be experts on history to see that “racialized social systems” (Bonilla-Silva 1997) are designed to privilege the present and future over the past. When the past is always present for racialized subjects, knowledge of history is also knowledge of now.

In order to increase the cultural relevance of CP Time, I offered the following prompt: “If I say that there’s a party going down tomorrow at 10 P.M., but we’re on CP Time, what time do you think the party will start?” Most youth picked up on this hint and figured out that the party will start later. Devon is a 15-year-old African American youth, attending an alternative high school for aspiring musicians. When asked to infer a definition of Colored Peoples’ Time, Devon makes a clear distinction between black and white time-use.

Devon: For us, like, growing up it was how black people spent their time compared to how white people spent their time...there’s a really big difference. I grew up knowing that black people time was what we do within our day and how different...Because we spend our time...a lot of us spend our time in jail, some of us spend our time taking care of kids, single parents taking care of kids. White people take their kids to daycare and all that, which is how different it was.

Devon’s multilayered perceptions of the differences in time use between blacks and whites are as revelatory as they are concealing. In these remarks, we discover Devon’s awareness of the connections between race, class privilege and gender inequality

between blacks and whites. By suggesting that a lot of black people spend time in jail, Devon constructs the prison industrial complex as a primary site of time use for both prisoners and non-prisoners.

In “The social life of social death: On afro-pessimism and black optimism,” Jared Sexton recites a scene from the 1967 film *In the Heat of the Night* where Virgil Tibbs, played by Sidney Poitier, tells Mama Caleba, played by Beah Richards, “There’s white time in jail, and colored time. The worst kind you can do is colored time” (cited in Sexton 2016: 62). Sexton goes on to describe “colored time” as “interminable, perhaps even incalculable, stalled time.” The equation of blackness and criminality is not only a form of racialization, but also temporalization. Similar to an event horizon — the region of no escape within a black hole — the prison industrial complex represents a spacetime that thwarts any opportunity to exit and obstructs observation from the outside. Devon identifies the prison industrial complex as a site of significant time use for black people in America. In short, the prison industrial complex both stalls and steals time from racialized prisoners, while making escape virtually impossible. Consequently, racialized youth, and black youth in particular, are forced to do time more than use it. In referencing single parenthood, Devon also alludes to the disproportionate impact of incarceration on black families, making clear that time is racialized and gendered.

White time, colored time, and racial time all function as boundaries, distinguishing between the temporalities of white and nonwhite life. White time functions as what Pachucki, Pendergrass, and Lamont (2007) describe as “symbolic and social boundary.” Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168) define symbolic boundaries as “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices,

and even time and space.” In spite of their classification, the implications of “symbolic” boundaries are far from symbolic. Symbolic boundaries are in close proximity to social boundaries, so close that they map onto one another. Social boundaries, according to Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168), represent “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities.”

As a symbolic and social boundary, white time constructs different disparate estimates in life chances between white and nonwhite life. The manipulation of white time ensures opportunity structures are accessible to some and denied to others. For example, white time requires students of color be placed in “remedial classrooms” or “special education” — an anachronistic spacetime compared to mainstream education familiar to white students. White time requires racialized persons to use a time that does not belong to them. In turn, racialized youth’s time use is read as time theft and thus criminalized. White time then ensures the probability of racialized youth being arrested and incarcerated is always greater than their white counterparts. CP Time also has a boundary-making capacity. However, CP Time’s boundaries are designed to protect racialized subjects from the violence of white time. Several youth recognize that while some boundaries are “symbolic,” their implications are real. Though Devon’s conceptualization of CP Time differs from its conventional meaning, he still manages to illustrate how time is racialized by describing how white people use time, while black people remain used by it.

I’ll get there when I get there: The ambiguity and contradictions of CP Time

Expecting black people to be punctual when white time guarantees their exploitation and ensures they remain “behind schedule” is asinine. Though easily forgotten over the course of history, there once was a time when it was bad taste to make haste.²⁴ For racialized persons rendered illegible within time itself, “punctuality” holds different meanings. CP Time reflects a temporal orientation that resists confinement within a binary, where there is little room for contradiction or the multiplicity of cultural meanings. CP Time’s association with delay and being behind the clock seems on the face of things to reinforce stereotypical associations between race and time. Lost within such representations is the capacity of the “subaltern to speak” (Spivak 1988).

“I’ll get there when I get there” is a familiar refrain to followers of CP Time. The phrase reflects an active effort to unsettle expectations of punctuality by resisting coherent meanings and intelligible standards of time. Racialized people are going to take their time because their time is always already taken (by white time). To “get there when I get there” invokes a call for greater appreciation of “ambiguity and irony” (Battani, Hall and Powers 1997: 787; Sewell 1999: 53; Halberstam 2005: 2), which tends to frustrate white time and white people. In short, CP Time threatens the stability and regularity of white time, while affording racialized people, and black people in particular, some degree of temporal liberation.

According to Pierre Bourdieu (1997: 223), access to time is contingent on “power and the objective chances open to it.” Bourdieu (1997: 227-8) goes on to describe “temporal power” as the “power to perpetuate or transform the distributions of various forms of capital by maintaining or transforming the principles of redistribution.”

²⁴ While studying the Kabyle, Bourdieu (1963: 221) observed “Haste is seen as a lack of decorum combined with diabolical ambition.”

With little control over the means of production, how much temporal power is possible? If time is money, as is often suggested, what do we make of CP Time? Is it possible that CP Time is a tactic used to not only disrupt temporal power, but create new modes and owners of production? Beyond individual acts of resistance, adherents of CP Time foster collective participation in a subversive, yet productive temporal system, where they both make and break time.

Claiming ownership of time takes a variety of forms. “Absolute power,” Bourdieu (1997: 228) notes, “is the power to make oneself unpredictable and deny other people any reasonable anticipation, to place them in total uncertainty by offering no scope for their capacity to predict.” CP Time forces people to wait in submission and rests in its capacity to provoke some semblance of freedom and belief in a collective power to resist temporal discipline, in favor of ambiguity. In doing so, racialized persons convey a refusal to be bound within a temporal system that eviscerates the potential for self-determination or collective well-being. However, as suggested, CP Time need not only be understood as a form of agency and/or resistance, especially given the many consequences of following CP Time (e.g. school detention, work termination, stigmatization). Rather, CP Time is functional for racialized persons who must contend with institutionalized oppressions that deny them both time and space.

As a strategy of resistance to existing forms of “temporal power,” CP Time involves the power of persuasion — particularly persuading others to wait. “Waiting,” as Bourdieu asserts,

...implies submission: the interested aiming at something greatly desired durably—that is to say, for the whole duration of the expectancy—modifies the behavior of the person who ‘hangs’, as we say, on the awaited decision. It follows that the art of “taking one’s time”, of “letting time take its time”, as

Cervantes put it, of making people wait, of delaying without destroying hope, of adjourning without totally disappointing, which would have the effect of killing the waiting itself, is an integral part of the exercise of power...(1997: 228).

CP Time promotes indeterminacy of presence/attendance allowing black people to control their schedules and those of others. However, CP Time and other racial temporalities need not only exist as responses to dominant narratives. In some instances, what may be read as “oppositional” may be experiments in alternative socialities centering spontaneity and sort of coordinated unpredictability. For example, anthropological linguist Susan Phillips reveals how the rhythm of daily life among the Ilongot tribe create ways to be beholden to one another as opposed to time:

They [non-Indians] try to learn from Indians at what time the event will begin. Often the person questioned will say he doesn't know, but if pressed, he may give a specific time—e.g. 8 P.M. or “some time after 9.” The non-Indians will arrive at that time, only to find that “nothing is happening” yet, and no one seems to know when something will happen. They wait anywhere from twenty minutes to several hours before the event begins...Far from being devoid of positive content (presumably because of not being rule-governed), indeterminacy allows the emergence of a culturally valued quality of human relations where one can follow impulses, change directions and coordinate with other people. In other words, social unpredictability has its coordination, and a knack for responding to contingencies. The qualities constitute, social grace, which in turn enables an attentive person to be effective in the interpersonal politics of everyday life...the Ilongots zones of indeterminacy, particularly in social visits, promote a human capacity of improvisation in response to the unexpected, and this very capacity can be celebrated as a cultural value (cited in Rosaldo 1989: 112).

Does improvisation or the celebration of “cultural value” constitute “temporal power” or something else? As a convention among black people throughout the diaspora, CP Time is both an inside joke and an acknowledgement of black people's capacity to remain in physical, psychic, and emotional communion with one another, despite being universally defined as “strangers” (Hartman 2007: 5). While CP Time forces adherents of white time to wait, it proves less consternating for black people who

respond with what Walcott (1972) calls “amused tolerance.” “Getting there when I get there,” also means that “I’ll see you when I see you.” When encountering one another in an anti-black world, most black people know that if it is “Good to see you!”, then it is also “Good to be seen.” Though only 16, Sean has apprehended the importance of black temporal traditions and demonstrates his proficiency in our discussion of “black people time.”

RM: So if I say there’s a party goin’ down at 11:00 but we’re on CP Time, what time do you think the party is gonna start?

Sean: I dunno, I think it’s called black people time.

RM: Also called black people time, yeah.

Sean: I don’t know what that CP thing is. I know what black people time is. So black people time is you a couple...You a *little* late.

Sean punctuates his remarks with a dose of humor that both ridicules and resists white time. The inside joke that Sean and I both understood was that “a little late” to black folk actually meant *a lot* late to others. Sean’s radiant personality brought life to the milieu and our one-to-one conversations. During free time, Sean commandeered the small boom box, tuned into a local hip-hop station, raised the volume high enough for all on the second floor to hear, and proceeded to “cut a rug” – the literal one in the center of the living room. Sean invited both peers and staff to join, but most seemed too shy to participate. Humor and performance characterize Sean’s personality and CP Time or “black people time.” Just as Sean takes center stage in front of peers and staff, CP Time is a pronouncement of one’s arrival before familiar and unfamiliar audiences. For someone like Kanye West who believes his “presence is a present,” time is a frivolous cost paid by those waiting on a gift.

They say good things to come to those who wait
So I'm'a be at least about'a hour late.²⁵

Others may arrive late seeking less fanfare and without much expression at all.

Yet, all are expected to appreciate ambiguity and not “act brand new” when someone is, as Sean notes, “a little late.” Ambiguity proved to be an orienting theme for many youth at Run-a-Way. Some youth, like 16-year-old Rahim, offered less explanation for following CP Time.

RM: Would you say that you're someone that follows CP Time?

Rahim: Yeah, I would.

RM: Yeah, ok. Is there a reason or is it...?

Rahim: No, I just... it just happen like that.

Rahim's remarks are dense as much as they are terse and capture an important feature of CP Time — it is best to “get there when you get there.” By suggesting that his lateness “just happens like that,” Rahim conveys a refusal to remain bound within temporal parameters and allows his life to unfold organically according to his own idiosyncratic schedule. When asked whether he has a personal schedule, Rahim's response was “No. I just go by the day.” At the time of our interview, Rahim was in the independent living program and had just applied to Job Corps²⁶ after being expelled from school for fighting. Rahim's idiosyncratic schedule is versatile and conducive to improvisation and shifting plans based on impulse. When one's schedule is as flexible as

²⁵ From “Start It Up” by Lloyd Banks featuring Kanye West, Fabolous, Swizz Beats, and Ryan Leslie.

²⁶ With over 125 sites nationwide, Job Corps is a free education and vocational training program administered by the US Department of Labor. The program aims to help youth between the ages of 16 and 24 strengthen their preparedness for careers and/or help them meet educational benchmarks such as earning a high school diploma or GED.

Rahim's, time itself bends in a variety of ways. Lacking access to consistent meals, shelter, medical care and income warrants some degree of flexibility in one's schedule.

Staff often described the program as an interim placement for youth "in limbo" – transition phase before moving to a more permanent placement such as home, foster home, group home, residential placement, hospital or juvenile detention center. Youth "in limbo" usually lacked clarity around next steps until just a few days before moving to a new placement. Most youth, however, came to Run-a-Way because of family challenges and planned to return home after meeting program expectations, including taking part in group activities and setting educational goals as well as participating in individual and family therapy.

Transience made it difficult for youth to develop lasting relationships with staff. There were, however, some exceptions. Finesse, who was 18 years old at the time of our interview, moved up the ranks from emergency shelter program to independent living, establishing an enduring relationship with numerous staff and youth at Run-a-Way. The independent living program located on the third floor of the program distinguished older youth with greater preparedness to accomplish Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) from their younger counterparts one floor below in the emergency shelter. Because the independent living program allows youth to stay there for up to one year (and in some cases longer), Finesse was one of a select number of youth who I saw regularly during my time at Run-a-Way.

Finesse described himself as having "white skin with black features." Finesse's own identity is to some degree contradictory.²⁷ Finesse is an aspiring rapper who was

²⁷ My rapport with Finesse was based in part on similar experiences as mixed-race people. Our mutual love for hip hop also served as an effective adhesive for our bond.

shot in the leg just before coming to Run-a-Way. It was not Finesse's first time at Run-a-Way. Before being shot, Finesse volunteered as an informal personal trainer for several youth in the emergency shelter program. Like many of his peers, Finesse returned to the program after continued challenges at home. When I met Finesse, he was confined to a wheelchair and was unable to leave the program due to concerns over his safety. Within 5 months, however, Finesse was getting around with crutches, while his injured leg remained protected by a cast. Despite not finishing high school, Finesse had a good paying job at the Mayo Clinic. After being shot, Finesse lost a significant amount of time at work, though the position was reserved until he was able to return. In the eyes of many of his peers, Finesse was a "real cool dude," partly because his job involved working with the Minnesota Timberwolves. Finesse was also known for a sense of humor as demonstrated in our conversation about CP Time. Before I could provide an example, Finesse indicated familiarity with the CP Time.

Finesse: I know what you're talkin' about.

RM: You know what I'm talkin' about?

Finesse: You talkin' about how...maybe it's different than what you were gonna say, but when I hear that what I'm thinkin' is like black people are always late type shit...I'm around the corner but they really be like 45 minutes away...that's what I was thinkin' of. When you first said CPT I thought you were talkin' about the buses in Chicago.

Both Finesse and Sean share a magnetizing sense of humor and tacit awareness of the importance of ambiguity to CP Time. Ambiguity is also integral to fully capturing what Michelle Wright (2015: 146) describes as "the multidimensionality of blackness." In *Physics of Blackness: Beyond Middle Passage Epistemology*, Wright (2015: 20) suggests, "In any moment in which we are reading/analyzing Blackness, we should

assume that its valences will likely vary from those of a previous moment.” *Physics of Blackness* is Wright’s provocation to not only ask “What is blackness?”, but also “Where and when is blackness?” Based on Finesse’s calculation and according to CPT, blackness and more specifically black people are “around the corner” and “45 minutes” late. To suggest, however, that all black people abide by CP Time would undermine Wright’s emphasis on heterogeneity and contradiction. Rather, my aim is to challenge misreadings of CP Time based on the incompatible metrics of white time.

According to Wright (2015: 145), “linear progress narratives” are highly “allergic” to contradictions. Given the connection between linear progress narratives and whiteness, this makes much sense. Seldom does whiteness accept ambiguity as an answer because, like linear progress narratives, it yearns for coherence and remains intolerant of contradiction, making it antithetical to women of color and queer of color epistemologies. Existing as a nonwhite, racialized subject within whiteness is itself a contradiction – one that frustrates and strains yearnings for intelligibility. Similarly, Wright’s (2015) emphasis on the heterogeneity of blackness belies coherence and linearity.

It is ironic that whiteness is so intolerant to ambiguity and contradiction when, as Du Bois observed, slavery and colonialism contradict white America’s putative commitment to liberal, democratic, and universalist virtues.²⁸ As Wright (2004: 82) notes,

In *Souls*, although the Negro American is not reconciled, split, he is not contradictory: his desire, according to Du Bois, is perfectly logical. Instead the (racist) white American is being contradictory.

²⁸ Within Critical Race Theory (CRT) racism should not be treated as an anomaly or a contradiction, but rather a central organizing principle of liberalism and democracy.

Du Bois was of the opinion that to the extent that black people lead contradictory lives, they do so in part because white America has violated its own claims to universal rights and freedoms. Hence, Du Bois consistently inverted whiteness and centered black sociality, while making white time contradictory to “Afro-Modernity” (Hanchard 1999). In Chapter 4, I demonstrate how racialized youth at Run-a-Way manage to turn the tables on (white) time, ensuring their temporalities were most culturally relevant and “up to date,” while casting whiteness into a “played-out” past. I have so far demonstrated how attuned youth are to the pace, cycles and rhythms of CP Time. To what extent, though, did youth actually move to the beat of CPT? In the following section, youth demonstrate, in practical terms, how they manage to be off white time, rather than on it.

See you late(r): CP Time in practice

Youth’s use of CP Time signified a shift from external conceptions of time (i.e. *chronos*) to an internal/experiential dimension (i.e. *kairós*). The notion of “time-as-thing,” according to Bourdieu (1997: 206), “is the product of a scholastic point of view.” Shifting to the experiential dimension of time, Bourdieu (1997: 206, emphasis in original) adds, “...practice is not *in* time but *makes* time (human time, as opposed to biological or astronomical time.)” As noted earlier, CP Time is as transformative as it is transgressive, and racialized youth at Run-a-Way were adept at making time while also destroying it.

Though not a familiar phrase among many racialized youth at Run-a-Way, most had some experience applying the basic principles of CP Time. Gerard was a charismatic 16-year-old black and Native youth, who was somewhat reserved, but capable of seizing any opportunity to be the center of attention. Gerard was well-liked

by most of the other youth in the emergency shelter program. Gerard's darker complexion meant that he was often mistaken for Somali, a misperception likely attributed to the many Somali migrants and refugees in the Twin Cities. I asked Gerard what time the party would start if it starts at 10 pm CPT. After Gerard, in his words, recognized the difference between CP Time and Central Standard Time, he said, "Colored People Time, like... it's gonna be at [pause] I don't know, when you say it's at." Self-definition and self-determination allow black people to not only control time, but CP Time not only controls time, but the pace of social life in any given setting.

I met Gerard on two different occasions at Run-a-Way. Our first meeting was characteristic of Gerard's stay in the program—transitory. Gerard returned home within a couple days of our first meeting. Gerard spent a significantly longer period of time during his second stay. We built enough of a rapport that Gerard's mother gave me permission to conduct our interview at their home in Near North, a majority black community in Minneapolis that is over-policed, underserved, and defiantly vibrant. Further along in our interview, though still on the topic of CP Time, Gerard admits to following CP Time, while legitimating lateness as personal opposition to that which is "lame" — punctuality.

RM: Would you say that you would consider yourself to be someone that follows CP Time?

Gerard: Absolutely.

RM: Yeah. Ok, why?

Gerard: Cuz I always... I always end up at parties really late. I like doing that, I don't know. I don't... I never go somewhere early, that's lame.

According to Gerard, lateness prevents lameness.²⁹ Regardless of race, lateness to parties is fairly conventional conduct. Therefore, it is somewhat disingenuous to suggest that Gerard's taste for lateness is that unique. I was curious to learn whether Gerard's commitment to CP Time was transferable to other settings. As our conversation continued, Gerard described resisting specific "racialized social systems" (Bonilla-Silva 1997) when white time is the dominant metric.

RM: This is a real basic question, but how do you define lateness?

Gerard: Lateness? We didn't do something on time. Something happens not on time...

RM: Do you care about being late?

Gerard: Nuh uh. I don't really care. School wise, I still don't care.

RM: Yeah. Why not?

Gerard: Cuz you'll get there eventually...Being late, something I always do...Work wise, I dunno, sometimes I actually go to work late. It doesn't really matter.

RM: How important is it for you to be on time?

Gerard: I wouldn't say it is important. Like, if you're wasting my time by rambling or something. School wise say you're teaching me something I already know, that would be wasting my time.

Gerard's penchant for lateness cannot be divorced from space and place.

Racialized youth in urbanized space recognize that they are often learning, laboring and living in spaces designed without them in mind.³⁰ Gerard describes school as what Damien Sojoyner (2016) conceptualizes as "educational enclosures" that *suspend* him

²⁹ The colloquial use of the word "lame" is widespread but is also problematic from a disability studies and disability politics perspective.

³⁰ It is worth noting that many social institutions were designed precisely with nonwhite people in mind. They were exactly who schools did not want to admit and who jobs did not want to hire.

and many other racialized youth in time. School, for example, is not simply incompatible because of biased curriculum or the mismatch between students of color and the teachers they learn from. Instead, Gerard sees school as a waste of time because as he states, “you’re teaching me something I already know.” Not only is time wasted, but in Gerard’s case, time is appropriated by the educational system. What does it mean to attend school on time, only to learn that you aren’t going to learn anything at all? It is one thing to be suspended in time. It is another to experience temporal regression. Gerard’s antisocial relationship to punctuality prompts a return to a key question orienting this research — “Whose time is it?” When you can only owe white time, rather than own it, it is futile to subsidize that which will never belong to you. To 16-year-old Shanté, punctuality was not a priority. Money, however, was.

RM: How would you define lateness?

Shanté: I’m always late though. I’m never on time to nothin’, even when I had to go pick up and drop off [drugs]. I was never on time. And that was bad though. They [other dealers] used to be so mad. “What are you late for? You takin’ all day.” I was doin’ other stuff, gettin’ other money. You ain’t there when you supposed to be, even though you know you supposed to be there. I knew but I wasn’t there.

RM: Ok, yeah. And that was ok with you?

Shanté: Yeah, I was like they ain’t goin’ nowhere ‘cuz they need *my* money.

Shanté’s history with the child welfare system made her one of the savviest youth at Run-a-Way and clearly ahead of her time. Shanté was so prescient and well-versed in the logics of capitalism that she regularly endorsed the notion that “time is money.” Compared to some of her peers who may “act out,” Shanté usually chose to “cool out.” Shanté’s “cool pose” (Majors and Billson 1992), however, belied the provincial limits of androcentrism. Not only is Shanté capable of anticipating and

preempting the violence “of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Du Bois 1903: 9), but as a young black woman, Shanté’s “multiple consciousness” (King 1988) provides a standpoint on and analysis of black women’s and femmes’ resistance to simultaneous and multiplicative oppressions.

Shanté was one of approximately ten youth who participated in the “fast life.”³¹ While more boys disclosed selling drugs than girls, Shanté’s accounts suggest she was as, if not more, experienced than her male counterparts. Despite the high risk of arrest and potential of violence from peers, customers, and police, Shanté appeared to march to the tick of her own clock and transgress time. Shanté was not, however, naïve, acknowledging that some “dudes are quick to shoot a girl.” Yet still, Shanté mustered up the courage to take other people’s time and make “other money” while doing it. Exuding the spirit of a young entrepreneur, Shanté’s belief that “they ain’t goin’ nowhere ‘cuz they need my money” signals an emerging business acumen, specifically an understanding of the relationship between supply and demand. To those forced to wait all day, their time is spent. But for Shanté, her ability to make “other money” on top of what she is about to earn makes her right on time. While several youth described their lack of regard for punctuality, others spoke about lateness from the perspective of the waiting party. As stated earlier, not all black people follow CP Time and as Remy notes, consistency and punctuality take precedent over being “fashionably late.”

RM: How do you define lateness?

Remy: Lateness. Um, if I tell you to be somewhere at a certain time and bring this and bring that, but you come 5 hours late and you didn't bring a goddamn thing I told your ass to bring! You are late. That’s it to me.

³¹ In Chapter 4, I further explore youth’s participation in the “fast life” as means to transgress time.

RM: Yeah. And do you believe that lateness is a real thing?

Remy: Personally, yes. Cuz we all livin' on our own timeframe. So on my side, yes, to me you are late. Maybe you're not late to you, but to *me* you are late.

RM: How important is it for you to be on time?

Remy: Super important, cuz I got anxiety like a muthafucka. I don't like bein' late.

Remy is a 16-year-old black and Native gender non-binary youth. Fortunately, my connection with Remy has extended beyond our time at Run-a-Way through our mutual involvement in anti-oppressive organizing. Remy's consideration of how other people perceive time suggests their broader awareness of relationality and the subjective dimensions of time (Flaherty 2011). The notion that "We all livin' on our own timeframe," illustrates Remy's awareness of the distinction between institutionalized time—organized around clocks and calendars—and personal "timeframes." With Remy's emphatic call for punctuality, putting them in conversation with Shanté, who is also 16 years old, seems more than timely.

Despite living the "fast life," Shanté's habitual lateness suggests that she was comfortable "getting there when she gets there." In a scenario where Remy is waiting on Shanté, the potential for tension seems likely. It is possible that if their paths were to cross under different circumstances, Shanté could be the person to whom Remy refers when speaking about expecting a delivery. In this situation, Shanté may not see herself as late, but as Remy suggests, she undoubtedly is.

Existing scholarship in gender and sexuality studies makes important interventions towards revealing the intimate connection between transgressive bodies and alternative time perspectives. Jack Halberstam, for example, describes how queer

and trans persons reckon with and remake time. As Halberstam (2005: 2) states, “Queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to the logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience—namely birth, marriage, reproduction, and death.” Halberstam calls attention to the potential of queer and trans persons to transgress boundaries and dichotomies that cannot contain the fullness of their identities. Similarly, Kara Keeling (2019: 17) describes how queerness and the queer appear “as a structural antagonism of the social” including social time.

In some cases, lateness was a byproduct of oppressive racialized norms and standards, especially for black girls. Standards of beauty, particularly hair style, proved to be a significant concern among many black girls. The following fieldnote from August 6, 2015 offers an example of how two 16-year-old girls, Shanté and Tameka, resist white time, while also producing a spacetime that centers aspects of black womanhood rendered invisible in questions of “time use.”

I arrived at 3 PM. The staff met in the activity room to review the “pass ons.”³² There were “no new updates” for most of the youth. However, the pass ons note that Shanté and Tameka stayed up until 2:30 AM doing hair. Tameka, who wears her own hair in a small afro, spent the night adding new weave for Shanté.

What does it mean to use time that doesn’t belong to you? Assessing life for black women during slavery, Patricia Hill Collins (2000: 57) states,

Women did not retain authority over their time, technology, workmates, or type or amount of work they performed. In essence, their forced incorporation into a capitalist political economy as slaves meant that West African women became economically exploited, politically powerless units of labor.

³² “Pass ons” are individual reports for each youth containing a short summary of occurrences and significant events from previous shift(s).

To what extent are Shanté and Tameka still being exploited by time? To some extent, it appears as if time is regulating the girls' behavior and limiting their activity to an unreasonably narrow scope that cannot account for the time consumed by conforming to racialized-gendered standards. To suggest that Shanté and Tameka's time is solely taken by racialized-gendered standards, however, is to obscure the possible desire for and pleasure gained from two black girls bonding by doing hair. While enjoying each other's company, Tameka and Shanté are participating in the co-construction of an insurgent time. Insurgent time takes pleasure in defying white time, just as Shanté and Tameka take pleasure in beautifying one another. While violating curfew may be distinct from familiar examples of CP Time, both girls are still transgressing white time, while revealing its limited capacity to contain the many dimensions of blackness and girlhood.

Shanté and Tameka may be practicing what James Scott (1990: 220) calls "infrapolitics" – "resistance that avoids any open declaration of its intentions." Both girls seem to demonstrate both explicit and covert forms of resistance. Shanté and Tameka may know they will be "written up" (penalized) for staying up past curfew, but there may exist a "hidden transcript" or an "offstage" discourse (Scott 1990) less discernible to staff at Run-a-Way. Obscured by what may appear to be overt resistance is the opportunity for the girls to create a sacred space within an insurgent time to celebrate black girlhood. The girls carve out the space and time within a broader context of patriarchy and whiteness that devalues and diminishes black beauty. Thus, Shanté and Tameka recite a hidden transcript that contradicts what is most legible to performers

who take their cues from “public transcripts” — guides to describing “the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate” (Scott 1990: 2).

The consequences of violating “public transcripts” related to program curfew seemed to vary depending on the staff person. Dwayne, for example, is one of several black staff members in the independent living program. Boasting a calm and composed approach to working with youth, Dwayne describes himself as “laid back.” By his own admission, Dwayne says, “No one ever abides by the 9:30 [weeknight] bed time.” Youth in the independent living program adhere to a “plus-minus” system determining privileges and penalties. Youth who violate curfew receive a “minus” on weekly progress sheets, resulting in a deduction in their earned allowance. Those who abide by curfew receive a plus and increase their chances of earning a full allowance at the end of the week. Black youth expected black staff would show some sympathy for curfew violations by granting an occasional grace period. Such favors, however, were difficult to grant. With cameras located on every floor and various locations outside of the building, Run-a-Way operated as fairly well-functioning panopticon.

There was also the issue of “consistency.” White staff called for “consistency” as a show of fealty to “order” in the program. Staff framed “consistency” as being in the best interest of the youth. They expressed concern over sending mixed messages and being accused of bias or favoritism. With most of the administrative and managerial staff being white, black direct-care workers were well aware of the risk of complaints if they let some youth “slide” for curfew violations. Dwayne, however, would occasionally make an exception for youth he saw as “doing the best they can.” Dwayne negotiated with youth, as well as staff, to find ways to help youth maintain positive standing and

earn their full allowance. Negotiations may have required youth to perform an additional chore or study for one hour longer. While successful in deferring and averting the threat of punishment, such negotiations still demanded time from racialized youth. With time being money, it is no surprise that youth fulfilled their half of the bargain by *spending* time in service of capital (i.e. weekly allowance). Though the temporal parameters regulating curfew hampered a sense of freedom and discretion, among black staff and black youth, both groups worked together to challenge “public transcripts” by regularly rehearsing “hidden” ones.

To fully grasp the importance of CP Time to racialized persons, some basic literacy of “hidden transcripts” is required. As “weapons of the weak,” hidden transcript literacy tends to be higher among poor, racialized persons. Consequently, hidden transcripts present the greatest threat to dominant groups. To explore the possibility of what is hidden within CPT’s transcript, I asked Devon about any additional purposes of CP Time.

Devon (15): Additional purposes.

RM: What use it serves?

Devon: I mean, honestly, I feel like that was the best way to stick it to the man then.

As Devon suggests above, as a route towards ridicule and resistance, CP Time uses humor to remind “the man” that poor, racialized people hold immense power. For those still unfamiliar with the concept, CP Time may be best summed up as “lateness with a smile.” Some join in on the amusement, remaining unperturbed by the lack of respect for time. Others, including “the man,” experience intense consternation over the contradiction between lateness and punctuality.

Rather than entertain “value-reinforcing strictures of punctuality that so well serve this coldly impersonal technological society” (Walcott 1972: 8-9), some youth envisioned a world where lateness did not apply. Dominique is a 16-year-old black trans youth who also identifies as “gender fluent.”³³ While not familiar with the term “CP Time,” Dominique did get the hint about the start time for the party without too much explanation and went on to explain how they interpret lateness:

Dominique: Lateness? When somebody...when you needed something at a certain time but you're about to do something else and that thing is late. But I feel like there's no such thing as lateness as long as you showed up and you can re-feel what happened. You know? I don't think people should be marked tardy if they can catch up on what happened already. You know?

By suggesting that there is “no such thing as lateness” because people can complete what has already been done, Dominique illustrates an iterative and perhaps nonlinear relationship (Glassner 1982; Jaques 1982) to the past, present and future. Within Dominique’s analysis is the possibility of reconciling the past with the present. Not only can people materially make up what was left undone, but Dominique’s emphasis on how people can “re-feel” what happened reflects their connection to the experiential dimensions of social time so often lost within *chronos* and white time. Dominique’s comments exemplify what transnational and queer of color feminist M. Jacqui Alexander (2005: 309) describes as “the embodiment of the Sacred,” which dislocates “linear time.” Similarly, CP Time “dislocates” white time while centering transformative and transgressive temporalities that exceed the conceptual boundaries of the “West,” modernity, and progress. Thus, for both Dominique and Alexander (2005:

³³ It is possible that Dominique intended to self-identify as “gender fluid,” a more commonly accepted identity along the gender spectrum. However, this should not diminish the applicability of “gender fluent.” While less conventional among gender scholars, “gender fluent” conveys a sense that one is fluent in gender discourse, especially when it comes to articulating their own gender identity.

309), “linear time does not exist because energy simply does not obey the human idiom.” For instance, while someone may arrive at a particular function an hour late, to the perceived latecomer they are “right on time.”

Tardiness, according to Dominique, also does not apply if people can “catch up on what happened.” Perhaps, Dominique is revealing the social constructedness of lateness and latecomers. To what extent is Dominique speaking to the way systematic forms of racialized violence leave many black people and other racialized persons always already outside of conventional opportunity structures and behind white time? In Dominique’s assessment, lateness cannot exist when time itself is always in motion and the presence of the past (e.g. “slavery’s afterlife”, settler colonialism) deprive youth of viable life chances in the future.

Whether used to redefine or rupture existing relationships to white time, CP Time functions as a kind of transformative resistance among black people and other racialized subjects. To be used by time, as opposed to using it, exposes an exploitative side of time concealed within universalist frames of “social time.” When adherence to white time requires black exclusion, dispossession and social death (Patterson 1985; Cacho 2012), black people recognize that being on time may involve just as many consequences, if not more, than being late. Black people, like many other racialized subjects, are in no hurry to be exploited. Hence, they will take their time, while potentially taking others’.

For many racialized youth at Run-a-Way, it was only a matter of time before their time mattered most and for 14-year-old Quincy, black time already mattered most.

RM: So if I said there’s a party and its goin’ down at 10, but we’re on black people time, what time does the party actually start?

Quincy: Party start when the black people get there.

RM: Yeah, exactly. Which may not be at 10, right?

Quincy: Whatever time we get there, that's when the party start. Like, black people...if you tell them to do something, like, black people, cuz it's our history, we don't like listening cuz we've been like, you know, tortured so much and we have to do stuff. Like, most black people be like, 'I'm gonna do what I want and see how that goes.' Yeah...black people don't listen. That's just not us. We don't listen. We... we listen all our lives, how about we *don't* listen anymore? And that's why you see most black people out there doin' what they doin' now cuz they don't wanna listen anymore. Cuz they're tired of listening. So yeah. They're tired of listening.

In Quincy's response, we find several rich elements of CP Time including ambiguity, resistance and transformation. Here, I describe Quincy's application of each theme, beginning with resistance. Quincy is adamantly opposed to abiding by a time that doesn't abide by him and other black people. The cumulative impact of and unfolding chronicle of black captivity, dispossession and torture obviates any expectation for black deference to white time. By refusing to listen in favor of doing what he wants, Quincy opens up space beyond the conceptual boundaries of thesis and antithesis.

Constructing CP Time as an antithesis to white time risks essentializing blackness and pigeonholing black people into unidimensional temporality where/when a multitude of differences among black people are flattened. Black people reckon with white time in a variety of ways. Remy, for example, abhors lateness and demands punctuality. Conversely, Gerard sees lateness as a key to maintaining a particular level of cool. Still there are others, like Shanté, who recognize the need to maximize their time, while reducing the time of others. In Quincy's case, time is contingent on black people's presence. In short, the party and to some extent, time itself, does not start until black people say "go."

Quincy demonstrates the possibility of creating while defying. The ambiguity of what can be produced does not deter Quincy from resisting. Rather, ambiguity is a source of momentum because while the pathway to liberation may not be clear, the opportunity to be free from enslavement and “slavery’s afterlife” is certainly better than not. The presence of the past makes it ostensibly clear to Quincy that resistance is required to create new spacetimes. In Quincy’s words, “I’m gonna do what I want and see how that goes.” Perhaps Quincy models what it means to be in communion with his ancestors while singing, “And before I’d be a *slave* / I’d be *buried in my grave*.”

Discussion and Conclusion

For Sylvia Wynter (2003), “the overrepresentation of Man as Human” and the use of race as a “genetic status-organizing principle” signify central concepts structuring the current episteme. Wynter (2003: 271) argues that “‘descriptive statements’ or governing master codes” established strict eligibility criteria turned “objective set of facts” for being human. What concerns me as a scholar of race, time and critical theory is a serious dilemma within the sociology of time — the overrepresentation of white time as time itself.

As I have argued, inclusion into “social time” by definition requires exclusion. Based on an appreciation of subjective/experiential interpretations of time, “social time” signals inclusion within a collective organized around shared temporal benefits. Upon further analysis, however, the construction of the “social” belies unity, equivalence, equilibrium, mutuality and any possibility of creating a time shared by all. Social time requires the systemic marginalization of racialized subjects from the existing temporal order and the social itself. In other words, sociologists privilege white time as the only

possible time, thus legitimating extreme forms of “temporal power” (Bourdieu 1997) over racialized subjects. The neglect of racialized time perspectives within a sociology of time results in major empirical delays and shortcomings.

What good is seeking to understand the temporal perspectives of the “other” when white time remains the central reference category? When temporal conventions are synchronized to white time, racialized subjects will inevitably be late, precisely because they are always already constructed as behind time or outside of time altogether. Moreover, white time requires the exploitation and extraction of nonwhite life to function. By paying unconditional deference to white time, social scientists legitimate the elision of race, racialization, and racialized subjects from analyses of time and temporality.

With a steadfast aim toward the future, white time remains intent on not only ignoring the past, but the presence of the past in the present. Here, I am specifically referring to settler colonialism and “the afterlife of slavery” (Hartman 2007). Though sociologists have had *ample time* to consider the role of race, racialization, and racism in analyses of “social time,” existing scholarship suggests that they, ironically, remain at an impasse and thus behind their own chronotopic clock. This research cannot make up for the time lost within such empirical voids. It does, however, bring the discipline of sociology up to date with racialized temporalities of those consistently “at-risk” of academic racism and neglect within white time.

What makes CP Time and other transgressive temporalities generative and functional is a collective appreciation of lateness. Lateness, while a source of consternation and agony for adherents of white time, is an acceptable and functional part

of racialized persons' temporal perspectives. Exhausted by the many "racialized social systems" (Bonilla-Silva 1997) synchronized to white time, racialized persons find relief in space where lateness is not only acceptable, but appreciated and endorsed. I argue that transgressive temporalities and insurgent time are functional precisely because they allow racialized persons *to function* within already *high-functioning* institutions (e.g. education, the workforce, the prison industrial complex, the ghetto) predicated on the detention and suspension of both time and personhood. To "function" is to "maintain," "get by," "hang tough," and/or "stay up." Transgressive temporalities and insurgent time help racialized persons function by freeing them of a tormented relationship with lateness, specifically, and with white time as a whole.

Having now established whose time it is, in the following chapter I explore what it means when racialized youth at Run-a-Way use a time (i.e. white time) that doesn't belong to them. It means, as I argue, that racialized youth's supposed "time use" will be read as "time theft" and thus criminalized. I go on to detail the ways racialized violence and "racialized social systems" steal time from racialized youth in urbanized space. Most racialized youth describe the relationship between racialized violence and time as a subtractive one. I ultimately make the case that racialized violence not only "takes time" (i.e. time required to process racialized violence), but routinely *takes* (i.e. steals) time away from an already temporally-dispossessed group.

Chapter 2:

To Own or Owe Time? The incommensurability of “time-use” and racialized youth

Introduction

In detailing the “two-ness” of a “double consciousness,” to what extent did W.E.B. Du Bois (1903: 9) consider this “peculiar sensation” a form of time use? While “double consciousness” has been trafficked as a theoretical concept, abstracting it from black life reeks of anti-blackness. For black people, “double consciousness” is lived, not just theorized. Though Du Bois may not have set out to quantify the physical, emotional and psychic labor associated with a double consciousness, there is little question that he had not already considered what is lost/taken through “always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others.” Evidence of Du Bois’s (1903: 221-22) prescience can be found in the following passage from the essay “On the Faith of the Fathers”:

Such a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double the social classes, must give rise to a double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretense or revolt, to hypocrisy or radicalism.

This passage exemplifies a phrase familiar to many black people: “You have to work twice as hard to be half as good.” By definition, working twice as hard to be half as good means that the “halves” have significantly less time to accomplish their goals than, their more temporally advantaged counterparts, “the haves.”

The marginalization of Du Bois’s theoretical and empirical contributions to sociology (Bulmer 1991; Anderson and Zuberi 2000; Morris 2015) has left various subfields, including the sociology of time, wanting of a deeper analysis of racialized subjectivities. Without an appreciation of the ways that racialization and racism condition the time perspectives of racialized persons, sociologists construct time use as a homogenous and routine activity familiar to all. Such universalisms, however, ignore the

processing time³⁴ associated with racialized violence. For example, Du Bois's "double consciousness" represents both an involuntary activity and survival strategy among black people. As August Wilson affirms, "Blacks know more about whites in white culture and white life than whites know about blacks. We have to know because our survival depends on it. White people's survival does not depend on knowing blacks."³⁵ Wilson's remarks capture the cognitive labor associated with being black in America. Despite making these remarks in 1988, over two decades after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Wilson was not being hyperbolic when asserting that black people's survival depends on their understanding of "white culture and white life." The legacy of slavery and continued state-sanctioned violence suggests survival remains paramount for black people. Aware that their integrity, dignity and humanness all remain open questions to those with greater privilege and power, black people are forced to think not just for themselves, but also for their white and non-black counterparts. Though this "peculiar sensation" may be involuntary, it is not any less time-consuming.

In their research exploring everyday experiences of the black middle class, Joe Feagin and Melvin Sikes (1994) disabuse readers of the notion that upward social mobility makes black people immune from racism. As a producer of incommensurable debt, racism also has the capacity to exhaust whatever time is available to those required

³⁴ By "processing time," I am referring to the time expended on the infinite and incommensurable process of reckoning with racialized violence.

³⁵ Although white people's survival does not depend on knowing blacks and other nonwhites, this has not stopped whiteness from claiming to know "the other." Urban ethnography (Liebow 1967; Geertz 1973; Rosaldo 1989; Hannerz 1969; Young 2008; Goffman 2014) within sociology is predicated on a relentless quest to not just make the familiar strange, but also make the strange familiar (to whiteness). Seldom does whiteness accept ambiguity as an answer because it yearns for coherence and remains intolerant of contradiction, making it antithetical to women of color and queer of color epistemologies. Existing as a racialized subject within whiteness is itself a contradiction – one that frustrates and strains a yearning for coherence. This chapter, thus, pressures whiteness to the point of rupture and hopefully, the point of no return.

to spend more in the temporal economy than they earn. The following excerpt comes from one of their interviews with a black woman and faculty member at a predominantly white university.

[One problem with] being black in America is that you have to spend so much time thinking about the stuff that most white people just don't even have to think about. I worry when I get pulled over by a cop. I worry because the person that I live with is a black male, and I have a teen-aged son. I worry what some white cop is going to think when he walks over to our car, because he's holding onto to a gun. And I'm very aware of how many black folks accidentally get shot by cops. I worry when I walk into a store, that someone's going to think I'm in there shoplifting. And I have to worry about that because I'm not free to ignore it. And so, that thing that's supposed to be guaranteed to all Americans, the freedom to just be yourself is a fallacious idea. And I get resentful that I have to think about things that a lot of people, even my very close white friends whose politics are similar to mine, simply don't have to worry about (Feagin and Sikes 1994: 68).

As described earlier, the notion of “working twice as hard to be half as good” signifies an undue burden placed on black people and other racialized persons. What is accepted as a basic task to those privileged along the lines of race, gender and class, is to racialized persons a much more time- and energy-consuming process. Each added step required to complete a task involves greater temporal expenditures for those always already temporally bankrupt. Working from temporal deficits is indicative of the way racialized persons, especially racialized youth, themselves are always already read as deficits (Gorski 2011; Ford and Grantham 2003). How such deficit-based ideologies translate into time-structuring factors for racialized youth remains a vastly understudied topic within a sociology of time. Though this work contributes broadly to the study of race in sociology, I am not simply seeking to make the racial(ized) realities of youth more legible. Rather, my aim is to make clear the extractive and exploitative relationship between racialized violence and time. Given that time is money, the “costs” of racialized violence have innumerable temporal consequences.

Expanding on my focus on the racialization of time and the temporalization of race, this chapter details the processes by which racialized violence and racialized social systems³⁶ steal time from youth in urbanized space. Though Marx focused on the antagonisms between bosses and workers, the exploitation of racialized youth transcends the labor market. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, racialized youth perform a variety of unpaid labor not only to survive but also to prevent “social death” (Patterson 1982; Cacho 2012) within “slavery’s afterlife” (Hartman 2007).

While most work is performed in service of productivity and with the expectation of compensation, the labor required to process racialized violence exceeds the conceptual capacity of remuneration precisely because racialized violence is an extension of unseizable debts. I liken unseizable debt to Denise Ferreira da Silva’s (2017) concept of “unpayable debt.” Both debts are incapable of being settled because what has been done cannot be undone. In fact, what has been done is liable to a redoing.³⁷ As Chakravartty and Silva (2012: 381) note, “neoliberal dispossession and debt are not lived in the same way by everyone.” Conquest, enslavement, “along with the postcolonial apparatus of raciality,” ensure that some debts can never be settled (Chakravartty and Silva 2012: 365). The labor required to process acts of racialized violence also exceed the compensation limits of overtime and double-time pay because both rely on false equivalences of comparable pay scales between workers. What to many whites is a “wage” (Du Bois 1935; Roediger 1991) is for racialized subjects an

³⁶ According to Bonilla Silva (1997: 469), “racialized social systems” refer to “societies in which economic, political, social and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races.”

³⁷ In Chapter 6, I feature several youth’s suggestions that “history is repeating itself,” alluding to forms of racialized violence they believed ended generations earlier. Youth exemplify a prescience rooted in both the present and the past to make sense of that which is continuously redone as opposed to undone.

unsettleable and incommensurable debt. Incommensurability, however, does not preclude responsibility.

As I will show in this chapter, racialized social systems and individuals have the “luxury of time” precisely because they steal time from an exploitable class of youth. In the first section, I seek to distance myself from those who use race as a proxy for racism. Conversely, I measure racism, not race, as a causal variable for the disparate life chances and chances at life between racialized youth and their white counterparts. In turn, I establish measurement validity by measuring what I intend to measure – racism. In the second section, I ask youth about their experiences with “discrimination” and “racism.” Youth at Run-a-Way recounted multiple and often similar instances of racialized violence and many viewed the relationship between time and racism as a subtractive one. In other words, the labor involved in processing racialized violence *takes* time. More precisely and in accordance with the conflict tradition of sociology, racialized social systems subtract time from racialized youth, while adding it to their own temporal coffers.

Though processing acts of racialized violence offers little financial return for laborers, this work is highly generative for “racial capitalism” (Robinson 1983). Hence, the third section attends to the synchronization of white time and racialized dispossession. Profits gained through such forms of racialized violence represent a dependency on expendability. In addition to bolstering the relational role of white wealth and black debt, racialized social systems convert the “processing time” of racialized subjects into a sort of racial(ized) intel — a stockpile of knowledge that can be deployed at any moment to inflict further harm.

I transition from the third to the fourth section with a poignant question structuring a broader theme of this chapter: “What does it mean to use time that doesn’t belong to you?” It means, as I argue, that racialized youth’s supposed “time use” will be read as “time theft” and thus criminalized. In my research, black youth were regularly read as out of place and “up to no good.” In short, police and non-state actors denied youth a sense of coevalness (Fabian 1983) and access to white time because of their placement in the existing ontological order. In turn, youth were only able to be used by as opposed to use time. As I demonstrate throughout this chapter, white time is calibrated according to the exploitation, dispossession, criminalization of and routinized violence against nonwhite youth, most of whom are black. This section concludes with a broader critique of the alleged “time use” of racialized youth. For racialized youth to use that which doesn’t belong to them suggests that they can only ever owe, as opposed to own, time.

Race or racism? A note on the study of race as an independent variable.

It is disingenuous to use race as a causal variable to explain structural inequalities such as impoverishment, “education debt” (Ladson-Billings 2006), unemployment, and incarceration. Race is not the cause of any of these outcomes or “dependent variables.” *Racism* is. In other words, the use of race as an independent variable undermines the *social* construction of race. Minoritized students do not fail in school because of their race. Black and brown people are not overrepresented in the prison industrial complex because of purported links between “ghetto-related behavior” (Wilson 1996) or “cultural repertoires” (Anderson 1999). These outcomes are the result of society’s *response to* race (i.e. racialized violence) and not race itself.

For example, US Supreme Court cases like *McCleskey v. Kemp* not only make racism largely unintelligible, but actually institutionalize/legalize its unintelligibility. *McCleskey* ruled that racial bias in sentencing cannot be challenged under the Fourteenth Amendment in the absence of clear “evidence of conscious, discriminatory action.” In other words, the legislative, judiciary and executive branches of government all play a role in legitimating the exclusion of racism as a decisive part of racialized persons’ everyday life. This sort of racial retrenchment (Crenshaw 2009) places the judicial system in similar anachronistic space to sociological research using race as an independent variable. How, then, does one calculate or quantify something like racism, which according to the most powerful systems of government, does not exist legally or socially? Perhaps this is the wrong question.

Subjective experiences with racialized violence elude quantification. Qualitative methods also have limited capacity to effectively calculate racial processing time and the extent of harm to racialized subjects. However, I rely on ethnographic observation and in-depth interviewing as complementary research methods for assessing the qualitative impact of racialized violence for youth at Run-a-Way. The open-ended nature of interviews precluded a need for youth to substantiate their claims with any “evidence of conscious, discriminatory action.” In other words, youth are not subject to an empirical ruling of what can and cannot be classified as racialized violence. Instead, I acknowledge youth as experts of themselves and their experiential evidence associated with racialized violence speaks for itself.

Racialized violence literally and figuratively doesn’t *count!*

Attempting to quantify the time-consuming experience of racism is a largely futile quest. Living with racism involves careful reflection and analysis over racist encounters. Racism is not something that people get used to or forget. Racialized subjects make sense of their seemingly antithetical existence to a dominant racial order. Many engage in this psychic, physical, and emotional labor just to “get by,” “maintain,” and “survive.” Lost within existing analyses of “time use” are the social-emotional costs of time. How do we account for the time racialized subjects spend making sense of racialized violence?

Here, I pause to address the tension of critiquing attempts to quantify racism and racialization, while acknowledging that I and youth at Run-a-Way use quantitative terms to describe processes far too nuanced to simply be discussed in terms of time. The length of time required to process an act of racialized violence cannot obscure the qualitative experience with the act itself. Racialized violence renders racialized bodies inherently violable and subject to haunting at *any time*. The relationship between racialized subjects and racialized violence “goes without saying” because it also comes without saying. Attempts, then, to quantify the lingering effects of racialized violence are futile.

I conceptualize *unquantifiable time* as the time corresponding to the physical, emotional, psychic labor performed by racialized persons. Like the invisible labor women perform on a regular basis (Ermath 1989; McClintock 1995; Collins 2000; Tadiar 2012; Moraga and Anzaldúa et al. 2015), racialized subjects perform an inordinate amount of physical, emotional, and psychic labor as a means of survival. This labor consumes a significant amount of time, yet also constitutes an incalculable time. “Incalculable” because the time required to process racialized violence literally and

figuratively does not *count*. To racialized persons, however, their experiences with systems of racialized violence will always count, in large part because they are *countless*. The exhausting exercise of having to not only think for yourself, but also for others is not measurable within objective categories of time use. In part, this is what makes attempts to quantify time expended to process racialized violence so paradoxical. Highlighting the incalculable racialized temporalities among racialized youth at Run-a-Way is not an attempt to *account for* or compensate for stolen time. Temporal reparations won't repair the "social time" (Durkheim 2001; Schwartz 1975; Aminzade 1992; Zerubavel 2003; Coser and Coser 1963; Glassner 1982; Merton 1984; Sorokin and Merton 1937; Lewis and Weigart 1981; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Flaherty 2011) that reads as more *anti-social* given its dependence on criminalizing of black socialities. Exposing racialized violence as a form of time theft stands as an intervention in and of itself.

Racialization and racism resulted in significant time loss for many youth at Run-a-Way. Most youth were poised to address more targeted questions related to racialization and racism. Some youth "felt me out" to gauge my responsiveness to candid conversations about race, including negative experiences with white people. When I asked 15-year-old Kendra if she has ever been targeted because of her race, she responded without hesitation.

Kendra: Yes. All the time.

RM: And how does being a target of racial bias impact your day to day functioning?

Kendra: Because say, like, I'm on the bus going to school and this guy or girl...[who is of] a different race than I am starts yelling or getting mad because I'm black. And I'm probably sitting in the front of the bus or something. Some

weird stuff. And then I have to crack [hit, punch, or slap] him in his face and then they...cause me not to be able to go to school or not to be able to get to school on time. I guess it just messes with your... my daily schedule sometimes because it always causes me to have to say something cuz I don't really have the ability to just be quiet and brush it to the side. So it always takes up time to actually cuss them out or something.

Kendra exemplifies the time-consuming nature of racism. The important point to consider here is that Kendra's white counterparts are less likely to have to "cuss" someone out for precisely because they are not racially violable subjects, as are Kendra and many of her black peers. Kendra directs attention to the labor required to address racist acts. In subsequent questions, Kendra explains why the time consumed by such work cannot be divorced from the psychic or cognitive labor.

RM: You talked about getting looks from people. Do you feel that having to think about how people are looking at you is a waste of your time too?

Kendra: You shouldn't have to worry about what people think. If someone's lookin' at me, I'm gonna be the type of person to say "*Hello. What's your name?*" But, yeah. I guess it takes up your time cuz' you're always thinkin' about what people think and what they say. You're always thinkin' about how you look to other people. So if you're getting bad looks you're wondering "OK, what am I doing wrong?"

RM: When you have these negative experiences does it cause you to have to think about it more often after the altercation has occurred?

Kendra: Yeah, it does. Because it's like I thought slavery and all that racism crap was over. And it's like having to live in a world where you can't just be...you can't be judged by the color of your skin and we still live in a world like that today. It's just petty.

Kendra invokes several aspects of Du Boisian thought to illustrate what it means to live with racism. In asking herself, "OK, what am I doing wrong?", Kendra echoes Du Bois's memorable question, "How does it feel to be a problem?" The fact that many racialized persons, and black people in particular, must ask this question is significant in and of itself. Kendra also exposes the challenges of reckoning with the notion of

“emancipation” and what Christina Sharpe describes “the wake” of slavery. In Kendra’s words, “I thought slavery and all that racism crap was over.” Kendra may be, according to Christina Sharpe, adjusting to the “atmosphere” of being in the wake:

...slave law transformed into lynch law, into Jim and Jane Crow, and other administrative logics that remember the brutal conditions of enslavement after the event of slavery has supposedly come to an end (Sharpe 2016: 106).

Appreciating the time-consuming experience of being “in the wake” and exercising a “double consciousness,” however, cannot ignore black women’s “multiple consciousness” (King 1988). If a “double consciousness” is marked by a “second sight,” one that only lets a black person “see himself [sic] through the revelation of the other world,” then for black women “multiple consciousness” signals that this world is not only white, but also androcentric and the analogy of blackness as male elides the interactive and multiplicative violence against black women.

The triple jeopardy of racism, sexism, and classism is now widely accepted and used as the conceptualization of black women’s status. However, while advancing our understanding beyond the erasure of black women within the confines of race-sex analogy, it does not yet fully convey the dynamics of multiple forms of discrimination. Unfortunately, most applications of the concepts of double and triple jeopardy have been overly simplistic in assuming that the relationships among various discriminations are merely additive...The modifier ‘multiple’ refers not only to several, simultaneous oppressions but to the multiplicative relationships among them as well (King 1988: 46-7).

King reveals the problem with using an additive model to make sense of various forms of social difference. Oppressions are not just synchronized or even simultaneous, but interactive (Crenshaw 1990). Multiple forms of marginalization involve teamwork. Through such cooperation, oppressions build off one another in cumulative, “multiplicative,” and in some cases, exponential fashion.

Under a white racial gaze, racialized youth are forced to question their own integrity because, as Kendra's remarks suggest, their integrity remains an open question to others. What does it mean to be constructed as less than zero? It means that racialized youth must constantly work to increase their value, while beginning from a deficit. When I asked Kendra how often she thinks about racism, she responded by saying, "Every time I'm around a white person. To be honest [chuckles]." The construction of race is a highly social process and Kendra illustrates the relationality of racism, while placing her experience in temporal terms. Thinking about racism "every time" she is around a white person is undoubtedly a physically, psychically, and emotionally exhausting activity.

For 17-year old Miguel, moments when racism does not significantly structure his thought process are rare.

RM: Do you ever think about racism?

Miguel: Oh, yeah.

RM: Ok. How often?

Miguel: Usually cuz every time when you don't know if they're talking behind your back because you're Hispanic, Somali, African American, Asian, or Indian. So they always try to talk behind your back and you never know if they're talking about you or someone else. So you obviously have to be more comfortable in your entity.

RM: Ok. And how does being a target...phase you and shape your everyday life?

Miguel: Cuz usually they be lookin' at all the other Hispanics and say, "Oh, they took our jobs. They took our jobs." But we didn't took their jobs, they just didn't wanna work or they just lazy cuz they don't wanna work.

RM: Do you ever feel like you want to do something about it?

Miguel: Yeah, usually when they make fun of Hispanics cuz they don't understand English fluently and then we ask them how do your family members

get here first? The English came in boats. You weren't here first. The Native Americans were here first.

Both Kendra and Miguel emphasize the role of a gaze that does more than just sees. It talks “behind your back.” It watches and haunts racialized subjects, making them as uncomfortable as possible in their “entity.” Conversely, the gaze’s hypervigilance complements its refusal to see, which is why Andrea Smith (2006: 2) argues that, according to settler-colonial logic, Indigenous people must not only disappear, “they must *always* be disappearing.” This refusal is symptomatic of Rosaldo’s (1989: 87) “imperialist nostalgia” wherein colonizers and social scientists mourn and romanticize over past civilizations of an “other,” which they are in fact complicit in destroying.³⁸ Miguel’s hyperawareness of anti-Latinx sentiments and white nativism requires frequent contemplation about the residence of the “past” (i.e. settler colonialism) in the present. Conversely, white time is directed toward the future vis-à-vis a denial of the “past.” Unlike the future orientation of white time, racial time³⁹ is marked by an always present past.⁴⁰

Being the target of racialization and racism reminds youth of the many legacies of oppression that cannot be disconnected from contemporary struggles. Such collective memory is vital to racialized persons’ survival (Lipsitz 1990: 135). To “be more comfortable in your entity” is Miguel’s way of describing racialized persons’ resolve to

³⁸ In “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” Tuck and Yang (2012: 10) identify several “moves to innocence” among settlers, including attempts to “locate or invent a long-lost ancestor who is rumored to have had ‘Indian blood,’ and they use this claim to mark themselves as blameless in the attempted eradications of Indigenous peoples.”

³⁹ Michael Hanchard (1999: 253) defines “racial time” as “the inequalities of temporality that result from power relations between racially dominant and subordinate groups” beginning with the advent of “racial slavery.”

⁴⁰ In Chapters 5 and 6, I expand on the connections between whiteness and time, as well as the importance of the past to racialized persons.

contend against various forms of oppression, including racialized violence, and strengthen one's sense of self. The mental, emotional and physical preparation required to strengthen such a resolve *is*, however, labor. Labor that remains unquantifiable, yet time-consuming. This then begs another question: Who consumes the time of racialized persons?

Though Miguel never uses the term "whites" or "white people," he does refer to those who "weren't here first" as "the English." I argue that white life and "white time" is subsidized by nonwhite life and those always already temporally bankrupt through everyday acts of racialized violence. In another interview, 16-year-old Malik offers a glimpse of some of the labor-time required to live with racism.

RM: Do you think about racism at all?

Malik: Only when I bump into it.

RM: Yeah. Can you give an example?

Malik: The other day, it was a month ago. Me and my brother was walkin' down the street to the library and we started wrestling. Then this white guy drove past and was like, "I hope you kill each other." I was like what do you do? We stopped and was wondering is it because we was play fighting and he thought it was serious. But it was like 100 other people around but nobody said nothin' but him. So we was kinda thrown off by it.

RM: And what did you all do after?

Malik: We talked about it for like an hour as we was walkin'.

This white man not only denied Malik and his brother a place in time, but also mobilized whiteness as the primary referent of temporality, while attempting to eliminate both youth from time itself via death. Despite demonstrating typical teenage behavior, Malik and his brother are forced back into an anti-black climate by a white man who renders them disposable and expendable. To process the racist act, Malik spent

an hour speaking to his brother. Just as race is relational, so is time and time loss in one space or place is accompanied by temporal gains somewhere else. In other words, Malik and his brother did not just lose time. Their time was stolen by the “white guy” driving by. This wretch of a human profited off the unquantifiable time and labor Malik and his brother used to make sense of the violent act. By “profit” I am referring to both the way in which this man gains both a material and immaterial advantage by forcing Malik and his brother to perform involuntary labor without pay. Time stolen by whiteness and white supremacy bolsters the claim that all capitalism is racial capitalism (Melamed 2011: 77). Malik and his brother cannot recoup this time or labor. Instead, it is added to a growing number of hours, minutes, and seconds⁴¹ spent living within “slavery’s afterlife” (Hartman 2007). Malik and his brother’s experience is a reminder that the “afterlife of slavery” and ongoing forms of settler colonialism is incommensurable with a paycheck. What America owes black and Indigenous youth exceeds the conceptual capacity of “debt.”

When time is stolen from one place it amasses somewhere else. The temporal coffers of racialized youth do not simply deplete, but are *depleted by* those with greater temporal stock. Malik and his brother’s time were likely transferred to what Charles Mills calls “white time.”

⁴¹ I recognize the tension of using quantitative terms while advancing a concept like unquantifiable time. However, this tension reflects a broader theme of contradiction. Attempting to live with racialization and racism consumes an inordinate amount of time for racialized youth. However, simply because this time cannot be quantified does not mean that the broader social constructions of time are equally unmeasurable. As illustrated in Chapter 1, there exist subjective dimensions of time that operate alongside white time. Hence, time is relational and as such, flows according to various rhythms. In the case of Malik and his brother, white time is always operating as a stopwatch measuring how long they and other racialized youth will last. Constructed as “less than zero” by racialized social systems, racialized youth exist within a calibrated countdown. In Chapter 4, I describe some ways racialized youth in urbanized space defy white time’s calibrations related to their own expiration.

Assuming that, with reference to the appropriate stochastic counterfactuals, we could conclude that the life expectancy of Blacks (for instance) has been diminished by these temporal deprivations, we can then say that the time they would have had has been removed... Where has it gone? Could we speak, perhaps fancifully, of its having been transmuted into White time, and posit a set of intra-and intercontinental equations that could be shown to balance through increments of White time on one side matching decreases of non-White time on the other, shortened life-spans over here extending life-spans over there? If so, then metaphysically these processes, these regimes of temporal exploitation and temporal accumulation, would not just be taking time— as, trivially, all processes, exploitative and non-exploitative, do—but transferring time from one set of lives to another. How much time do you have? (Mills 2014: 28)

Mills makes clear that, within the context of “white time,” nonwhite “time” is not simply taken, but transferred. I argue that racialized violence generates time and wealth for white people. White wealth is a product of black debt (Du Bois 1935; Roediger 1991; Conley 1999; Marable 2000). Truncated life expectancies among black people are in fact *lowered*, not lower. Capitalism, the criminal legal system, schooling, the non-profit industrial complex, racialized medicine and the state all ensure that existing as a poor, racialized subject in the United States means you have to wait. Wait for service. Wait for a visit. Wait to be educated. Wait on your caseworker. Wait to be seen. Wait to be made un-seeable. Wait on whiteness because whiteness takes its/your time. In short, the comforts and conveniences supporting the proliferation of white life necessitate black social death. As Frank Wilderson notes,

White and non-Black subjectivity cannot be imbued with the capacity for self-knowledge and intersubjective relationality without anti-Black violence, without the violence of social death. In other words, White people and their junior partners need anti-Black violence to know they’re alive (2015: 144).

Wilderson exemplifies one of the many “wages of whiteness” (Roediger 1991).

White time and white life are co-calibrated to the social death and the expiration of racialized persons, particularly black youth. The white man who yelled at Malik and his

brother is not an exception. White people profit from black debt every day. As a “consolation prize” (Harris 1993: 1758), whiteness ensures that white people are winners regardless of the contest. White people win because they are not black, thus not the targets of racialized violence. As David Roediger (1991: 66) notes, “Chattel slavery provided white workers with a touchstone against which to weigh their fears and a yardstick to measure their reassurance.” What does it mean to depend on the expendable? It means that knowledge of what one is, is consistently juxtaposed against what one is not – what I describe as identity formation by negation. Though racial time doesn’t count within whiteness, it figures prominently into the logics of capital accumulation.

Racial surveillance of the temporally bankrupt

Observing that the limitations in Marx and Engels’s ideas over the prospects of a “[European] bourgeois society would rationalize social relations and demystify social consciousness,” Cedric Robinson (1983: 2) set out to develop a more complete analysis of capitalism by introducing its racial dimensions:

The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force . . . racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term ‘racial capitalism’ to refer . . . to the subsequent structure as a historical agency.

Because all capitalism is racial capitalism, the racial economy is supported by the unequal production and exchange of human value and worth. As people are ontologically arranged to “fit the needs of reigning state-capital orders” (Melamed 2011: 77), a dysselected category of persons spends more and earns less.

To expand my exploration of the temporal costs of racialized violence, I asked youth about their experiences as customers in various businesses. Most youth acknowledged the need for a certain fortitude to racial profiling common in many racial-economic exchanges. However, “ethnic-racial socialization” (Burt, Simmons and Gibbons 2012) does not preclude acknowledgement of the cumulative time spent during such socialization processes. In other words, just because youth expect to be targeted by racialized social systems should not legitimate racial profiling. As noted earlier, processing acts of racialized violence, including interrogations by store clerks and police, *take* time.

In accounting for the temporal losses associated with excessive cognitive labor, this section expounds upon earlier work on the experiential dimensions of racialized violence. Previous research on the experiences of racialized youth expose what is most extraordinary about schooling (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Ladson-Billings 2006; Tatum 1997; Pollock 2004), searching for a job (Newman 1999; Pager 2008), or simply negotiating public space (Anderson 1990; MacLeod 2009; Rios 2011). While shopping may be a mundane activity to many, racialized violence made it a dreadful experience for several youth at Run-a-Way. Most youth described exerting significant time and energy to participate in what most of their white counterparts describe as a “leisurely activity.” To better understand what made these experiences so violent, I asked youth to describe how they expect to be treated when entering businesses. Fourteen-year-old Cherise, for example, had this to say:

Cherise: It’s different in each store, but they’ll keep an eye on you, cuz they think you’re gonna seal something. And like, they’ll follow you around the store just to make sure you don’t.

Jerome (16 years old) picks up where Cherise leaves by showing what it means to be followed after being racially profiled.

Jerome: Mm, sometimes I think they treat me different cuz I'm black so they think I'm gonna steal something...cuz I was in Marshall's...I was looking at something and one of the managers was like, "Do you need help?" And I said "no." And then she act like she was workin' over there and she kept asking me do you need help with something. I kept saying no.

In the following account, 16-year-old Tameka provides a vivid example of how her "double consciousness" remains in full effect while shopping.

Tameka: Like...you know those white people at the store...those white people that be workin', like cops or whatever who be lookin' at you in the store? They be always thinkin' you're stealing, just because you're black. Like, I got my own stuff! I got money! Yeah, I just think that's like really rude. Just because I'm black. I'm coming in the store with a bag, doesn't mean I'm gonna steal. Not every black people steal stuff. They should know that. Like, white people steal! Asian people steal!

Similarly, Kendra shows how a purse, while a portable accessory for many, becomes hefty temporal baggage for racialized youth.

Kendra: They're, oh my goodness, they're always staring. I carry a purse, so they're always watching me or following me or asking me, "Do you need help?" every 5 minutes because I'm black and they think I'm going to steal. And it's not true, I have money so I don't have to steal. Not every black girl or girls of color steal.

Beyond having to think for others, each youth described a more physiological process, what Frantz Fanon describes as "epidermalization" (Fanon 1952: xv).

Epidermalization, or the inscription of race on the body, also takes time. The boy who screamed, "Look, a Negro!" takes Fanon's time while also ostracizing him from white spacetime. Just as Fanon was "overdetermined from the outside" (Fanon 1952: 95), each youth's time use was read as criminality and in need of constant monitoring or what Simone Browne describes as "racializing surveillance."

Racializing surveillance is a technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race and exercise a “power to define what is out of place” (2015: 16).

Browne (2015: 7) studies blackness as “metaphor and as lived materiality” with particular attention to blackness as an object of surveillance. The racializing power of epidermalization not only defines a person’s degree of humanness, but also their spatial and temporal location. As Cherise, Jerome, Tameka and Kendra illustrate, the white gaze is especially vigilant in stores. In retail spaces, the gaze functions as a tracking device locating each youth as out of place.

The physical, emotional and psychic labor resulting from racial violence forced many youth at Run-a-Way to not only think for themselves but for others. Notice youth’s use of the phrase “they think” to describe the vigilance of store clerks. “They think” was a recurring phrase throughout most of conversations about racism. In claiming to know how they are perceived by sales clerks, youth exercise their “double consciousness” to move through space and time. In addition to “epidermalization of inferiority” (Fanon 1952: xv) writes,

I was responsible not only for my body, but for my race and my ancestors. I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas, slaver traders, and above all, yes, the grinning *Ya bon Banania* (1952: 92).

Fanon ably demonstrates the psychic labor associated with a double consciousness. Psychic energy activates key synapses in order to connect with racialized histories, while establishing connections across space and time.

Several youth adhered to compressed schedules when shopping. Anticipating being labeled a “thief,” racialized youth feel the pressure to buy or bounce (leave).

RM: How do you think people are gonna treat you when you walk into a convenience store or a department store?

Remy: They be actin' real scared. Like, I'm just about to walk up in there and start hurtin' people or I'm gonna take things from their store. Sometimes I do, cuz I feel like if you gonna treat me like I am, I might as well. Whether I did it or not, if you feel like I did, you gonna call the police and I'm gonna go to jail. Even if I didn't do nothin'. So I might as well. You know? When I walk up to the cash register, they stand back a little bit. You know? They look at me like they studyin' me like they ain't never seen a black person before in their life. Like they just so scared like I'm gonna do something' to them. And that's hard cuz I feel... I just feel so alienated. Like...that's the one thing your racism where I feel like I'll never get used to. Can't even walk in a store to buy something' with money that I earned without feelin' like a clown. Like a fish out of water.

RM: And...is that a very time consuming thing for you too?

Remy: Yes.

RM: Can you say a little bit more about how it wastes your time?

Remy: It doesn't really waste my time, it more speeds it up. Cuz when I go into the store, I don't even go into a store unless I know exactly what I'm finin' to get, exactly where I'm finin' to get it from, cuz I'm trying to be in and out. And if I ain't ever been in that store before, I'm not goin' unless I'm goin' with one of my white friends. Cuz the anxiety...I don't want people to be something' me around, like when I walk into a store I never been to before then they really lookin' at you like, "Why it's takin' them so long to find what they need in my store. What they doin'?" They doin' something' else." You know?...It just gives me a lot of anxiety cuz it's taking me more time to look for what I need.

Cherise, Jerome, Tameka, Kendra, and Remy all describe how their blackness is surveilled and ontologically located as out of place and time. Each youth explains what it means to be seen, while seeing oneself. Within their accounts lies the convergence of Du Bois's "double consciousness" and Fanon's concept of "sociogenesis," or what Sylvia Wynter calls the "sociogenic principle."

The concept of sociogenesis underlines that: I am who I am in relation to the other who sees me as such; and, in a society structured upon racial hierarchies, becoming black is bound up with being perceived as black by a white person (as Fanon understood that we *was* black, according to the child's and the mother's eyes...) (Mignolo 2015: 116).

In Remy's words, they are not only seen or perceived by a white person – they are studied. Both Fanon and Remy are read similar to Katherine McKittrick's (2006: 93) description of black people in Canada – as “surprises.” Remy's blackness invokes wonder, while simultaneously alerting technologies of “racializing surveillance.” Sensing the anti-blackness of capital, Remy hastens their shopping, revealing the effectiveness of surveillance technologies within racial capitalism.

The time white storeowners *take* to surveil and profile Remy and the countless other racialized youth is yet another “possessive investment in whiteness” and time. The white gaze represents an illicit investment in “seeing” and “recognizing” nonwhite criminality. The less time racialized persons have, the more time is transferred to whites. The cruel irony is that those responsible for underwriting temporal corruption also hold the patent⁴² on technologies for “time and attendance solutions” (i.e. ways to prevent “time theft” by employees). Remy also uses a “white friend” to maneuver space and time. The “white friend” is meant to act as a buffer against racial violence. Though Remy's “white friend” may help Remy pass (temporally and temporarily) into white time, the pass expires once outside the store. By showing how time is not only lost, but accelerated by racial violence, Remy complicates existing theories on space and time, thus generating epistemological lacunae worthy of exploration.

Racialized youth demonstrate that shopping is hardly a “leisure activity” because racial violence compresses time. Perhaps the problem of quantifying racialized youth's “time use” is not solely a product of the countless seconds, minutes, and hours spent

⁴² Kronos is a company whose mission is to offer “the industry's most powerful suite of tools and services to manage and engage your entire workforce.” Among its many services, Kronos offers the “workforce timekeeper” to “help reduce payroll and labor errors by enforcing labor tracking and control.” <https://www.kronos.com/products/time-and-attendance>

processing racial violence. Maybe racialized youth are living on time that is not their own, what we could conceive of as borrowed time.

“Time use” or time theft? The criminalization of “agency.”

What does it mean to use that which does not belong to you? It means that your “time use” will be read as “time theft.” Among many Black Studies scholars, time represents a tool of violence and captivity (Hanchard 1999; Marriott 2000; Hartman 2002; Wilderson 2014; Sexton 2015; Warren 2016; Silva 2017). When black youth are routinely used by time, studying their “time use” patterns is an empirical error. However, I am careful to not construct time as a laissez-faire mechanism of social control devoid of a controller. Racialized social systems, specifically the police, consistently found racialized youth guilty until proven less guilty (of time theft). Each youth’s account serves as evidence that “police violence” is a redundancy and why “racial profiling, street murders, terrorism” are “standard operating procedure” (Martinot and Sexton 2003: 170). Subsumed within a category of those said to “have all the time in the world,” many black youth at Run-a-Way were left asking, “Whose time? Whose world?”

This section contributes to previous theories on the criminalization of racialized youth by describing an alternative site of criminalization – alleged “time use.” What kind of time do you spend/use when time doesn’t belong to you? Neferti Tadiar (2012: 794) uses the term “mortgaged time” to describe the experience of domestic workers who go into debt after obtaining work overseas. This debt constitutes a “Life they owe rather than own.” Racist lending restrictions make it so that racialized youth must first borrow time before using it. When time is money, it makes sense that poor, racialized

youth *owe* rather than *own* time. As racialized youth “use” time, to what extent are they abused by the same metric? Returning to Ronald Walcott’s conceptualization of CP

Time helps clarify this point.

CP Time actually is an example of Black people’s effort to evade, frustrate and ridicule the value-reinforcing strictures of punctuality that so well serve this coldly impersonal technological society. Time is the very condition of Western civilization that oppresses so brutally...(Walcott 1972: 8-9)

As racialized social systems place more youth in both educational and carceral detention (Wun 2016; Nocella, Primer, and Stovall 2014; Kim, Losen, Hewitt 2010; Sojoyner 2017), time use and abuse by time are further conflated. Hence, the criminalization of “time use” warrants attention to what is taken through racialized violence.

Youth’s experiences with racialization and racism *take* time and what Tadiar (2012: 791) calls life-time – “The overlooked productivity of social practices of life making that seem to lie outside contemporary modes of exploitation of life as living labor.” Time is taken by “processing” racialized violence and continuously questioning one’s placement in existing ontological orders. Time is also taken *by* whiteness and white supremacy. That is, time is taken from racialized subjects who must ask “Who the hell am I?” (Anzaldúa 2015: 221), “Aren’t⁴³ I a woman?” (Truth 1827), and “How does it feel to be a problem?” (Du Bois 1903: 7). For those aggrieved by the criminal-legal system, especially those in the “belly of the beast” (prison industrial complex), there is hardly a moment when both life and time are not taken by the state. Those in the grips of

⁴³ There exist different accounts of whether Sojourner Truth used “Ain’t” or “Aren’t.”

the carceral state, however, know that the reach of the beast is long and its craving for the social and physical death of racialized subjects is insatiable.

Racialized youth at Run-a-Way described countless experiences with police terror, including the following from Shanté describing an encounter outside a different youth program.

Shanté: One time I was outside at like 3 in the morning, right outside the shelter I was stayin' at. The cops pulled up and arrested me, put me in the back of the car cuz it was [after] curfew. And...they like, "Do you have any tattoos? Where's your ID? What's your name?" and they like, "Ok, you need to stop with the attitude." I was like, "I don't have an attitude. This is how I talk." They're like, "Oh, well keep on with that attitude and you're 'bout to go downtown." And I was like, "This is how I talk. First of all, I'm irritated cuz you just put me in the back of a cop car." And then there was bottles outside and he like, "Have you been drinking," and got the flashing light in my eyes. I was like, "You can do a breathalyzer. I'm clearly sober." "We can't prove that." And I'm like, "Do your breathalyzer." And they didn't wanna do it. And I was like 'cuz you know! Why would I have all these bottles just sittin' out here? I don't take authority well. They just disrespect us so quickly.

Shanté explains why racialized youth are more likely to be used by time than use it themselves. While violating curfew constitutes a temporal transgression, Shanté is always already read as transgressive, which means police read her alleged "time use" as criminal conduct. In addition to violating the program's curfew, Shanté also violates white time (Mills 2014) – a time that denies racialized youth coevalness within modernity. Consequently, the police suspend Shanté within white time while reassigning her to the worst possible time a person can do: "colored time" (cited in Sexton 2009: 62).

Shanté and other racialized youth are liable to more than a simple warning or citation for violating curfew. As racially-contradictory subjects in a *state* of white supremacy, racialized youth violate state-sanctioned curfews on life. For example, black

youth in urbanized space who reach and surpass 21 violate the violent and repressive curfew ratified by police intent on, to borrow from Dorothy Roberts (1997), “killing the black body.” As 17-year-old Melissa shows, black youth in particular are especially vulnerable to police terror.

RM: How do you interact with white people who are in positions of authority?

Melissa: Not well...Cuz...for instance, police. I feel like some of them are racist. Like they automatically assume...I'm finin' to pull out a weapon or something. And how they react to movement.

RM: Can you say more about that?

Melissa: Like, if I just take my hands out of my pocket then they think I have something or something. You know what I mean?

RM: Yeah. Have you had any particular experiences like that that you could share?

Melissa: Yeah, like when I was at a foster home and I was just sitting there and he [police officer] was like, “Why do you look like you have an attitude?” And I'm like, “What? I don't have an attitude.”...And then...he's gonna touch me and I was like, “Don't touch me!” And then he's gonna try to tackle me to the ground for no reason. I wasn't even doing anything.

When womanhood and femininity are read as white, black women, indigenous and women of color have few protections from extralegal violence, particularly sexual violence by police. As Andrea Ritchie notes,

Traffic stops, the war on drugs, stop-and-frisk practices, broken windows policing, and the regulation of people on probation or parole...all serve as facilitators of police sexual violence (2017: 113).

Questions seemingly absurd to many white youth are not only discerning, but vital to the safety and survival of racialized youth. Do I have to keep my hands out of my pockets? Do I keep my hands in my pockets? What happens when I take my hands out of my pocket? Will they think I will be pulling out something more powerful than a

wallet? Will I be accused of stealing? Will I be searched? Will I be arrested? Will I be sexually abused? Will I be next? The processing time of each of these questions literally and figuratively doesn't count. Read as a transgression, Melissa need not do anything to be the target of police violence. In other words, state violence against black youth is not contingent but "gratuitous" (Wilderson 2014: 7).

As Kendra describes, gratuitous violence spills over into her daily schedule, exposing the differences between black and white sociality.

Kendra: ...say that you're going to just go out and have a good time with your friends or something. Like, my own personal time and you've gotta worry about being targeted by the police because they see a group of black kids all together. So it's like, "What are they doing? They're probably up to no good." Just because of the color of our skin. But if you see a group of white kids you ride past them like they're not doing anything.

A gathering of white people is a "social," while according to Kendra, a gathering of black people is a threat to the "social" and, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, a threat to "social time." Presumed guilty until proven less guilty, racialized youth are prohibited from assembling, even if such assembly functions as a defense against the routine terror of the state. Kendra's remarks suggest that black youth are only recognized as agentic insofar as they are "criminally culpable" (Hartman 1997: 24). When "not doing anything" is not just read as "doing something," but "doing *something criminal*," the concept of agency backfires against black sociality.

Kendra was one of many youth who suggested that police read her and other black youth as "up to no good." Rahim, 16 years old, describes the criminalization of his "time use" while walking around "up to no good."

RM: Are there things that you feel take up your time but don't take up time for white kids?

Rahim: [pause] Well, not really. Well, I do got like one thing. One day I was just walkin' down the street and I was with... I got white friends too so I was with one of the white friends, right. And he was walkin' on the other side of the street, you know what I'm sayin', and the police pulled me over and gave me a ticket. They said it was like... walking up to no good. Like walkin' around up to no good and robbin' and stealin'. Somethin' like that. I forget the real name they put for it, but that was the definition of it. You know what I'm sayin'? Walkin' around up to no good, and I was just walkin' by myself. And he [Rahim's friend] was still walkin' across the street, he didn't get stopped for nothin'. I got stopped. He was like, "What'd they stop you for?" Like, I don't know, you know what I'm sayin'...They think you're walkin' up to no good, they stop you...They didn't stop the white dude. I was kinda mad...I felt like it was kinda racist, you know what I'm sayin'. Cuz I told them I was with the dude across the street and they just let him keep walkin', you know what I'm sayin'. Then he finally came across the street once he realized they were finin' to let me go, you know what I'm sayin'. He was like, "No, he's with me," you know what I'm sayin'. And after he told them that, you know what I'm sayin', like they got cool and like, "Oh, I'm just gonna write him a ticket."....And after that we just walked off..

Rahim could not immediately recall the charge, but as I asked clarifying questions he said the police called it "loitering." When white time is equated with active forward motion (Wright 2004: 58), police read racialized youth in the "inert city" (Donald and Lindner 2014), like Rahim, as "loiterers." Tragically, while activeness or activity may protect racialized youth from a loitering charge, it is no defense from the charge of agency.

For police and white civilians turned deputies, "up to no good" functions as probable cause and motive. On February 26, 2012, George Zimmerman used "up to no good" as a license to kill 17-year old Trayvon Martin.

Dispatcher: Sanford Police Department...

Zimmerman: Hey we've had some break-ins in my neighborhood and there's a real suspicious guy, uh, [near] Retreat View Circle, um, the best address I can give you is 111 Retreat View Circle. This guy looks like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about.

Emboldened by the notion that white people are not just protected by the police, but *they are the police*, Zimmerman read Martin's "agency" as criminality and ensured that his time at life would not exceed another minute. The "blameworthiness of the free individual," as Hartman (1997: 7) puts it, highlights the continuum between freedom and slavery. With "emancipation" came new forms of punishing black people and black sociality (Du Bois 1937; Hartman 1997; Blackmon 2008; Alexander 2010). Rahim's repeated use of the phrase "up to no good" harkens back to the period of Reconstruction, the Black Codes and convict leasing systems marking a seminal phase in "slavery's afterlife" (Hartman 2007). For many black youth, state violence is not just premature, but immemorial. Hence, claims that black youth have "all the time in the world," ignore the antiblackness of time and the world.

In addition to the inordinate amount of time consumed by racialized violence, the charge of "walking up to no good" exemplifies the criminalization of racialized youth's "time use." As a black youth from a low-income community, Rahim is not legible to police and many others as "good." Hence, Rahim must rely on his friendship with a white youth to buffer encounters with police. Once Rahim's white friend steps on the scene, the police, magically, "got cool." It is as if Rahim's white friend's own legibility within time underwrites Rahim's existence as a temporal subject.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have called attention to subtractive relationship between time and racialized violence. According to most racialized youth at Run-a-Way, racialized violence takes time. Youth spent time questioning why they were continuously monitored while shopping. They questioned why they were harassed by the police. They

spent additional time questioning whether racialized social systems and individuals would treat white youth the same way. I conceptualize this inordinate amount of physical, emotional and psychic energy as “processing time” or the time spent reckoning with racialized violence. The immense amount of processing time among black youth resulted in further deficits and debt.

Seconds, minutes, and hours as units of measure mean little when one cannot claim ownership over time. When the time is always right for white and wrong for nonwhite, is it even possible for racialized youth to use time? Youth describe the consequences of attempting to use time that did not belong to them. Youth’s “time use” was read as “time theft” and thus criminalized by the clerks of capital in various businesses, the police, as well as deputized whites charged with carrying out the mandates of racial terror when the state appears derelict in its duties or when 9-1-1 seems too slow for white standards.

If youth were not stealing time, it was clear that time could only be borrowed. While their white counterparts could own time, racialized youth at Run-a-Way could only owe it. Owing time placed youth in greater debt. If youth used their time in ways that did not underwrite the temporal investment and security of white life, they were seen as “irresponsible borrowers.” Time may be money for white people, but for racialized youth, time is debt. “Slavery’s afterlife” (Hartman 2007) is an ongoing and incommensurable debt that increases exponentially with the passage of time. As a product of racial capitalism (Robinson 1983) and black debt, white time subsidizes white life, while depreciating the value of black life.

In the first chapter of *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman (1997: 20) asks, “Why is pain always the conduit for identification?” Hartman sees a clear risk of using oneself as a reference to make sense of the suffering of others, particularly the enslaved. To what extent does beholding the pain of racialized youth preclude the possibility of sentience among this dispossessed group? Provoking empathy among the beneficiaries of racialized dispossession is a potential act of violence itself. As Hartman (1997: 19) notes, “...empathy is a double-edged, for in making the other’s suffering one’s own, this suffering is occluded by the other’s obliteration.”

Is it possible that pain is also a conduit for disidentification?⁴⁴ Put differently, does pain lead people to avert their gaze from the violence that they are complicit in producing precisely because they cannot identify with the suffering of black people? If Blackness, as Moten (2003: 1) notes, “is a strain that pressures the assumption of the equivalence of personhood and subjectivity,” then to what extent can white and non-black people identify with black suffering? To what extent is black suffering made fungible and coopted by these groups? If identification is conducive to cooptation, does it beget further violence through an elision of what is so salient (i.e. racialized violence)? Relationality is a generative concept for establishing links between identities. What happens though when the relations that define relationality between groups are marked by violence? Too often, relationality emphasizes commensurability and mutuality, thus eviscerating disproportionate and incommensurable suffering. Relationality devoid of responsibility can never be a site of peace, only further violence.

⁴⁴ While José Esteban Muñoz uses “disidentification” to “to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications,” I am more interested in how members of dominant identities, particularly white people, dis-identify from those ongoing forms of racialized violence.

I present these examples to trouble universal conceptions of time and space. Each youth provides further evidence that both time and space subsidize white life, while amassing an incommensurable debt to racialized subjects. The instances of racial violence I present in this chapter are not meant to immerse readers to a place of voyeurism. Rather, each account strains mutual conceptions of time. Racialized youth were consistently used by white time and white space. They demonstrated why the concept of “time use” lacks measurement validity – the extent to which a concept measures what it intends to measure. Given that racialized youth’s “time use” was routinely surveilled and criminalized, it appears that they were renting time, rather than using it. The relationship between time and space extends in Chapter 3 to explore what it means for the young and racialized to reside in the midst of Minnesota white.

Chapter 3: The Makings of a “Maybe Environment”: Nonwhite habitus within a white habitat

Introduction

What was once a destination for many during the “Great Migration” is now the basis for a good-old fashioned “talking to.” “Why are you moving to the Midwest? Are there *any* people of color there?” These were just some questions from friends and family after learning of my decision to pursue a PhD in Minnesota. Truth be told, I asked myself the same questions. Coming from mostly black and Latinx neighborhoods in Boston and Providence, I sensed a move to the Midwest would require some serious adjustment. My limited knowledge of US geography left me with provincial conceptions of states outside the Northeast. Before moving to Minnesota, my perceptions of the Midwest were restricted to fields and whiteness, which regularly mixed to form fields *of* whiteness.

Observing a whiter and whiter demographic at each rest stop, gas station, hotel and supermarket during the drive from the Providence to Minneapolis only reinforced my earlier assumptions of what Sara Ahmed (2007) describes as “a phenomenology of whiteness.” I learned my rendering of Minnesota was not inaccurate save for some parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Good Samaritans warned about venturing too far beyond Twin City lines, as the contrast between white and nonwhite grew more ostensible. However, even joking about the overwhelming whiteness of the Twin Cities, even when it is not snowing, obscures vastly different experience among many racialized groups. Studying racialized youth in the Twin Cities is, then, not an attempt to bring attention to a rich yet “understudied” site of sociological analysis. Rather, what concerns me is the potential of current and future research in urban sociology and urban ethnography to

make intellectual gains at the expense of many racialized youth rendered invisible by their temporal and spatial location within white spatial and temporal imaginaries (Lipsitz 2011; Mills 2014).

Representations of the Twin Cities in popular news magazines extend distorted and often sanitized narratives, precluding any acknowledgement that those disproportionately harmed must disproportionately benefit. In March 2015, approximately four months after I began volunteering at Run-a-Way, *The Atlantic* published an article by Derek Thompson titled, “The Miracle of Minneapolis.” Evidence of the “miracle,” according to Thompson, rests in several claims.

Only three large metros where at least half the homes are within reach for young middle-class families also finish in the top 10 in the Harvard-Berkeley mobility study: Salt Lake City, Pittsburgh, and Minneapolis–St. Paul. The last is particularly remarkable. The Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area is richer by median household income than Pittsburgh or Salt Lake City (or New York, or Chicago, or Los Angeles). Among residents under 35, the Twin Cities place in the top 10 for highest college-graduation rate, highest median earnings, and lowest poverty rate, according to the most recent census figures. And yet, according to the Center for Housing Policy, low-income families can rent a home and commute to work more affordably in Minneapolis–St. Paul than in all but one other major metro area (Washington, D.C.). Perhaps most impressive, the Twin Cities have the highest employment rate for 18-to-34-year-olds in the country.

Readers quickly recognize that the “miracle” Thompson refers to is an economic one. The Twin Cities is home to nineteen Fortune 500 companies, which, according to Thompson, helped subsidize “the Minneapolis miracle” through the redistribution of commercial tax revenues to “enrich some of the region’s poorest communities.”

The miraculous portrait Thompson creates, however, is what Jessica Nickrand, in a response also published in *The Atlantic*, called “Minneapolis’s White Lie.” In the

piece, Nickrand challenges Thompson's claim that commercial property tax sharing programs would "lift all boats," including low-income communities of color.

The policies that Thompson cites as responsible for keeping "the poorest areas from falling too far behind" were designed for a population that looks very different from what Minnesota looks like in 2015. The Minnesota Miracle Plan of 1971, which was mentioned in Thompson's article, required all municipalities in the metropolitan Twin Cities area "to contribute almost half their growth in their commercial tax revenues" to a fund that would be invested directly back into the community. This served the area well until 2002, when the Minnesota Legislature revised its property- and income- tax systems. This resulted in a nearly 10 percent decrease in revenue-raising capacity between 1999 and 2002. Since 2002, 90 percent of municipalities in Minnesota have seen their tax revenues drop another nine percent.⁴⁵

Nickrand suggests that part of Thompson's white lie involves the use of white people as a reference category. It is irresponsible, though, to entertain Thompson's romanticized picture of the Twin Cities, when Minnesota maintains the lowest rankings in the nation on key indicators of social welfare. For example, Nickrand references a Wallet Hub study that ranked Minnesota (296%) third in terms of highest poverty rate gap, just below North Dakota (328%) and Connecticut (340%).⁴⁶ Even the *Washington Post* took aim at Thompson's article, with a piece by Jeff Guo, titled, "If Minneapolis is so great, why is it so bad for African Americans?" Nickrand warns, "...if racial inequalities are not addressed, Minneapolis could find itself as one of the nation's poorest cities when it comes to racial politics and urban decline."

Just as racialized violence takes time, the racialization of space dictates the ontological pace of raciality within time. For example, the construction of the inner city

⁴⁵ Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/02/minneapolis-white-lie/385702/>

⁴⁶ "Note: The Highest Poverty Rate Gap category describes the poverty rate of a certain ethnicity in relation to that of whites. For reference, 100% would mean twice the poverty rate of whites." <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-highest-and-lowest-financial-gaps-by-race/9842/>

as the inert city⁴⁷ (Donald and Lindner 2014) requires the concomitant establishment of education (e.g. underfunded, under-resourced, understaffed) and employment (e.g. low-wage, dead-end jobs) opportunities guaranteeing racialized youth remain suspended in time. The systematic neglect, underdevelopment and divestment of majority black communities in the Twin Cities is key to the construction of what 15-year-old Devon describes as a “maybe environment.” What is guaranteed to many white youth is more likely a “maybe” to nonwhite youth, particularly those residing in poor, urbanized space. Youth saw a stark contrast between their life chances and those of their white counterparts.

As I demonstrate, the construction of ‘maybe environments’ requires a dual commitment to a “white spatial imaginary” (Lipsitz 2011) and a “white temporal imaginary” (Mills 2014). Both imaginaries treat affirmative action as “reverse racism,” interpret personal success as a product of a strong, individualistic work ethic, and believe in fairness, once the terms and conditions of existence for certain groups makes fairness impossible. However, both imaginaries and imagination have material consequences. In other words, the white spatial and temporal imaginary may thrive in a land of make-believe, while creating a land of need-to-leave for many nonwhites. It is no surprise that, in a piece published on November 16, 2018, USA Today ranked the Twin Cities fourth among the “15 worst cities for black Americans.”⁴⁸ How miraculous, then, is the “Minneapolis Miracle” for black and other racialized youth at Run-a-Way? How are guarantees for white people re-classified as “miracles”? What role do “white spatial

⁴⁷ Like the “inert city,” “stillville” refers to a place where both time and opportunity are at a standstill. The term is familiar to many black people from communities in the rural South.

⁴⁸ Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/11/16/racial-disparity-cities-worst-metro-areas-black-americans/38460961/>

imaginaries” (Lipsitz 2011) and “white temporal imaginaries” (Mills 2014) play in constructing suburbanized and urbanized space? What is the difference between staying and living in poor, urbanized space? What are the makings of a “maybe environment”? To answer these questions and others, I present this analysis of race, space and time in the Midwest.

Midwest or middle of white?

In *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, Katherine McKittrick (2006: 92) describes black people in Canada as a “surprise.” What then does it mean to be black in the Midwest? Does it mean believing in those deemed unbelievable? Perhaps, engagement with black life in the Midwest requires, what McKittrick describes as, “an engagement with wonder.” What wonder could possibly exist in a region of mostly “flyover states”? In flying over the Midwest, what is overlooked? Blackness? Indigeneity? Black people? Indigenous people? If black people are a surprise in the Midwest, are indigenous people similarly astonishing? Blackness and indigeneity both defy latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates and exceed containment within a specific region. Blackness, specifically, “anarranges” (Moten 2010) linear logic and what Michelle Wright (2015) describes as “middle passage epistemologies.” What makes black people such a surprise to Canadians is not that they exist, but that they exist in the midst of whiteness. To what extent, then, are black people living in the Midwest also located in the middle of white?

According to demographic data from the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2015 the Twin Cities was approximately 62.2% white; 17.3% black or African American; 9.6% Asian; and 10% Hispanic or Latino. Native Americans and Alaskan

Natives made up 1.6% of the total population of the Twin Cities. Because whiteness remains the central reference category for white sociality, a single nonwhite person has an incredible capacity to turn a predominantly white space into a hyperbolized nonwhite space. The magnification of nonwhiteness leads many white people to conclude that the sprinkling of a few faces of color shields them from any claims of discrimination or racism. “Minnesota nice” is an added line of defense brandished by many white people when confronted by accusations of racial violence. “Minnesota nice” requires reciprocity, mutuality, coherence, consistency, and a false equivalence between the experiences of white and nonwhite people. In theory, “Minnesota nice” is universally accepted and practiced. In reality, “Minnesota nice” legitimates some of the cruelest forms of violence against racialized persons precisely because the established discursive parameters prohibit the potential to be mean. In other words, the emphasis on “nice” summarily dismisses the potential to be anything but kind. “Minnesota nice” may be nice for whites, but is beyond a nightmare for many nonwhite people.

A 2013 report produced by the Council of Minnesotans of African Heritage (formerly Council on Black Minnesotans) reveals qualitatively different educational experiences between black and white students. For example, while 75% of all students in Minnesota graduate on time, only 55% of students of color do so. According to the report, less than half of all black third-graders achieved expected reading proficiency for their grade level compared to approximately 84% of their white counterparts.⁴⁹

Prospects for employment and escaping impoverishment are additional sites of struggle for black Minnesotans. While less than 5% of Minnesota’s total workforce were

⁴⁹ Retrieved November 24, 2014 https://mn.gov/cmah/assets/2013%20Annual%20Report_tcm32-356559.pdf

unemployed in 2013, 15% of black residents lacked a job, a gap nearly twice as large as the national gap. While black people make up just 8% of all Minnesotans, they represent 36.5% of those living in poverty. By contrast, whites make up 80% of the state population and only 9% live in poverty.⁵⁰

The salient mismatch between black and white within and outside the Twin Cities, however, should not overshadow Indigenous struggles to resist settler violence. Settler colonialism remains in full effect across Minnesota. Erich Steinman (2016) identifies six “dimensions of settler colonial power” as further evidence that settler colonialism is indeed a “structure, not an event” (Wolfe 1999): (1) Denial; (2) Foundational settler violence; (3) Ideological justifications; (4) Settler colonial control of population economy; (5) Cultural appropriation; (6) Denial and elimination of possible alternatives (Steinman 2016: 222). Steinman argues that the denial and concealment of settler colonial violence, ideological justifications for the genocide of Native peoples, assimilation-based education, racialization and cultural appropriation reinforce “the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands is justified” (Smith 2006: 2). “The Miracle of Minneapolis” wields important settler colonial logic when author Derek Thompson, attributes the city’s economic prosperity to “geographic blessings.” Here we see another example of the diminishment of settler colonialism when Thompson uses a euphemism (“geographic blessings”) to describe the violence associated with violated treaties, coercion, and theft.

In addition to prevailing logics of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one), manifest destiny, and the Doctrine of Discovery, treaties were integral to the conquest

⁵⁰ Source: 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2010-2014).

and genocide of Dakota and Anishinaabe peoples in Minnesota. The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and the Treaty of Mendota, for example, legitimated occupation of Dakota lands by both settlers and Anishinaabe peoples (Waziyatawin 2008: 32). Settlers coerced Native people into signing treaties by “withholding...rations (theoretically guaranteed from previous treaties)” or threatening to take lands by force without any compensation” (Waziyatawin 2008: 32). Adding to the cumulative settler colonial violence, settlers passed new legislation that unilaterally abrogated earlier treaties, while providing white settlers Dakota treaty annuities, and ushering in a US military–led ethnic cleansing campaign.

The limited number of Native youth in youth programming is a direct result of attempts to decimate Nations, while diminishing and disappearing settler violence (Steinman 2016). Though Native adults make up just 1% of the total population in Minnesota, they make up 12% of the state’s homeless population.⁵¹ During my time as a volunteer at Run-a-Way, I met only one Native youth. Though Native youth represented one of the smallest populations served at Run-a-Way, to not convey the presence of supposedly past settler colonial violence would be tantamount to reinforcing settler logic that holds Native peoples should not only disappear, “but must always be disappearing” (Smith 2006: 2).

The tension between indigeneity and migration (Sharma 2015) represents a potentially rich site for decolonial praxis. Few youth at Run-a-Way, and even fewer who participated in this research, identified as Indigenous or migrants. In working through this tension, it may be worth refraining from settler equivalence and considering the

⁵¹ “Characteristics and Trends among Minnesota’s Homeless Population.” (May 2019) Wilder Foundation 2018 Minnesota Homeless Study.

experiences of the unsettled settlers, or “those who are rendered as always-already oppositional others” (Sharma 2015: 171). Free trade agreements, deregulation, speculative capitalism, privatized land, environmental racism, the destruction of local economies and the paternalistic role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in increasing a debt that should be owned by developed, as opposed to developing, nations is all further evidence of the role of geopolitics in spurring migration (Sassen 1999).

The largest number of Somali immigrants and refugees in the U.S. reside in the state of Minnesota, many of whom are located in the Twin Cities. St. Paul is also home to the largest Hmong American community in the US. While scholarship on Asian racialization continues to grow (Chan and Hune 1995; Lowe, 1996; Jean-Kim 1999; Yu 2002; Maira 2009), the racial subjectivities of Southeast Asians, particularly Hmong, Cambodians, Laos, Karen, and Vietnamese, warrants further research. Many immigrants and refugees (Tang 2015) comport to tenuous timelines structured by the state, particularly the executive branch of government. In examining the relationship between citizenship and empire amongst South Asian youth, Sunaina Marr Maira reminds readers of the temporal liminality of many immigrants living in the US.

Citizens, too, must wait for state documents and wrestle with government bureaucracies, but immigrant time is not quite like citizen time. Immigrant time passes slowly, sometimes quickly, like the time of citizens, but it is always intensely bound up with distance, and with an incredible preoccupation with, and fear of, documents issued by the state (Maira 2009: 122).

Reducing analyses of race, racialization and racism to a black-white binary obscures the importance of relationality (Kim 2008) to processes of “racial formation” (Omi and Winant 1994). In some cases, the absence of particular racialized groups from

sociological research may serve as a generative site of inquiry as opposed to strictly an opportunity for critique. For example, the absence of youth who identify as Native, Latinx and Asian and Pacific Islander is due in large part to their population numbers within shelter programs. According to findings from the 2015 Minnesota Homeless Study, only 11% of homeless youth in the state identify as Hispanic; 9% identify as American Indian and only 2% identify as Asian.⁵² Though existing demographics limited opportunities to be more inclusive of other racialized youth, this research brings greater attention to a group of mostly black youth located in the Midwest and often the middle of white. In this chapter, I privilege a bountiful conversation with Devon – a black youth with aspirations to change the world through his music.

Minnesota Maybe

I heard a white man's yes is a black maybe.

Common
"U, Black Maybe"

The racialization of space is inextricably linked to the racialization of time and the temporalization of race. Time is different depending on the space and region of the world we inhabit, hence time zones. Assessments of space also differ depending on time. For example, going to school on a Saturday may feel very different from attending on a Tuesday. However, what happens when people within the same alleged time zone are read as temporally distinct? In *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian takes up this exact question, while arguing that social scientists prohibit "the other" or the exoticized object of social research from inhabiting the same space and time as the researcher.

⁵² Source: <http://mnhomeless.org/minnesota-homeless-study/reports-and-fact-sheets/2015/2015-homelessness-in-minnesota-11-16.pdf>

The history of our discipline [anthropology] reveals that such use of Time almost invariably is made for the purposes of distancing those who are observed from the Time of the observer (Fabian 1983: 25).

Sociology, however, is not immune from denying empirical subjects the opportunity to inhabit the same space and time as researchers. Despite sociology's emphasis on the iterative relationship between the individual and the social, sociologists demonstrate greater qualifications to be psychologists by privileging individual behavior, morals and values over systems and institutions. William Julius Wilson, for example, uses limited access to "social capital" as grounds for denying poor, black families coevalness (i.e. a place in time).

Inner-city social isolation also generates behavior not conducive to good work histories. The patterns of behavior that are associated with a life of casual work (tardiness and absenteeism) are quite different from those that accompany a life of regular or steady work (e.g. the habit of waking up early in the morning to a ringing alarm clock). In neighborhoods in which nearly every family has at least one person who is steadily employed, the norms and behavior patterns that emanate from a life of regularized employment become part of the community gestalt. On the other hand, in neighborhoods in which most families do not have a steadily employed breadwinner, the norms and behavior patterns associated with steady work compete with those associated with casual and infrequent work. Accordingly, the less frequent the regular contact with those who have steady and full-time employment (that is, the greater degree of social isolation), the more likely that initial job performance will be characterized by tardiness, absenteeism, and, thereby, low retention. In other words, a person's patterns and norms of behavior tend to be shaped by those with which he or she has had the most frequent or sustained contact and interaction. Moreover, since the jobs that are available to the inner-city poor are the very ones that alienate even persons with long and stable work histories, the combination of unattractive jobs and lack of community norms to reinforce work increases the likelihood that individuals will turn to either underground illegal activity or idleness or both (1987: 60-1).

Wilson makes clear that "social isolation" is less of a choice and more indicative of structural economic changes. However, by representing black people in urbanized space as trapped within a degenerative and regenerative system of social, cultural, economic and temporal regression, Wilson displaces an emphasis on structure in favor

of a psychosocial analysis. Wilson, though, is not unique. Many urban sociologists complicit in the reproduction of temporal stigma are simply doing their job. As a discipline predicated on interpreting the iterative relationship between individual and social structures and linking biography to history (Mills 1959), sociology prides itself on its unique capacity to reveal what is hidden in plain sight. As Pierre Bourdieu asserted, “The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden.” Unfortunately, few seem to question how sociology can honestly work towards such a goal when it remains complicit in *hiding* what is hidden.

In this section, I aim to complicate existing sociological analyses of the relationship between poor, urbanized space and time. I argue that in limiting their analyses to the interplay between culture and structure, urban sociologists have constructed inadequate representations of the temporal orientations of people residing in poor, urbanized space. How do racialized youth at Run-a-Way view their communities in relation to time? To what extent do youth reckon with the temporal stigmatization of their communities? What are the implications of constructing people within the same time zone as “behind” and “ahead of time”? To answer these and other questions, I asked youth how outsiders view their community. Devon (age 15) said,

Devon: Old, run down. We are not very up to date. I mean, a lot of us are still wearing Jheri curls. Yeah. I feel like...we’re definitely described as being behind or not very up to date.

RM: Why would you say that is?

Devon: Because...there’s nothing that’s really pushing us into the modern time. We live in crappy buildings, we get treated crappy. And so there's no real reason to push forward, so we just remain in this same type of... we just remain behind. There’s nothing pushing us forward.

RM: How do you think white people view you as an individual in relation to time?

Devon:...I don't like to assume, but I know some of them view me as being slow, lazy, not hardworking, not using my time the right way.

RM: Any reason why you think that?

Devon: I think that's because of my skin. Because that's what they see so many of my people doing, they assume that when they see me that I do the same thing as them.

Devon reveals a corporeal dimension to the temporalization and racialization of space. Once white people epidermally (Fanon 1952) define and spatially locate Devon, they place him outside of white time. Key to racialization is the ascription of value and worth. In Devon's case, white people rely on space as an indicator of individual value and worth. Devaluing space, in turn, justifies devaluing those within that space. For example, "crappy buildings" legitimate "crappy" treatment of residents. Towards the end of our interview, I asked Devon what age he believed people should have children. In Devon's response lies a provocative analysis of race, space and time.

Devon: Oh, I feel like it should be when you're out of college and you have a good job and everything is stable. Because it's very, very hard to raise a kid. I know this from personal experience. It's very, very hard to raise a kid in a maybe environment. Maybe I'll get a job. Maybe there'll be money coming in and maybe we'll have an apartment. I feel like if you're gonna have a kid it should be in a very stable, very for sure environment. I'm not saying you have to be rich and own a big house, but you should have a form of income coming in, you should have a house at least, whether it's just an apartment or whatever, but it should be a very for sure-environment.

When Common begins, "U, Black Maybe" by saying, "I heard a white man's yes is a black maybe," the rapper signals a double standard wherein what is guaranteed to whites, is but a possibility for black people. As Devon suggests, the use of "maybe" does not only function as a discursive tool. There is a materiality to "maybe." The

construction of the ghetto, for example, required uncertainty about how residents would survive. “Maybe they would make it out. Maybe they won’t.” Ambiguity and more specifically, the production of ambiguous life chances through the construction of space and opportunity structures, makes so many aspects of black life a “maybe.” Though race does not emerge as a key theme, Devon points out a striking difference between raising a child in a “maybe environment” and a “very-for-sure environment.” According to Devon, the overwhelming sense of uncertainty in “maybe environments” hamper efforts at time management.

RM: I’m wondering, do you feel it’s a maybe environment because the people in those communities made it a maybe environment? Or do you see systems that have created problems in the community?

Devon: I feel like it’s...shared between people who have not really worked towards making it a for sure environment so it stays a maybe environment. I also feel like it is a system. The government and the police and all the people we’re supposed to trust have also made this maybe environment a bigger even maybe. Because they’re not giving us jobs. But at the same time they’re taking our money and they’re sending us out to war. But they’re not feeding us. They’re not protecting us. And so it’s made it an even worse environment because of the lack of responsibility that they’ve put into our community.

RM: Can you say more about how systems like police, governments, make it a maybe environment?

Devon: I’m not saying all social workers are like this, but in the black community many, many families are torn apart by social workers because you take the, what do you call it. The... child protection services. A lot of them come in because it’s a single mother and she’s been raising her kids on her own and this social worker comes in and she one by one divides and conquers the family. She stops in all the time, she interviews the kids equally, and a lot of them just basically put the stress on the family and eventually the stress just breaks the rope and the family falls apart. And then the social workers come in and they divide up a family. And it makes the community worse because of the pain that that inflicts on the community.

Though part of this response seems to reinforce urban sociology’s emphasis on ambiguity as an inherent part of life in poor, urbanized space, Devon offers a structural

analysis of the makings of a “maybe environment” and broader atmosphere of uncertainty (Wood 2001, 2003; Burton and Tucker 2009). According to Devon, “the government and the police” are largely responsible for *making* so many things a maybe for racialized and dispossessed persons in urbanized space. Mentioning Jheri curls is not Devon’s attempt to put down other members of his community. Jheri curls are not a product of “cultural lag” (Ogburn 1922; Wilson 1996) or indicative of life in an “urban jungle” (Hannerz 1969: 20). Rather, Devon is attempting to intimate connection between race, space, time and temporality. The saying, “You don’t know where you’re going, until you know where you are coming from,” exemplifies a recognition among many racialized people that the past is always present.

As products of systematic racialized violence, “maybe” environments occupy a unique space within and outside of white time. Insofar as “maybe environments” are held to standards and expectations of white time, they remain within white time. Wilson, for example, maps “maybe environments” onto standards of white time including, heteronormative family formation, “breadwinners,” norms, punctuality, and stable work histories. It is not that racialized people do not exemplify characteristics of white time. It is that white time (Mills 2014) requires the exploitation and extraction of nonwhite life. Hence, white time limits a racialized person’s potential to actually find “stable work” because it takes nonwhite time via exploitation. Consider the experience of a single mother, who has to wake up at 4 AM to get her daughter ready for day care before going to her own job, At 5 AM, the mother and daughter are on a bus headed towards the day care. After dropping the child off at day care at 6 AM, the mother is back on a bus headed to work. However, the trip involves two different buses and the mother arrives

late to work. If time is in fact money, much of the mother's time spent preparing for work remains uncompensated by her employer. The employer legitimates its wage theft under the guise of white time, literally making gains (i.e. capital) at the mother's expense. As EP Thompson suggests,

Those who are employed experience a distinction between their employer's time and their "own" time. And the employer must *use* the time of his labour, and see it is not wasted: not the task but the value of time, when reduced to money is dominant. Time is now currency: it is not passed but spent. (1967: 61)

At the same time, "maybe environments" remain outside of white time by dint of their nonwhite composition. The temporalization of urbanized space, according to Anne McClintock, required that black people be cast into an anterior time, diametrically opposed to modernity.

...the urban slums were depicted as epistemological problems—as anachronistic worlds of deprivation and unreality, zones without language, history, or reason that could be described only by negative analogy in terms of what they were not...Like colonial landscapes the slums were figured as inhabiting an anachronistic space, representing a temporal regression within industrial modernity to a time beyond the recall of memory (McClintock 1995: 121).

As McClintock illustrates, poor urbanized space is a site of temporal stigma marking poor people as inherently regressive. Sociologists and urban ethnographers, in particular, are complicit in making poor, urbanized space asynchronous and temporally deviant (Cosser and Cosser 1963; Wilson 1987; Ferguson 2004). Opportunities to improve life chances in "maybe environments" are habitually late or absent. The certainty of ambiguity requires residents of those communities to maintain a unique relationship with time. Many of the youths I interviewed came from two notable "maybe environments" in the Twin Cities: (1) the Rondo neighborhood in St. Paul and (2) North Minneapolis.

The presence of the past in Rondo and North Minneapolis

From 1956–1968, under the guise of “urban renewal” or what James Baldwin⁵³ once called “Negro removal,” more than five hundred families were uprooted as construction of the I-94 freeway rammed through the heart of St. Paul’s black community. Urban renewal effectively destroyed several sites of black sociality including homes, businesses, churches and social houses. Racial segregation and more specifically antiblackness made many of these sites vital to promoting a sense of safety and affinity between and among black people. Today, black residents in St Paul still remember the process of urban renewal in part because the past for black people and many other racialized subjects is always present. In mid-July, many residents of Rondo and the broader Twin Cities gather to celebrate “Rondo Days” – a weekend festival commemorating the vibrant social life of the historically black community. On July 17, 2015, the then-mayor, Chris Coleman, declared July 17th “Rondo Remembrance Day,” saying, “Today we acknowledge the sins of our past... We regret the stain of racism that allowed so callous a decision as the one that led to families being dragged from their homes creating a diaspora of the African-American community in the City of Saint Paul.” Coleman then went on to issue a formal apology to past and present residents: “Today as Mayor of Saint Paul, I apologize, on behalf of the city, to all who call Rondo home for the acts and decisions that destroyed this once vibrant community.”

Like many other forms of racial violence, removing sites of black sociality, blackness, and black people in service of capitalism and “a possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz 2006) represents an incommensurable debt. It is unclear whether Coleman was apologizing for a continual undoing of black social life or for what the

⁵³ Baldwin made the remarks during a 1963 interview with Kenneth Clarke.

mayor treated as an isolated case of racism relegated to a specific historical spacetime. To ensure the past remains a present part of the black community in St. Paul, Rondo residents proposed the creation of the Rondo Commemorative Plaza. Unveiled on July 14, 2018, the Commemorative plaza offers “a space for education, contemplation, inspiration, and community building.”

Traveling far enough west on I-94 (the same highway that divided Rondo) will bring out-of-towners to another predominantly black community — North Minneapolis, otherwise known as the “northside” or “north.” According to a geographic profile by Minnesota Compass, blacks or African Americans make up 55% of the Near North community, while whites make up only 14%.⁵⁴ North Minneapolis is, according to the Center for Urban & Regional Affairs (CURA), a site of ongoing “strategic disinvestment and racial segregation.”⁵⁵ “White flight” and the shift from public to private investments resulted in decades of economic decline and undervalued housing stock. Consequently, the Northside is increasingly becoming the target of gentrification. As the population of young white families grows in North Minneapolis, many responses to key questions about black people’s future in the community begin with a “maybe.” “Maybe I’ll graduate.” “Maybe I’ll find job.” “Maybe, I’ll have to move.”

The makings of the Northside and other “maybe environments” reflect the makings of what Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1993) describe as “the underclass.” Racialized violence, “rapid economic growth and growing spatial deconcentrating,” white suburbanization, the withdrawal of commercial institutions from

⁵⁴ Source: 2013-2017 data. Retrieved from: <https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis/near-north>

⁵⁵ “Gentrification in Minneapolis and St. Paul: Retrieved from: <http://gentrification.umn.edu/north-minneapolis>

the inner city, “urban renewal,” institutionalized racism in housing markets and federal housing authorities, failed public policy, restrictive enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, geographic and political isolation are integral to the construction of poor, urbanized space and the “underclass” (Massey and Denton 1993: 118). The authors go on to note, “Segregation, not middle-class out migration, is the key factor responsible for the creation and perpetuation of communities characterized by persistent and spatially concentrated poverty.” The *makings* of “maybe environments” implies an ongoing construction ensuring that racialized histories are rarely past. Instead, subprime mortgages, gentrification, and “accumulation by dispossession” have become the standard operating procedures for “the racial logic of global capitalism” (Chakravartty and Silva 2012).

Despite their contributions, the extent to which Massey and Denton intervene in conventional social scientific understandings of poor racialized persons, however, is debatable. For example, while the authors acknowledge that the construction and persistence of the ghetto is a product of systemic racism and discrimination, their explanation for the perpetuation of the “underclass” reifies socially constructed conditions of the ghetto itself. Ultimately, through their own structural explanations of segregation, Massey and Denton pin themselves into a familiar culture-of-poverty-trap. Take for instance the use of “underclass.” The authors’ failure to put this term in quotes, even once, legitimates its reification. The “under” in “underclass” implies subordination. Not only is the “underclass” a subordinate to all other socioeconomic classes, but it is also temporally inferior. As several scholars have demonstrated, the ghetto represents “anachronistic space” (McClintock 1995) marked as “backward” and behind time

(Ogburn 1922; Coser and Coser 1963; Wilson 1996; Ferguson 2004; Mills 1997). By definition, the “underclass” is “under” other classes. Hence, social scientists can only make sense of “underclass” through a paternalistic and deficit ideology (Gorski 2011), that requires what is “under” to advance through racial progress and uplift. Remaining true to conventional social science, the authors turn to public policy to address ongoing racial segregation (Massey and Denton 1993: 229) while ignoring that poor, urbanized space remains underwritten by a “possessive investment in whiteness” and, more specifically, white space and time.

White spatial and temporal imaginaries

In the 1972 hit song “Across 110th Street,” Bobby Womack sang, “The family on the other side of town would catch hell without a ghetto around.” Here, Womack refers to the mutually constitutive relationship between the ghetto and the suburbs. Womack makes clear that suburban maintenance requires both the systemic construction and destruction of the ghetto. The “family on the other side of town” require uncertainty within “maybe environments” as proof of their residency in “very-sure environments.” Certainty is backed by a “possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz 2006) and what Bonilla-Silva describes as “white habitus” — “a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that *conditions* and *creates* whites’ racial taste, perceptions, feelings and emotions and their views on racial matters” (Bonilla-Silva 2010: 104).

It is no coincidence that “white habitus” is just a couple letters short of “white habitats.” Where white people live shapes how they orient themselves to the world. Existing sociological research reminds us that “maybe environments” exist in relation to

the guaranteed privileges of “very sure environments.” The blueprints of many white habitats form within what Lipsitz (2011) calls the “white spatial imaginary.”

...This imaginary does not emerge simply or directly from the embodied identities of people who are white. It is inscribed in the physical contours or place where we live, work and play and it is bolstered by financial rewards for whiteness. Not all whites benefit from the white spatial imaginary, and some Blacks embrace it and profit from it. Yet every white person benefits from the association of white places with privilege, from the neighborhood race effects that create unequal and unjust geographies of opportunity (Lipsitz 2011: 28).

The solipsistic (Rich 1979) design of many white habitats leave little space for analysis of the “structured advantages” woven in whiteness. Instead, personal success is naturalized and detached from the institutionalization of whiteness in education, employment, housing, the criminal-legal system and public policy. Building on Lipsitz’s concept and the correspondence between space and time, Charles Mills (2014: 29) argues that a “white temporal imaginary” is key to “structuring social affect as well as social cognition, and helping to constitute exclusionary gated moral communities protected by temporal, no less than spatial, walls.” Spatial and temporal walls extend beyond gated communities.

The walls of whiteness require the construction of other impenetrable walls difficult to break from the outside. I am referring to mutually constitutive relationships between gated communities and the ghetto, project, ‘hood, trap and/or barrio. Many racialized persons stay in one or more of these locations, because, as Saidiya Hartman (2007: 87-88) notes, they are places not meant for living.

We stay there, but we don’t live there. Ghettos aren’t designed for living. The debris awash the streets, the broken windows, the stench of urine in project elevators and stairwells are the signs of bare life. “The insistent, maddening, claustrophobic pounding in the skull that comes from trying to breath in a very small room with all the windows shut,” writes James Baldwin, daily assaults the residents of the ghetto, the quarters, the ‘hood. It produces the need to “destroy

tirelessly” or “to smash something,” which appears the most obvious path of salvation. As C.L.R. James observes about the San Domingo masses, they destroyed “what they knew was the cause of their sufferings; and if they destroyed much it was because they had suffered much.”

Spaces “not meant for living,” however, are not devoid of life. As gated communities strive to protect whiteness and wealth, insurgency brews among temporally dispossessed and racialized peoples in urbanized space. The brew will eventually spillover into an urge towards, as James Baldwin and C.L.R. James suggest, destroying that which is destructive. In other words, when segregated by the walls of wealth and whiteness, poor, racialized people remain intent on razing what is raised and rising. The asynchronous temporalities of “maybe environments” and “very sure environments” must recalibrate according to standards not set by white time, but by the resistance of racialized peoples.

Discussion and Conclusion

Calibrated according to white spatial and temporal imaginaries (Lipsitz 2011; Mills 2014), “The Miracle of Minneapolis” offers a future-oriented portrait of two cities haunted by a present past that disproportionately harms racialized and Indigenous peoples. Derek Thompson credits top-down economic theory (i.e. maintenance of capitalism) with the preservation of the “American dream.” Thompson’s universal claims offer further evidence of the use of white life as a reference category to make sense of the life chances of all Twin Cities residents, including nonwhite ones.

“The Miracle of Minneapolis” is more than a “white lie.” It is a form of journalistic perjury overrepresenting white life as life itself, while rendering nonwhite suffering invisible. There is a difference between a “miracle” and guaranteed success at every conceivable level of measurable success. However, for those with the complexion

for the protection, “miracles” and “guarantees” are apparently interchangeable. Perhaps, the real “miracle” of Minneapolis and greater Minnesota lies within the capacity of racialized persons and Indigenous peoples to continue to resist and fight ongoing forms of racialized violence.

Despite representations of poor urbanized space as inherently uncertain, I argue that racialized persons, including youth, retain an acute awareness of the future, making them more prescient than “present oriented.” When the response to a “yes or no” question is “maybe,” most youth know to be prepared to wait. For racialized youth in urbanized space, however, a “maybe” is not only a potential response to ordinary questions, but also a default decision on their life chances. Racialized youth at Run-a-Way interpret “maybes” as the product of institutional inequalities that offer some guarantees and *others* gimmicks. The promises made to the white youth cannot be understood without the false promises made to those nonwhite. Relying on “maybe” to gauge their life chances, racialized youth can hope for the best, but are inured to prepare for the worst. In other words, what was once a “maybe” becomes an unequivocal “no” for racialized youth.

Beyond the conventional deficit-based perspectives used in the makings of a “maybe environment,” there exists a more liberating framework. It is one less concerned with the imposition of uncertainty on poor, racialized communities through a top-down dynamic and more attentive to “radical” resistance that, remaining true to the etymology of the term (*radix*, Latin word for “root”), comes from the ground up. It is a paradigm that refuses to be contained by the fixity of “yes” and “certainly.” One that is deliberately elusive, fluid, dynamic and fugitive in order to escape the rigid confines of

dominant modes of thought, discourse and action. So when someone asks racialized youth, “Can we count on you to behave, be on time, do what we tell you to do, and stay within the lines?” The rebellious, dignified, and life-preserving reply might just be “maybe.”

Repeated denial from conventional opportunity structures is a time-consuming experience that results in a compression of one’s life chances and time itself. Within this compression, time accelerates. For racialized youth in urbanized space, there exists an asynchronic relationship between white time and important “age-graded” (Settersten 2004; Benson and Furstenberg 2007; Shanahan 2000) transitions in the life course (e.g. education, employment). This discordant relationship requires racialized youth to become extremely resourceful time makers. When racialized violence steals time, youth find innovative ways to regain temporal losses. The tactics and strategies used to recoup time are in some cases “criminal” and always transgressive. In the next chapter, I explore how youth’s protracted experiences in schooling and searching for work engender what I call, transgressive temporalities and insurgent forms of time.

Chapter 4: The Life Course Less Traveled: A Racial-Epistemological Critique

Introduction

White time cannot guide, let alone be a measure of the racialized life course of youth whose past is always present and whose future is *made* habitually truant. An always present past (Trouillot 1997; Hartman 2002; McKittrick 2006; Weheliye 2014; Hong 2015; Sharpe 2016; Silva 2017; Keeling 2019) and fugitive future⁵⁶ requires a transgressive relationship with time. Living a life along a “straight and narrow” path is conducive to those whose life course unfolds seamlessly along white time.

Within the context of the Life Course Perspective (hereafter “LCP”) the notion of “working twice as hard to be half as good” complicates existing conceptions of a linear time ordering life course transitions. Life course concepts like “de-standardization,” “de-institutionalization,” and “individualization” (Brückner and Mayer 2005; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008) serve as heuristics for assessing variability in age-graded transitions and making sense of a more flexible life course. Though these terms help decipher the life course of white youth with the “luxury of time,” they have little application in attending to racialized realities of poor youth in urbanized space who remain temporally bankrupt.

The central intervention I make in this dissertation is to explore how racialized youth reckon with time. In this chapter, I expound on this question beginning with a racial critique of the LCP. Privileging white logic and white life as the central referent for all racialized groups results in biased interpretations of what constitutes transitions

⁵⁶ I use “fugitive” here in a similar tradition to other critical theorists and Black Studies scholars (Hartman 2007; Harney and Moten 2013; Wilderson 2015; Gumbs 2016) to describe futures that for many racialized youth, are continuously “on the run.”

and trajectories. Prefiguring time and life as white warrants investigation into the transitions and trajectories of racialized subjects.

What concerns me is using the LCP and white time as measurements of nonwhite life and temporality. In my research, racialization and systemic racism protracted average times required to obtain an education and/or find a job. Within the context of education, white time ensures that there will always be a “behind” for some children to be “left.” Working within white time requires that black people be the last hired and the first fired. Delays due to various forms of racialized bias was further evidence that many nonwhite youth at Run-a-Way could not abide by the same timetables as their white counterparts.

This chapter examines the incompatible relationship between the LCP and the racialized life course of youth at Run-a-Way. I begin by revealing what remains absent from the LCP, namely analyses of racialization and racism. Lacking such an analysis grants the LCP license to treat conventional life course transitions such as school and work, as universally accessible. However, life course transitions are not functionally equivalent. Instead, youths’ endeavors to finish high school and find a job begin from a deficit. Youth recognized the need to work at least twice as hard, only to be half as good as their white peers.

Based on systemic delays in legitimate opportunities for success, racialized youth at Run-a-Way space pursued expedited pathways to make money, what some may call “fast money.” In other words, it is a hard road to a “fast life” (course) for racially “dysselected” (Wynter 2003) persons, especially youth in poor, urbanized contexts.

While “affluenza” may serve as an adequate defense plea for rich, white youth⁵⁷ who “live fast,” the poverty penalty in the criminal-legal system marks racialized youth guilty until proven less guilty. Because racialization vaccinates poor, nonwhite youth from “affluenza,” they remain overrepresented within carceral capitalism (Wang 2018). Consequently, racialized youth are not only liable for arrest, but also subjected to arrested time, based on dichotomies of “dominant” and “deviant time perspectives” (Cosser and Cosser 1963: 641-2). Before illustrating the centrality of racialization and racism in the life courses of youth at Run-a-Way, I detail the limitations of the LCP as a paradigm reliant on indivisible conceptions of transitions and trajectories to obscure heterogeneity, multiplicity and consequently erase racialized violence.

End-of-life-care for the life course perspective

Social scientists cannot understand the iterative connections between individuals and the social without first interrogating their analytical tools. In this chapter, I argue that one of the most utilized tools for establishing connections between biography and history (Mills 1959), the LCP, cannot attend to the everyday impacts of racialization and racism for racialized youth in urbanized space. Ignoring the complex biographies of racialized youth is not, however, simply a limitation of the LCP — it is a fundamental flaw. The absence of racialization and racism from the LCP is as revelatory as it is concealing. Omitting racialized violence from life course analyses exposes the assemblages of power integral to a racialized life course. These operative functions make possible the overrepresentation of the white life course as life itself. Cultivating

⁵⁷ In December 2013, State District Judge Jean Boyd sentenced Ethan Couch, a white teen from Texas, to 10 years' probation for driving under the influence and killing four pedestrians and injuring 11. Couch's attorneys successfully argued that the teen's affluenza would be best treated in a rehab program as opposed to prison.

ideas from fundamentally flawed ground will inevitably yield a fruitless harvest.

Garnering a more fruitful crop involves a removal of rotting and rotten roots. Failure to uproot these ideas leads social scientists to continue tilling the soil under which decaying theories lie.

The LCP works to construct homogenous and indivisible conceptions of the life course that are not only incompatible, but antithetical to the racial realities of racialized youth in urbanized space. The LCP's negligible engagement with racialization and racism reinforces a universal application of concepts and theories to make sense of the biographies of those always already rendered outside the universal. The elision of racialization and racism from life course literature is symptomatic of the white, middle-class norms, worldviews and orientations defining the paradigm's central concepts — transitions and trajectories (Elder 1985; Furstenberg et al. 1999; Johnson 2002; Uhlenberg and Mueller 2003; Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2004). Consider employment as a life course transition. To identify systemic racism as a determining factor in one's chances at employment would undermine homogenous interpretations of transitions considered "valid for all." Systemic racism as a concept, however, exceeds the conceptual capacity of life course transitions precisely because it is not a singular event over the life course, but routinized harm that places racialized subjects at greater risk of being dysselected from the category of human (Wynter 2003). In other words, racialization and racism are not life course transitions but *life course constants*.

By suggesting that transitions and trajectories are familiar to all and only differ qualitatively based on the individual, the LCP preempts critique of transitions and trajectories lacking the conceptual capacity to attend to the subjective realities of

racialization. The LCP, like many other subfields within sociology, places transitions and trajectories within a cause-effect framework. The purported utility of the LCP lies in its capacity to explain current and future behavioral patterns through an analysis of earlier life events (Elder 1985; Sampson and Laub 1990; Furstenberg et al.1999; Elder et. al 2004; Johnson 2002; Pallas 2004; Schafer, Ferraro, and Mustillo 2011). Within the LCP, the interdependence of transitions and trajectories represents a totalizing relationship devoid of nuance, resistance, heterogeneity, nonlinearity, multiplicity, ambiguity, inconsistency, contradiction, incoherence and incommensurability. It is a relationship that relies on coherence, intelligibility, and absolute certainty for making sense of biographical complexities. Even in its effort to think sociologically by highlighting the relationship between the individual and society, the LCP privileges explanatory hypotheses. For example, Glen H. Elder (1974: 21-2) defines the life course as

...pathways through the age differentiated life span, to social patterns in the timing, duration, spacing, and order of events; the timing of an event may be as consequential for life experience as whether the event occurs and the degree or type of change. Age differentiation is manifested in expectations and options that impinge on decision processes and the course of events that give shape to life stages, transitions, and turning points.

“Biographical structuration,” for example, refers to “the constraining influence of a person’s past for his or her present and future life chances” (Schafer, Ferraro, and Mustillo 2011: 1081). Despite its emphasis on agency, the LCP relies on deterministic concepts focused on the individual. In turn, individual responsibility becomes the primary mode by which the LCP reads “agency.” This explains why racialized violence remains illegible within the contemporary LCP. Racialized violence is not self-, but structurally-inflicted. Because of the LCP’s neglect of “racialized social systems”

(Bonilla-Silva 1997) and racialized violence as systemic forces, it privileges individual explanations to explain adversity in the life course.

Previous research positing that deviance in adolescence leads to deviance in adulthood (Glueck and Glueck 1950; Sampson 1987; Sampson and Laub 1992; Uggen and Massoglia 2004) establishes ideological and theoretical parameters that require the use of linear logic and linear time. Sampson and Laub (2003), for instance, argue that institutionalization (e.g. group home) during childhood facilitates a trajectory of deviance in adulthood. Absent from Sampson and Laub's analysis is any mention of the systemic forms of oppression shaping a child's chances of being removed from their family's care, such as racialized bias in reporting within the child welfare systems (Roberts 2002, 2003; Dixon 2008; Watkins-Hayes 2009; Mandel 2013; Children's Bureau 2016) and institutional racism within child welfare more broadly.

Because the LCP necessitates a relationship between transitions and trajectories, it inevitably relies on linear conceptions of time that work to illustrate progress from one life stage to the next. The timing of transitions is crucial to predicting trajectories (Modell, Furstenberg, and Hershberg 1976; Elder 1985; Neugarten and Hagestad 1976; Settersten 1999; Brückner and Mayer 2005; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008).⁵⁸ The *timing* of transitions matters as much to life course scholars as *the type* (Neugarten and Hagestad 1976). However, time in the life course is not strictly linear (Settersten 1999) and biographies are far too complex and dynamic to fit within predictive models.

⁵⁸ In their outline of the "paradigmatic principles in life course theory," Glen Elder Jr., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson and Robert Crosnoe (2004: 12) cite the "principle of time and place." However, by referencing "historical times" the authors treat time as an indivisible and de-racialized concept. Relying on primarily historical events *within* time (e.g. war, the Great Depression) is fundamentally different than critiquing the system used to measure when these events take place.

Studying the timing of transitions leaves white time — the system of measurement used to assess timing — unexamined and thus naturalized. The LCP's preoccupation with whether transitions occur on time (Neugarten 1968) reflects an unquestioned deference to white time. Even within life course scholarship seeking to complicate normative transitions, the threat of universality looms.

Studies on “emerging adulthood” (Arnett 2000; Tanner and Arnett 2017), for example, trouble existing conceptions of the timing of life course transitions by investigating an interim period of development from the late teens through the mid-twenties — a stage that is neither adolescence nor young adulthood. Within this intermediate stage of development, emerging adults have the privilege to explore worldviews, career interests, love, and relationships. In their research aimed at establishing a “synthetic portrait” of the subjective meanings young adults ascribe to their transition to adulthood, Douglas Hartmann and Teresa Swartz (2007: 276) identify what they call a “new vision of adulthood.” This new vision rejects conventional milestones (e.g. completing school, employment, marriage, home ownership) as indicators of one's transition to adulthood. What concerns Hartmann and Swartz is how the “most vulnerable” populations will fare in their transition given this “new vision of adulthood.” However, descriptors like “most vulnerable” function as a convenient catch-all to obscure the hierarchical ordering of ontological value based on racialization and racism. While Hartmann and Swartz (2007: 267) allude to “racial discrimination” as a potential factor in shaping future orientations of emerging adults, this allusion seems more like an illusion as any references to race, racialization, and/or racism are nowhere to be found in the authors' conclusions.

Emerging adults have the luxury of structuring their life courses in nonlinear ways. However, for youth in urbanized space, nonlinear life courses are products of routine racialized violence necessitating “one step forward two steps backward,” as well as the occasional side-step exacerbating the risk of becoming formally known to the criminal-legal system. While some scholars theorize the life course as “de-standardized,” “de-institutionalized,” and “individualized” (Brückner and Mayer 2005; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008; Shanahan 2000; Macmillan 2007; Silva 2012; Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson 2014), seldom do these scholars explore the standardization of racialization or institutionalized racism in the life course. By wielding race as an intervening/independent variable to explain divergent pathways of white and nonwhite youth, life course scholars render racialized violence invisible. What life course scholars describe as differences “based on race” are in fact differences constructed according to racializing logic.

John Modell and Robert Siegler (1993), for example, obscure the role of racism in shaping what they describe as “racial and socioeconomic differences in IQ.” In comparing the IQ scores of “whites and blacks from the 1920s into the 1960s,” the authors find greater differences in IQ scores of blacks and whites in southern rural contexts than in southern urban areas, which, they argue, results in greater racial differentials in IQ as compared to northern urban areas. According to the authors,

The persistent differences in the size differentials, however, point to the probability that historical trends in black population mobility have reduced national differentials in measured IQ between the two races, as blacks have moved to cities toward the North, in part because of superior educational opportunities (1993: 98)

By studying differences in IQs between racial groups, the authors naturalize features of biological racism. Using space (i.e. region) as an intervening variable shaping IQ, the authors exculpate themselves from any charge of racialized violence. Without attending to the racialization of space (Du Bois 1899; Drake and Cayton 1962; Anderson 1999, 2011; Massey and Denton 1993; McKittrick 2006; Pattillo 2008; Twine 2010; McClintock 1995; Mills 1997; Lipsitz 2011), the authors grant themselves license to use a variety of euphemisms to mask multiple forms of violence. “Mobility,” for example, is an inaccurate term to describe “moveability” or what Black Studies scholars call the “fungibility” of blackness (Hartman 1997). Black people didn’t simply move North toward “superior educational opportunities.” They were mostly *moved* North by racialized violence in the South. This is the “part” left out of the authors’ explanation for “black population mobility.”

Through earnest engagement with processes of racialization and racism, this research departs from the LCP by complicating the use of race as an independent variable. Like many other subfields in sociology, the LCP prides itself on accounting for the connection between biography and history to make sense of individual lives. Despite its effort to bridge the micro and the macro (Elder et al. 2004; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008), the LCP supports the permanence of ineffectual approaches to studying race by privileging the individuals or groups over institutions — a debt owed to social psychology. For example, the relationship between race and age-graded transitions⁵⁹ is most legible through damaged-centered research⁶⁰ seeking to explain patterns of

⁵⁹ Shanahan and Macmillan (2008: 232) describe “age-norms” as the expectations associated with specific behaviors or life course transitions, collectively agreed upon within a group.

⁶⁰ Eve Tuck (2009: 413) asserts that “damage-centered research...looks to historical exploitation, domination, and colonization to explain contemporary brokenness, such as poverty, poor health, and low

delinquency (Glueck and Glueck 1950; Sampson and Laub 1992; Uggen and Massoglia 2004), criminality (Pettit and Western 2004), poverty (Sampson and Laub 1992; Sampson and Laub 1994; Furstenberg et al. 1999; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008), teenage pregnancy (Geronimus 1996), and youth development (Garbarino et al. 1991; Burton et al. 1996; Elliott, Menard, Rankin, Elliott, Wilson, and Huizinga 2006; Alexander, Entwisle and Olson 2014). The LCP then uses race as an independent variable to remodel culture-of-poverty discourse under the guise of “social capital” (Furstenberg and Hughes. 1995).

The incestuous relationship between criminology and life course studies has legitimated some of the most racist scholarship in sociology. In research extending the legacy of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the infamous “Moynihan Report,” Robert Sampson and John Laub (1994) joined the popular trend from biological racism to cultural racism and laissez-faire racism (Bobo 1998), by shifting the blame from black ontology to black sociality.

Apparently, the fundamental causes of delinquency are consistent across time and rooted not in race (e.g., black inner-city culture) but generic family processes—such as *supervision*, *attachment*, and *discipline*—that are systematically influenced by family poverty and structural disadvantage (Sampson and Laub 1994: 539, emphasis in original).

Apparently, Sampson and Laub were attempting to avoid reproducing stereotypical representations of “black inner-city culture,” and in typical sociological fashion, they use “structural disadvantage” as a default explanation for delinquency. However, when the only conceptualizations of “structural disadvantage” include “family processes,” “structural disadvantage” is at best a vacuous term and at worst a culture-of-

literacy...Here’s a more applied definition of damage-centered research: research that operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation.”

poverty proxy. How Sampson and Laub can make claims of “structural disadvantage” without any interrogation of the structure of racialized violence or the structure of the criminal-legal system colonialism is indicative of their rigor, or lack thereof, in analyzing poverty in urbanized space. As Saidiya Hartman (2002: 772) notes, “The normative character of terror insures its invisibility; it defies detection behind rational categories like *crime*, *poverty*, and *pathology*” [emphasis in original].

Previous research by Sampson reveals just how anachronistic criminologists are when it comes to issues of race and the “urban poor.” According to Sampson (1987: 348), “...there is nothing inherent in black culture that is conducive to crime. Rather, persistently high rates of black crime appear to stem from structural linkages among unemployment, economic deprivation, and family disruption in urban black communities.” This is what life course scholars describe as providing a “structural analysis” of issues of race. What Sampson ignores is the how the use of “black crime” in the second sentence undermines the lackluster attempt to debunk perceived connections between black culture and crime in the first. If there is “nothing inherent in black culture that is conducive to crime,” then why use a term like “black crime”? More importantly, Sampson shows no contrition for the problem of studying “black crime” (Sampson 1987) when white supremacy is exonerated and emboldened by the criminal-legal system. The following excerpt from *The New Jim Crow* is instructive.

In the era of mass incarceration, what it means to be a criminal in our collective consciousness has become conflated with what it means to be black, so the term *white criminal* is confounding, while the term *black criminal* is nearly redundant... Whiteness mitigates crime, whereas blackness defines the criminal (Alexander 2010: 193).

The problem of studying “black crime” is that, as Alexander notes, it legitimates the category of white crime as an anomaly. Even when discussing incarceration over the

life course, Becky Pettit and Bruce Western (2004) fail to recognize how the use of “mass imprisonment” functions as a euphemism masking state terror against racialized subjects. As Dylan Rodriguez (2016: 13) notes,

“Disparity” is a bullshit concept, when we already know that the inception of criminal justice is the de-criminalization of white people, particularly propertied white citizens and those willing to bear arms to defend the white world. “Mass Incarceration” is worse than meaningless, when it’s not the “masses” who are being criminalized and locked up. So there is some furtive and fatal white entitlement involved in this discursive political structure [emphasis in original].

Like many criminologists and life course scholars, Pettit and Western (2004) use “disparities” and “mass imprisonment” to construct a nebulous category of structural inequality. The opposite of “disparity” is “parity.” However, holding out hope that sentencings between white and nonwhite prisoners will be on par with one another is futile, when as Rodriguez (2016: 13) notes, “...the inception of criminal justice is the de-criminalization of white people.” Sentencing parity itself is a pyrrhic victory for those who believe that prisons are “obsolete” (Davis 2003). The authors’ reference to black male imprisonment makes “mass imprisonment” an incorrect unit of analysis. Pettit and Western’s conclusions offer only opportunity for further dismay.

“Imprisonment has become a common life event for recent birth cohorts [*sic*] black non-college men” (Petit and Western 2004: 164). The authors’ inductions read as a sort of laissez-fair racism (Bobo 1998), where black men somehow manage to arrest and imprison themselves. Imprisonment does not magically appear in the life course of black men. A more accurate conclusion is that the “afterlife of slavery” (Hartman 2007) continues to haunt black people through expanding forms of captivity. Perhaps Pettit and Western could make a more useful intervention by examining “the end of mass

imprisonment's life course." Unsurprisingly, Pettit and Western appear to take a more apologist than abolitionist stance toward the prison industrial complex:

Although the mass imprisonment of low-education black men may result from the disparate impact of criminal justice policy, a rigorous test demands a similar study of patterns of criminal offending. Increased imprisonment risks among low-education men may be due to increased involvement in crime (Pettit and Western 2004: 164).

Such conclusions not only legitimate the criminal-legal system, but conceptualizations of criminality itself. Consequently, agency in the life course of black men is most legible in terms of "patterns of criminal offending." The LCP takes pride in its attentiveness to agency (Elder 1974; Bertreaux 1981; O'Rand and Kreckler 1990; Clausen 1991; Elder 1994; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Furstenberg et al. 1999; Macmillan 2007; Andrew, Eggerling-Boeck, Sandefur and Smith 2007; Shanahan 2000; Hitlin and Elder 2007; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008; Flaherty 2011). "Agency," though, is a complex term with the potential to harm racialized subjects. When is the agency of racialized people most legible? When the same "agency" life course scholars use to illustrate how poor families "manage to make it" (Furstenberg et al. 1999) is also used by criminologists to investigate "deviance" and "desistance" as "turning points" across the life course, "agency" becomes a pretext for increasing imprisonment rates of racialized subjects. Paradoxically, the unpredictability of the "urban jungle" (Hannerz 1969) precludes the possibility of agency. Instead, racialized subjects in urban space are left with "tool kits" (Swidler 1986) and "line[s] of action for which one already has the cultural equipment." Even "situated choices" (Schafer, Ferraro, and Mustillo 2011: 1064) cannot fully attend to the consistency and consequences of racialized violence

over the life course. Instead, “situated choices” privilege “social location and lived experiences,” while ignoring what it means to “choose” without choices.

There can be no agency without personhood. In “Black Time: Slavery, Metaphysics, and the Logic of Wellness,” Calvin Warren (2016: 63) asks “Why do we assume that blacks are agents if the ontological problem of blackness is not resolved?...To my mind, one must at least prove the ontological discontinuity of slavery before we can talk about political agency.” In other words, the “afterlife of slavery” precludes talk of political agency. Rather, “agency” serves as a tool for redeeming the irredeemable and/or recuperating that which one is complicit in killing.⁶¹

Demands to recognize the agency of the “urban poor” also serve as conscience-easing mechanisms for scholars seeking solace in the possibility that poor, nonwhite children may “overcome adversity” and escape the “racial enclosure that succeeded the plantation” (Hartman 2018: 470). To repose an earlier question by Hartman (1997: 20), “Why is pain the conduit for identification?” A desire for relationality belies unequal and violent (and perhaps, unequally violent) relations between white and nonwhite persons. Calls for “agency” function as feel-good maneuvers to bring about a faux-equilibrium between white and nonwhite people. But as Fred Moten (2003: 1) states, “Blackness...is a strain that pressures the assumption of the equivalence of personhood and subjectivity.” What appears to pressure “the equivalence of personhood” is not just blackness, but responses to blackness (i.e. antiblackness). In other words, categories of “human,” “not-quite human,” and “nonhuman” belie an equivalence of personhood.

⁶¹ Here, I draw on the work of Hortense Spillers (1987) and Renato Rosaldo (1993). In “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe,” Spillers (1987) describes how “kinship” loses meaning as a result of the ongoing violability of black life. Relatedly, Rosaldo (1993: 70) develops the concept of “imperial nostalgia,” which reflects a mourning for what one has destroyed.

Invoking “agency,” however, cannot eliminate antiblackness. As Calvin Warren (2016: 63) notes, “Every attempt to diminish or eradicate antiblackness with agency, political or otherwise, reproduces the very antiblackness that one is trying to eradicate.” Because white life and white time remain key referents for understanding the life course, “agency” lacks the conceptual capacity to acknowledge what it means to contend with routine racialized violence.

My research departs from conventional perspectives on the life course in a variety of ways, but its sharpest divergence comes through exposing what is concealed within a fundamentally flawed paradigm. However, this research is not a corrective to the LCP. Attempting to correct that which is fundamentally flawed is counterintuitive given that faulty foundations produce shoddy structures. Despite my consistent critique of the LCP for failing to attend to issues of racialized violence, I hold no expectations for the subfield to begin to do so. Such moves would be both disingenuous and dangerous. Increasing the legibility of minoritized subjects within the LCP legitimates new forms of violence against members of this dysselected category. The focus of this chapter is more generative. My aim is to illustrate the contours of a life course less traveled. Previous research examining racial differences between white and nonwhite youth emphasize the significance of “lower-quality neighborhoods,” “lower-quality schools,” and “family disadvantage” as determinants of life course trajectories (Alexander, Entwisle and Olson 2014). By contrast, I center the voices of racialized youth in urbanized space to show how limited life chances require a transgressive relationship with white time. In the next section, I substantiate black youth’s claims of having to work twice as hard to be half as good as their white counterparts due to

neglect and racialized bias in schooling. Believing that educational opportunities came late or not at all, many racialized youth at Run-a-Way concluded that school was largely a waste of time *and* space.

Planned obsolescent schooling

What if social institutions were like car parts – designed to eventually break or fall apart in order to sustain capitalism’s relentless desire for consumerism? Similarly, what if some of the most fundamental systems regulating the social world—including the criminal legal system, police, education, labor, etc.—were designed with inherent flaws to ensure failure? Moreover, what if the same institutions created the exact problems they are charged with addressing? Perhaps, it would mean that there exist many more “maybes” for racialized youth in urbanized space. What follows is an examination of the planned obsolescence of schooling for racialized youth. Some claim that schools were designed without racialized subjects in mind. However, the opposite is also true. Educational systems were designed precisely with racialized subjects in mind – they were the ones designated for exclusion. As evidence that “all are NOT welcome” in schools, 15-year-old Tameka recounts how classmates used race as a “genetic status-organizing principle” to locate Tameka in both space and time.

RM: Do you ever feel targeted based on your race?

Tameka: I used to when I was little...Yeah. Cuz I’d be the only...cuz I went to a mostly all white school and I had poofy hair with my glasses on. And they used to just look at me like, “Why is your hair like that?” I’m just like... like why *isn’t* your hair like this?

The apparent consternation of Tameka’s white peers is a product of whiteness’s discomfort with contradiction and ambiguity. At 16, Tameka seems acutely aware that racialized violence is a life course constant – one that does not come and go, but resides

in the “afterlife of slavery” (Hartman 2007). By flipping the script, Tameka places her white peers outside of a spacetime familiar to her and other black youth. Tameka reveals how white time orients students to a distorted understanding of who belongs in schools.

Similarly, school curriculum reminded racialized students that white time and white life were the primary reference points for all other knowledge production. Many black youth I interviewed identified few opportunities to see themselves reflected in their curriculum. When I asked Dominique about how they use their time in school, they emphasized the importance of not thinking about time at all.

Dominique: I try to forget about time at school too because it’s a lot of busy work and I hate busy work. And...I hate being told to do an assignment without, like, you know, having structure. You know? Like, I can’t do a class without structured notes. I passed my government class with 99% because he had structured notes... I like classes when it’s like that. Structured, I can actually look back. I actually learn better that way. And that helps it pass the time. But in, like, normal class when you’re just reciting a textbook, memorizing that section of the textbook and then taking a test, and then you’re gonna forget about it and then you’re gonna bring it up at the end of the semester, take that test, and then walk away, but some of the stuff that we learn is irrelevant. Like, I really do not care about Alexander the Great. That is not going to shape my future. I feel...we should study more current events, stuff that actually affects us now, stuff that we can have a conversation about. Cuz normal people *do not* talk about Alexander the Great or Cleopatra or King Tut.

While many racialized youth are disproportionately targeted as being “slow learners” or in need of special education, Dominique and many other black youth actually point out that educational curriculum is not only outdated, but potentially responsible for keeping them behind in school. Not only were schools designed without particular students in mind, they were also designed to fail. “Normal” classes, according to Dominique, rely on rote memory and arbitrary learning measures that disproportionately harm racialized youth. Many students like Shanté yearn for not just answers, but analysis of contemporary social problems. However, the institutionalization

of rote learning and biased curriculum in schools remind racialized youth that racism remains a life course constant.

Shanté: Even in school they don't... in the textbook maybe a half a page on slavery and all they do is talk about cotton. Like, they don't teach you nothin' about the past, all that we been through. All they teach you about is the world problems. Like, don't nobody care about that. We wanna know is why our people was gettin' hanged and beaten and havin' to slave in a field from sun up to sun down. Why y'all still treatin' us like we work for y'all every day?

Shanté critiques her school's curriculum for neglecting slavery while denying students answers to the continuity of racialized violence over the life course and from past to present. Shanté concludes with a stunning reference to what Saidiya Hartman might describe as "slavery's afterlife." For Shanté, slavery extended, rather than ended. At the same time, school curriculum precludes the possibility of exploring "slavery's afterlife" when its actual life is ignored. Expecting students to be on the cutting edge of visionary goals for addressing the "ills of the world" means little if schools are not teaching students about the ills of their country.

Eventually, youth's repeated references to the neglect of black history in school curriculum became a point of inquiry during interviews. The following is 15-year-old Devon's response to my question about the neglect of black culture in school curriculum.

Devon: Because a lot of black culture is not necessarily violent, but there's been a lot of fighting for what we believe belongs to us. And some of it has been through marching and peaceful and that's what they teach you about, because it's peaceful. The reason they don't teach us about Malcolm X is because Malcolm X believed in by any means necessary. You should get your freedom no matter what it takes. And that's not what they wanna teach kids, to take whatever's yours by any means necessary.

Beyond an emphasis on teaching and learning, school is also a site of discipline and as Devon suggests, schools will not teach students what is necessary to achieve

freedom. Devon echoes the thoughts of many revolutionaries over time, including Assata Shakur.

The schools we go to are a reflection of the society that created them. Nobody is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free. Schools in amerika are interested in brainwashing people with amerikanism, giving them a little bit of education, and training them in skills needed to fill the positions the capitalist system requires. As long as we expect amerika's schools to educate us, we will remain ignorant (Shakur 1987: 181).

Shakur is under no illusion that a disease (i.e. systemic social inequality) is treatable with a symptom (i.e. schools) of that disease. To entertain such a possibility legitimates the standard operating procedures of schools outlined by Shakur. As Shanté notes, schools offer few opportunities to help students survive, let alone be free.

RM: Do you ever feel people show a lack of respect for your time?

Shanté: Yeah, in school.

RM: So can you maybe elaborate on how?

Shanté: All...they want you to do is just sit there and read books and fill out papers. Like, you wastin' my time literally. Cuz I could be doin' that somewhere else or I could be doin' somethin' better. Cuz fillin' out books is not helpin' me put food in my mouth or clothes on my back.

Encouraging students to view education as an investment in future employment opportunities means little to youth when exigent material needs, including food and shelter, pressure the present. Perhaps schools are synchronized to white time – a time that that supports a structurally advantaged life course precluding the need to seek assistance from state services including housing and food assistance programs. Shanté cannot help but view school as a space to “waste valuable time,” leaving racialized youth feeling as if they are consistently beginning from behind.

As a subfield, the sociology of education has advanced important connections between the role of schools in producing future workers. In *Learning to Labor*, Paul Willis studies two groups of youth in the UK from the early to mid-20th century—the lads and the ‘ear’oles.’ Willis details processes of social reproduction in schools and the workforce, ultimately showing how “how working class kids get working class jobs.” Without examining how time is racialized and attending to the unique experiences of Afro-Caribbean youth, Willis ignores how white time takes time from racialized youth.

If one wishes to contact them, it is much more important to know and understand their own rhythms and patterns of movement. These rhythms reject the obvious purposes of the timetable and their implicit notions of time. The common complaint about “the lads” from staff and the “ear’oles” is that they “waste valuable time”. Time for “the lads” is not something you carefully husband and thoughtfully spend on the achievement of desired objectivity in the future. For “the lads” time is something they want to claim for themselves now as an aspect of their immediate identity and self-direction. Time is used for the preservation of a state-being with “the lads”—not for the achievement of a goal-qualifications (1977: 28-9).

As life course constants, rather than life course transitions, racialization and racism were integral to the educational experiences of many students I interviewed, including 16-year-old Remy.

RM: How is your time constrained based on how much harder you have to work compared to white kids?

Remy: Cuz white kids simply got it easy. They doin’ somethin’ for 2 seconds and it’s over...Or...let’s say we all get asked the same thing and the white people do everything that they were asked to do and they get to go, even though the black person did the same thing but maybe the professor wants to push them because they care or they wanna see if they can work a little bit harder...I feel like...when I raise my hand I get ignored [but when] the white kid raises their hand, the teacher goes to them. So I’m spendin’ more time on my work because I’m struggling and because the teacher not helping me. And so it’s taking me more time to get work done and to learn stuff, so it’s slowing me down in school cuz I have so little time to learn what the teacher’s teaching us every day.

Why does the LCP place such great emphasis on “timing” when time itself leaves racialized youth behind their white counterparts? Remy struggles academically, not because of “learning difficulties,” but due to an unequal distribution of time and academic neglect in the classroom. Remy and many other students are forced to learn in classrooms calibrated to “racial time” or the “inequalities of temporality that result from power relations between racially dominant and subordinate groups” (Hanchard 1999: 253).

For racialized youth learning and laboring in “enclosures” (Sojoyner 2016), an education feels more like a lock than “the key.” Adopted from Clyde Woods’ *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*, “enclosures” are what Damien Sojoyner (2016: xiii) defines as “historical contestations over power, resources, and ways of life that have ushered us to the present.” Sojoyner emphasizes that enclosures, like temporal orientations, are contingent on history and not static. Racialized bias within schools and the classroom is indicative of the fact that many of the “architects of black education” (Watkins 2001) were not black. Marcus, who is 16, echoes Remy when describing teachers’ preferential treatment of white students.

RM: So you talked about feeling targeted by your race, do you think about racism?

Marcus: Sometimes. [sighs] For instance, I have a group of friends, because I chose predominantly black people, and it could be something as simple as, you know, not being able to get a job as easy as somebody who’s white...In school sometimes with some teachers...they favor or they have more patience with the white students than with the blacks. Maybe based on their beliefs towards the culture, but I definitely see that in the school systems.

Though educational enclosures may not be static, racialized bias within schooling is a constant. In showing greater patience with white students than black students, Marcus's teachers cooperate to maintain an unequal system of time. Marcus's teachers do not, however, simply distribute time unevenly between white and black students. Rather, these teachers are responsible for robbing black students of time, while donating it to others. "Less patience" means less time with black students. Hence, the time teachers should be spending with black students if they had more patience is donated to a more racially-compatible group – white students. Both Remy and Marcus reveal how teachers perpetuate "racial time" by granting preferential treatment to white students. In expanding vast temporal inequalities, racial bias in schooling also adds to what Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006: 5) describes as massive "education debt" — a product of the unequal distribution of schooling resources between white and nonwhite students, as well as "historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies." The convergence of mounting education debt, racial time, and racialized bias within schools requires racialized students to work twice as hard only to be half as good as their white counterparts.

Despite liberal universalisms of shared success among all students regardless of race, racial time in education ensures that many children will in fact be left behind, not just in school, but time as well. Planned obsolescent education requires earnest consideration of the concept of failure in schools. What does it mean for students to "flunk" in systems designed to fail? It means racialized students will be "held back," not just in a grade, but in time. While racialized youth begin from a deficit, their white counterparts begin with "bonus time" (i.e. the time impatient and neglectful teachers

take from racialized students). “Bonus time” yields added benefits for white students, while increasing the “education debt” to racialized students. Racial time remains the standard metric for most low-wage jobs available to racialized youth. In the next section, youth at Run-a-Way make the case that opportunities for stable employment remain punctual for white youth, while habitually late or absent for themselves and others in their community.

“Keisha doesn't get the call before Kimberly.”

If schools are designed with fundamental flaws to ensure differential outcomes between white and nonwhite students, there exist built-in technologies to ensure racialized youth fail in the pursuits of stable work. My interviews made clear that most racialized youth at Run-a-Way were acutely aware of many of these technologies. I asked all youth to estimate how long it takes to find a job in their community. Estimates ranged from a week to a year. However, most youth concluded that it takes significantly longer for youth of color to find work than their white counterparts. Racialization and racism proved to be life course constants in youth’s efforts to find work. In the excerpt below, Shanté describes her search for work as an important source of temporal dispossession and inequality. By “temporal dispossession,” I refer to the twin process of theft and accumulation. Similar to temporal theft, temporal dispossession involves temporal gains elsewhere. “Racialized social systems” (Bonilla-Silva 1997) reconstitute such gains, exacerbating temporal inequalities between the rich and the poor.

RM: So how long would you say it takes someone to find a legitimate job in your community?

Shanté: That, man, a long time! Like, I think it’d be like 3 months, maybe even longer. I know my brother been lookin’ for a job for the past year.

RM: Wow. What causes it to take so long?

Shanté: First it's cuz we black. They thinkin' we gonna steal from their store and then we... most black people out here use drugs and they drug test at most companies now, so the drug test really get people off cuz if you can't pass your drug test you not gonna be able to get no job. The process is way longer.

RM: And would say that's a lot different for white folks when they look for jobs?

Shanté: Yeah...like, a lot of my white friends, we apply for the same job and they got the call the next day and I never got called.

Shanté's account of searching for work as a black youth provokes an important question: Who is stealing from who? Shanté accuses storeowners of racially profiling her and other black youth as possible thieves. To what extent, though, are employers taking black applicants' time through countless hurdles including drug tests, unnecessary background checks, personality tests, and other dilatory tactics, all of which is uncompensated time? Before Shanté's time is taken, it must first be devalued in relation to her white counterparts' time. However, Shanté's time is not worthless, but rather highly lucrative to employers who require racialized youth to generate a "diverse group of candidates" from which to reject.

Whether three months is an average estimate for finding work is beside the point. Shanté sees opportunities to achieve key life course transitions as significantly different from white youth. In this research, I ask how racialized youth in urbanized space reckon with time and Shanté answers by describing a protracted job search due to racialized bias among employers. However, the lengthening of time does not mean that there is more of it. As the time to find work lengthens, deadlines to meet basic needs shortens. In other words, racialization and racism not only takes time (see Chapter 2), but

compresses it. In the following exchange, Devon illustrates the material consequences of temporal dispossession for members of his community.

RM: So on average, how long do you think it takes someone your age to find a job in your community?

Devon: In my community it can take up to a couple weeks up to a month.

RM: Would you say that's a long time?

Devon: Yeah. I mean, definitely...yeah. It's definitely a long time...Because, well, people in my community, the reason why kids in my community get jobs is because their family life is struggling. And so if you're waiting a few weeks to a month, by the time you even get your job your lights could be off, your... you could be evicted...

As Devon shows, with each unit increase in the time spent seeking work, there is a significant decrease in the remaining time to meet basic needs for survival. There is then a concomitant increase in the possibility of greater suffering among those already economically and temporally dispossessed. As both principle and mechanism within the LCP, "situational imperatives refer to the demands or requirements of a new situation" (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008: 49). For many families living in poor, urbanized space, financial and temporal dispossession is not a new but a persistent situation marked by several "situational imperatives." As Devon shows, electric bills and rent payments cannot wait even though opportunities for employment take their time, and whatever time poor families have.

Constructions of poor racialized persons in urbanized space as languishing in time due to a lack of motivation and orientation to the future (Hoffman 1896; Moynihan 1965; Wilson 1996) ignore the inhospitable character of "racial time" (Hanchard 1999). Whether waiting on a job, waiting on an education, waiting for service, "racial time" (Hanchard 1999) and "white time" (Mills 2014) are designed to wear down racialized

persons. Several youth described disparate experiences between white and nonwhite youth in their search for a job. Kendra, for example, recounts what happened when she and her white foster sister applied for the same job at Dairy Queen.

RM: So on average, how long would you say it takes someone from your community to find a job?

Kendra: Maybe [pause] 2 months.

RM: Ok. Does that seem like a long time?

Kendra: Sort of. Because I...have a foster sister and she's white and...we both got an application to Dairy Queen and I put mine in and she put hers in, but she's the only one that got an interview back. So I guess it also depends on what color you are.

RM: Yeah, sorry to hear that. Did this happen just recently?

Kendra: Yeah.

RM: Did she get the job too?

Kendra: Yeah, she got it.

Kendra expresses dismay over what appears to be yet another rigged system. Attempting to labor in a system designed without her in mind means that Kendra will have to work significantly harder than her white counterparts. While it is unclear why Dairy Queen chose to hire Kendra's white foster sister over her, other youth found themselves in similar situations. In the narrative below, Rahim describes testing for racialized bias when searching for work with white friends.

RM: Do you ever feel like you're being racially profiled by people?

Rahim: Yeah, by the police and in jobs.

RM: And how so?

Rahim: Like... like every day, really. You know what I'm sayin'? If I was to walk down the street at night time, like 10 or 11:00, pretty sure I'd be gettin'

pulled over again sayin' "walkin' up to no good." You go to a job, you know what I'm sayin', and tryin' to, you know, just look like a regular person, you know. [Employers] Sayin' you probably look like a drug dealer to them, you know what I'm sayin'. They look at you like he's *really* tryin' to apply here? You wouldn't even get the call, you know what I'm sayin'. So it's racially profile. I done walked up to plenty of restaurants, "are you guys hiring?" They tell me no, then my [white] friend go ask they tell him yes and then, you know what I'm sayin', I just be sittin' there lookin' like, that's bogus! You get the job but I can't. And, like, my mom used the term Keisha doesn't get the call before Kimberly, you know. Like, you know what I'm sayin', the white girl gets the call before, you know, Keisha. You know. And that's how I been lookin' at it lately. Every time I try to go get a job or somethin', you know what I'm sayin', I do it on purpose. Like I said, I got white friends. So I go first, like I wanna see what they, you know, give it to me. I go up there like you guys hirin'. Some jobs, they say ok. They say we hirin', give me an application and everything. They do the same. But my white friends, they be havin' jobs. Jobs call them back to back. I can't get one job. Like, it's harder. You know what I'm sayin'.

RM: Yeah, that's a messed-up situation. That's a real situation too. I've heard people having to change their name on applications to use a white person's name...

Rahim: [Finishes my sentence] Just for them to get the call.

RM: Just to get the call. That's a real thing.

Rahim: And so after [learning] my name's Rahim⁶², they don't know if I'm black or white. They're like, "I wanna meet this guy," they finally meet me, you know what I'm sayin', they like, "Oh, he's black. I'm not gonna call him back." It done happen like that before too.

RM: When you think about that...I can imagine it's frustrating. And...does it take up a lot of time for you to have to think about this on the regular?

Rahim: Yes. I shouldn't even think about it. I should be, you know what I'm sayin', thinkin' about... I should be gettin' a job. It shouldn't be that hard, like, pretty sure there's a point in time where they [employers] didn't have no work history or anything like that, you know what I'm sayin', and they goin' in and they got a job. Why can't I go in and get a job? Maybe I'll be a good fit for this job or somethin', you know. They won't give me a chance, it's crazy. It does take up more time thinkin' about it then, you know what I'm sayin'...

⁶² Rahim suggests that his is more commonly associated with white people than black people.

The time to find work for Rahim is not only protracted because of delays in callbacks, but due to the extra time spent over questioning why “Keisha doesn't get the call before Kimberly.” “Processing time” (introduced in Chapter 2) consumes an inordinate amount of time that most racialized youth already lack. Rahim knows that racism results in temporal costs for Keisha, while giving Kimberly a temporal advantage. As illustrated in the previous sections, racialized bias in schooling and racialized profiling in searches for employment are like clockwork for racialized youth. Anticipating such obstructions in attempts to earn a high school diploma or find a job leads many youth to find expedited paths to making money.

Within life course research, stable employment represents an indicator of a youth's transition to adulthood (Marini 1984; Shanahan 2000; Johnson 2002; Gauthier and Furstenberg 2005; Osgood, Ruth, Eccles, Jacobs, and Barber 2005; Andrew, Eggerling-Boeck, Sandefur and Smith 2007; Benson and Furstenberg 2007; Macmillan 2007; Crosnoe and Johnson 2011; Silva 2012; Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson 2014). As life course constants, racialization and racism remain excluded from such scholarship, resulting in a disingenuous appraisal of youth's chances of finding work. As youth's testimonies suggest, racialized bias dispossesses youth of time and the opportunity for a seemingly standard life course transition. With numerous impediments to legitimate work, it is no surprise that youth seek faster options to make money.

(S)low wage labor can't compete with fast money.

Nuthin' left for us but hoop dreams and hood tournaments
Thug coaches with subs sittin' on the bench either that or rap
We want the fast way outta this trap
Whether it be nine to five or slingin' crack

Nas

We Will Survive

Life course scholars recognize that the life course line is seldom straight, but de-standardized and de-institutionalized (Brückner and Mayer 2005; Shanahan and Macmillan 2008). “De-standardization” and “de-institutionalization” involve detours and U-turns, making the life course less straight and more crooked for many emerging adults. However, what does it mean to follow a crooked life course within the context of systems designed to fail poor, racialized youth? It means poor, racialized youth remain in search of shortcuts that may not always follow the “straight *and* narrow” path, but are nevertheless straight⁶³ (and the fastest route to their destination).

Transgressing time may involve expedited and potentially illegal survival strategies (Williams 1989; Anderson 1999; LeBlanc 2003; Harding 2010). I argue that youth’s involvement in the underground economy is not only a legal transgression, but a temporal one as well. What if rather than viewing drug dealing as “going down the wrong path in life” or a “commitment to a life of crime,” there was greater acknowledgement of the level of resourcefulness among racialized youth forced to do more with less (time)? When forced to “work twice as hard to be half as good,” you “work smarter, not harder.”⁶⁴ Racialized youth involved in the underground economy maintain a level of ingenuity often mistaken for impetuosity. However, this provincial perspective obscures the unyielding pressures of time associated with beginning one’s life course from behind. Because of the dilatory payoff associated with

⁶³ To be “straight” is to enjoy a sense of contentment with personal circumstances (e.g. finances, emotional or physical well-being, sustenance, etc.).

⁶⁴ It would be a mistake, however, to assume that work within the underground economy is at all easy. The risks of arrest, incarceration, police terror, unconventional work hours and meager earnings remain undesirable to most with access to legitimate opportunities for work.

(s)low-wage labor (Newman 1999), the insurgent time of the fast life is a competitive substitute to the typical “nine-to-five.”

Whether hastened or delayed, the life course transitions of racialized youth in urbanized space are anomalous to the LCP. This section explores how racialized youth optimize time that doesn't belong to them. Stolen time results in temporal deficits, leaving racialized youth at a significant disadvantage due to unequal starting points in the life course. The synonymous relationship between time and money makes temporal deficits tantamount to economic ones. In this expedited course to cash, racialized youth consistently redirect and revise white time and the linear life course (Burton et al. 1996).

In presenting youth with several common sayings related to time, most youth identified with the notion that “time is money.” The equation of time and money is not strictly linked to the need to address exigent circumstances. Racialized youth saw time as money because job opportunities were habitually late. Finesse (18 years old), for example, expresses an unwavering confidence in selling drugs as the easiest and fastest way to make money.

RM: So what would you say is the easiest way someone your age can earn money in your community?

Finesse: Sellin' drugs. That's the easiest. Unless you can finesse...I mean, I was blessed with a *real good* mouthpiece. I can talk my way into anything, you know, so it's like... you got like 3 choices. You can finesse your way into getting a job that's gonna pay you decent enough money to live on, you can sell drugs, you can rob people. And that's like, growin' up that was the 3 types of people that I seen in my 'hood, you know.

RM: So you talked about the easiest way, what would you say is the fastest way?

Finesse: Sellin' drugs. Definitely. Sellin' drugs or, for females... I mean, I guess for males too sellin' your body if you know some people that are into that sort of thing.

To Finesse and several other youth at Run-a-Way, selling drugs was both the easiest and fastest route to earn money. Finesse identifies three “choices” to make money that seem more like constrained options. To “finesse” one’s way into getting a job reflects Elijah Anderson’s (1999: 36) notion of “code switching,” where racialized youth, and black youth, in particular, negotiate codes and etiquette according to particular racialized contexts. What makes “code switching” distinct from the “performances” and “fronts” (Goffman 1959) is that the codes youth switch between are highly racialized. Hence, the “presentation of self” (Goffman 1959) is a product of racialized scripts, including the one that measures black youth using “the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Du Bois 1903: 9). “Overdetermined from the outside” (Fanon 1952: 95), racialized youth, and black youth in particular, must finesse their way into legitimate work, revealing the continuity of slavery and freedom (Hartman 1997). Not all racialized youth, however, can “finesse” their way into legitimate opportunity structures. Members of this further “dysselected” category, according to Finesse, may find their way to the “fast life.”

Like CP Time, the fast life was an antiquated term with which only a few youth could relate. “Trapping,” which involves making, selling and/or distributing drugs (usually cocaine), proved a more relevant term to youth. The “trap” has multiple meanings. It is commonly associated with the space (i.e. the trap house) used to make and prepare drugs for sale. The “trap” may also refer to the ghetto, a mutually-constitutive counterpart to the suburbs with few exits. Old heads warn youth that death or incarceration are the two primary escape routes out of the “trap” while revealing how their communities are part of a larger project of planned obsolescence. Aware that their

communities are designed to fail, racialized persons, including youth, view their communities as what Devon calls “maybe environments” (see previous chapter). Asked about the fastest way to earn money in his community, Rahim offers the following.

Rahim: I say trap. Fast money.

RM: Ok. Why is that?

Rahim: Because it’s hard to get jobs out here now, you know what I’m sayin’. Well, even though it’s like seasonal jobs right now, but it’s just still hard to get a job. You know what I’m sayin’, if you don’t have a high school diploma or GED you’re not really finin’ to get a good job, you know what I’m sayin’.

RM: Do you feel like it’s harder for certain youth than others?

Rahim: I say it’s harder for black, you know what I’m sayin’, colored youth... you know, from experience...It’s more white people than black people with jobs, you know what I’m sayin’. And...I don’t have a work history because I never worked, so, you know what I’m sayin’...I’m not tryin’ to be racist or nothin’, but plenty of white people...they had a job and worked since they were like 15, 14. So they’d get hired quicker than...a person that never had a job before.

Though only 16, Rahim doesn’t need to guess who tends to be “last hired, first fired.” Rahim knows that this asymmetrical-temporal relation requires racialized bias between black and white applicants (Pager and Quillan 2005; Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). The cyclical problem of seeking work without prior employment experience and *within* a job racket is a futile pursuit. The absence of conventional life course transitions engenders an alternative relationship to time and opportunity structures. While Shanté also identified selling drugs as the easiest way to earn money in her community, when asked about the fastest way this was her response:

Shanté: A faster way. Drugs, that’s easy, but fast way. It would be sellin’ yourself.

Shanté was one of three girls and one gender non-conforming youth who, during their life course, worked as a sex worker, more commonly called being in “the life.”

Here Shanté shows why the life course is also gendered (Moen 1996, 2003; Moen and Orrange 2002). The gendered division of labor ensures that men work a single shift outside the home, while women do double and triple duty. Reproductive labor, affective labor, carework, and the labor-time required to reckon with acts of sexual violence, however, remain incommensurable within the logics of capital. Women and femmes, particularly women and femmes of color (Tadiar 2012; Ritchie 2017), may borrow time, but take severe risks when attempting to spend it.

Time is not simply lost due to the unequal value ascribed to women's labor. Rather it is stolen by sexual violence as a tool of domination.⁶⁵ Involvement in "the life" requires girls to spend inordinate amount of time processing multiple forms of violence that exceed containment within the conceptual limitations of a transition or trajectory. Life course scholars and criminologists conveniently avoid the role of the state terror in shaping life course transitions and trajectories. Instead, arrest and incarceration become volitional life course transitions (Glueck and Glueck 1950; Sampson 1987; Sampson and Laub 1992; Uggen and Massoglia 2004; Pettit and Western 2004). When state terror criminalizes not just dissent, but defense, survival strategies become liable to arrest and incarceration. Historically, police and sociologists, as Saidiya Hartman describes, have collaborated to create the exact crime they seek to fight and study, respectively.

What the law designated as crime were forms of life created by young black women in the city. The modes of intimacy and affiliation being fashioned in the ghetto, the refusal to labor, the forms of gathering and assembly, the practices of subsistence and getting over were under surveillance by the police as well as

⁶⁵ Jody Miller attempts to "investigate how the structural inequalities that create extreme—and racialized—urban poverty facilitate both cultural adaptations and social contexts that heighten and shape the tremendous gender-based violence faced by African American girls." Miller's analysis is based on an indivisible concept of gender violence devoid of processes of racialization. Consequently, Miller ends up reproducing a variety of culture-of-poverty tropes and appears to fall into the second-wave feminist trap of equating womanhood with whiteness.

sociologists and the reformers who gathered the information and made the case against them, forging their lives into tragic biographies of poverty, crime and pathology. The activity required to reproduce and sustain life is, as Marx noted, a definite form of expressing life, it is an art of survival, social poesis. Subsistence – scraping by, getting over, making ends meet – entailed an ongoing struggle to produce a way to live in a context in which poverty was taken for granted and domestic work or general housework defined the only opportunity available to black girls and women (Hartman 2018: 469-70).

Hartman’s broader aim in *The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner* is to expose the “open rebellion and beautiful experiment produced by young women in the emergent ghetto – a form of racial enclosure that succeeded the plantation.” It is an experiment in audacity – to resist racialized violence, state terror, and spaces not meant for living. Black girls, like Shanté, possess a brilliance, creativity, and social adeptness that defies the design of the ghetto, while generating new life chances and chances at life.

Finesse, Rahim and Shanté and several other youth identified selling drugs or selling themselves as the fastest and easiest way to earn money in their communities. Youth at Run-a-Way who viewed the fast life as both the fastest and easiest way to earn money had a clear vision of the unique way their life course unfolds. Prepared to begin a long and hard road filled with roadblocks, racialized youth in urbanized space become familiar with various shortcuts and detours along the life course. Some shortcuts and detours are efficient. Others transgressive. The next section elaborates on how the fast life represents the latter.

The hard road to a fast life (course)

Livin’ the fast life, in fast cars
Everywhere we go, people know who we are
A team from outta Queens with the American Dream
So we plottin’ up a scheme to get the seven-figure cream.

Kool G. Rap and Nas
The Fast Life

Unlike fast time in the fast life, white time has little purchase for youth read more as temporally consumable than as temporal consumers. The fast life represents an “accelerated life course” (Burton et al. 1996) with which the standard life course paradigm cannot keep pace. Previous ethnographic research on the experiences of racialized youth in urbanized space suggests the American dream remains exclusive, elusive, and illusive (Anderson 1999; Bourgois 2003; Burton et al. 1996; MacLeod 2009; Majors and Billson 1992; Newman 1999; Harding 2010; Rios 2011). In studying the experiences of black teens in urbanized space, Burton et al. (1996: 400) make the case that exigent needs and obstructed opportunities impair youth’s vision of what is possible over their life course. In response, the authors argue, youth pursue a “revised American Dream” (Burton et al. 1996: 400) oriented towards the fast life.

Among the various status symbols associated with the fast life are drugs, foreign cars, designer clothes, jewelry, vernacular dexterity, money, and weapons. According to Anderson (1999: 117), the fast life involves “living on the edge.” Dysfunctional as it may appear to those with legitimate opportunities for success, the fast life holds a captivating appeal for both prescient and present-oriented youth (Cosser and Cosser 1963; Moynihan 1965; O’Rand and Ellis 1974; Wilson 1987; Sánchez-Jankowski 1991; Burton et al. 1996; Wilson 1996; Anderson 1999; Furstenberg et al. 1999; MacLeod 2009). Thirteen of the thirty youth involved in this research had experience participating in the fast life.

I introduce the fast life or “trapping” as survival strategies used when conventional opportunities come slow or not at all. Seeking faster routes to escape

spaces not meant for living and opportunities designed without you in mind requires a transgressive relationship to time. What makes the fast life transgressive is not just a connection to illegal activity, but its threat to white time. Before expounding on these arguments, I illustrate youth's conceptions of the fast life, beginning with 15-year old Devon.

Devon: The fast life? Well, where I grew up, the fast life was the person that sold the drugs, you know, had all the fancy cars and basically had a chance of dying at any moment because of what he did. That was the fast life. Because if you were in that type of business...your life was gonna end pretty quickly.

Devon associates the fast life with truncated life expectancies. To live the fast life is to abide by an insurgent time, one that acknowledges that patience is “for the birds.” Mandated to “work twice as hard to be half as good,” racialized youth participating in this underground economy prefer to work smarter, not harder. If racialized youth must work twice as hard to be half as good, they have less time than their white counterparts. Working smarter and not harder gives racialized youth the opportunity to recoup time lost and stolen through experiences with racialization and racism. However, the fast life is not a long-term solution toward addressing the enduring forms of racialized violence over the life course.

The fast life is *fast*, hence its name. It is fast in the sense that it may not last. Spaces not designed for living place a moratorium on life and provoke an urgent need to reckon with time. Acting according to perceived temporal positions is what Robert Merton (1984: 264) calls “socially expected durations.” Merton contends that people make decisions based on the perceived length of experiences and their personal life expectancy. “Socially expected durations” serve a specific purpose for seniors and the terminally ill who tend to calibrate their decisions based on perceptions of their own

mortality. The possibility that racialized youth in poor, urbanized space hold similar “socially expected durations” as those approaching the end of life warrants concern and critique.

In studying “hustling as structure and strategy,” Loïc Wacquant (1993: 155), states “Much like the people who live from it, money from hustling ‘ain’t goin’ nowhere’ and is consumed by and in the moment: better play today when you have no assurance of having a tomorrow.” It is unclear, though, whether Wacquant considers the possibility that youth privilege nowness over the future because they can foretell the future based on present forms of structural and racialized violence. When time is compressed and the future is both fugitive and flee(t)ing, the time lies within an urgent and insurgent now.

Previous research suggests that racialized youth, mostly black and Latinx, enter adult roles at earlier ages than their white counterparts (Settersten 2003; Benson and Furstenberg 2007). Settersten (2003: 91), for example, finds that “non-whites, non-professionals, and those with lower educational levels cited age deadlines more often than their counterparts.” The pressure to meet certain developmental deadlines is, as Settersten (2003: 91) notes, more salient among marginalized youth whose life chances seem already “foreclosed.” What prompts earlier deadlines among nonwhite youth, however, remains absent from Settersten’s analysis. Perhaps racialized youth, and black youth in particular, anticipate countless forms of structural violence based on their “second sight” (Du Bois 1903: 7) and awareness of the many threats to black mobility within a white world. The fast life represents the most convenient and sometimes sole

detour along a hard road riddled with roadblocks. When I asked 18-year-old Finesse about who usually participates in the “fast life,” he had this to say.

Finesse: [pause] People that really got no other choice. I never heard nobody gettin’ into [the] trap that wanted to be in the trap. You know? Nobody wakes up and is like, “Hey, I’m gonna go sell some crack.”

What Finesse illuminates is the impossibility of agency within the “afterlife of slavery” and “social death.” What good is agency when you lack choices? This tension suggests a need for more accurate language and sharper analysis of the concept of “agency.” According to Finesse, structural violence inures people into the fast life. The coordinated brutality against black life, both before and in the wake of “emancipation,” is what Orlando Patterson calls “social death.” The three elements of social death, according to Patterson (1985), include: 1) total powerlessness and hence, what Frank Wilderson (2015: 136) describes as violability to “gratuitous violence,” 2) natal alienation, and 3) generalized dishonor. As “one of the most extreme forms of the relation of domination” (Patterson 1985: 1), slavery has no analogy. In Wilderson’s (2015: 140) words, social death represents “a matrix of violence where reciprocity is never possible.” Questions surrounding youth’s “motivations” for entering the fast life ignore their limited chances at life, hence the slow and protracted experience of social death. Within the context of social death, there are no “motivations,” only survival strategies and defense tactics. What does it mean to then “live fast” within the interminable pace of social death? To what extent do terms like “fast life” read as strictly volitional, while obscuring the ongoing assault against racialized subjects?

In centering the experiences of racialized youth with state repression, Lisa Cacho (2012: 145) adopts Patterson’s concept of “social death” to describe a “desperate space,

overwrought with and overdetermined by the ideological contradictions of ineligible personhood.” Cacho questions the utility of rights-based discourse for the “racialized rightless” – those “ineligible to personhood,” unprotected within the realm of deservingness, innocence, and denied a right to life. In turn, “total powerlessness, natal alienation, and generalized dishonor” become life course constants for the “racialized rightless.” In living the fast life, youth can expect to experience alienation and dishonor from friends and loved ones. Tanisha, who is 16 years old, says her brother’s struggles to find legitimate work led him to work smarter, not harder.

RM: How long do you think it takes for kids to find a job?

Tanisha: It depends on if you’re experienced with the job or if it’s your first time or if you’ve been fired a lot. But probably it’d take a month or at least 2 or 3 weeks.

RM: Mmhm. Does that seem like a long time?

Tanisha: Um, kinda. Cuz my brother...he was tryin’ to...like, my sister was tryin’ to help him find a better way and she got him a job with her at a Burger King and he decided to do it to stay out the streets but...they started him off with 2 hours a week...And then they kept givin’ him those hours and he was like I’d rather just keep doin’ the same stuff I was doin’ then just to come to a place for 2 hours and get paid like 8 dollars or 7 dollars an hour. So he stopped. And then he ended up in jail.

For Tanisha’s brother, the fast life represented an appealing alternative to precarious labor and when labor is precarious, time is precious. Tanisha’s brother saw little incentive in working a job offering a negligible return on his temporal investment. To what extent does Tanisha’s brother perceive work in the streets as a greater temporal investment than time in the formal economy? Rather than seeing the fast life as a “waste of time,” perhaps youth, like Tanisha’s brother, treat time as a highly-coveted resource and optimize it by forgoing slow money in favor of more efficient and insurgent paths.

After reminiscing over their own fast life ventures, “ol’ heads” (Anderson 1999) are quick to insist “slow money is better than no money.” However, the dilatory procedural tactics of employers leave racialized youth wondering, “how slow can they go?” Opportunities for “slow money” are either habitually late or nonexistent for racialized youth in urbanized space. Given the legacy of slavery and its afterlife, equating “slow money” with “slave money” is not hyperbole. According to Paul Gilroy (2009: 571), “...in the critical tradition of blacks in the West, social self-creation through labour is not the core of emancipatory hopes. For the descendants of slaves, work signifies only servitude, misery and subordination.”

The fast life presents lucrative opportunities outside of planned obsolescent systems. Because time is money, the fast life holds immense value, especially to those financially and temporally bankrupt. Racialized youth from poor, urbanized space have little patience for typical nine-to-five jobs that short-change them both financially and temporally. However, the fast life is transitory and the notion that those who live it will “likely end up dead or in jail” is widely accepted in poor, urbanized communities. Within the afterlife of slavery, though, black youth don’t simply “end up dead or in jail.” This “laissez-faire” oppression obscures ongoing forms of structural violence against black youth.

Participation in the fast life serves as an opportunity for racialized youth to revise their life course trajectories in accordance with demands to work twice as hard only to be half as good. The fast life, however, is not strictly a response to structural inequalities. Such dialectical interpretations of youth resistance obscure the role of desire and the pursuit of leisure (Kelley 1997) in youth’s decision to participate in the

fast life. As Kelley (1997: 45, emphasis in original) contends, "...the pursuit of leisure, pleasure, and creative expression is *labor*, and that some African-American urban youth have tried to turn that labor into cold hard cash." Kelley helps invert mainstream conceptions of labor and what is labeled "productive activity" for youth. The appeal of working less and achieving similar or greater levels of financial success as workers in the conventional labor market is an irresistible incentive, especially for youth with limited work experience.

Development scholars treat a desire for immediate reward as a "maladaptive" behavior and antithetical to "delayed gratification" (Mischel, Shoda and Peake 1988). Others attribute demands for instant payoff to children's lack of "environmental reliability" (Kidd, Palmeri, and Aslin 2013). Both theories negate that delayed gratification is a racialized concept privileging white, middle-class life (Scott 1973). In turn, scholars wield delayed gratification as a tool to scold "impatient" nonwhite youth for wanting, while ignoring the white youth who tease and taunt them with what they cannot have (e.g. symbols of wealth and privilege). Perhaps instant gratification signals poor youth's awareness of what is (not) to come.

Within the context of life course research, "schema" signifies "a bundle of knowledge that represents a subset of past experiences" (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008: 188). Similar to collective memory, schema orients people to time and space using experiential and historical knowledge as a guide. Observing and experiencing structural violence over their life course, youth at Run-a-Way knew what to expect from life, while recognizing the challenges of living, learning and laboring in systems designed to fail.

They lived insurgently in the now because the future is fugitive, thus remaining present-oriented and prescient at the same time.

Discussion and Conclusion

Attempting to make sense of the life course of racialized youth living in urbanized space using conventional life course theories is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole, making the LCP a paradigm for some, and a puzzle to many others. This chapter cannot recover all the missing pieces to this puzzle. Rather, this chapter adds new pieces that further complicate the puzzle. By problematizing the universality of time through the particularities of race, I argue that the LCP disavows the role of racialization and racism as life course constants that exceed the conceptual capacity of transitions and trajectories.

Paying unquestioned deference to white time results in inaccurate assessments of the life course. Students are learning, laboring and attempting to live in setups – systems designed to fail. Educational enclosures (Sojoyner 2016), low-wage work opportunities (Newman 1999), and/or the ghetto (Hartman 2007) are not conducive to living or improving life chances. Rather, they are sites of racialized violence. Can spaces that hold youth hostage actually be conducive to “life course transitions”? Is an ongoing form of structural violence still a “transition”?

The claustrophobic feel of enclosure engenders modes of escape and fugitivity. As youth demonstrate, the fast life may indeed be the fastest way to flee spaces not meant for living. Choices are not just limited or “situated.” For many racialized youth in poor urbanized space, choice itself is not possible. No youth would ever *choose* to reside in spaces that destroy life chances and chances at life. They would not choose to learn in

schools that are themselves the “locus of contestation,” (Sojoyner 2016: xi), as opposed to a funnel to another enclosure (i.e. prison industrial complex). Neither would they choose exploitation over a living wage.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that participation in the fast life is not a defining life course transition for all racialized youth in urbanized space. However, the opportunity to make in one week, what people make in a month, is a compelling proposition to those required to work twice as hard to be half as good. The mutually-constitutive relationship between urbanized space and suburbanized space (Du Bois 1899; Drake and Cayton 1962; Anderson 1999; Massey and Denton 1993; Lipsitz 2011) prompts consideration of how the fast life and conventional work opportunities are to a large degree co-dependent. The fast life is predicated on the proliferation of jobs and youth’s exclusion from them. Put differently, the slow, leisurely life course integral to the development of a white, suburbanized habitus depends on the evisceration of opportunity for many racialized subjects in poor, urbanized space.

The consistent elision of racialization and racism from the LCP makes it a feeble framework for understanding the biographical complexities of many youth inside and outside of Run-a-Way. Racialization and racism have no bearing in life course or time-use research, reflecting an inherent racialized bias privileging the experiences of white, middle-class youth over racialized youth from low-income backgrounds. In naming racialization and racism as salient life course constants, this chapter offers a careful and desperately needed critique of the LCP and studies on time-use. For racialized youth in urbanized space constructed as “up to no good” (See Chapter 2), the concept of “time use” in the life course is a misnomer.

Before concluding, I detail the vulnerability of critique. In presenting a racial critique of the life course perspective, I place myself at risk of a host of academic violence. For example, this critique makes me vulnerable to “academic ventriloquism” (Pavlenko 2003; Bucar 2011; Mayock 2016; Chandra 2017) by mainstream life course scholars. I am referring to how the ideas of critical and minoritized scholars remain unintelligible until uttered by conventional scholars. Consequently, what was once a radical, external critique becomes a self-legitimizing, internal critique by scholars who suddenly “acknowledge the limitations” of their theoretical approach and seek to improve the paradigm. I am also not seeking greater representation of racialized youth in the LCP. Rather, what I reveal is an entanglement of power that naturalizes the elision of racialization and racism as life course constants.

In Chapter 5, I explore how racialized youth interpret time in relation to whiteness and the experiences of white youth. Because of their white counterparts’ temporal advantage, racialized youth saw their time horizons as compressed. In spite of the temporal inequalities between them and their white counterparts, youth at Run-a-Way discovered ways to invert the terms of temporality to ensure that their culture was always most relevant and “up to date.”

Chapter 5: Why is the Time Always Right for White and Wrong for Us?

Introduction

In *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, George Lipsitz (2006) uses “possessive” as a double entendre. Whites are not only possessive of whiteness, but, according to Lipsitz, also predisposed to possession. That is, susceptible to be *possessed* by whiteness. “Possession,” though, is just a few letters short of “dispossession.” Without examining the extent to which possession requires dispossession, we place ourselves at risk of possession (i.e. spellbound) by antirelational thought. Does a possessive investment in whiteness provoke a possessive investment in time and space? Lipsitz (2011: 37) addresses part of this question in later work when introducing the “white spatial imaginary” and describing whiteness as “a structured advantage subsidized by segregation.” I argue that in addition to being subsidized by a white spatial imaginary and a white habitus (Bonilla-Silva 2010), whiteness is co-sponsored by white time (Mills 2014). In this chapter, I explore how racialized youth at Run-a-Way interpret time in relation to whiteness and their assessments of white youth.

Independently, the study of whiteness and the study of time are important interventions in sociology. A solid foundation for any empirical investigation of the relationship between whiteness and the “time perspectives” (Coser and Coser 1963) of racialized youth, however, has yet to be set. The cold, perfunctory, impersonal character of modern or progressive time is conducive to individualism, competition, and capitalism – all key ingredients to a “possessive investment in whiteness.” Those who refrain from participating in such a competition or who lack the various forms of capital to do so remain at a temporal disadvantage. Temporal disadvantage is not, however, a

product of individual decisions or irresponsibility within the temporal economy. As illustrated in previous chapters, a compost of structural violence denies, steals, and compresses whatever alleged time racialized persons possess.

As noted in previous chapters, “racial time” (Hanchard 1999) signifies both quantitative and qualitative differences between white and nonwhite temporality. Within racial time, the relationship between whiteness and time is subtractive for racialized people, yet additive and profitable for whites. Time is not race neutral. It remains a contested terrain privileging some and exploiting many others along the lines of race, gender and class (Forman and Sowton 1989; Tadiar 2012; Agathangelou and Killian 2015). In the first chapter, I made the case that time is racialized by distinguishing between CP Time and white time. CP Time, I argue, derives from an incompatibility between white time and the lived experiences of racialized persons, generally, and black people in particular. In this chapter, I draw on ethnographic observation and interview data to explore how whiteness factors into the antagonistic relationship between white time and racialized youth.

To what extent do racialized youth see their relationship to time as distinct from their white counterparts? Like race, whiteness is relational; hence, understanding how racialized youth reckon with time also requires examinations of whether they perceive white youth doing the same. To what extent does whiteness condition the time perspectives of racialized youth in urbanized space? The effects of whiteness as a “condition” (Lipsitz 2011) do not negate its potential *to condition* or harm nonwhite people. As whiteness constructs white people as “future oriented,” sociologists cast racialized youth living in poor urbanized space into anterior time, where they remain

preoccupied by the present (Cosser and Cosser 1963; Liebow 1967; Hannerz 1969; O’Rand and Ellis 1974; Wilson 1987; Burton et al. 1996; Anderson 1999; Furstenberg et al. 1999; Sharkey 2006; MacLeod 2009; Harding 2010; Gans 2011).

With whiteness being associated with those who are future oriented, where are racialized youth positioned and where do they position themselves on the temporal spectrum? How do youth assess life chances when opportunity structures remain calibrated to white time? What strategies do they use to “keep up with the times” when the time is always right for white and wrong for them? To begin answering these questions, I place my work in conversation with critical whiteness scholars and scholarship.

The temporality of whiteness

In *Black Reconstruction in the United States*, W.E.B. Du Bois (1935: 700-1) observed that white laborers, by dint of phenotype (and the social value ascribed to such phenotype) benefited from a “public and psychological wage.” Du Bois’s prescient formulation of whiteness paved the way for critical race theorists, critical whiteness theory and countless sociologists to explore the way whiteness works as a set of power relations between poor white workers and their black counterparts. By taking Du Bois’s notion of a “wage” literally, David Roediger (1991: 13) shows how poor white laborers capitalized on their whiteness while forfeiting the opportunity to forge alliances with their poor black counterparts in favor of solidifying a higher position within a constructed racial hierarchy. In offering allegiance to their capitalist bosses, poor white laborers failed to recognize that their class interests were more reflective of those they worked *with* (black people) than those they worked *for* (white elites). In short, poor

whites were “tricked” by their own whiteness (Wise 2008) and the future orientation of white time.

In “Whiteness as Property,” Cheryl Harris (1993: 1758) describes whiteness as a “consolation prize” white people redeem in case of (nonwhite) emergency (i.e. ontological threats to the *episteme*). Regardless of the stressors of life as white may be, white people will always be winners, precisely because whiteness is everywhere they want to be. Harris (1993: 1714) expands on the covetous relationship between whites and whiteness by suggesting that whiteness evolved “from color to race to status to property.” This is in part why Saidiya Hartman (1997: 24) describes whiteness as an “incorporeal hereditament or illusory inheritance from chattel slavery.” It is what Hartman calls “the property of enjoyment.” Referencing *Black’s Law Dictionary*, Hartman (1997: 24) notes to “enjoy” entails “the exercise of a right, the promise and function of a right, privilege or incorporeal hereditament. Comfort, consolation, contentment, ease, happiness, pleasure and satisfaction.” Whiteness provokes an orientation towards the future, while ignoring the presence of the past, including the interminable “inheritance of chattel slavery.”

As a “public and psychological wage,” whiteness provides both unconditional reassurance and insurance to whites, guaranteeing that even when times get tough, whiteness will be there. As Harris (1993: 1777) notes, whiteness undergirds the “settled expectations of whites” cultivated through legal affirmation of white privilege and anticipation for material advantages and “institutionalized privileges.” The unlimited protection coverage of whiteness is subsidized by a “white habitus” — “a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that *conditions* and *creates* whites’ racial taste,

perceptions, feelings and emotions and their views on racial matters.” As a racial critique of “structuring structures” (Bourdieu 1977: 72), white habitus opens a window to whiteness.

Similarly, “the white spatial imaginary” (Lipsitz 2011) represents a cognitive frame entertained by sponsors of whiteness who describe affirmative action as “reverse racism,” interpret personal success as a product of a strong, individualistic work ethic, and are generally more concerned with fairness, once the terms and conditions of existence for certain groups makes fairness impossible. Within this solipsistic (Rich 1979) space there is little room for self-interrogation of the “structured advantages” woven in whiteness. Personal successes and gains are then deemed “natural” and part of a “self-actualized achievement” (Owen and Dwyer 2000: 212) as opposed to products of the institutionalization of whiteness in education, employment, housing, the criminal-legal system and public policy. Despite its ubiquity, whiteness remains obscure to a majority of whites (Frankenberg 1997; Doane 1997; DiAngelo 2011). This is partly why Mills (1997: 126-7) sees whiteness as a “political commitment to white supremacy.” Mills (1997: 127) goes on to state, “Whiteness is not really a color at all, but a set of power relations.”

Expanding upon Lipsitz’s “white spatial imaginary,” Charles Mills (2014: 29) calls for a corresponding “white temporal imaginary,” to consider the role of white time in shaping social cognition. For example, to what extent does contentment in the present based on stable employment, housing and financial security underwrite prospective and speculative orientations to the future? More importantly, how do prospective and

speculative investments in whiteness dispossess poor, racialized subjects of the belief that time is on their side?

Though implied in critical whiteness scholarship, the temporal orientation of whiteness is not typically centered as a primary site of analysis. It is not enough to ask, “What is whiteness?” Like Michelle Wright’s (2015) proposal for studying blackness, we must also ask “when” and “where” whiteness is. In answering the “when” part of this question, critical whiteness scholars have established that whiteness is associated with that which is future oriented and modern (Goldberg 1993; Mills 1997; Perry 2001; Ahmed 2007; Mawani 2014). The latter part of the question (the “where” of whiteness) is more obvious given the white supremacist context in which ontologies form. Sara Ahmed (2007: 151) examines the “what,” “when,” and “where” of whiteness through a phenomenological lens and views it as the “what” that is “around.” Where Ahmed (2007: 150) is concerned with “how whiteness is ‘real,’ material and lived,” I intervene by considering the implications of “lived” whiteness on the temporal perspectives of racialized youth in urbanized space.

My objective is not to provide an exhaustive literature of whiteness. Instead, I highlight specific contributions, while intervening in critical whiteness studies in a different way. My central claim is that whiteness holds a unique and intimate compatibility with time. White time, I argue, is predicated on linearity, quantification, and an intolerance for ambiguity, progression, and modernity, all of which undergird “white logic” and “white methods” (Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). In becoming more possessive of and possessed by whiteness, white people are simultaneously *dispossessing* nonwhite people of the chance to claim any time for themselves.

I am interested in how whiteness infringes on the time perspectives of racialized youth cast into a spatio-temporal abyss based on their residency in poor, urbanized space. The association between whiteness and future orientations explains the equation of racialized youth in poor, urbanized space with present orientations. However, as I demonstrate in the final chapter, rather than being a paralyzing force suspending youth in time, present orientations mark a site of nowness, in light of a prescient vision of what is to come. Remaining ahead of time, the youth I studied found ways to invert the temporal terms of whiteness and their own racialized-temporalized positions by depicting their white counterparts as cultural appropriators and behind what was most “up to date.” In the end, racialized youth at Run-a-Way ensured their temporalities were most culturally relevant and “up to date,” while casting whiteness into a “played-out” past.

My findings not only intervene in existing literature on the sociology of time and whiteness, but also present new directions in youth resistance scholarship. Resistance to white time, like many forms of dissent, runs the risk of deeper embeddedness in the systems and structures that remain the target of criticism (Willis 1977; Young 2004; MacLeod 2009). As youth repurposed time to their benefit, many re-inscribed linear conceptions of temporality rooted in whiteness and androcentric thought. “Counter-frames” (Feagin 2013) to the future orientations of whiteness were still couched in what Wright (2015: 46) describes as “progress narratives” embedded in linear time. Wright critiques progress narratives for endorsing a return to an “origin” or singular point in history where blackness begins, rendering black (queer) women illegible. Despite the rhetorical limitations of linear progress narratives (Ray et al. 2017), racialized youth at

Run-a-Way invoke these counter-frames in a spirit of resistance by re-membering a past under continuous threat of evisceration by the future orientations of whiteness. While their resistance may be situational, the content of these counter-frames illustrates not only how “temporal power” (Bourdieu 1997) of whiteness works, but how it is contested. In the following section, youth explain why they believe white youth’s lives are calibrated to vastly different temporalities than their own.

“They got all the time in the world.”: How racialized youth view white youth temporality.

Without having been fully immersed in a “white habitus” (Bonilla-Silva 2010: 104), racialized youth at Run-a-Way were poised to speak about what they perceived as disparate temporalities between themselves and their white counterparts. Why give credence to racialized youth’s perceptions about the time use of their white counterparts? I am not seeking to validate youth’s perceptions according to empirical standards. What I am calling for, though, is an acknowledgement and appreciation of the time and energy exhausted by racialized subjects who must maintain a unique vantage point based on what Sylvia Wynter (1994: 50) calls the “genetic status-organizing principle,” otherwise known as “race.”

To racialized persons, understanding whiteness or white culture does not entail formal study. The oppressive ubiquity of whiteness makes it the most common educational default that racialized subjects have no other choice but to learn. In this *crash* course, some nonwhite people choose to appease whiteness. Some inhabit it. Others challenge or resist whiteness. In my research, I observed racialized youth relating to whiteness in all these ways, while also redefining the terms of this relationship. To

operationalize this relationship, I explored youth's perceptions of how their life chances and opportunities differed from their white counterparts and how those experiences shaped their perceptions of time. Below is part of my conversation with 17-year-old Tanisha. Before I could finish my sentence and ask whether she has more or less time than white youth, Tanisha interjected with this:

Tanisha: Oh, they can sit on they rich behinds.

RM: Ok. So what are some of the things that you think take up your time but don't take up their time?

Tanisha: Workin'. They don't have to worry about that because their parents do it...Like, just in case they did wanna get a job, they probably won't be turned around for a job at an interview. They probably get it on the spot.

While the extent of Tanisha's contact with "rich" white youth is unknown, she speaks with confidence and details what their lifeworlds look like. With opportunity structures already established in their favor, white youth, according to Tanisha, hold significant levels of privilege. Enhanced life chances were not solely linked to institutional (e.g., employment, education) opportunity structures, but also social/familial ones. The intergenerational transmission of wealth led many racialized youth at Run-a-Way to believe that white youth benefited from the luxury of time, while they and others like them remained in a race against time. Perhaps it is more accurate to say, they were also *a race* against white time.

When I asked 16-year old Dominique about differences in time use between white youth and racialized youth, they presented a picture of disparate schedules for both groups.

Dominique: Mm, I feel with white youth, stuff is more, like, either planned... planned and busy. Like, they... they have the resources to stay busy. Like, I rarely go to dinner or we're going hiking. But for black youth, I feel like those

occasions are rare and special and stuff like that. However, there are some routines like Saturday morning cartoons or whatever...Oh, especially like in my house, we didn't eat dinner until 10:00 at night. While here [Run-a-Way] it's 6:00...

RM: Why would you say you had dinner later when you were at home?

Dominique: I don't know, because I guess we got to bed earlier. But with my mom I didn't have a bedtime, so there's a lot more, like, awareness of time with white people...They're more set to the system. I shouldn't say aware, because...time is a manmade system. (Smacks lips) Bam!

Dominique unveils a budding sociological imagination by exposing the social constructedness of time. Dominique also answers an orienting question of this research: Whose time is it? According to Dominique, time is “manmade.” In their opinion, time is not only “manmade,” but also white-manmade.⁶⁶ White people, according to Dominique, seem to have a better relationship to time and, in their words, are more “set to the system.” In further exploring racialization of time, I asked Dominique about other differences in time perspectives:

RM: Do you ever think that maybe certain people function on a separate... like white people have their own time?

Dominique: Yes. Yes, definitely. Cuz no person of color would dare start school at frickin' 8:00 in the morning! We do not get up that early! Yes. Okaaaaay.

RM: So would you say time itself, do you feel like time itself is a white people thing?

Dominique: Yes, definitely! Because, you know, like...we don't have enough time to live...I wish everything could be 24 hours because that way the party doesn't end. You can be nocturnal if you wanted to.

⁶⁶ As a “gender-fluent” and “trans” person, Dominique’s critique signals an attempt to speak back to the heteronormativity of time. Both queer and queer of color theorists including Jack Halberstam (2005), José Esteban Muñoz (2009) and Kara Keeling (2019) critique time as privileging a social in which queer and trans lives literally and figuratively don’t count. Like each of these theorists, Dominique answers the question of “Whose time is it?” For Dominique and other queer and trans youth of color at Run-a-Way, time was concentrated in the hands of those privileged along the lines of race, gender, class and sexuality.

Notice how Dominique immediately links time, when marked as white, to education. This reflects Dominique's earlier point that time is manmade. White space (Moore 2008) is inextricably linked to white time. Both white space and white time present a threat to Dominique's identity as a black and trans person. The temporal constraints of whiteness force Dominique and other black youth into more than a race against time – they are also racing to survive. In imagining the possibility of a “nocturnal” existence, Dominique invokes important connections between time and marginality.

Jack Halberstam's (2005: 5) *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* details the ways trans people queer time through “nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity.” Queer time reflects the heterogeneity of time and serves as a response to what Halberstam (2005: 5) conceives of as “family time” – “the normative scheduling of daily life (early to bed, early to rise) that accompanies the practice of child rearing.” Multiplicative forms of marginalization make adherence to such “normative scheduling” an anomalous virtue and virtually anomalous to queer and trans nonwhite people. Coping with racialized homophobia and transphobia requires an inordinate amount of time that queer and trans people of color do not have. Like racialization and racism, racialized homophobia and transphobia steal time by forcing queer and trans subjects to process multiplicative forms of violence. Healing from cumulative forms of racialized and sexual violence sometimes requires new spaces of sociality where, in Dominique's words, “the party doesn't end.” This may take the form of actual parties or social gatherings that occur when most people are asleep. Queer racialized subjects also perform various forms of

labor that lie outside of the logic of capital accumulation and “bourgeois time.” In a critique of David Harvey’s description of the gender politics of time/space, Halberstam asserts,

...all kinds of people, especially in postmodernity, will and do opt to live outside of reproductive family time as well as on the edges of labor and production. By doing so, they also often live outside the logic of capital accumulation: here we could consider ravers, club kids, HIV-positive barebackers, rent boys, sex workers, homeless people, drug dealers, and the unemployed. Perhaps such people could be productively called ‘queer subjects’ in terms of the ways they live (deliberately, accidentally, or of necessity) during the hours when others sleep and in the spaces (physical, metaphysical, and economic) that others have abandoned, and in terms of the ways they might work in the domains that other people assign to privacy and family (2005: 10).

In marking time as white, Dominique provides a racial critique of time missing from Halberstam’s work. Living outside of “reproductive family time” does not offer refuge from white time, a persistent threat to the life of queer and trans people of color. Each additional murder of trans women of color gives Dominique legitimate reason to feel as though time was robbing them of life. Insofar as Dominique desires to live in a spacetime when and where “the party never ends,” they are effectively queering linear time and reproductive family time. White time, however, legitimates the coevalness of racialized violence and violence against queer and trans persons. Perhaps Dominique does not feel like they have enough time to live because white time (Mills 2014) is predicated on the extraction of nonwhite life.

Racialized youth at Run-a-Way were acutely aware of the benefits conferred by whiteness, including accrued time. When asked whether she has more or less time than her white counterparts, 16-year old Shanté said:

Shanté: Less time. They got all the time in the world.

RM: And why do you say that?

Shanté: People wait on them like it's nothin', like they Jesus or somethin'...It's just cuz they white. They automatically get more respect just cuz of the color of their skin. They even got a higher credit score than us already...We gotta hustle, we gotta struggle, we gotta work hard to really get what we want. And they don't have to work hard at all. They can get it just like that.

Shanté's response helps answer Erykah Badu's question when she sings, "Time to save the world / Where in the world is all the time?"⁶⁷ Like Tanisha and Dominique, Shanté views white youth as endowed with proprietary claims to time. Shanté identifies several "structured advantages" characteristic of a "possessive investment in whiteness" (Lipsitz 2006), while extending Lipsitz's conceptualization by showing how an investment in whiteness subsidizes temporal capital. Because time is money, "temporal capital" reads as a redundancy. I use the term not simply to signal the commodification of time, but rather to illustrate whiteness's worth and exchange value. In other words, temporal capital grants white people access to not only modernity, but as Shanté notes, higher credit scores. Hence, a "possessive investment in whiteness" reflects a possessive investment in time. Among the many privileges conferred by whiteness, time may be conceived of as material and immaterial capital maintaining whites' "settled expectations" (Harris 1993). Shanté reveals how these "settled expectations" mutually reinforce the unsettled experiences of black youth. In other words, white youth "got all the time in the world" because white people have *taken* all the time in the world by amassing tremendous amounts of wealth through global capitalism, enslavement, conquest, genocide, displacement, dispossession, and environmental destruction. With "all the time in the world," a higher credit score is just one of many bonuses for white

⁶⁷ From the song "Didn't Cha Know" off Badu's album "Mama's Gun" (2000).

people. Racialized youth, however, don't "got it like that" and instead must receive a temporal and temporary loan before actually using time.

Less time to work twice as hard to be half as good

Youth's protracted estimates for completing school and finding a job (see Chapter 4) suggest that they were aware that the paths toward such life course transitions were filled with roadblocks and detours that limited their life chances. "You have to work twice as hard to be half as good," remains a familiar expression to many black people. If this saying is accurate and black people must work twice as hard as their white counterparts, does this mean that they have half the time to accomplish the same goal? Most youth I interviewed expressed feeling greater temporal constraints compared to what they saw as relaxed life course transitions and trajectories among white youth. Youth described time loss as a product of increased physical, emotional and psychic labor. Remy is a 16-year-old gender non-binary youth who identifies as African American and Native and queer. Having not yet attended college, Remy is still able to project what they believe to be a likely length of time based on the experiences of relatives.

RM: How long do you think it takes someone to complete college from your community?

Remy: Um, I know it took my Auntie like 10 years cuz she kept dropping out and then she would go back and she would have to finish.

RM: Why do you think it took her a little longer?

Remy: She told me that she personally felt like she had to work hard... like, harder than the other kids, but what she meant by that was she felt like it was a race... she said she felt like a field slave. So like maybe if you work this hard you can get close to the master, you can get close to the teacher. So maybe if you do this right then you'll get this in return even though everyone else is doing it but you've just gotta work harder for it cuz I want you to show me the difference...It just gave her a lot of anxiety and she wasn't comfortable with that.

RM: Yeah. Do you feel like you and even maybe your auntie usually have to work twice as hard as white people to get certain things?

Remy: Most definitely... Yes, cuz I feel like I'm doing extra stuff...I don't wanna do their job cuz I feel like I'm doing 2 jobs at once. I don't wanna do extra stuff cuz then that's taking up time. It takes time to do extra stuff. If we both got the same amount of time but we got 2 different things to do and that one person has one thing to do, then that means that I have less time.

Remy's auntie's intermittent education is not due to a lack of effort or academic preparedness. Instead, racialized bias, whiteness, and the awareness of having to work significantly harder than most of her peers takes Remy's auntie's time. In other conversations, Remy expressed similar anxiety about school because of a heightened self-awareness in relation to whiteness and white students, in particular. Having to constantly think in such relational terms is, according to Remy, like "doing two jobs at once" and hence, a waste of time. The thought of working twice as hard to achieve goals similar to those of white youth is so appalling that Remy likens it to slavery. A sense of enslavement can only exist in relation to the beneficiaries of this "peculiar institution." In the following narrative, 16-year-old Rahim explains why he feels he has to do more with less (time).

RM: So how much harder do you feel you have to work compared to white kids your age to achieve the same goal?

Rahim: 100%. You really gotta work just to get to where they at because their moms and dads, they got companies so they just pass down... You know what I'm sayin'? And it's gonna be super hard for me to...come from the bottom to the top...

RM: So that's like... twice as hard?

Rahim: Yeah, twice. Yeah.

RM: If you have to work twice as hard does that mean you have less time to do it?

Rahim: Well, yeah. You could say that. I have less time to do more. Cuz, like, they're always ahead. It's always gonna be a point in time they're gonna be ahead of you so, you know what I'm sayin'. Just to catch up...it's one times harder [harder the first time] and then the second time is like twice as harder. You should be...right there with them. Not above but with them, you know what I'm sayin'?

Rahim feels forced to work 100 percent harder to achieve some sort of parity with white youth. Working 100 percent harder may not always mean that you are working twice as hard. In some cases, youth like Rahim may already be working significantly harder than his white counterparts. Hence, when he works 100 percent harder, he may be working *at least* twice as hard as his white counterparts to achieve similar goals. The need to “catch up” to white youth “always ahead” in time signals Rahim’s awareness that race is temporalized. Rahim has “less time to do more,” due to the cumulative advantages associated with whiteness, as well as the cumulative struggles for nonwhite youth. Rahim describes an intergenerational transmission of wealth and privilege, best exemplified in what Robert Merton (1968) calls “the Matthew Effect.” According to Robert Merton (1968), the Matthew effect, or “cumulative dis/advantage hypothesis” (Pallas 2003), posits that advantages or disadvantages of individuals and groups cumulate over the life course, explaining why “the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.” Miguel, who is 17 years old, explains time shortage as a corollary to an intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantage.

RM: When you think about what you have to accomplish on a day-to-day basis, do you feel you have more or less time than white kids?

Miguel: Less time...Because I'm usually working to help my mom.

RM: So what are some things that you think take up your time every day, but may not take up time for white kids?

Miguel: School... It's just I have to work harder than them cuz I usually [have] 30 minutes before school ends to go to work, so I always be asking for all the notes teachers and doing the homework on the bus, focusing on schoolwork on the bus until I get to the bus stop to work, then go home, change real fast, leave the backpack, and go directly to work... They usually don't cuz their parents either pick them up or give them a bike to go home.

In addition to school, Miguel is one of many students who holds down a part-time job while still earning a high school degree. Compared to depictions of racialized youth in urbanized space as incapable of planning or thinking long-term, Miguel has a well-structured routine built around his school–work life. Miguel also identifies employment as a key source of “time use.” While Miguel’s peers may be doing homework at home, he must do his homework on his way to work. When forced to do homework on the bus on the way to work, is Miguel using time or being used by it? When school and work are synchronized to white time, racialized youth will inevitably be late. Miguel cannot possibly keep up in school when white time requires many migrant youth to work after-school jobs to make ends meet. As Miguel shows, white time demands deference to temporal standards to ensure white wealth increases at the expense, extraction and exploitation of nonwhite life.

“White people — do you believe in black privilege?”: Interrogating whiteness and white time.

To youth at Run-a-Way, whiteness, white identity, and white culture were synonymous. In some cases, youth found ways to resist whiteness, white identity, white culture, and white time simultaneously. Take for example an exchange during a shift change meeting in the Emergency Shelter Program. Around 3:30 PM every day, staff and youth gather in the program’s living room to recount the day’s events and run down the evening agenda. Staff usually begin the discussion with the “question of the day,”

such as “What is your favorite color?” or “If you had a superpower, what would it be?” As youth begrudgingly answer the questions, most staff awkwardly wait for the ordeal to end. At the conclusion of one particular shift change meeting, Remy eagerly asked, “Can we talk about race?” The three staff present, looked sheepishly at each other, as if engaged in a telepathic deliberation over how to best respond to the question. Eventually, one halfheartedly said, “Yeah, let’s do it.” Remy proceeded by asking, “White people — Do you believe in black privilege?” The looks on the faces of the white staff persons conveyed regret for their invitation. Their best defense was to ask, “What do you mean by black privilege?” Remy then explained the problem of whites’ claims of “reverse racism” in the wake of accomplishments by an “exceptional” group of black people. Remy then went on to disabuse believers in “black privilege” of the absurdity of such claims by reminding that systemic racism keeps black people locked into the criminal legal system and locked out of educational and employment opportunities.

While not explicitly naming it, Remy conceptualized whiteness as a normalizing orientation of the world and its way of functioning. If whiteness is, as Lipsitz (2011: 37) asserts, “a condition,” then Remy was questioning what they believe is a symptom of that condition — the notion of “black privilege.” The question was not simply intended as a corrective, but also a screening tool to assess whether any of the white staff actually subscribed to such beliefs. What seems most instructive about Remy’s conceptualizations of whiteness is that they are interrogating its egocentric character, allowing many whites to use white culture and white identity as a reference category for all social life. Remy also makes an important rhetorical move by questioning the links

between whiteness and time. If whiteness is synonymous with modernity, then it makes no sense for white people to entertain a backwards concept like “black privilege.” By screening the white people in the room, Remy sought to make sure that “black privilege” became antiquated before becoming relevant. In my research, I looked at how other racialized youth made similar moves to invert terms and conditions defining modernity and modern subjects.

The wackness of whiteness: Youth resistance strategies for making white time “late.”

Inverting white logic through ridicule is a long, established tradition among black scholars. In search of explanations for a hubris and inflated worth associated with whiteness, W.E.B. Du Bois asks:

But what on earth is whiteness that one should desire it? Then always, somehow, some way, silently but clearly, I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen! (1995: 454)

Du Bois poses such a simple, yet generative question. In doing so, Du Bois mocks whiteness in a number of ways. First, Du Bois questions why anyone would want to be possessive of whiteness. Second, Du Bois critiques whiteness itself for being so possessive that it must claim ownership of the entire world. Lastly, what appears to be a rhetorical question is Du Bois pointing out the “psychological wage” of whiteness, particularly its potential to possess white people. To be possessed by whiteness is to risk becoming possessed by time. In *African Religions and Philosophy*, John Mbiti (1969) devotes an entire chapter to the “concept of time” and offers the following critique of foreigners socialized and synchronized to white time.

When foreigners, especially from Europe and America, come to Africa and see people sitting down somewhere without, evidently, doing anything, they often remark, “These Africans waste their time by just sitting down idle!” Another common cry is, “Oh, Africans are always late!”...Those who are seen sitting

down, are actually not wasting time, but either waiting for time or in the process of “producing” time (Mbiti 1969:19).

Mbiti highlights whiteness’s intolerance for ambiguity. Whiteness and white people require coherence and answers. Not knowing what Africans could possibly be doing sitting down drives white people to consternation. Misreading Africans’ “time use” serves as evidence to prove white people and whiteness remain behind time. Michelle Wright describes the way prominent black scholars depict whiteness as backwards and blackness as most modern. Wright (2015: 133) references *Notes from a Native Son* revealing James Baldwin’s “rhetorical trick” where the novelist “frames modernity as closer to Blackness than whiteness.” Other scholars have effectively flipped the script on whiteness by refusing to absolve it of the “problems” it creates. “The Negro problem,” for example, does not reside in black America, but within enslavement, Jim Crow, residential segregation, police terror, racialized violence, whiteness and white America (Du Bois 1903; Ellison 1944; Wright 1946).

The creative tradition of inverting who is actually most “uncivilized,” “backwards,” or “premodern” survives in the work of notable scholars such as Robin D.G. Kelley, Cheryl Harris, George Lipsitz, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, all of whom have found ways to debunk the links between whiteness and progress. In *Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional!* (1997), Robin Kelley indicts white social science and social scientists for constructing black communities as “degenerative,” “dysfunctional,” and “pathological.” The book’s title is an allusion to “the dozens” – a competition of mental maneuverability, vernacular dexterity and witty jokes familiar to many black youth. The title serves as a “comeback” to white social science and white social scientists depictions of black people in poor, urbanized space — “No. Yo’ mama’s dysfunctional!”

By turning the fundamental principles of whiteness on their head, black scholars also reconfigured the terms and conditions of modernity to locate whiteness and white people within anachronistic space. I am interested in exploring how racialized youth at Run-a-Way carry on this tradition of repurposing time to ensure that their styles, tastes, and worldviews were most culturally relevant and “up to date,” while leaving behind whiteness in a “played-out” past. As youth revise the terms and conditions of whiteness and time, they become producers of new temporalities and reposition themselves on the temporal spectrum. In this section I highlight some of the strategies racialized youth use to not only “keep up with the times,” but also ensure that no matter what they do, they are always “on time” or “up to date” and that their sociality is *never late*.⁶⁸

Despite the coevalness of whiteness and modernity (Fanon 1963; Said 1979; McClintock 1995; Ferguson 2004; Alexander 2005; Halberstam 2005; Bhabha 2009; Lawler 2012; Mawani 2014; Nanibush 2016) and future orientations (Mbiti 1969; De Vos 1975; Perry 2001; Wildcat 2005), racialized youth at Run-a-Way found a way to invert whose culture was “up to date.” Youth viewed their white counterparts as well as white culture as behind time, lame, or just plain “wack” (uncool). Fashion trends, musical tastes, and social media content (e.g. Twitter trends, memes, Vinez) all represented (temporal) status symbols. As centered nonwhite sociality, they transgressed time, while demanding others keep pace. The following fieldnotes help illustrate the wackness of whiteness.

We are all in the case management office. Melissa, 16-year old black girl, stops by and asks, Steve, a white male in his late forties, “When are you going to stop wearing those sandals?” Steve is wearing a pair of black Birkenstock sandals

⁶⁸ While “late” is typically used as a reference to that which is not on time, it is also an expression to signal a delay in picking up on recent trends, particularly among youth.

with white socks. “I wear these from April ‘til October” he replied. “Uggghhh!” Melissa replies with exasperation.

—Fieldnote from July 16, 2015

After dinner, we return to the floor. Steve informs the youth that they can participate in one of two activities: (1) mini-golf (2) trip to the park to play ultimate Frisbee. When the youth ask Steve if he was coming, they mentioned that he can’t leave wearing his Birkenstock sandals.

—Fieldnote from July 24, 2015

Attending to the minutiae of youth sociality helped me interpret what they deemed most relevant and up to date. Racialized youth tend to know the latest fashion trends and according to their footwear index, Steve’s Birkenstocks were *not* up to date. Birkenstocks are not typically marketed or sold in poor communities of color. Despite their hefty price tag, the sandals hold little weight in the consumer culture of racialized youth. Similar to the way nonwhite people are relegated to anterior time when in predominantly white institutions, Steve and his footwear are rendered illegible within the spacetime of racialized youth at Run-a-Way. Whiteness was tantamount to wackness in other space at Run-a-Way, including the “dance floor” of the basement conference room.

We gather in the basement conference room for the evening activity. Staff expect youth to play Nintendo Wii Fit as their physical activity for the day. Among the many games to choose from, the most popular seemed to be “Dance, Dance Revolution.” Before beginning the game, Lisa, a middle-aged white staff person, tells youth she was warned not to participate. When someone asks why, Gerard [16-year-old] interjects saying, “White people can’t dance.”

—Fieldnote from July 28, 2015

The stereotype that “white people can’t dance” is reminiscent of the 1992 film *White Men Can’t Jump*. It is an allusion to stereotypical representations of white people as having less physical prowess than nonwhites generally, and black people in particular.

Gerard is not just mocking white people and whiteness, but reorienting the when and where of whiteness (Wright 2004; Ahmed 2007). Gerard locates white time outside a realm of what is most relevant and up to date. In mocking the white people's inability to keep pace with the latest dance trends, Melissa and Gerard also mock the clock and temporalize whiteness behind the spacetime of racialized youth. Both youth create an interesting racial-temporal inversion by locating whiteness, white people, and white time in the anterior and "premodern" space typically reserved for black and other racialized persons.

The coherence between whiteness and modernity loses strength as racialized youth link an incapacity to keep up with the latest and timeliest trends to white ineptitude. Inverting the relationship between whiteness and modernity, 14-year old Shanice suggests what is most inept is white people emulating those they view as "worthless."

RM: How important is the past to you?

Shanice: It's important because it's talkin' about our generation, it's talkin' about our color, the things that happened back in the day. For one, we really need to learn about that...because we still got white people constantly talkin' about us, constantly tryin' to be better than us but also tryin' to be like us! You know. It doesn't make sense to me. You're talkin' about us but tryin' to be like us, you know. We make up stuff, they wanna take that and make it as their own! You know. But at the same time I still don't get it because they say black people are stupid, you know, worthless, but also you're tryin' to take what we have made into your own.

Shanice loves her blackness and the blackness of others. A love for blackness, black life, and black people warrants defense. Shanice feels obligated to protect blackness from the consistent threat of whiteness and what Joe Feagin (2013) calls the "white racial frame." Protecting blackness from whiteness comes in multiple forms,

including what Feagin (2013) calls “counter-framing.” According to Feagin (2013: 21), counter-frames originally formed as survival strategies, but later developed into tools for analyzing and resisting racialized violence. Shanice’s counter-frame calls out the irony of whiteness coopting the exact culture it deems backwards.

Cultural appropriation was a recurring theme among racialized youth at Run-a-Way. Many endorsed the idea that white people viewed black culture as “inherently violable” (Smith 2005) and hence, theirs for the taking. Consider the following remarks from Remy when asked about how they perceive white youth in relation to time:

Remy: I dunno. Sometimes I feel like they should just stop with whatever they’re doing. I don’t really think about what white people wear or how they do things or the things that they’re up to date really. I don’t really care. But I guess I just don’t think about it too much. And if I am thinking about what white people are doing modernly, I am looking to make sure that what they’re doing isn’t appropriating someone else’s culture. Cuz to white people, someone else’s culture from years back, they think that they can just make it their own and all of a sudden it’s some new thing... They act like it’s a new thing when really it’s been someone’s culture since day one and they’re taking it from people who actually own that culture and it’s their life, they do it every day and they’re taking credit for it.

Remy cares less about whether white people are “up to date” and more concerned with whether they are stealing from black culture. Cultural appropriation is one thing, but cultural *misappropriation* makes the wounds of such theft even rawer. In *Time Passages*, George Lipsitz (1990: 80) describes the “misappropriation of memory” familiar to 1950s sitcoms like *Mama*. Such television (or “tell-lie-vision”) programs sponsor a romanticized past that never was (Coontz 1992). Both Shanice and Remy express concern about white exploitation of black culture. However, to witness their culture displayed in contradictory ways evokes even greater disdain for such theft.

Racialized youth at Run-a-Way were acutely aware that black culture's appeal to whites (and other nonblack people) meant that blackness itself had significant value, despite broader attempts to weaken its worth. There is an unspoken understanding among many nonwhite people: When white folks start doing something, that is a cue to stop doing that thing. Similarly, racialized youth at Run-a-Way knew that when white people begin to adopt their style, they must stop it because it is officially "played out." As Fabian describes, the commodification of black culture for a white audience requires a temporal shift from the "primitive" state of "the other" to "civilized" state of the Self.

Resources have been transported from the past of their "backward" locations to the present of an industrial, capitalist economy. A temporal conception of movement has always served to legitimize the colonial enterprise on all levels. Temporalizations expressed as a passage from savagery to civilization, from peasant to industrial society, have long served an ideology whose ultimate purpose has been to justify the procurement of commodities for our markets. African copper becomes a commodity only when it is taken possession of by removing it from its geological context, placing it into the history of Western commerce and industrial production. Something analogous happens with "primitive art" (Fabian 1983: 95).

While the concept of "temporalization" was not a part of everyday parlance at Run-a-Way, youth like Remy saw how cultural traditions go from worthless to worthy over time. As time elapses, that which is "primitive" is refined and redefined as "modern." Temporalization requires spatialization. African goods and resources, as Fabian notes, must first be spatially placed on the "dark continent" before being relegated to a past retrievable only through Western civilization's benevolence (Manzo 1996).

Exemplifying that which is modern and future oriented, whiteness plays a significant role in temporalization. Whiteness usurps the "primitive" or "backwards" under the guise of "development" or "progress." Aware that what is "new" is not always

true, Remy demands white people be held accountable for cultural appropriation and their attempts to temporalize blackness. Despite the trick of temporalization to make intimate cultural traditions appear “new” and innovative, many racialized youth, especially black youth, hold immense pride in their cultural past and take what was stolen. Quincy, for example, uses contemporary fashion trends as a link to and site of enslavement and black resistance.

Quincy: It’s just stuff that, you know, seems to make the culture of white people mad. Like, the shoes I’m wearin’ right now, the shoes, the Timberlands, the tree that they put on it symbolizes when they used to burn black people. Like, and if they didn’t realize – the white people that make the shoes – that black people are the person [sic] who put your shoes out here [made them popular]. Like, the only reason your shoes are runnin’ [selling] for 200 and 300 dollars is because black people are wearing them. Like, I can see a couple white people wear Timberlands but I can go into my school that’s 75% black people and...every one of them has a pair of Tims. Like, they don’t see that. If we weren’t here they wouldn’t be able to do what they are doing now. Like, if...100 years ago if they didn’t have us, where would you be right now? So I’m just sayin’, like, that’s what white people need to realize that if we weren’t here, where would you be right now? Like, if I wasn’t wearin’ your style of shoes, where would you be right now? You would be nowhere, cuz...the shoes didn’t even become a brand name until 1973 and these shoes wasn’t really even all that [in style] ‘til the 2000’s ‘til the black people started wearing them....and even when we wear them, we have respect. We...we cover up the tree. Like...there’s a tree on the boot heel. We can’t cover that [one] up, but I have a big face one and I cover that up when I wear them. Cuz...even though I’m gonna buy your shoes, I’m gonna respect my kind, my people. So yeah. That’s what they need to realize. Where would you be if we weren’t here right now? Where? Yeah.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Most of Quincy’s response is based on a November 7, 1993 *New York Times* article titled “Out of the Woods” where Timberland’s former executive vice president, Jeffrey Swartz, described his intended consumer base as “honest working people.” Swartz went on to say that he is not going to “build his business on smoke” referring to what he perceived as fickle and unreliable fashion sense among inner-city youth. “We are cutting back the number of doors we do business in. So if you want to buy us and you are not our target customer, we don’t have a point of distribution that speaks to your life style. We are making hip-hop come to our distribution.” Though Swartz refuted claims that he and the Timberland Corporation would dissociate themselves from a “hip-hop” consumer base, critics see this as further evidence of the way corporations (intentionally) underestimate the economic power of poor communities of color in order to advance a broader agenda of economic exploitation. Racialized youth at Run-a-Way relied on localized knowledge of status symbols (e.g. Timberlands) to screen peers and staff on their ability to keep pace with the most culturally relevant trends.

As I have argued at various parts of this project, white life and “white time” is subsidized by black life, black debt and black death. Quincy makes clear that the accumulation of white life, white time and white wealth also requires racial capitalism (Robinson 1983). Thus, Quincy reminds white people of the “unpayable debt” (Silva 2017) owed to black people. Capital accumulation within the fashion industry, as Quincy notes, is predicated on black extraction and dispossession. The black community’s patronage of white-owned corporations, however, is not reciprocal. As rapper and activist Chuck D once said, “I like Nike, but wait a minute. The neighborhood supports. So put some money in it!”⁷⁰

Coincidentally, in the 1993 *New York Times* article that sparked the controversy over Timberlands, Carl McCaskill, the president of Cheryl Johnson McCaskill Communications, a public relations firm in New York, “was repeatedly surprised by the lack of cooperation from outdoor apparel companies when he approached them with ideas for recycling some of those dollars back into programs intended for black and Hispanic youths.” “‘When I think about it, I get disgusted,’ Mr. McCaskill said. ‘I think it’s so stupid for the kids to continue to wear it’ [knowing that the corporation does not view black and brown youth as a legitimate consumer base or legible consumers].” Ironically, the incessant quest toward conspicuous consumption and the attainment of material markers of temporal status gives way to the construction of those residing in poor, urbanized space as guided by a set of “distorted values and priorities.” Quincy and many of his peers, however, see things differently. Rather than completely withdraw their financial support from white-owned companies like Timberland, racialized youth,

⁷⁰ Lyrics from “Shut ‘em down” by Public Enemy. From the album “Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Black.” (1991)

like Quincy, embrace the contradiction of supporting corporations that do not necessarily support them in “pursuit of leisure, pleasure, and creativity” (Kelley 1997: 45). Though seldom credited for their labor, Quincy and other racialized youth in urbanized space consistently resist whiteness by making and remaking various forms of culture, while also defining the temporal terms of what is most up to date. By asking “Where would you be if we weren't here right now?,” Quincy is given license to temporalize whites as backwards for exploiting black culture without any sense of obligation.

The importance of “counter-framing” should not lead us to overestimate the transformative potential of mocking whiteness and white culture within such a localized context as Run-a-Way. Rejecting whiteness and white culture often backfires in “white space” (Moore 2008; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Anderson 1999; Anderson 2015). As racialized youth transition to adulthood, they remain in a race against time not simply because they reject mainstream opportunity structures, but because opportunity rejects them.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I center racialized youth’s perceptions of white youth’s relationship to time to highlight the inextricable relationship between whiteness and time. Racialized youth viewed existing opportunity structures, such as education and employment, as supportive of the leisurely timetables of their white counterparts. In the race against time, racialized youth at Run-a-Way see themselves as beginning from delayed starting points compared to white youth. Perceiving their starts as delayed left

many racialized youth at Run-a-Way feeling time was compressed. They saw their white peers as the joint owners of a time that they could only borrow.

White time had strict eligibility criteria that excluded racialized youth as prospective investors. With time being money, the intergenerational transmission of wealth signified an intergenerational transmission of (available or free) time. Coming from mostly poor and working-class backgrounds, racialized youth at Run-a-Way were temporally bankrupt. Not only did youth lack time, but they also began from temporal deficits. Racialized youth constantly cogitate over multiplicative forms of oppression that leave them behind in the race against time. Compared to the abundance of time they believed white youth possess, racialized youth at Run-a-Way saw their timetables for achieving conventional benchmarks (e.g. school) as compressed.

Is it possible to measure compressed time within conventional time-use studies? Time-use researchers effectively “control for race,” while ignoring the uncontrollable nature of *racism*.

Using whiteness and white life as reference categories, time-use studies ignore the time taken and accumulated by racialized violence. Time diaries may be useful for enumerating the daily time use of white youth (Gauthier and Furstenberg 2005; Zick 2010; Mahoney and Vest 2012; Wright, Price, Bianchi, Hunt 2014), but how do these diaries account for the time *used by* racism and racialization? It remains unclear whether time diaries can capture the experiences that do not fit neatly into the margins of printed time intervals. How does a time diary calculate the time Rahim spends working (at least twice as hard to be half as good? How do time diaries accurately detail Miguel’s time

use when his travel time by bus is also his study time? Can a time diary capture the time Remy spends disabusing white staff of the absurdity of “black privilege”?

Racial inequality, racialized violence, and racialized labor are not measurable within seconds, minutes, days, years, etc. Time diaries not only fail to enumerate racialized youth’s “time use.” They also fall short of accurately measuring white youth’s time use. How can time diaries account for the time white youth save by not having to take multiple buses to school? Do time diaries account for the time white youth save learning about racism from nonwhite people, as opposed to spending time reading a book? How do time diaries quantify the time white youth save learning, living and laboring within the many social institutions designed with them in mind? Just as there are inordinate temporal benefits that come from matching your teacher, your social worker, your doctor, your boss, your staff person, etc., the mismatch between racialized youth and professionals results in major penalties.

Though processing acts of racialized violence, including whiteness, offers little financial return for racialized laborers, this work is highly generative for “racialized social systems” (Bonilla-Silva 1997). Racialized violence yields significant material and immaterial profit. Profits derive from any of the following: enslavement; stolen land; convict leasing; the prison industrial complex; the overrepresentation of youth of color in “congregate care settings” (e.g. foster care, group homes, residential programs); the mutually-constitutive relationship between poor, urbanized space and wealthy, suburbanized space; and white people relying on black people to set trends, while denying them compensation as trendsetters. In the end, white people depend on the physical, emotional and psychic labor of nonwhite people to maintain a modern and

future-oriented temporal position in the race against time. White people have the “luxury of time” precisely because they steal time from an exploitable class of youth.

When in a race against white time that offers less time to be half as good as the winners, finding a way to “run your own race” is a challenge. Racialized youth at Run-a-Way preferred to redefine the race by transgressing time and creating what J. Brendan Shaw (2015: 63) describes as “radical ruptures in contemporary scripts of progress.” In this race, racialized youth had already declared themselves the winners because whiteness was wack and incapable of keeping pace with black sociality. While constructing whiteness as wack may present a negligible threat to white time, “resistance is revelatory” (Kelley 2014), and the existence of these counter-frames (Feagin 2013) shows that racialized youth recognized being most up to date was more a matter of being off white time than on it.

Chapter 6: Prescience within Present Orientations: Getting past the ‘ethnographic present’ in urban sociology

Introduction

To urban sociologists, “thinking for the moment” is symptomatic of present time orientations and a product of an unpredictable and arrested life course (Furstenberg et al. 1999), “social disorganization” (Hannerz 1969; Wilson 1996; Sharkey 2006; Elliott, Menard, Rankin, Elliott, Wilson, and Huizinga 2006), and violence (Sampson 1987; Prothrow-Stith 1991; Anderson 1999; Venkatesh 2008; Harding 2010; Griffiths 2013; Ralph 2014; Kotlowitz 1991). When scholars grow tired of blaming the ghetto for racialized youth’s “maladaptive” behavior, childrearing strategies and family socialization become the next best scapegoat.

Consider the work of sociologists striving to distinguish between “risk” and “resilience” in poor communities. In *Managing to Make It: Urban Families and Adolescent Success*, Furstenberg and colleagues (1999: 10) examine factors related to “successful adolescent development” within poor, urbanized space using the “risk and resiliency framework.” While the authors note some limitations of the framework, their conceptualization of “development” stays confined to an “iterative and ongoing process between children and the settings in which they grow up” (Furstenberg et al. 1999: 10). Missing from this iterative process is any acknowledgement or appreciation of the role of the state in shaping adolescent risk and resilience.⁷¹ Furstenberg and colleagues go on to attribute present orientations to an intergenerational transmission of dysfunction. As Furstenberg and colleagues note,

⁷¹ In fact, by the authors’ own admission, “we underplay the role of the state and even the community in collaborating with parents as childcare and socializing agents, believing that childrearing practices are among the private choices that individuals make” (Furstenberg et al. 1999: 232).

Most parents in our study devoted their attention to the here and now, believing that the future would take care of itself if their children managed to remain in school and stay out of trouble...parents were applying expectations appropriate for a past rather than a future economy...many parents simply didn't have adequate knowledge of the middle-class world to guide their children in how to succeed (Furstenberg et al. 1999: 226).

Present orientations, according to Furstenberg and colleagues, are symptomatic of limited exposure to middle-class norms and values. What I find most interesting is this group's conceptualization of deprivation. Rather than acknowledging poor families' struggles to access quality food, stable housing, clothing, education, and employment, Furstenberg and colleagues believe poor families in urbanized space suffer from a poverty of middle-class norms and values. Furstenberg and colleagues accuse poor families of passively letting the future "take care of itself." Present orientations are not products of an inactive deference to the future. Rather, as racialized youth show in this chapter, state and structural violence "takes care" (i.e. eliminates) the future for them. Striving for a better future is an appealing prospect, but mainly for those who are not the targets of racialized violence.

Taking cues from Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Furstenberg and others, Alex Kotlowitz (1991: 80) in *There are No Children Here*, assigns tacit blame to poor black mothers for limiting their children's ability to plan for the future.

She [Lajoe] rarely felt she could sail through a day and enjoy such simple moments as the coming of spring, Pharoah's smile or Lafeyette's playful teasing. There was no time to reflect on the past or plan for the future. If it wasn't the shooting outside, it was her daughter's drug habit or Lafeyette's troubles at school or Pharoah's stammer (Kotlowitz 1991: 80).

When using white middle-class children and white time as central reference categories, it is no surprise that urban sociologists cannot find "children" in poor urbanized space. The unpredictability of poor, urbanized space, according to urban

sociologists (Moynihan 1965; Wilson 1987; Wacquant 1993; Burton et al. 1996; MacLeod 2009), explains why racialized youth are “present oriented” and why they judge the future as futile. Compared to urban sociologists who tend to reify poor, urbanized space as violent, chaotic, and inert or suspended in time, I entered this research attempting to de-arrest youth from the “ethnographic present” and make what is most mundane matter by exposing the racialized dimensions of time and space. Where urban sociology suspends racialized people in what Fabian (1983: 33) calls the “ethnographic present,” this chapter builds from the premise that “another world is possible,” while appreciating the presence of the past and fugitivity of liberal futures. “Another world *is* possible,” but it depends on who is telling the time.

In this chapter, I make the case that racialized youth are less “present oriented” and more prescient. Having peeped the multiplicative forms of oppression they will inevitably face over their life course, racialized youth from poor urbanized space retain a unique ability to foretell their futures. My work at Run-a-Way reveals the ways that racialized youth are not only “ahead of their time,” but ahead of time itself. I use interview data and ethnographic observation to substantiate my claims that the racialized temporalities of racialized youth are at odds with white time. Racialized temporalities make it so the past is never past,⁷² purported opportunities in the present are habitually absent, and future opportunities remain fugitive. With whiteness being intimately linked to future orientations (Coser and Coser 1963; De Vos 1975; Mills 1997; Perry 2001), racialized youth saw the future as bright for white, but dim for themselves. Youth

⁷² “Pastness . . . is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify the past as past” (Trouillot 1997, 15). Excerpt From: *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. (2016: 55) by Christina Sharpe.

constructed the future in such dismal terms because no matter how hard they tried, opportunity structures were always already obstructed.

The heavy rotation of oppression precludes investment in the future because for racialized persons, the past is always present (Mbiti 1969; Azzahir 2001; McKittrick 2006; Hartman 2007; Weheliye 2014; Hong 2015; Sharpe 2016) and liberal futures remain hostage to structural violence. While the clockwise direction of minute and second hands symbolize progression in time, racialized temporalities are recursive. That is, racialized violence cannot be isolated to a single point in time. Instead, oppressions travel — swaying back and forth, around and around, from past to present. For example, youth at Run-a-Way did not see the present-day violence against racialized people as anything new and instead described it as “history repeating itself.” Many youth likened the police killings of black people to slavery and the continued criminalization of blackness (Hartman 1997; Alexander 2010; Muhammad 2010; Browne 2015). The residency of white supremacy, slavery, conquest, and genocide in the present require racialized youth to relocate to an alternative spacetime as a means of escape from interactive oppressions, including the threat of temporal suspension and detention. Provided a preview of dismal life chances, as well as their chances at life, youth refused to “become another statistic” within the “ethnographic present.” Youth were not simply “beating the odds,” they were cheating time and death. It was precisely the imminent threat of educational enclosures (Sojoyner 2016), racialized bias in employment, homelessness, police terror and social death that resulted in diminished life chances and chances at life.

Fugitive futures: When “what is to come” has already gone.

While youth are believed to maintain a present-orientation to time, such assessments fail to appreciate the possibility that many youth have already cogitated deeply over their futures and concluded that there is not a whole lot to look forward to. What happens when what is to come has already been marked absent? Do youth reject what is constantly on the run in favor of the here and now? The stigma surrounding “present orientations” is one Elliot Liebow takes to task in *Tally’s Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*.

...from the inside looking out, what appears as a “present time” orientation to the outside observer is, to the man experiencing it, as much a future orientation as that of his middle-class counterpart... Thus when Richard squanders a week’s pay in two days it is not because, like an animal or a child, he is “present-time oriented,” unaware of or unconcerned with his future. He does so precisely because he is aware of the future and the hopelessness of it all (Liebow 1967: 42).

The concomitant increase in age and experience certainly help “streetcorner men” recognize “the hopelessness of it all”; however, even youth can gather enough experiential evidence to figure out that pursuing liberal futures is futile. Having had a preview of the many challenges along their life course, racialized youth must adjust their time horizons accordingly. However, to consider this a “psychic” ability is disingenuous given that social scientists (Elliott, Menard, Rankin, Elliott, Wilson, and Huizinga 2006), journalists (Kotlowitz 1991; Elliott 2013) linguists (McWhorter 2001), doctors (Prothrow-Stith 1991), Supreme Court Justices,⁷³ and the state issue a sobering outlook on the life course trajectories of racialized youth and black youth in particular. This dismal forecast is said to be a product of “environmental risk factors,” “the underclass,”

⁷³ On December 9, 2015, the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said, “There are those who contend that it does not benefit African Americans to get them into the University of Texas, where they do not do well as opposed to having them go to a less-advanced school...a slower-track school where they do well.”

“concentrated poverty,” “cumulative disadvantage,” and a “culture infected with an anti-intellectual strain” (McWhorter 2001). In other words, to predict the various struggles in one’s life course is hardly a “psychic” ability when scholars and state protocols for racialized violence presage the imminence of (social) death (Patterson 1982; Hartman 2007; Cacho 2012; Rodriguez 2016). Because racialized youth at Run-a-Way had a strong sense of what was to come, they refused to entertain false promises. For example, Kendra, age 15, had this to say when asked why certain people living the “fast life” think for the moment:

Kendra: ...because I guess they might think the moment is what we’re living in now. Why think about the future if it might not really come? Some people might not think that there is a future cuz the future isn’t promised. So they might just think, “Well, I’m gonna think about now, right now at this moment so I can live in this moment and not in some fairy tale that might not even happen.”

RM: Mm. Why do you think the future is so uncertain?

Kendra: Because it’s never been confirmed that we’re gonna have another day. We might make plans in the future, but there’s no telling if it will really happen. This world could end right now, we wouldn’t even... we wouldn’t have anything to say about it.

Most adults have the capacity to tell time, but youth, especially racialized youth, are told the time. Urban sociologists, for example, deploy “at-risk” discourse to make sense of the limited life chances and chances at life of racialized youth in poor communities, with little attention to the risks of structural violence. Youth, like Kendra, however, knew that she and other youth were “at risk” of police terror, “the persistent nexus” between the school and prison (Meiners 2007: 31-2), and racialized violence. In suggesting that “it’s never been confirmed that we’re gonna live another day,” Kendra does not limit the threat of a premature death to “environmental risk factors,” but widens the definition of risk to include the threat of state-sanctioned violence. In response to

Kendra's last point, I asked whether she felt that the notion that tomorrow is not promised is a "realer" feeling for black people and black youth.

Kendra: Yeah. Definitely. Because...black kids don't really...they don't really look up to anything...I mean, we see black people get killed for absolutely no reason at all. Police officer is not gonna spare my life because I'm a kid. They're not gonna spare my life because I'm a girl. I'm still black! The color of my skin is still the same as Trayvon Martin or Eric Brown.⁷⁴ So I...sometimes I feel like I might not even have a future...or my brothers might not have a future. I mean, we can say...we wanna go to college and stuff. But how many youth have said they wanted to go to college and ended up on the street? I mean, all youth say they wanna go to college.

At the time of my interviews, the #BlackLivesMatter movement was in full effect and for youth like Kendra, so was antiblackness. With an athletic physique, long braids, and dark complexion, Kendra "fit the description" sketched by most police officers in the Twin Cities. When the "description" is always already black, Kendra must emphasize, "I'm still black." In other words, Kendra is "still" the description. What does it mean to "fit" what one is? To Kendra, it means that describing the future is a challenge because she has already been described as the description.

The future is not promised for Kendra and other black youth because it has been stolen by racialized violence. Kendra echoes Feminist Studies Professor Karen Barad's notion of "a future of no future." In a lecture focusing on "addressing issues related to a common future," Barad describes the role of climate change and nuclear technology in accelerating the Doomsday Clock and the extinction of life on earth.⁷⁵ The threat of nuclear war and climate change, however, does not preclude the potential of anti-black regimes truncating Kendra's life. Contrary to representations of racialized youth as

⁷⁴ Kendra appears to interchange the names of Mike Brown and Eric Garner.

⁷⁵ "Karan Barad: Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future." The talk was given on June 2, 2016. Published on December 8, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnOJioYNHU>

bereft of hope and future orientations because of the unpredictability of their environment, Kendra makes sure to center the state's wanton destruction of black life. The possibility that the future, in Kendra's words, "might not even come" signals its fugitivity. Or perhaps Kendra's future is held captive to structural violence. Could it be that youth like Kendra find it futile to always try to capture that which is already held captive or on the run?

Perhaps Kendra's assessment of the future falls into the category of what Mbiti (1969: 17) calls "no time" – "what has not taken place or what has no likelihood of an immediate occurrence." What seems both fleeting and also captured for racialized youth in poor, urbanized space is opportunity. When the future is predicated on promises of "equal opportunity" and "freedom" for all, racialized youth from aggrieved communities understand that these tropes are part of the spacetime of liberal futurities⁷⁶ where and when they are not included.

Though Kendra sees the future under threat of expropriation by police violence (redundant), she also expresses some desire to attend college. Kendra's prescience belies notions that she and other racialized youth are "present oriented." Kendra expresses both concern and rejection over that which has yet to come. However, it is important to clarify what type of future she is rejecting. Is Kendra rejecting the possibility of improving her life chances over time? Or, is she rejecting a liberal futurity predicated on

⁷⁶ Although Dylan Rodriguez (2015: 34) does not conceptualize the term, I see liberal futurities as linked to conceptions of prospective opportunity structures for improving life chances. Because liberalism requires universality, mutuality and commensurability, liberal futurities stand in as the aspirational goals for all. Many of the youth I interviewed refused to entertain the notion that opportunity structures for white and nonwhite youth are comparable. In rejecting liberal futurities, youth were also rejecting key frames to colorblind racism, including what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva describes as "abstract liberalism," which is predicated on false equivalences of "choice," "individualism" and "equal opportunity."

false promises of “equal opportunity” and neoliberal “freedoms” that backfire as soon as she attempts to become an “entrepreneurial self”?

If the present is any predictor of the future, then current voids will likely exist later in life. Racialized youth at Run-a-Way were perceptive enough to recognize that the protracted nature of structural inequalities made the current moment and the future largely indistinguishable. Rarely did youth at Run-a-Way reject the future without offering some rationale for thinking and being “in the now.” Complicating conventional understandings of time as contained in isolated intervals of the past, present, and future, 16-year-old Remy views life as one continuous struggle, in which the only endpoint or deadline is death itself.

RM: Can you describe how you think about the future?

Remy: I don't think about the future...I'm in the moment. To me, the moment right now *is the future*. What you're doin' in this moment is going to affect what's going on in the future.

RM: Ok. What do you envision for your future?

Remy: I see this very stressful road because my life has been hard since day one. I don't really think about the future cuz people keep telling me it's going to get better. But it's like if I have to go through all this shit in order for it to get better, I dunno if I wanna see it at all cuz I don't wanna... I wanna stop. I don't wanna do it no more. Cuz the more I keep going the more shit keeps happening. I don't like that. So I just don't really think about the future like that...

For Remy, contemplating over the future is futile, precisely because tomorrow's struggles are so evident today. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1977: 9), “Today is tomorrow, because yesterday tomorrow was today.” What Bourdieu illustrates is the fluidity and iterativeness of time. What Remy and Bourdieu both acknowledge is that time does not stop. Hence, isolating a “point in time” is counterproductive. As (Siriani 1987: 165) notes, “The future appears only as an abstract and linear continuation of the

present.” The foresight with which Remy assesses time is a product of multiple ways of knowing and being. By being “in the moment” or in the now, Remy is also in the know.

Despite their fledgling stage in life, Remy has taken a preview of their life course and *knows* what to expect. Hence, describing Remy and other racialized youth as “prescient” seems fitting. However, if we take seriously Du Bois’s (1903: 9) notion of “double consciousness” and that black youth are “born with a veil,” they may be simply narrating their biography according to the “tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with a second-sight in this American world — a world which yields to him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world.

My conversations with youth like Remy at Run-a-Way illustrate the breadth and timelessness of Du Bois’s “double consciousness.” Describing how their “life has been hard since day one,” Remy implies that their “double consciousness” and “multiple consciousness” (King 1988) began at birth. In accordance with Du Bois, Remy must travel a “very stressful road” over the life course in the “other world” (i.e. the white world). Urban sociology as a subfield lacks the theoretical, conceptual and methodological capacity to fully comprehend Remy’s journey. Within sociology, generally, and urban sociology, specifically, “double consciousness” remains undertheorized as an orientation to alternative futures.

In privileging “future orientations” as an indicator of youth’s “direction in life,” urban sociologists have ignored Remy’s assertion that “now is the future.” Echoing the work of other theorists of queer time, Remy recognizes that “the future is in the

present”⁷⁷ Remy sees time as comprised of mutually-constitutive parts. Hence, to be oriented to the future is to also be oriented to the present and vice versa. By asserting, “right now is the future,” Remy complicates enduring representations of the time perspectives of racialized youth living in poor urbanized space. Much of this scholarship treats urbanized space as a nosocomial infection that breeds violence and spreads uncertainty. It does so without holding the state accountable for producing ambiguity and truncating the time horizons of racialized youth in poor, urbanized space.

“You can plan a picnic but you can’t predict the weather.”

Tell me, who do we call to report crime
If 9-1-1 doin’ the drive by?

Kanye West
“Cops Shot the Kid”

Urban sociologists temporalize poor racialized people living in urbanized space as present-oriented (Cosser and Cosser 1963; Moynihan 1965; Wilson 1987; Burton et al. 1996; Wilson 1996; MacLeod 2009; Furstenberg et al. 1999). Stereotypical representations and popular discourse around the conditions of poor, urbanized space shaped youth’s orientation to time, as well as predictions for their life course. Some youth subscribed to the notion that the future is not promised because, as Tariq notes, “anything can happen.”

RM: Can you describe how you think about the future?

Tariq: I think of the future as unpredictable. Cuz really anything can happen in the future. If you plan something, it doesn't always have to happen. It’s not guaranteed to happen. It’s guaranteed that you can try, but the future is unpredictable.

⁷⁷ Muñoz (2009: 49) adapts “the future is in the present” from CLR James’ first volume of collected writings, “The Future in the Present” (1977).

RM: Mmhm. And so why would you say it's unpredictable?

Tariq: Because, like, people... everyone around the world makes decisions and my decisions can be affected by someone else's decisions. So therefore, you can't predict someone else's decisions. So if your decisions are affected by another person's decisions, you can't really see that coming until it happens...there's this saying, "you can plan a picnic but you can't predict the weather."

Tariq, who at the time of our interview was 16 years old and prepared to enter the 11th grade, was part of the independent living program at Run-a-Way. With square rimmed glasses protecting his brown eyes that matched his dark brown complexion, a calm and collected demeanor, and an Afro that parted in the middle and reached his shoulders, Tariq stood out among his peers. Described as "mature," "responsible," and "highly goal-oriented" by several staff, Tariq was known for making efficient use of time, while also realizing that the time he used was not his own.

To urban sociologists and life course scholars Tariq's uncertainty is a product of his environment. Violence within poor, urbanized space, according to both urban sociologists and life course scholars, makes it impossible for racialized youth like Tariq to effectively plan for what is to come. It is interesting what both groups of scholars include and exclude in their assessments of "environmental risk factors." Black Studies scholars like Christina Sharpe do a better job predicting the weather for black people than sociologists and meteorologists combined.

In *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Sharpe (2016: 106) uses "the weather" to illustrate how "antiblackness is as pervasive as climate." According to Sharpe (2016: 106) the weather of being "in the wake," is part of "the atmosphere: slave law transformed into lynch law, into Jim and Jane Crow, and other administrative logics that remember the brutal conditions of enslavement after the event of slavery has supposedly

come to an end.” Though meteorological “weather” may be unpredictable, Sharpe’s conceptualization suggests that the forecast of antiblackness is quite predictable and extends well beyond 5- or even 10-day projections. What would it look like to construct alternative forms of “human-induced climate change” predicated not on the destruction of the earth, but on salutary strategies supportive of black life? If antiblackness is as pervasive as the climate, then the lividity of black people is integral to life on earth.

I would argue that Tariq’s skepticism over the future is not strictly a product of his environment, but the unreliability of systems, institutions, and the individuals who comprise both. These “administrative logics,” as Sharpe (2016) notes, are all part of “the weather” and general climate of antiblackness. By alluding to the decisions of others, Tariq understands that the “weather” Sharpe describes is a greater factor in shaping his forecast of the future than meteorological events.

My central intervention in this chapter lies in making the case that racialized youth in poor, urbanized space are more prescient than present-oriented. When part of one’s predictions involves tragedy, however, psychic ability may feel more like a burden (Du Bois 1903; Balfour 1994). Toward the end of my interview with Tariq, I asked him how long he expected to live.

Tariq: Honestly, I expect myself to die almost every day. It sounds a bit odd to say that I expect to die almost every day, but literally anything that can happen that can cause me to die every day. About 2 hours ago I could have died. I didn't, but I expect myself to die every...almost every day. Any day I go outside, I expect to die in some way. That’s just because of the whole unpredictable world we live in.

Tariq cannot plan a picnic not because of his environment or community, but because of conditions far more inclement than the weather. It was Tariq’s encounter with state terror that provided to not only threaten his “picnic,” but also his life.

Approximately 18 months after I left Run-a-Way, police, from a suburb approximately 20 minutes from the program, shot 18 rounds at Tariq while he was playing with an airsoft gun in a park. Tariq was hit twice – once in his brain and once in his spinal cord. Though Tariq survived the shooting, his allotted time at life was significantly truncated by racialized terror. In response to the shooting, Tariq’s family and friends organized a protest where they condemned the police for treating mental illness as a death sentence.

Ableism cannot be divorced from understandings of antiblackness and other forms of racialized violence (Whitesel 2017; Ritchie 2017). The simultaneity, intersection, and interaction between racism, fat hatred, ageism, ableism, and classism is, according to Jason Whitesel (2017: 427), largely responsible for the police killings of Eleanor Bumpurs and Eric Garner. Instead of acknowledging Tariq’s fragile mental health, police treated the co-existence of blackness and disability as a threat, thus legitimating the notion that antiblack violence requires no transgression (Wilderson 2014). Instead, “Violence has no temporal or spatial limits for the Black” (Wilderson 2014: 30).

Tariq’s expectation of dying whenever leaving home signals an awareness that antiblackness knows neither temporal nor spatial boundaries. Does Tariq’s “double consciousness” contribute to beliefs in a premature death? If so, how does Tariq come to grips with premonitions, as well as an actual preview of an early mortality? Some may take solace believing that Tariq was “granted a second chance at life.” Does this “second chance at life” come with a future? What good is a “second chance” when the deadline for black death is always already accelerated by state violence in the “first” chance? If

his tragic encounter with police is any indicator of what he can expect for adulthood, the possibility that Tariq's future is not only fugitive, but moribund, is terrifyingly real.

Karen Barad asserts, "Time is fixated on its own demise," and uses the Doomsday Clock as an example of how deadlines for human survival are accelerated by the technologies of global capitalism. The Doomsday Clock is, according to Barad, "nonlinear, non-mechanical...It doesn't simply move forward." Instead, it is synchronized to "global politics and technological progress." The Clock doesn't go from beginning to end but measures the countdown to the end.⁷⁸

On January 26, 2018, the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists advanced the Doomsday Clock thirty seconds from three to two and a half minutes closer to the "final hour" (Bromwich 2018). The problem with the Doomsday Clock is that it ignores the possibility that death comes sooner for some than others. Racialized violence synchronizes black life to its own Doomsday Clock. Rhythmic state terror against black people never misses a beat. So, while *all* are said to be affected by global capitalism and climate chaos, the Doomsday Clock for black life is accelerated by antiblackness that defies both space and time.

Plenty of attention is given to the unpredictability and unreliability of poor, urbanized space. Still, there remain specific aspects of inner-city life that racialized people are certain about. In the ghetto, there exists the certainty of joblessness, the certainty that law enforcement will neither protect or serve, the certainty that the criminal-legal system will remain in contempt of justice, and the certainty that various institutions including education, child welfare, and housing will cooperate with the state

⁷⁸ "Karan Barad: Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future." The talk was given on June 2, 2016. Published on December 8, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnOJioYNHU>

to reduce the life chances of racialized people. There also exists the certainty that the depleting budgets of social services cannot contend with the proliferating profits of the carceral state and its capacity to expropriate time and eviscerate the future, particularly for poor, racialized youth. Finally, there exists the certainty that scholars from outside the boundaries of the ghetto will weaponize research methods in order to develop greater insights into the experiences of the “urban poor.”

Rather than assume that racialized youth in the inner city place a moratorium on their own future orientations because of the “disorder” of everyday life, it is worth considering how an awareness of struggle conditions their perspectives of what is to come. If racialized youth are ambivalent about the future, it is precisely because looming oppressions are so vivid and justice remains obstructed. To illustrate the role of the state in contributing to the time theft of poor, racialized people in urbanized space, I asked youth about the response times of law enforcement. In the spirit of Public Enemy, who famously proclaimed, “911 is a Joke,” Kendra had this to say.

RM: Would you call the police when there’s an emergency in your home or your community?

Kendra: No.

RM: Ok. Why not?

Kendra: Because...I feel like nothing’s gonna happen or nothing’s gonna change. You’ll call the police once and then the problem will be fixed for a little while and then it’ll happen again and you’ll just have to keep calling the police. It really doesn't matter if the police are called or not, especially in my house.

RM: When you... if you ever did call, how long would you think it would take them to get to your emergency?

Kendra: We might as well not even have called in the first place cuz it’s like it’s gonna take a long time. Especially in my neighborhood, so it’s like you might as well just deal with it yourself.

RM: Are ambulances and emergency services also very slow to respond?

Kendra: Yes.

RM: Ok. Why do you think that is? Why do you think they take so long?

Kendra: Because we're black. And I guess an emergency in a white person's home would be more...

RM: Important?

Kendra: Yeah, important to deal with than an emergency in a black person's home. And they can just determine...they can look up who's talking, cuz they ask for your name and address and all. They can just look up exactly where you are and determine if they wanna go there now or later.

Kendra's prescient assessment of police-response times illustrates what is most predictable in poor, urbanized space – state terror. The “delayed” response of police to poor communities of color is not, however, an example of a transgressive temporality. Rather it is simply police abiding by white time that denies, violates, and enacts violence against the personhood of racialized subjects. When asked why police take so long to respond to emergencies, Kendra responds without hesitation – “Because we're black.” Criminologists may use Kendra's response to legitimate the use of race as an independent variable. What such scholars fail to acknowledge is that police do not have slower response times to Kendra's needs because *she* is black, but because of *social responses* to her blackness. In other words, the use of race as an independent variable is a misnomer. A more accurate “explanatory variable” is *responses to race* (i.e. racialized violence) or anti-humanness (Wynter 2015; Ansfield 2015). While police are often slow to respond to the needs of racialized and urbanized communities, somehow they manage to not only be punctual, but early, when it comes to placing racialized youth into the criminal-legal system.

In addition to routinely criminalizing racialized youth's "time use," police engage in a *take time* by abdicating their responsibilities to racialized people, especially those living in poor urbanized space. However, if we take seriously the role of the state, it cannot "abdicate" a responsibility that it never actually had to black people. Heeding Hortense Spillers's (1987) warning about the limitations of language and the dangers of solecism, it is not possible to abandon what you never cared for (and cannot care for) in the first place.

Despite my argument that describing youth's prescience as a "psychic" ability is somewhat misleading, certain predictions were eerily noteworthy and illustrative of the way racialized people are (in) a constant race against time. Tanisha, who was 17 at the time of our interview, had her own predictions about the future of state power. While I was more interested in Tanisha's outlook on the future, she used the question as an opportunity to foretell what is arguably the "present" moment.

RM: Can you describe how you think about the future?

Tanisha: To be honest, something is...something bad's gonna happen. Like, cuz Obama's not gonna be president no more and there's a man that's running and a woman that's running. And the man that's running seems very racist. And I think that he'll try to get...I think that he'll try to turn us into slaves again. Black people.

I conducted this interview in July of 2015. My purpose here is not to assess the accuracy of Tanisha's premonition, but to return to my central critique of urban sociology's representation of racialized youth as "present oriented." Tanisha's ominous outlook not only reflects her insight into the future, but also a deep and abiding connection to a racialized, and un-sanitized, past. Tanisha portends problems for black people based on ongoing acts of violence against black life. Ironically, it was Tanisha's

connection to the past that made her and many other youth at Run-a-Way way ahead of their time.

Despite limited attention to the future orientation of a “double consciousness” within urban sociology, Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic* provides evidence that this “second-sight” for black people may have been looking toward the future. Gilroy substantiates these claims through Richard Wright’s analysis of the transmutation from “African” to “Negro.”

It is interesting that he (Wright) expressed this dissident consciousness of the West in temporal terms. Claiming in effect, that event split subjectivity carried some significant advantages: “I’ve tried to lead you back to my angle of vision slowly...My point of view is a Western one, but a Western one that conflicts at several vital points with the present, dominant outlook of the West. Am I ahead of or behind the West? My personal judgement is that I’m ahead. And I do not say that boastfully; such a judgement is implied by the very nature of those Western values that I hold dear” (Gilroy 1993: 162).

Richard Wright, like many youth at Run-a-Way, believed Western standards of time could not keep pace with black people’s accelerated sociality. Black people temporalize whiteness and “Western” culture to a played-out past. A tacit, yet pivotal, move Du Bois makes in *Souls* is to juxtapose “double consciousness” to a white, single consciousness – one that does not require white people to know black people for the purposes of survival. It is then no surprise why Wright and other black people would see themselves as ahead of time. Two (or more) consciousnesses demand psychic residence in the past, present, and future at the same time. With ongoing forms of racialized violence against black people, many youth saw the past and present as indistinguishable.

History repeated or remixed?: The heavy rotation of racialized temporality.

Chocolate rain
Only in the past is what they say
Chocolate rain

History quickly crashing through your veins

Tay Zonday
“Chocolate Rain”

A popular trend among dancehall reggae and hip-hop DJs alike is playing the first few lines or bars of a song and then restarting the track. The process begins, when a dancehall DJ screams (in Jamaican patois) “puuuuull up” or “wheel up.” With this cue, the crowd is now prepped to hear the song again. Similarly, hip-hop DJ’s and emcees at live shows will often ask to “run it back.” DJs “pull up” or “run back” a hit record to give all partygoers an opportunity to re-experience a moment in spacetime (i.e. the elation that comes with hearing the repetition a favorite song.) While using music may seem superfluous in relation to the primary objectives of this research, there exist intimate connections between race, space, time, and sound (Lipsitz 1990; Woods 1998; Moten 2003; McKittrick 2006; Valdés 2012; Weheliye 2005). As George Lipsitz (1990: 112) notes, “The rhythmic complexity of Afro-American music encourages listeners to think of time as a flexible human creation rather than as an immutable outside force.”

“Pulling up” or “running back” a track is, I argue, a form of time travel — a concept popular culture reserves for those privileged along the lines of race, gender and class within the context of (white) sci-fi. However, black people form their own versions of science fiction and subfields like Afrofuturism create new temporal-spatial imaginaries for black sociality to flourish (Womack 2013; Shaw 2015). While black sci-fi focuses on future possibilities, here, I assess the importance of the past to racialized youth.

Nearly every youth I interviewed at Run-a-Way considered their past to be very important. Despite a variety of watershed moments in racial justice history predating the

infancy of most racialized youth I interviewed, police killings and activist responses, including #BlackLivesMatter, forged substantive connections between legacies of slavery, conquest, genocide and contemporary struggles for justice. The significance of youth's cultural pasts was integral to shaping their present realities. Malik was 1 of 9 black youth, who also identified as "Native."

RM: How important are events of your cultural past?

Malik: I feel like it's very important. Like, my Grandma is native so what I do is I smudge...every other day if I can or every day. Cuz...sage is used to cleanse your body and cleanse your house for 30 days. Whenever I'm sick I go smudge and the next day I'm perfectly fine or the next couple of hours I just start to come back. So I feel like it's very important.

Though only 16 years old, Malik smudges in order to not only cleanse, but also remain in communion with many of his elders and ancestors. Malik's observance of Native tradition signals a deep connection to the past and prescience of the present and what is yet to come. Enslavement was critical to settler colonialism and both remain integral aspects of Malik's biography. For 16-year-old Shanté, who also identifies as black and Native, slavery was the most immediate reference point in relation to her cultural past. In her words, "Slavery is real important."

Shanté:...cuz those is my people. They went through literally hell and back for us. And look where we are today, we still gettin' treated disrespectful. We still gettin' beat for no reason. Look at how many black kids have gotten shot by cops. We still gettin killed for nothin', literally. I mean, it [racial justice movements] was worth it. We're way better off today than how we was 150 years ago, but it still ain't no different. It's just a different way of disrespect. They're disrespecting us legally now...Like...especially the way they talk to us it's like you act like slavery never happened. Like, y'all *just* did this to our same people. Like, the way cops is gettin' away with killin' kids, the same way white people is gettin' away with hangin' us back in the day. Y'all still gettin' away with the same petty crimes. Well, not petty but *ridiculous* crimes...

In Shanté’s opinion, little has changed over the last 150 years, alluding to her intimate connection to the past and the presence of, what Hartman calls “the afterlife of slavery.” A decade earlier, Hartman (1997: 6) would offer this theoretical scaffolding for slavery’s afterlife: “The enduring legacy of slavery was readily discernible in the travestied liberation, castigated agency, and blameworthiness of the free individual.” Hartman again describes how black “agency” backfires in the wake of “emancipation.” Shanté sees a similar dynamic at play when exclaiming, “We still gettin killed for nothin’, literally!” The difference between the legal lynchings of the past and those of today, to Shanté, are negligible. While those privileged along the lines of race, gender and class have the capacity to construct the past as a blank page in history, Shanté’s biography and those of many black people are densely narrated. In an analysis of the social structure of time, Eviatar Zerubavel (2003: 26) states that marked time⁷⁹ has a higher “mnemonic density” compared to “unmarked time.” That is, particular periods in time occupy greater mnemonic space depending on their biographical significance for the individual. Racialized violence is not only mnemonically dense, but temporally taxing. In other words, the mnemonic density of oppression requires a substantial amount of *processing time*. However, what does it mean to process something that is in continuous process? Can racialized violence ever be fully processed?

⁷⁹ In *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of Past*, Zerubavel (2003) distinguishes between “marked” and “unmarked time.” “As a strictly mathematical entity, time is homogenous, with every minute essentially identical to every other minute, as demonstrated by the way they are conventionally measured by the clock.” This form of time, for Zerubavel, is “unmarked” because of its banality and synchronization to calendar days, weeks, months, etc. “Marked” time, by contrast, reflects those “extraordinary chunks of social reality” that help distinguish between “eventful” and “uneventful” historical periods (Zerubavel 2003: 26).

Zerubavel introduces the concept of “mnemonic community” (Zerubavel 2003: 4) to describe a group formed around a shared history, culture and interpretation of the past which is always present. When Shante’s mnemonic community is at odds with the selective memory of other mnemonic communities, time and the “past” becomes a contentious space. Shanté, like many youth at Run-a-Way, constructed a relational racial history. In other words, black people were not the only characters portrayed in their historical accounts. White people also held prominent positions in each youth’s “time map” (Zerubavel 2003), serving as further evidence of significance of sociogenetic factors in identity formation (Fanon 1952; Wynter 2015). Echoing some of Shanté’s sentiments, Tameka (16) describes racialized violence as a recurring trend.

RM: How important are events of the past, like your cultural past?

Tameka: Oh, important because I do feel history do repeat itself. Like history is repeating itself right now with the racist thing. Like white cops killing black people. Like back then they used to do it and now it’s startin’ again. And you heard about the white man [referring to Dylann Roof] who went in the church and killed black people? Isn’t he out or they’re bailin’ him out?

The present-day killings of black people by police bear a striking resemblance to events of youth’s cultural past.⁸⁰ Tameka’s connection to the past makes her acutely aware that “white cops killing black people” is not a new trend, but is instead, simply “startin’ again.” Social scientists use connections to the past to legitimate the “lack of progress” and/or “modernization” of the “other” (Fabian 1987). However, for youth like

⁸⁰ Connections between the past struggles and contemporary ones need not be limited to any one particular racialized group. Consider the experiences of Native and Indigenous peoples of the US and the world who have been experiencing displacement, dispossession, and genocide since a spacetime I am not qualified to locate. The present-day experiences of Latinx/Chicanx people in the US are reminiscent of federal initiatives like “the Bracero Program,” “Operation Wetback,” and the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act.

Tameka, the past was a necessary tool for navigating white time. As the saying goes, “You don’t know where you’re going until you know where you’re coming from.”

What happens, though, when where you are going looks a lot like where you have already been? One of the most salient themes that ran throughout several interviews, including Tameka’s, was the notion of “history (or the past) repeating itself.”⁸¹ Did Tameka liken the mass shooting of black worshipers at the Emanuel A.M.E. church in 2015 to the Birmingham bombing of the 16th St. Baptist church that killed 4 black girls? For some “mnemonic communities,” the *heavy* rotation⁸² of racialized violence makes the past present. By contrast, those complicit in making the rotation of oppression so heavy treat the past as always past and to a large degree non-existent.

In a comparative school-based ethnography examining identity formation between white and nonwhite youth, Pamela Perry (2001: 58) found that white students saw only “ethnic” people as having a connection to the past, while their own white identity was deemed “cultureless.” Perry (2001: 73) goes on to note, “Naturalized whiteness is securely grounded in and validated by the normal way of things in the present and therefore does not seek meaning in cultural or past orientation.” It is no coincidence that at the same time whiteness is validated by the present and associated with future orientations, it is granted license to ignore ongoing protocols of systematic

⁸¹ If we conceive of time in a similar way to Jodi Melamed, that is time as a Mobius strip, the notion of “history repeating itself” makes much sense. Mobius strips have two sides available for use, which ultimately increases the life span of the belt itself. To think of time as a Mobius strip is perhaps a means of making the most out of time, just as the surface area of Mobius strips is optimized.

⁸² “Heavy rotation” is a term DJs use to describe the high frequency of plays of a particular record or song.

violence including settler colonialism, slavery, and empire. Racialized youth don't have the luxury to ignore the past because it constantly haunts them in the present.

There are serious consequences for imagining legacies of oppression as remnants of the past. If violences are kept suspended in time (i.e. the past), then the struggles to resist them are rendered meaningless, at best, and nonexistent, at worst. According to Hardt and Negri (2000: 54), the “incommunicability of struggles” make them “always already old, outdated, and anachronistic.” For youth like Remy, the past is far from gone. It is here and now. Because time for many racialized subjects is better represented along the curves of nonlinear time, I asked Remy whether time only moves forward.

Remy: That's funny cuz for the past couple of days I've been telling people that I think time is moving backwards.

RM: What do you mean by that?

Remy: ...You know how your history teacher will say, “If you don't learn history you'll be forced to repeat it.” Then she'll laugh it off or whatever. Yeah. I just feel like, shit, my history teacher was right cuz I didn't learn about nothing. I don't wanna hear not a damn thing. But now it's like the stuff she was trying to tell us, it's happening right in front of our eyes. It's been happening! We're watching it happen...I literally just feel like we're going back in time...And the... the lack of resistance that people are having to hide their racism. These days people are so openly racist it's just blowing my mind. Cuz they don't necessarily have any consequence unless we can prove that it's keeping us from getting to things that they can get to. You know what I mean? Unless we can prove that it's [racism] preventing us from getting our rights, not that it makes a difference...

Remy raises an important theme, echoed by other youth at Run-a-Way. In suggesting that time moves backward, Remy is alluding to the lack of progress made towards a more just world for racialized people, generally, and black people, in particular. Remy is also challenging the “cultureless” identity of whiteness (Perry 2001) by suggesting that their teacher's advice also applies to white people. In other words, “If

you don't learn white history (i.e. settler colonialism, enslavement) you'll be forced to repeat it.”

Mark Twain once said, “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it rhymes.” “Such rhyming implies that, while clearly distinct, the past and the present are nonetheless fundamentally similar, to the point of evoking *déjà-vu* sense of ‘there we go again’” (Zerubavel 2003: 25). The continued state-sanctioned violence against black people and other racialized people living in the US suggests that history has been “rhyming” for quite some time. History may not repeat itself exactly, but to racialized people suggesting that it rhymes sounds like a crude euphemism. Is “slavery’s afterlife” merely “rhyming” with “social death”? Does the “genocide” of Native peoples “rhyme” with “Standing Rock” or “Line 3”? Does “Operation Wetback” rhyme with the “incarceration of children and families at the border”? From Jim Crow past to the “New Jim Crow” (Alexander 2010); from conquest and genocide to contemporary forms of environmental racism and sexism against Native people; from the exploitation, detention and exclusion of Chicana/Latina persons; history appears to be doing much more than rhyming.

Mark Twain’s phrase-turning charm is one of many diluted references to time. For example, the saying “time heals all wounds” warrants critique and intense skepticism among those whose wounds run deep in a past that continues to inform the present and a seemingly recurring history. Time has not healed the global wounds of black people. Time has not healed the wounds of Native peoples around the world whose history is marked by conquest, violated treaties, dispossession, land expropriation and genocide. Time has not healed the wounds of Asian and Pacific Islanders who were displaced, interned and killed in US intervention and imperial takeovers. Time has not

healed the wounds of Arab and Muslim people whose lives, land and natural resources remain the target of insatiable imperial appetites. The notion that “time heals all wounds” is only a comfort to those who inflict the wounds and benefit from such harm. Cumulative disadvantage theory (Merton 1968; Pallas 2003) reminds us that the passage of time is more likely to worsen wounds, rather than heal them. Hence, when urban sociologists construct racialized youth in urbanized space as lingering in a perpetual state of delay, it is worth asking whether black, Indigenous, and racialized youth are “killing time” or if *time* is killing them? What does it mean to describe racialized youth, and black youth in particular, as “killing time,” when systems enacting quotidian violence have already pronounced their time of death?

Rather than ending, racialized violence is extending. Hence, technologies of temporal violence cannot be isolated to a single point in time. Modernity, white supremacy, patriarchy, settler colonialism and capitalism are interconnected forms of oppression and key sponsors of proliferating violence within linear time. It is no coincidence that whiteness is future oriented. Why would whiteness want to acknowledge historical and ongoing acts of racialized violence?

The rotation of the racial(ized) temporalities of racialized people precludes a future predicated on a present that hollows out the past. While “fast forward” and “skip” are common features on most stereos, racialized people cannot neglect the “rewind” button, especially when particular soundtracks of oppression never seem to “pause,” but only stay stuck on play/repeat. The creative control of sound in hip hop signals black people’s adeptness with time travel.

I asked youth to utilize their time-traveling talents and imagine what they would like to be doing in five years. Racialized youth who reject the future are not bereft of aspirations, as some may believe. To better understand time horizons, I asked them to make some projections for the life course. I asked 16-year-old Dominique what they would like to be doing in five years.

Dominique: Um, I think I will be 21. I hope to be doing really good in college and I hope to have an apartment and be working and just trying to free myself from depression and free myself from time. Like, I hope I have a soulmate by then.

RM: How will you work towards those goals?

Dominique: Just [pause]...Forget about time. I feel like that's so essential. Even though, like, [we're] basically oppressed by this time infinitely, you know. Just try to fight back and enjoy things instead of regretting that they're gone...You understand what I'm saying?

RM: So not get so bogged down by things that have happened and let those things shackle you to your current position, but pretend as if there is no time and we can all... we can do whatever we want.

Dominique: Yes. Cuz when you think of things like that, you're thinking of a stopwatch for your life...I don't think you should think like that. I think you should enjoy the moments and, you know, let them go and then like, surround yourself with things that remind you of moments such as that. Like pictures and videos and food that remind you of those people and moments. You know?

Pursuing markers of independence (e.g. college, apartment) inevitably require some form of “time management” in terms of setting deadlines for applications, scheduling appointments, etc. It then may seem paradoxical for Dominique to emphasize how “essential” it is to “forget about time” in order to achieve their goals. To “forget about time,” however, is not to forget about what transpired over time (e.g. slavery, conquest, genocide). Rather than reproduce capitalist logic as a manager of time, Dominique prefers to pursue temporal liberation or liberation from time. Throughout our

interviews, Dominique couched their ideas within the context and cosmology of the “Black radical tradition” (Robinson 1983). As Cedric Robinson notes,

This violence was not inspired by an external object, it was not understood as a part of an attack on a system, or an engagement with an abstraction of oppressive structures and relations...Rather it was...the preservation of the ontological totality granted by a metaphysical system that had never allowed for property in either the physical, philosophical, temporal, legal, social, or psychic senses. For them defeat was an internal affair (Robinson 1983: 168).

In attempting to “free” themselves from depression and “fight back and enjoy things instead of regretting that they’re gone,” Dominique is involved in an internal affair (i.e. self-liberation from time). Though Dominique encourages others to “enjoy the moments,” to depict them as “present oriented” belies a prescience held by far more chronologically gifted persons. Without a “stopwatch for life,” it is imperative for Dominique to locate a spacetime where they can enjoy the moment and surround themselves with reminders of positive moments or feelings. The future orienting Dominique is one where time does not exist. Perhaps, Dominique is committed to the teleology of time. The spacetime Dominique envisions is not beyond the realm of possibility. In fact, it may be found in sound. When asked whether time was more of a “white people thing,” Dominique said, “Yes, definitely...I wish everything could be 24 hours because that way the party doesn't end. You can be nocturnal if you wanted to.”

Just as the DJ and emcee controls time through calls to “pull up” or “run it back,” the turntablist also possesses a unique capacity to dictate a hip-hop audience’s orientation to time. “Scratching” is a technique the turntablist uses to create music within music. Scratching creates “a break” (Moten 2003) in the record at play. In parties, the turntablist/DJ may scratch a popular verse in a song for emphasis purposes. The skilled turntablist/DJ knows what verse is likely to “get the crowd hype” (very excited

and entertained). The turntablist/DJ will run a track back several times to allow the crowd to collectively experience the lyrical force of a particular verse. Scratching, I argue, functions as a transgressive temporality the turntablist/DJ uses to violate white time. However, unlike white time, scratching a record does not efface history. It remakes and remixes it.

As racialized people turn the tables of time and DJs spin the turntables, they place the direction of time under their discretion. The DJ and the audience cooperate by manipulating the tempo and temporality of a song. Lipsitz draws important connections between temporal manipulation at work and temporal manipulation in sound.

The sense of time conveyed within Afro-American music directly contradicts one of the main disciplining forces of industrial culture. Before the rise of the factory, people generally worked at their own pace for their own purposes, disciplined by necessity or desire, but not by the time clock. Industrial labor brought the clock and its incessant demands into the workplace and into the home; days became divided into units of working time and individuals lost control over nature, purpose and the duration of their labor. Controlling workers accustomed to pre-industrial values was the primary focus of management for over one hundred years. Despite rewards of high wages and punishments including the threat of starvation, workers never wholeheartedly embraced time-work discipline, and their culture reflected that refusal. Instead of the regular beat that measured time by the clock, working-class music embraced polyrhythms and playing off the beat as a way of realizing in culture the mastery over time denied workers in the workplace (Lipsitz 1990: 112-13).

In other words, within the context of “Afro-American music” time goes when black people say so. I conclude by revisiting 14-year-old Quincy’s remarks about CP Time:

RM: So if I said there’s a party and its goin’ down at 10, but we’re on black people time, what time does the party actually start?

Quincy: Party start when the black people get there.

Conclusion: De-arresting the future through “climate change” and the production of nowness.

In attempting to de-arrest youth from the “ethnographic present” (Fabian 1983) in urban sociology, I maintain that racialized youth in urbanized space are not “present oriented,” but prescient. The empirical evidence I use to describe the source of youth’s clairvoyance, however, seems counterintuitive. For example, I argue that an always already present past makes racialized youth acutely aware of what is to come. With past oppressions residing in the present, youth have a clear sense of what to expect from the progression of time. Several youth reject the future because they have seen the future and know what a racist-carceral, colonial state has in store for them and many other racialized youth. Youth’s preparedness is a product of their prescience and an awareness that racial struggles are extending, not ending.

As I have argued, racialized youth from urbanized space retain a unique ability to foretell their futures based on the multiplicative forms of oppression they will inevitably face over their life course, youth. So it is not as though racialized youth have not thought about the future. It is precisely because youth have cogitated so deeply over their futures that they reject many of the oppressions that have yet to come. As Muñoz writes,

Rather than invest in a deferred future, the queer citizen-subject labors to live in a present that is calibrated through the protocols of state power, to sacrifice our liveness for what Laruen Berlant has called the ‘dead citizenship’ of heterosexuality” (Muñoz 2009: 49).

Because racialized, including queer and trans youth, choose not to entertain a “liberal futurity” (Rodriguez 2015: 34) or “deferred future” directed towards “freedoms” associated with a “post-racial era” does not make them present oriented. It makes them prepared. If the youth I interviewed are seen as “present oriented” it is an orientation that differs significantly from representations in urban sociology. Instead of being a paralyzing force that keeps youth suspended in time, present orientations are marked by

the production of “nowness,” in light of a prescient vision of what is to come. My work highlights the ways that racialized youth in urbanized space are not only “ahead of their time,” but ahead or perhaps outside of time itself.

Youth’s arrival at this particular spacetime requires transgression. Whether it’s being late to school, late to work, violating curfew, racialized youth at Run-a-Way may not see themselves as late at all. Instead, they are simply getting there when they get there. The “late” label signals the always already atemporal ontologies of racialized youth, and black and Native youth in particular. By refusing constructions of a non-past (Robinson 1983; Wolfe 2001; Said 1979), violent presents and liberal futurities, youth are transgressing time.

Conclusion: Another Spacetime is Possible

...Black existence is a condition of possibility of moving beyond the what is. At the same time, it presently anchors a set of possibilities for “something else to be.”

—Kara Keeling *Queer Times, Black Futures*

A salient theme in the 2016 presidential election was undoubtedly time. Whether Bernie Sanders proclaiming “a future to believe in,” Hillary Clinton’s iconic campaign logo of a red arrow signaling progress forward or even Donald Trump’s intention to “make American great again,” time is an inherent part of political discourse. Each campaign is built on a promise to progress towards a destination or end point. But where and when do politicians hope to arrive? From where and when are they departing? The United States is now embarking on another election year and progress is once again an integral part of political discourse. However, it is the introduction of the past within such future-oriented politics (redundancy) that I begin my concluding thoughts.

On June 18, 2019, one day before the commemoration of Juneteenth,⁸³ Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell remarked:

I don’t think reparations for something that happened 150 years ago for whom none of us currently living are responsible is a good idea. We’ve tried to deal with our original sin of slavery by fighting a civil war, by passing landmark civil rights legislation. We elected an African American president. I think we’re always a work in progress in this country but no one currently alive was responsible for that and I don’t think we should be trying to figure out how to compensate for it. First of all, it’d be pretty hard to figure out who to compensate. We’ve had waves of immigrants as well come to the country and experience dramatic discrimination of one kind or another so no, I don’t think reparations are a good idea.

⁸³ Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the abolition of slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers in Galveston, Texas announced that the Civil War ended and enslaved peoples were now free.

McConnell was responding to a question about the recent H.R. 40 legislation, a bill introduced by Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas to establish a commission to study the impact of slavery and consider a proposal for reparations. What exactly does McConnell mean when describing America as a “work in progress”? What could America possibly be progressing towards, when the racialized violence of the past is so imbricated in the present? Is a “work in progress” indicative of work in white supremacy, capitalism, anti-blackness, and settler colonialism? As most politicians invoke calls for “progress,” it is important that we ask, “Progress for who?” To what extent is “progress” for one group regress for another? When “progress” remains synchronized to white time (Mills 2014; Mahadeo 2019), “racial capitalism” (Robinson 1983), and the general expansion of state power, what is progressive to some is oppressive to others.

Absent from McConnell’s remarks is any acknowledgment of the past’s presence, the “afterlife of slavery” (Hartman 2007), and ongoing settler colonial violence. How does McConnell square the tension in exonerating himself from the atrocities of enslavement, while remaining one of its many beneficiaries? Just as the vestiges of racialized violence reside in the present, so too do the profits of racial capitalism. McConnell deserves some credit for at least being honest about the country’s consistency as the greatest “purveyor of (racialized) violence,” when expressing confusion as to how to compensate other racialized subjects for their experiences with “dramatic discrimination.” Yet, the future orientation of whiteness makes compensation an impossibility. In conversation with Frank Wilderson, Saidiya Hartman contends,

The reparations movement puts itself in this contradictory or impossible position, because reparations are not going to solve the systemic ongoing production of racial inequality, in material or any other terms. And like inequality, racial domination and racial abjection are produced across generations. In that sense,

reparations seem like a very limited reform: a liberal scheme based upon certain notions of commensurability that reinscribe the power of the law and of the state to make right a certain situation, when, clearly, it cannot (2003: 193).

Maintaining an unwavering commitment to meritocracy in spite of overwhelming evidence of “racialized social systems” (Bonilla-Silva 1997) designed to privilege whites over nonwhites exemplifies a possessive investment in whiteness, as well as what belongs to nonwhites. In response to calls for reparations, the consistent refrain among white people in and outside of elected office is that people alive today cannot be judged by their ancestors’ actions. However, calls for reparations and oppositional responses ignore the presence of the past for racialized people and black people in particular. As described in Chapter 2, enslavement and its afterlife represent an “unpayable debt” (Silva 2017). The debt is unpayable in large part due to white people’s status as beneficiaries of slavery, settler colonialism and US empire. Hyper-segregation, the mutually-constitutive relationship between urbanized and suburbanized space, violated treaties, stolen land, environmental racism, free-trade agreements, structural adjustment programs, and militarism worldwide disproportionately benefit white people while disproportionately harming racialized subjects around the world.

In *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman (1997: 116) describes “emancipation” as a “nonevent.” The persistence of antiblackness is what Hartman (1997: 51) refers to as a “history that hurts” – “the still-unfolding narrative of captivity, dispossession, and domination that engenders the black subject in the Americas.” Not only is enslavement a history that hurts, but according to Dionne Brand (2001: 5), it is a history that *haunts*.

Black experience in any modern city or town in the Americas is a haunting. One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes. History is already seated in the chair in the empty room when one arrives. Where one stands in a society seems always related to this historical experience. Where

one can be observed is relative to that history. All human effort seems to emanate from this door. How do I know this? Only by self-observation, only by looking. Only by feeling. Only by being a part, sitting in the room with history.

The presence of the past and the haunting of history engenders a unique relationship to time. The “non-event” of emancipation blurs the lines between the past, present and future. Did enslavement end or extend? How is Jim Crow distinct from “the New Jim Crow” (Alexander 2010)? To what extent is black agency equated with criminal culpability? The presence of the past reflects a history that haunts. Brand knows this based on experiential evidence. “Who feels it knows it” is a popular aphorism in Jamaica and many other majority-black Caribbean nations invoke signifying the subjective side to oppression that only the oppressed can understand.⁸⁴ To know “it” is to know impoverishment, dispossession by accumulation (Chakravartty and Silva 2016), destruction by design, environmental racism and slavery’s afterlife (Hartman 2007). To *feel* enslaved, in spite of emancipation, is to recognize the presence of the past.

Concerned with those in a “small place,” Jamaica Kincaid writes,

To the people in a small place, the division of Time into the Past, the Present, and the Future does not exist. An event that occurred one hundred years ago might be as vivid to them as if it were happening at this very moment. And then, an event that is occurring at this very moment might pass before them with such dimness that it is as if had happened one hundred years ago. No action in the present is an action planned with a view of its effect on the future. When the future, bearing its own events, arrives, its ancestry is then traced in a trancelike respect, at the end of which, their mouths and eyes wide with their astonishment, the people in a small place reveal themselves to be like children being shown the secrets of a magic trick.

⁸⁴ It is worth asking what happens when who doesn’t feel it claims to know it? I am specifically considering the fungibility of the slave and the possibility to interchange people with cultural capital. Hartman (1997: 21) describes fungibility as “the joy made possible by virtue of the replaceability and interchangeability endemic to the commodity—and by the extensive capacities of property—that is, the augmentation of the master subject through his embodiment in external objects and persons.” What concerns me, then, is the possibility that the fungibility of blackness provides an opportunity for those who don’t feel it to claim to know it.

In Antigua, people speak of slavery as if it had been a pageant full of large ships sailing on the blue water, the large ships filled up with human cargo – their ancestors; they got off, they were forced to work under conditions that were cruel and inhuman, they were beaten, they were murdered, they were sold, their children were taken from them and these separations lasted forever, there were many other things, and then suddenly the whole thing came to an end in something called emancipation. Then they speak of emancipation itself as if happened just the other day, not over one hundred and fifty years ago. The word ‘emancipation’ is used so frequently, it is as if it, emancipation, were a contemporary occurrence, something everybody is familiar with (Kincaid 1988: 54-5).

Why is “emancipation” such a seemingly “contemporary occurrence” for Antiguan? Perhaps, remaining in close proximity to a pre-emancipation period. As Frantz Fanon (1963: 54) writes, “The apotheosis of independence becomes the curse of independence,” when the “colonial power says: ‘If you want independence, take it and suffer the consequences’.” Black people in “A Small Place” like Antigua or even a larger place like the US recognize that emancipation and independence may engender the opportunity for further punishment. They both feel and know the consequences of “travestied liberation, castigated agency, and blameworthiness of the free individual” (Hartman 1997: 6).

The call for reparations signals an awareness of commitment to present and future generations through an intimate connection to the past. However, as I have demonstrated, racialized youth represent a threat to the future, as opposed to an “investment” in it. What, then, do examples of politics and racialized youth have in common? Both are seeking to escape. Politicians evade questions of reparations, while abdicating responsibility for racialized violence that is both then and now. To escape responsibility is to default on what is already on a still-accruing, unpayable debt. Racialized youth, by contrast, not only seek an exit from the here and now of racialized

violence, but an escape from white time necessitating an anti-black future. As black youth transgress the “what is” of white time and liberal futurities, they bring new meaning to the notion of time travel. Black youth were not interested in going “back to the future,” precisely because they knew that the future was foreclosed by white time. Rather, black youth found ways to create black futures in the present. While reckoning with time, racialized youth also wrecked it in order to design new possibilities for being.

In addition to being about time, this research has made the case that it is also *about time* that sociology catch up to the racialized temporalities of racialized youth in urbanized space. “Run-a-Way” is a play on existing constructions of youth “deviance,” delinquency, and homelessness. Having worked in paid and unpaid youthwork positions for nearly a decade, I know that youth do not simply “run away.” Many, are in fact, running *a way*. In other words, they are running with a vision – with prescience. They have foresight. They are acutely aware of how to comport themselves according to anticipated adversity in ways that the conventional life course cannot comprehend, even through the application of concepts like “schemata” (Shanahan and Macmillan 2008: 188), “biographical structuration” (Schafer, Ferraro, and Mustillo 2011: 1081) or “situated choices” (Schafer, Ferraro, and Mustillo 2011: 1064). Sociology’s reliance on measures of linear time, the linear life course, and an overall linear logic, will keep it suspended in white time. Perhaps sociology is not meant to keep up with the temporalities of racialized youth in urbanized space. By running *a way*, rather than away, racialized youth reveal their level of connection to past and present realities, as well as futurities.

“Fugitivity,” as conceptualized by Black Studies scholars, does not require a person to run *a way*. Rather, the act of running is itself generative. To flee, escape, and abscond represent modes of acting with purpose. Fugitivity is also an opportunity to repurpose. Yet, “runaway youth” have little chance of escaping the grips of classification. The stigma of being a “runaway” speaks for those presumed guilty until proven less guilty, namely racialized youth. As a mouthpiece for the transgressive, stigma expresses little interest in motivations for running away. It does not matter what youth are running from or where they are running to. Running itself is transgressive, as it defies the designated space and time.

To inquire about youth’s motivations for running is to risk learning that racialized youth have become superfluous to the concept of the “Child” (Edelman 2004) and thus warrant no protection. As racialized youth begin to share the reasons for running, you learn they are running from a compost of violence largely produced by adult-led systems that fail. Many run in an attempt to escape planned obsolescent space—schools, low-wage work, detention and “maybe environments.” Perhaps, many black youth at Run-a-Way were seeking the haven that many of their ancestors sought and that Hartman (2007: 226) describes:

And the dreams of what might be possible were enshrined in the names of these towns and villages founded by fugitives, *safe at last, we have come together, here where no one can reach us anymore, the village of free people, here we speak of peace, a place of abundance, haven*. Haven like communities of maroons and fugitives and outliers elsewhere, their identity was defined as much by what they were running from as by what they were running toward (emphasis in original).

We need not privilege physicality, however, to understand the concept of “running.” Many youth were running a way without moving at all. As fugitives fleeing

racism, settler colonialism, and antiblackness, youth ran away, both physically and psychically, from racialized violence and towards another spacetime.

At the start of this project, I made the case that time is racialized and race is temporalized. Drawing on previous literature within the sociology of time, I argued that both social time and the social render racialized persons illegible within time. To the extent that they are legible within time, racialized persons are more likely to be used by time, than use it themselves. White time (Mills 2014), for example, represented a site of exploitation and extraction of nonwhite life. Similarly, “racial time” (Hanchard 1999) is premised on enslavement, dispossession, and death. Beginning with the advent of slavery, racial time appears to lack a deadline, precisely because the mounting and cumulative effects of racialized violence remain in full effect. With this racial critique, I urge sociologists to consider how whiteness prefigures time, thus denying the coevalness of racialized persons, and black people in particular.

Resistance remains a part of the narrative. As they made their escape from white time and racial time, racialized youth managed to attend a party or two and funk up the clock. I explore the importance of CP Time as a means to not only mock the clock, but carry on temporal tradition. Despite youth’s unfamiliarity with CP Time, they inherited a prescient analysis of time and their relation to it. Not all black people adhere to CP Time, yet it remains a deeply cultural element and practice. Even youth recognized black people’s unique relationship to time. CP Time presented an opportunity to break and make temporal conventions. Though racialized youth may have been on the run from white time and racial time, CP Time encourages them to take “their” time, while collecting a few extra minutes from others.

As fugitives of “white time” racialized youth were not “only on the run,” they were wanted for attempting to use time that did not belong to them. Hence, their “time use” was read as time theft and was deemed criminal behavior. Black youth were charged with “walking up to no good,” while walking *down* the street in their own neighborhood. It is not that they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Rather, they were in the wrong space according to white time. My findings reveal the limitation of “time use” studies and life course research to accurately measure racialized youth’s “time use.” White time remains the product of black debt and dispossession. In short, black youth were accused of stealing that which was already stolen (from them).

By asking what it means to use time that doesn’t belong to you(th), I expand the breadth of youth development and time use studies. The American Time Use Survey (ATUS), for example, lacks any adequate measures of either racialization or racism. If the ATUS cannot account for the time youth spend processing acts of racialization or racism, then it is inevitably capturing but a fraction of this group’s purported “time use.” Racialized violence, however, remains incommensurable with routine activities such as the time youth spend on personal hygiene or chores. Experiences with racialization and racism remain unquantifiable. They literally and figuratively do not count. To racialized persons, and black youth in particular, acts of racialization and racism will always count because they are *countless*.

As youth ran from liberal futurities (Rodriguez 2015) with limited prospects of improving life chances or chances at life, they became skilled at spacetime travel. Racialized youth ran from “maybe environments” and the corresponding political economy that ensures “maybe” jobs, schools, housing, and detention. The experiences of

youth attempting to survive within educational and work opportunities nearing obsolescence is well documented in sociology. Less attention is devoted to what it means for black youth to work twice as hard to be half as good as their white counterparts. I reveal that such incommensurable labor-time inevitably results in black youth having far less time than their white peers. The combination of compressed time and foreclosed opportunities abbreviated aspirations for the life course.

Racialized youth at Run-a-Way followed the life course less traveled. Racialized violence defied space and time, confronting youth in school, in the workplace, and on the streets. The fundamental life course framework predicated on transitions and trajectories, however, lacks the conceptual capacity to account for the physical, emotional, and psychic labor required to make sense of such violence. Rather than being either transitions or trajectories, racialization and racism, I argue, represent life course constants to racialized youth.

Racialized youth could not entertain the same liberal futurities as their white counterparts. With education and employment both functioning more as locks and less as keys, racialized youth at Run-a-Way described other means of escape. The pace of the fast life was comparable to the speed many youth ran. They found ways to not only make money, but also take time. Time in the fast life, however, remained compressed given the threat of “doing time.” Yet, the surveillance of blackness (Browne 2015) and the reach of the criminal-legal system guaranteed that some time can never be done.

The coevalness of whiteness and time warrants consideration of how white time conditions the time perspectives of nonwhite youth. Racialized youth spoke with confidence about the limited time they had compared to their white peers, providing

further evidence that the time is racialized. Wondering why the time always seemed right for white and wrong for them, racialized youth created ways to work outside the temporal boundaries of white time. As they made their escape from white time, racialized youth explored ways to mock the clock and further funk with whiteness.

Birkenstocks and socks may be constantly trending according to white time, but within the context of Run-a-Way, racialized youth declared such fashions wack on arrival. Racialized youth, black youth in particular, maintained an untouchable and timeless swag. While their swag remained “up to date,” whiteness and white time were relegated to a “played-out” past. I show that in funkying with time, black youth were also repurposing it. Time was not simply a metric for keeping track of schedules. To many racialized youth at Run-a-Way, time also served as a gauge of individual connections to nonwhite trends and sociality.

Racialized youth’s cool could not be divorced from their prescience. Urban sociology fails to appreciate such prescience because it is preoccupied with present orientations. In centering the prescience within present orientations, I contribute to a wealth of scholarship on race, youth, and urbanized space. Just as time was compressed, so was life experience. What many racialized youth had already seen and experienced cannot be contained in most people’s lifetimes. Black youth in particular knew what to expect because racialized violence offers back-to-back previews. Youth’s relaxed composure was not a product of desensitization to “inner-city violence,” but a serene adaptation to structural violence not-yet-here. Rejecting liberal futurities and privileging nowness did not make youth “present-oriented.” It made them prepared to confront racialized violence and oppression along the life course.

Racialized youth's temporalities were not only transgressive, but transformative. To transform time required exercising what Robin D.G. Kelley describes as the "black radical imagination."

We must remember that the conditions and the very existence of social movements enable participants to imagine something different, to realize that things need not always be this way. It is *that* imagination, that effort to see the future in the present, that I shall call 'poetry' or 'poetic knowledge' (Kelley 2002: 9).

Youth saw not only foreclosed futures in the present, but also imagined a "then and there" of black sociality free from white time and racialized violence. As long as some persons remain exploited by white time, there will exist an exigent need to resist and, in the words of Toni Cade Bambara, "make revolution irresistible." For adherents of white time navigating the world through the future, the prospects of a temporal revolution remain to be seen. The residence of slavery's afterlife in the present led many youth to imagine the "not-yet-here." As Kara Keeling (2019: 126) notes, "The past appears with every present, harboring dimensions of itself that might challenge what has been perceived about it." For the prescient, including James Baldwin, "There is never time in the future, in which we will work out our salvation. The challenge is in the moment; the time is always now."

A transgressive temporality is conducive to the production of a nowness situated outside the past, present and future. We may locate this nowness within what Michelle Wright describes as epiphenomenal time. "Epiphenomenal time understands one spacetime: the moment of the now, through which we imagine the past and also move into the future possibilities (walking, thinking, talking)" (Wright 2015: 145).

Transgressive temporalities may also be likened to what Christina Sharpe (2016) calls, “the residence time of the wake.”

The amount of time it takes for a substance to enter the ocean and then leave the ocean is called residence time... We, Black people, exist in the residence time of the wake, a time in which “everything is now. It is all now” [Morrison 1987: 198] (Sharpe 2016: 41).

With many youth at Run-a-Way privileging nowness over future orientations, it is possible that they are also existing in the “residence time of the wake.” Racialized youth at Run-a-Way held visions for an alternative temporal reality, based on a deep and abiding connection with the past and an intimate relationship with the present. In short, the presence may get racialized youth past enduring struggles. However, these relationships don’t simply exist linearly. The direction of time is as ambiguous as the spaces available for youth to run. There is no certainty where youth will end up or when they will arrive. Instead, they will “get there when they get there” and, perhaps, “see you when I see you.”

To transgress time involves the production of new space. Perhaps it is a space where Remy and Shanté go when they feel they are not learning anything in school. Maybe it is where Tameka goes when she sees history repeating itself. Could it be where Shanice goes when she sees her history being stolen by white people? Tanisha may go there when she worries that the President of the United States will turn black people into slaves *again*. It could be where Kendra goes when she feels tomorrow is not promised. Does Tariq create such a space when he cannot plan a picnic on account of the “weather” (Sharpe 2016)? Does Dominique join Tariq and others when trying to “free” themselves from time? In Quincy’s terms, it may be where and when “black people get there.”

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