The thing that struck me the most about the first chapter of Fanon’s  *A Dying Colonialism* was the apparent interplay between politics and culture in colonial Algeria. At the beginning of the chapter, he outlines how the French colonial government sought to crush Algerian national identity by “winning over” Algerian women to European values. This operation manifested itself as a concerted campaign against the veil and an assault on “medieval and barbaric” Algerian cultural practices. With hindsight, it is clear that this campaign failed; Algeria was never Europeanized and many Algerians continued to fight against the French colonial government. However, it is interesting to note that some Algerian did adopt European dress and values. As Fanon explains, “Here and there it... happened that a women was ‘saved,’ and symbolically unveiled... After each success the authorities were strengthened in their conviction that the Algerian woman would support Western penetration into the native society.” (42)

This example clearly demonstrates the power of culture and ideology over force. At the time, France had an overwhelming military advantage over the Algerian rebels. Yet despite this overwhelming advantage, they continued to pour considerable resources into a campaign to Europeanize the Algerian people. As such, their enemy was not Algerians *per se*, but rather Islam. As Fanon puts it, the French saw Algeria as “a prey fought over with equal ferocity by Islam and France” (41). It is interesting to note this relationship between politics and culture, and to consider how culture shapes politics and *vice versa*.

I was also intrigued, and a bit confused, by Elyachar’s definition of communicative channels in her essay *Phatic Labor, infrastructure, and the question of empowerment in Cairo.* She explains that communicative channels are “an outcome of practices of sociality on their own terms, as distinct objects of inquiry” (455). Importantly, she argues that communicative channels are distinct from social networks. While I agree that lines of communication exist outside of one’s close personal connections, I don’t think that it’s possible to separate communicative channels from one’s wider social network. As Elyachar herself notes, communication requires “physical proximity and psychological contact between the speaker and an addressee [to] allow them to send and receive messages” (455). As such, communication requires a social relation, or “psychological contact,” to be effective. Thus, it seems to me that communicative channels are inseparable intertwined with social networks; in order to develop a new communicative channel, you also need to expand your social network.

I also think that Elyachar could make her point more effectively if she coined a different word for the concept she is trying to develop. It seems to me that she is trying to argue that there is potential for communication within a social milieu but outside of existing social connections. However, the term *communicative channels* seems to emphasize that communication can only exist between individuals who establish a person-to-person connections. Perhaps communicative milieu would be a better word.