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Race and Computation: An Existential Phenomenological Inquiry Concerning Man, Mind, and the Body

Author
Mahendran, Dilan David

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Race and Computation: An Existential Phenomenological Inquiry Concerning Man, Mind, and the Body

by

Dilan D. Mahendran

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Committee in charge:

Professor Paul Duguid, Co-Chair

Professor Kimiko Ryokai, Co-Chair

Professor AnnaLee Saxenian

Professor Hubert L. Dreyfus

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Abstract

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Dilan D. Mahendran

Doctor of Philosophy in Information Management & Systems

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Paul Duguid, Co-Chair

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This dissertation is concerned with two phenomena, race and computation, their emergence in modernity and their convergence today in our modern technological epoch. From the perspective of the traditional disciplines the concepts of race and computation are wholly incommensurable. Formally, race refers to a hierarchical taxonomic schema for classifying humans while computation refers to the formal mathematical logic of digital machines. I argue that race and computation share a peculiar modern conception of the body in relation to cognition. According to this modern schema one is more fully human if one appears toward the pole of the mind and therefore less or not human at all if one appears toward the pole of the body. It is this artificially strained relation between the body and the mind that had come to define the human in modernity and persists in our current epoch. In this way race became the measurement of the polarity between the mind and the body and as such the modern measure of humanity.

The distinction that race makes is not lost in computation because it inherits this narrow model of the human as *animal rationale* and mechanizes it. I argue that this defining characteristic of the modern human as rational is both computational and racial and finds itself historically anchored in the normative conception of the human as Man [*homo humanus*]. My chief aim in this dissertation is not to indict modern technology as racist but to show how race and computation reveal the bipolar aspects of our normative schema for human being, one that has had a long "romance with disembodiment."[1] Could both race and modern technology share a common origin in Western modernity? Could race and computation share a fundamental philosophical ground which the sciences themselves take as *a priori*? More urgently, what could race and modern computational machinery tell us about what it means to be human in our current age? Does the origin of the modern subject lay the framework for both the development of race and computation?

1 Evelyn Fox Keller, *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender, and Science* (New York, Routledge 1992), 180.

These radically disparate objects, race and computation, are grounded on a peculiar relationship between Man, his body, and thinking. By Man, I mean what has come to be accepted as the modern norm for *human-being*, the autonomous rational animal. The concept of the rational animal places thinking, the *sine qua non* of the secular human, in opposition to the body. The basis of my argument is that the historical idea of Man, as the secular human, had been developed through the violent devolution of bodily experience, in favor of detached calculative rationality, from which computation and race have emerged. This has placed Man over and against the natural world that extends beyond the mind, especially the body and others who are constituted outside the norm of Man. It is well known that Descartes inaugurates the modern concept of Man as the thinking subject by articulating this norm as the distinction between mind as thinking substance [*res cogitans*] and everything external to mind [*res extensa*].

I argue that this normative distinction between mind and body finds a more radical expression in Alan M. Turing's concept of the digital computer, a founding theory of computer science and information technology. On the one hand the digital computer decouples the bodily from existence, proof of the teleological development of a technological rational humanity. On the other hand, race limits existence to the bodily, as a fundamental barrier to humanity. It can be said that modern computation is the angelic ascent from one's body, while race is the hellish descent into one's body.

In Memory of

Peter Lyman

who showed me the path to thinking begins in friendship

Preface

This dissertation sets out to apply some fundamental tenets of existential phenomenology to the inquiry of human identity in relation to race and modern technology. While it can be quickly ascertained that race is closely related to the problem of human identity, modern technology (particularly computational machinery) seems distant from such an inquiry and even more further afield from the idea of race. Yet simply, race and computation are historical characters in the narrative of the West's ongoing pursuit for personal existence and self-certainty. Race and computation are intimately linked to the telos of European reason. The following question could be posed: Why existential phenomenology? Why not provide a positive history of technology AND race in order to see where they may intersect? For example, why not provide a history of computing and how the racial identities of its founders impacted the design of the computer? Or how early computer manufacturers such as IBM assisted the Nazi's in developing information retrieval systems to further its genocidal campaign against Jews and so called "non-Aryans."[1] These are both valid and important topics of research but neither can reveal the basis upon which the idea of race and computation are grounded, that is, the idea of personal existence. Personal existence is normative because it asserts that in order to be human one must be actively reasoning and be certain of doing so. The uniquely European idea of the self-sufficient person as a rational animal is where the modern invention of race and the later development of computation find their unlikely origin.

The theoretical concept of the digital computer descends from the traditional prejudice that human thinking is a type of interiorized mental symbol manipulation and calculation about the external world. As such, the digital computer is a mechanized model of the traditional model of the person. Moreover, two centuries before the advent of the theory of computation, race was intrinsically aligned with the history of rational personal existence because race provided a mechanism to distinguish between beings with reason and those without. The idea of the person is historical and not universal. Personal existence is captured by the normative concept of Man which modern Europeans allowed to stand-in as the universal human of all time. Both race and computation cover over the truth that the concept of Man as the human is their standard of measure. Today some have announced that Man is dead and we are now posthuman but I will show that this is a premature if not specious claim. The concept of Man has transformed into a more radical expression of calculative reason most clearly shown in the belief that the human and nature are computational, that is, comprised of hardware and software. Today the world appears as computable information. What's critical is the concept of Man still remains the hidden standard of measure for science and technology because the concept of Man has been buried deep within the artifice of the modern technological world. As such, the

1 Edwin Black, *IBM and the Holocaust*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 2001).

concept of Man still functions as a central organizing principle of racial and technological experience.

Existential phenomenology provides a way to reawaken and recover the forgotten and covered over idea of Man. First it provides a method to explicate the distinction between the human and human-being. Human-being is the way in which humans are encountered, the way humanity is perceived. The being who walked the Nile in 4000 B.C. is as human as the being who walks along the Rhine in 2011 A.D. What has changed is the epochal interpretation of human-being and not the human species. Race is a modern European facet of the perception of human-being. If we return to the question of human experience as that of encounter with the world this will, if only preliminarily, provide the existential basis in which to see how our current interpretation of the human and human-being is technological through and through.

Race, as I will argue, is firstly about *encounter*. Race then is a way in which human-being is encountered. Encounter means how human-being is perceive in pre-objective experience. Phenomenology holds the view that all knowledge begins with perceptual encounter. Therefore phenomenological method starts from the first-person perspective. Perception is of course a widely used term in the sciences and in public discourse, often connoting the biological sensory system that delivers information to our brain which in turn are computed into meanings about the external world. In the public sense, perception can also mean opinion or appearance. However perception has a very specific meaning within phenomenology. It cannot be reduced to cognition, bio-chemical computational processes in the brain, or beliefs. Rather perception is the constitution of meaning manifest in immediate experience. From the phenomenological point of view, human perception goes straight through to the *things-themselves* and provides our most basic access to the world. Perceptual access is a founding access meaning that all other forms of access to objects such as reflection, epistemology, science etc. derive from it. Phenomenology begins in the interrogation of the encounter of "what ever is" prior to the prejudices of reflection, judgments, and representations.

Is there such a thing as pre-conceptual racial meaning? Can human-being be perceived as racial prior to psychology or sociology? Psychology provides an important lens into interiorized mental states about race such as racial beliefs and personal opinion. Sociology can provide a powerful analysis of the exteriorization of racial constructs that organize society such as institutional racial structures. Neither psychology nor sociology provide a method in which to interrogate racial encounter. Isn't it true that we carry in our heads some set of representations, concepts, and beliefs about race which we can then deploy? It is certainly true that we have racial concepts delivered over by culture most evident in our collective discourse about race. However a synthesis of racial concepts may not be what occurs when we encounter others. Racial discourse and its system of concepts first relies upon the encounter of human-being. As such, racial discourse is a derivative manifestation of what can be called a tacit perceptual know-how. Racial

discourse then relies upon an unthematized background racial know-how. Unthematized racial know-how refers to how we already understand others pre-reflectively in a certain way. An example of racial know-how is police racial profiling such as that practiced in the state of Arizona to detain and deport “illegal aliens” from South and Central America. How do police initiate the process of distinguishing between alien and citizen? Racial perception is already intentional and meaningful regardless of whether the objective facts of the matter are wrong or right, whether a police officer has correctly detained an illegal alien or mistakenly pulled over a citizen. No matter what the outcome, the situation begins with encounter and in order to encounter one must already have an understanding of what can be encountered.

It is the opaque and indeterminate perceptual space prior to objective knowledge that I wish to explicate. Arguing that race is firstly about human encounter both compliments and also challenges views that racial meaning is a matter of belief (psychological), the collective use of language (discursive), or institutional practices (sociological). The theory of computation is premised upon the idea that the opacity of perceptual life is not essential to knowledge. Therefore computation eliminates the ambiguous from its algorithms in order to achieve mechanical certainty. Digital computation has now begun to radically transform the way we interpret the human and world. Yet, I will argue that this new interpretation does not fundamentally alter the essence of race and the centrality of personal existence in being human in the West. The Western world is neither posthuman nor postracial.

There are three distinct areas that this dissertation addresses. The first is the application of existential phenomenology toward the study of racial and modern technological experience. Phenomenological methods provide a way to both access and broaden out the meaning of race and technology by returning to their shared origin in the naturalization of personal existence. The second is an epochal critique of European reason and cognition which grounds both race and technology. The third is a critical assessment of the basic themes present in contemporary constructivist accounts of race which are themselves technological in character. Chapter 1 introduces a set of basic methodological problems in attempting to study race and technology and the ways in which phenomenology can be applied both positively and critically. In the first chapter, I will lay out the schemas for the last three Western epochs—Christian, modern, and modern technology and their corresponding models of human cognition—God, Man, and Machine. The models of cognition in their respective epochs, I will argue, function as standards of measure for the human as a dialectical relation between finitude and infinitude. In chapter 2 I look at the history of the concept of Man through the lens of the Heideggerian epoch, sometimes referred to as the history of being. Heidegger's epochal schema provide a novel way to think about the historical unfolding of human encounter in order to uncover the origins of personal existence in specific reference to the idea of race and technology. Phenomenologically an epoch is not a historiographical object but

rather it indicates a prevailing style of interpreting being. In chapter 3 I examine the centrality of cognition in defining the modern human in the West. In this chapter I argue that the theory of computation was already prefigured by the cognitive model of Man several centuries prior, seen most clearly in the work of G.W. Leibniz. I conclude that the computer as a model of mechanized reason is itself based upon the prior model of Man. In fact the ontological status of the computer preserves some of the basic characteristics of Man, in particular the idea of self certainty which is transformed into what I call computational certainty. In chapter 4 I develop further the idea of self certainty by bringing it into reference to racial whiteness as a style of human comportment in which scientific consciousness is an exemplar. In this fourth chapter I trace the quest for certainty as an essential facet of defining the human as Man and as such reveal *being-certain* as a phenomenal component of racial whiteness. In chapter 5 I return to the issue of cognition but now in relation to the bodily dimension of technological experience. In this fifth chapter I argue that once cognition is determined as the basis of human existence, it not only colonizes human-being all the way down, but through the prejudice of *extension*, colonizes the world all the way out. Therefore the traditional prejudices that narrowly define the human as a closed off interiority also limit our understanding of how we interact with the world. Instead of the existential condition of *being-in-the-world*, the traditional prejudice asserts that we are minds inserted into a world of extended things. The "overdetermination" of cognition results in a totalizing colonization of being. In chapter 6 I return to the question of phenomenology of race begun in chapters 1 and 4.[2] In this sixth chapter I specifically take up the problem of the constitution of self under a racist background by drawing upon Frantz Fanon's psycho-existential phenomenology of anti-black racism. I bring Fanon's phenomenology of self consciousness in dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception to begin to describe not only racial perception of others but how race impacts the formation of the self and the possibility of intersubjectivity. In the seventh and final chapter I critically take up four contemporary approaches to social construction of race theory: sociological-structural, rational-propositional, discursive, and performative. I conclude chapter 7 by returning to the concept of Man and the question of Man's existence in our current epoch by asking if Man is indeed dead, as some have proclaimed. I conclude by arguing that if personal existence and calculative reason are still central to what it means to be human in the West then the essence of Man still holds sway. Most critically then, the idea of race which is no doubt durable must still be organized around the rational and technological person.

2 Throughout this dissertation I deploy an unconventional yet simple system of quotation in which quoted terms or phrases I wish to give special attention will be placed within "scare quotes" while direct quoting of an author will be placed within "regular quotes."

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Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the encouragement and support I have received from my loving parents, Alexander Mahendran and Julia Kamalinie Mahendran. My father and mother have always stood by me along my circuitous route in higher education. I owe a great deal to Warren Sack for cultivating my intellectual interests when I first began as a master's student in 2000. Warren has been a great inspiration. I am grateful for the unique perspectives each member of my committee has provided. I am indebted to Kimiko Ryokai for graciously accepting to co-chair at such a late stage in the project and for helping me see that there is a much broader audience for my research than I had once thought. I would like to thank AnnaLee Saxenian who has enthusiastically supported my project from its inception. AnnaLee convinced me that my project was relevant to information science and contributes to the vision of interdisciplinary technology research. My dissertation project took its major turn in 2005 while attending Hubert Dreyfus' course on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. I've learned a great deal from Bert, not only about existential phenomenology but the value in teaching and learning that can only come about through dialogue. Bert has shown me that thinking is about ideas not ideology. I would like to especially thank Paul Duguid for his dedication and guidance. Through Paul I've been able to appreciate, mostly through observation, the power and beauty in writing. Paul is a generous teacher and tenacious debater which, in my mind, makes a him a formidable intellectual. Paul leaves no idea unchallenged!

Chapter 1. **Introduction: Basic Problems of Race and Technology**

> Meditative thinking demands of us that we engage ourselves with what at first sight does not go together at all.[1] Martin Heidegger (1966)

This dissertation is concerned with two phenomena, race and computation, their emergence in modernity and their convergence today in our modern technological epoch. From the perspective of the traditional disciplines the concepts of race and computation are wholly incommensurable. Formally, race refers to a hierarchical taxonomic schema for classifying humans while computation refers to the formal mathematical logic of digital machines. I argue that race and computation share a peculiar modern conception of the body in relation to cognition. According to this modern schema one is more fully human if one appears toward the pole of the mind and therefore less or not human at all if one appears toward the pole of the body. It is this artificially strained relation between the body and the mind that had come to define the human in modernity and persists in our current epoch. In this way race became the measurement of the polarity between the mind and the body and as such the modern measure of humanity.

Computation inherits this narrow model of the human as *animal rationale* and mechanizes it. I argue that this defining characteristic of the modern human as rational is both computational and racial and finds itself historically anchored in the normative conception of the human as Man [*homo humanus*].[2] My chief aim in this dissertation is not to indict modern technology as racist but to show how race and computation reveal the bipolar aspects of our normative schema for human being, one that has had a long "romance with disembodiment."[3] Could both race and modern technology share a common origin in Western modernity? Could race and computation share a fundamental philosophical ground which the sciences themselves take as *a priori*? More urgently, what could race and modern computational machinery tell us about what it means to be human in our current age? Does the origin of the modern subject lay down the framework for both the development of race and computation?

These radically disparate objects, race and computation, are grounded on a peculiar

1 Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper & Row 1966), 53.

2 By appropriating the Roman humanist term "*homo humanus*" in his *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger both historizes and relativizes the naturalization Man as the definition of the human itself. Within philosophical anthropology the idea that Man and human are one and the same is thrown into question by the phrase "man the human" [*homo humanus*].

3 Evelyn Fox Keller, *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender, and Science* (New York, Routledge 1992), 180.

relationship between Man, his body, and thinking. By Man, I mean what has come to be accepted as the modern norm for *human-being*, the autonomous rational animal. The conception of the rational animal places thinking, the *sine qua non* of the secular human, in opposition to the body. The basis of my argument is that the historical idea of Man, as the secular human, had been developed through the violent devolution of bodily experience, in favor of detached calculative rationality, from which computation and race have emerged. This has placed Man over and against the natural world that extends beyond the mind, especially the body and others who are constituted outside the norm of Man. Descartes inaugurates the modern concept of Man as the thinking subject by articulating this norm as the distinction between mind as thinking substance [*res cogitans*] and everything external to mind [*res extensa*].

I argue that this normative distinction between mind and body finds a more radical expression in Alan M. Turing's concept of the digital computer, a founding theory of computer science and information technology. On the one hand the digital computer decouples the bodily from existence, proof of the teleological development of a technological rational humanity. On the other hand, race limits existence to the bodily, as a fundamental barrier to humanity. It can be said that modern computation is the angelic ascent from one's body, while race is the hellish descent into one's body.

I have chosen to conduct a phenomenological interrogation of race and computation as a way to uncover their the ontological status. A specific worry one faces in phenomenological inquiry into race is that phenomenology will appear to naturalize race by attempting to demonstrate that race is an embodied know-how which draws upon a prior background understanding of human-being. While phenomenology's popularity has waned, its methods have been under continual development for over a century and there is in fact no one single phenomenology. For some there are camps and boundaries that one does not cross, such as that between Husserlians and Heideggerians. I am not concerned with defending one or the other nor do I care about these artificial boundaries.

There are at least three approaches to phenomenology one can take. The first is what can be called the approach of the specialist who pours over phenomenological texts to point out its technical philosophical details. The second is the one which interprets phenomenology as set of literary documents and seeks to situate these documents in an intellectual history. The third approach adapts all or parts of the various phenomenological methods, such as the reduction of Husserl or Heidegger's formal indication, towards the inquiry of concrete phenomena. The first approach treats phenomenological treatises as sacred texts and often retreats into orthodoxy in which the other two approaches are seen as philosophical heresy. The second approach is an important form of historical cultural criticism but in treating phenomenology as literature it forfeits phenomenological methods and its search for truth. Once philosophy is treated

as a collection of archival documents, philosophical arguments are dispassionately treated as an object of historical scientific inquiry. Therefore in the second approach one can only make relative truth claims not universal ones about what it means to be human. In spite of this clear limitation of the second approach those that engage in it invariably attempt to make universal claims nonetheless. The spirit of the third approach can be captured in a Husserlian/Heideggerian inspired slogan: "return to the phenomena." This is easier said than done because the phenomena are not techniques, texts, or facts. This dissertation is a preliminary attempt at the third approach of doing phenomenology rather than talking about phenomenology. I hope to provide a new analytic in which to examine two phenomena which in our everyday outlook and scientific attitude seem to have little or no relation at all. If we naturally take race and computation to be self evident objects that refer to orthogonal regions of knowledge, how can race and computation be shown to be grounded upon the idea of personal existence? I will attempt to begin to answer this question in the following chapters. On the way we may encounter some unanticipated and exciting new phenomena.

1. The Telos of European Reason

What in fact makes intelligible race and computation as co-constitutive phenomena is the telos of European reason anchored to the modern subject. Figure 1 depicts the splitting of nature through theoretical reflection which for Husserl and Heidegger begins with pre-Socratic Greek philosophy but takes on its radical distinction with the inchoate concept of “mind” seen in Plato. The chasm between experience and the reflective or theoretical attitude has widened continually since the inception of *theoria* as the one triumphant pursuit of the West. For Husserl, *theoria* (universal science) is that which made Europe stand out against all other cultures as the only truly world historical civilization.[4]

Greek *theoria* would go through violent permutations resulting in its technization into Enlightenment rationality and the ever increasing specialization of the sciences away from its origin as a universal science. For Heidegger, this blind pursuit converted *logos* to rational calculation and as such was an abomination of pre-Socratic thought. Furthermore, Heidegger believed the quest for the idea of the infinite colonized the being of other cultures, what he called with disdain, Europeanization, what Kant called with approbation, cosmopolitanism or what we today call with exuberance, globalization. Regardless how one charts the inception of *theoria* and the theoretical attitude, reason has been determined by Western thought to be *ground*, the basis of not only European sciences and technology but European humanity. It should then be no surprise that race and racism are invariably linked to human reason as the basis of personal existence, the

4 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 16.

one true way to be human.

The finiteness of the human body is precisely the region where race makes its mark. Race says something about the finitude of the human by indicating the relation between one's body and reason, that is, between finitude and infinitude.

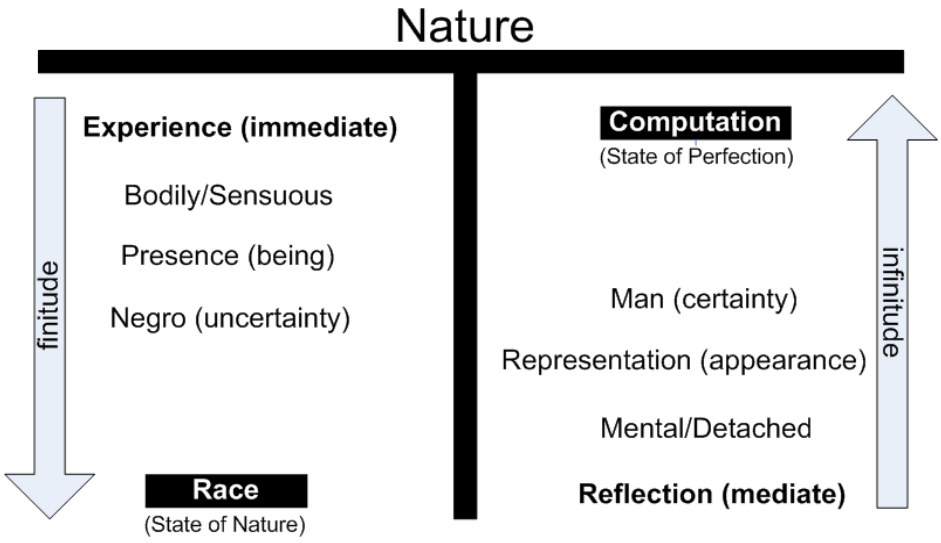

Figure 1.

Computation is not only a historical character in the teleology of European reason but more fundamentally represents its apogee. Computational machinery, I shall argue, is a radical mechanization of the idea of infinity. Once the limit to Man's cognition had been reached, Man held onto the idea of infinity by placing it into machines grounded upon the mathematical idea of infinite time and space.

Today, one's proximity to computing machines, as an exemplar of modern technology, indicates one's membership in the teleological development of reason. Alphonso Lingis writes that in the West we have naturalized the idea of the modern subject in such a way that we cannot question it.

> pursuit of Western science and practice transforms nature to be sure, but first transforms human nature, where there emerges an entirely new form of subjectivity - the person. The idea of a person is an ideal, a task, not a natural given. Western spirituality is the very production of personal existence.[5]

Personal existence is synonymous with a justified and proper humanity. Unwittingly, this view informs the belief that if each brown and black child on Earth were given a personal

5 Alphonso Lingus, "The Origin of Infinity", in *Research in Phenomenology* 6, no. 1 (1976): 27-45, p 37.

computer this would teach them how to exist as a *person* because, as Lingis argues, it is personal and self-sufficient existence in which Western humanity not only strives for but takes as the natural and correct stand point on being.[6] Personal computing cannot only be said to represent some set of relations to the means of production nor simply an ideology but is grounded upon personal existence. It is mistaken to make the human and the "I think" one and the same, yet this is precisely what it is assumed in Western personhood. In chapter 2, I will interrogate in detail this error to naturalize the human as Man. It is not only philosophical anthropology that makes the error of making Man stand in for the universal human but, I shall maintain, even contemporary posthuman critics of Enlightenment's liberal subject (Man) make a similar conflation by inadvertently treating the human and Man as one and the same.[7]

The lauded extension of sociality through Internetworked distributed computing is in essence individuated sociality and like all of Western humanity's endeavors must begin from the person, that is the individual. A very early articulation of personhood we owe to Descartes. Is the promise and deliverance of personal computing so bad? Somehow this is the wrong question but nevertheless the types of questions that critics are invariably asking. It will be critical here to avoid falling for "common sense" questions. The problem is not so much the following: Are digital media and personal computing detrimental, a panacea or something in between? Rather how does such technology organize experience and what hidden standards of how to be human lie within it. Computation and digital technologies are models of how secular humans normatively interpret themselves; as egological subjects [*ego cogito*] who represent and engage the world through cognition. In chapter 3 I will provide a far more detailed analysis of cognition, computation and the concealment of the subject. What the critic and the sociologist miss the marketer of personal computing devices knows all too well, that the "I think" is the organizing principle of the digital device paradigm. Therefore it is humorous that the "I" is prepended to product names and marketing slogans in plain sight.[8]

The ontological status of objects is often passed over in favor of what Heidegger called their "whatness" or substance as object each with a collection of properties.

> According to current opinion, this definition of the thingness of the thing as the substance with its accidents seems to correspond to our natural outlook on

6 See "One Laptop Per Child Vision", OLPC, accessed August 1, 2011. http://laptop.org/en/vision/

7 See N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

8 Steve Jobs, "iMac Introduction 1998", accessed August, 3, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BHPtoTctDY . Steven Jobs states in his marketing introduction of the first iMAC computer in 1998 that the "iMac comes from the marriage of the excitement of the Internet with the simplicity of Macintosh..."i" also means some other things to us. We are a personal computer company...Internet. Individual. Instruct. Inform."

> things...Metaphysics takes thing concept as that which is projected from a propositional statement. Subject with predicate. This is the natural way to see things.[9]

Treating technological objects, or any objects for that matter, as self evident often results in their enchantment or disenchantment, meaning technology can only appear between two poles: beneficial or deleterious. The natural way to see things or what Husserl called the natural attitude [*natürliche-Einstellung*] poses a considerable problem for human sciences and humanistic criticism because they often adopt the natural attitude just when they think they are furthest away from it.[10] The Husserlian phenomenologist, Klaus Held, argues that the natural attitude has a colonizing tendency.

> In normal cases, intentional lived experience takes its object as existing; in this sense, it contains a "positing of being." The relation of people in the natural attitude to objects is their understandable belief in the existence of objects. This "belief of being" relates, first of all, to the individual objects of individual intentional, lived experiences. If we look at it closer, though, we see that this belief encompasses the whole of all such objects, that is, the "world." [11]

According to Held the outcome of the "belief in being" does not just implicate "this object here" but encompasses the world which appears to be merely a collection of objects.[12] I will discuss the natural attitude in more detail in chapter 5. The "positing of belief" in the being of humans and objects is not of course identical but they go hand-in-hand. According to Husserl when the natural attitude goes unchecked it has a negative impact upon the sciences by hiding the originary manners of givenness in which empirical and ideal objects are first presented in lived-experience. These objects lose their original sense or meaning in which they were first formed and cultivated.[13]

I would add further that once the science takes as its object "the human" the results are far more detrimental. The human sciences will not only presuppose a world, but also "who posits the world", that is, Man the subject of science. Stephan Strasser states, "all scientific theories implicitly presuppose man and his world."[14] In chapter 2, I will discuss further the implications of positing Man as the *a priori*, the hidden standard of measure for the sciences. Race indicates something about the presupposition of Man as the disclosure of human-being while modern technology indicates something about a type of

9 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", in *Poetry Language Thought* (New York: Harper Row, 1971), 23-24.

10 See sec. 6.

11 Klaus Held, "Husserl's Phenomenological Method", in *The New Husserl,* ed. Donn Welton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press , 2003), 18.

12 See no. 43.

13 See chap. 2, no. 79; chap. 4, no. 22.

14 Stephan Strasser, *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences: A Contribution to a New Scientific Ideal* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1963), 277-94.

world disclosure of objects.

Man ↔ World

Race ↔ Technology

Phenomenology's task from its inception has been to question the *a priori* of Man and world; not through skeptical doubt but to suspend [epoché] belief in them in order to interrogate the conditions of human existence. Heidegger had once stated that "the sciences don't think" by which he did not mean that the various sciences are inherently inept but rather that the sciences cannot represent themselves to themselves in order to interrogate their basic concepts.[15] Once the ground concepts of "Man and World" are suspended then it maybe possible to reveal their relation in the origin of the new human that emerges in the transition between the Christian and modern epochs and its most extreme permutation in modern technology as the being that extends calculative rationality to machines.

2. The Epoch as the Point of Departure

The fundamental analytical category in which my arguments rely upon is the concept of the epoch. The epoch forms the basis of Heidegger's Western history of being which is consistent throughout his oeuvre. This dissertation is concerned with the last three epochs in the West: *Christian*, *modern*, and *modern technological*. The usage of the "modern technology" corresponds with what some call "postmodern" or "postmodernity." Throughout this dissertation I will use "modern technology" to refer to our current Western epoch. While the concept of race emerges in modernity and the concept of computational machines (Turing Machines or *a*-machines) is discovered in the subsequent modern technological epoch, they both represent aspects of the teleology of reason. Race, referencing the intelligibility for the capacity of human reason in finitude and computation pointing to the extension of reason towards infinitude.

Christian ∩ Modern ∩ Modern Technology

Conceptually the epoch is not historical because it is concerned not with subjects, events, dates etc. but with the coherence of a mode or modes of how being is disclosed as a relation between concealment and unconcealment. According to Heidegger each epoch has within it a certain style of interpretation in which all entities can appear as what they are. The intelligibility of entities (beings) depends upon a dominant mode of interpretation or revealing. For Heidegger, Metaphysics, whose groundwork was

15 Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 9.

established by Plato through the conversion of logos into rationality, is the essential basis for each of the Western epochs. I would add that Metaphysics, as a normative structure of ordering how entities are revealed, functions in a teleological manner, meaning that it progressively narrows the meaning of being through the violent demand of rationality. The continual evolution of the idea the human as a rational animal is co-dependent on the continual devolution of bodily existence. The teleological nature of Western rationality has been to continually place mind and body at odds and in each successive epoch the mind and the body move farther and farther apart. The traditional prejudice treats the human body as simply an extended thing among other extended things. The continual purification of reason as a teleological progression is exemplified as early as Descartes' inauguration of modernity to contemporary functionalist views of mind seen in Noam Chomsky and Jerry Fodor. In his essay “The Age of the World Picture”, Heidegger argues that an age or epoch is oriented toward a dominant mode of interpreting being.

> In metaphysics reflection is accomplished concerning the essence of what is and a decision takes place regarding the essence of truth. Metaphysics grounds an age, in that through a specific interpretation of what is and through a specific comprehension of truth it gives to that age the basis upon which it is essentially formed. This basis holds complete dominion over all the phenomena that distinguish the age.[16]

The essay cited above is important in Heidegger's thinking because in it he begins to chart the incipient transition from modern to modern technology. Heidegger's critique of Metaphysics and the epoch as an analytical unit in which to trace the telos of Western rationality may seem sweeping to many. However it affords an insightful way to grasp the basis for the West's expansion outside of Europe through colonialism and imperialism.

> Thesis: If there is a coherence in each epoch in which *being* is interpreted normatively, in a unified manner then any objects whatsoever should have a referential intelligibility. As such, race and computation (digital) will be grounded upon the overarching modern metaphysical meaning of human and world. The human for the most part in modernity had been over-represented as the subject Man whose correlate is the circular interpretation of world as technological.

God ∩ Man ∩ Machine

The human is the invariant in each epoch. The human should not be mistaken as Man. However the mode in which the human is interpreted is dependent on an entity that functions as the standard of measure as seen in the illustration above. I call these the *three models of cognition*. Each standard of measure is correlated to cognition in

16 Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 117.

dialectical relation of infinitude and finitude. Elements of infinite and finite cognition are carried across each epoch from the preceding one. Though each of the last three epochs can be considered *sui generis,* the centrality of cognition in relation to human finitude and infinitude remains a consistent theme. The human as the invariant is seemingly always tied to cognition throughout these three epochs. Divine cognition is that which is infinite as a direct immediate intuition that requires no thinking as such. According to this Christian model, God does not think, God intuits directly and manifestly the infinite. In the Christian epoch the infinitude of God was impossible to think but was believed to be complete and actual. One had faith in the divine, but as creatures of God, humans did not believe that they could conceptually grasp God's creation as a manifest cognition. Therefore for Christian humans the infinite was incomprehensible and unthinkable. In the modern epoch or the Age of Man, a radical shift occurs where it became possible to think about the infinite as a possibility. The realization of the finitude of cognition is the essence of freedom and infinitude is the essence of truth. In direct reference to modern Europeans, Lingus writes:

> The idea of infinity is not an idea among ideas, not an idea of something, not a concept, being ungraspable, does not contain a content; it is only as an idea or as an ideal; it is the idealizing form of ideas. It cannot be given, actual; it can only be *ad infinitum*. It is only as aimed at; it indeed is the pure form of a telos. It is by becoming thoroughly aim, intentionality, that European consciousness pursues infinity.[17]

Man's new found freedom achieved through the self consciousness of its own finitude created a freeing relation to the infinite in which it could be possible to conceive of the infinite. In spite of this new found freedom in which Man could be guided by the idea of infinitude, Man could not intuit the infinity all at once. Man's thinking was progressive but limited because his mental representations only revealed aspects of an object and reality as such. Descartes was one of the earliest to demonstrate through his philosophical anthropology that we experience the world through limited perspectives what he called representations. Representations become the basic units in which to model reality. In our natural outlook on computation it will seem appropriate to ask: Can computers think like humans? Are computers in essence *thinking machines*? The phenomena in fact reveals that the question is posed the other way round: Do humans think like computers? Are humans computing machines? I will discuss in detail in chapter 3 how the mind as the faculty of modeling is itself modeled by theoretic Turing machines.

The shift from God to Man radically transforms the infinite as the actuality of the divine to the infinite as the possibility-to-know by Man. Infinitude and finitude function as the dialectical ground of cognition. In Kant's words, pure reason is a "regulative principle" and I would add emphatically, normative. Kant writes in the "Antimonies of Pure

17 Lingus, "The Origin of Infinity", 30.

Reason" contained in his first *Critique,* that the principle of reason is "a principle of the greatest possible continuation and extension of experience, allowing no empirical limit to hold as absolute." Kant adds, the "idea of reason, can therefore do no more than prescribe a rule to the regressive synthesis in the series of conditions; and in accordance with this rule the synthesis must proceed from the conditioned through all subordinate conditions, up to the unconditioned. Yet it can never reach this goal, for the absolutely unconditioned is not to be met with experience."[18] For Kant, human experience is the limit but using the normative (regulative) principle of reason established by his predecessor Leibniz, thinking must direct itself toward the infinite, though it can never reach the absolute unconditioned (indivisible) state of perfection. Perfection is nonetheless the goal rational man must shoot-for or direct itself toward. Later on in the "Transcendental Dialectic," chapter 3., entitled "The Ideal of Pure Reason", Kant writes, "[t]his ideal is the supreme and complete material condition of the possibility of all that exists—the condition to which all thought of objects, so far as their content is concerned, has to be traced back."[19] Kant consummates both modernity's apex and its further transformation by the transubstantiation of the Christian epoch's supreme being, God, to the supreme being of reason of which Man would have to take up stewardship. By projecting pure reason as regulative and normative it provides Man the ideal in which to model itself, *progressus ad infinitum,* and as such Man becomes the model or prototype for human-being as well as the standard of measure for the world. Lingus argues that infinity does not simply serve a functional role in European reason, that is, it cannot be taken as a property, but grounds the very basis of truth for European man.

> The idea of infinity will have this completely decisive role in European cognitive life because it is not a concept which can be philosophically judged as to its truth, but is the decisive constituent of the philosophical idea of truth itself, and therefore of all truths. And infinity is not some-thing that can be taken as a reality among other realities, but it is the decisive constituent of the idea of the universal characteristic of reality: extension. The *idea* of extension is the idea of infinite extension: extension whose forms and properties are studied by mathematics, that is, no longer by empirical measurements but by ideas, is infinite extension.[20]

The epochal transitions of cognition works as follows: Christian Epoch (God = infinite cognition) as the impossibility to know the actual and infinite divine plan → Modern Epoch (Man = finite cognition) the possibility to think the infinite and to know only within limits → Modern Technology (Turing Machine = finite/ infinite cognition) the possibility to think and know the infinite without limits. Though in our current epoch the

18 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), [A 509, B 537 – A 511, B 539], 450-451.

19 Ibid*.,* 491 [A 576, B 604].

20 Lingus, "The Origin of Infinity", 30.

divine seems to be out of the picture entirely the ontological status of Turing Machines as theoretic discrete finite state machine with an infinite tape still holds fast to a central theological concept of infinitude. The radicality of Turing Machines as automatic machines is that it is a further extension of the previous two cognitive models. The Turing Machine is the technological interpretation of the regulative idea of infinitude manifest in the Christian supreme being and the modern secular finitude of the concept of Man.

The human as the invariant across epochs exists as fallen flesh by which I mean, the human is in each interpretation tied to its vital body and in each case the body occludes and limits cognition. In the Christian epoch the body represents fallen flesh and sin while in the modern epoch the body came to represent that which occluded proper reason, the source of deviance and the corruption of moral values. In our current modern technological epoch the human body has been pushed to the margins by Internetworked technologies such as social networking and virtual online worlds. In our current modern technological epoch the body retains the theme as that which obstructs cognition yet in an extreme fashion as that which obstructs the human mind's possibility of infinite existence such as the science fiction fantasy where human consciousness is uploaded to an Internetwork where it can cheat human bodily mortality.

In the last three epochs and their corresponding models of cognition the human body has been progressively objectified. In the Christian epoch the human was a creature of God whose soul was capable of salvation. A Christian soul was the essential characteristic of what it meant to be human. In the Christian epoch the soul and the mind were not seen as separate and distinct. With the “death of God” in the modern epoch the Christian soul was overtaken by the rational mind. Remarkably, the invention of race would take the place of Christian as the indication of humanity. Race plays a central role in the teleology of European reason, because no longer is Christian comportment the mark of human-being but rather rational comportment. The measure of one's rational comportment is indicated by one's racial presence. Race is in this sense the modern “mark of the mental.” Race, as it emerged out of the modern epoch, played an essential role in phenomenally and discursively distinguishing those who are freed from their bodies and those that are condemned to their bodies. Race provided the essential foil in which Man can set itself off from all other empirical entities. In modern technology in order to progressively move toward infinite cognition the human body must be left behind or needs to be extended in such a way as to offload critical aspects of cognition into machines.

The problem we face is that despite these normative models of cognition we live and exist as our bodies though we treat our bodies as objects and deny the essential bodily dimension that grounds all thinking. Phenomenology's basic ideal is to recover [*originaliter*] the sensuous givenness of the lived-body [*leib*] and in doing so rescue the

body from its continual denigration by the West's quest for certainty.

3. The Essence of Race and the Modern Epoch

What is the essence of race? Does race indicate something about the human existential structure of Western worldhood? The question I pose here seems to fly in the face of our current and prevailing conception of race(s) as having no essence and no foundation in the natural world. Rather the point is to elucidate the question race asks us in its transcendental character. *The essence of race is the intelligibility of the human in reference to the body and thought*. From the authoritative view of positive science, race is a shifting hierarchical taxonomy which forms the basis of exclusionary practice and overall inequality in a given society. The positive science's view is not incorrect yet its hidden assumption is that somehow the human (species) and human-being (how humans are encountered) are the same. The phenomena or what can be called the phenomenality of race seems to show more fundamentally that race lets some humans be encountered with human-being while others are not or what Fanon referred to as non-being.

To be sure, there is a complex and varied history of the concept of race, however race's essence cannot be uncovered from historiography alone. Nor can the positive human sciences deliver a comprehensive account of the essence of race. Because left to historical facts it can be easily concluded that race is epiphenomenal. Everyday experience seems to demonstrate otherwise because we seem to see others as already racial prior to reflection. Nor do we require rules or run through checklists in order to interpret others in a racial way. Race cannot simply be a concept(s) deployed by the sciences and irresponsibly taken up by lay people because even the scientist wakes each morning, as do each of us, with a general background understanding of our world. Racial intelligibility seems to withdraw into the background. Sometimes we are surprised when we interpret someone to be of one race and then we come to find, often with embarrassment, that they are not the race we had initially intuited. How did we come to find them showing-up as a race at all? In the West, race seems to be an essential part of our general background understanding of human identity. It is clear that racial meaning depends upon human interpretation, this I do not contest. However how interpretation is manifest and unfolds in experience seems entirely unclear to the sciences. In their theoretical attitudes the sciences often conflate the objective mode of race such as biological, cultural, informational by forcing them to stand-in for the lived-through consciousness experience of human intelligibility. Take for example an anthropologist in the field in an urban U.S. highschool where she observes in her field notes that the majority of students are black. The race of the students is in someway already self-evident to her as an ethnographer. It is not the expressed goal of qualitative positive human science to ask the question: how is it that these students show-up as a black?

Positive science must in someway take the observed race of their research participants as naturally self-evident.

I argue that the origin of race gains its understanding prior to its emergence in authoritative speech of any kind such as that of natural history, the Kantian twin sciences (geography and anthropology), and its later formalization within 19th century human sciences. Though in the next chapter I will discuss in detail the pre-understanding of race, it will be helpful to introduce some key points here. Scholars naturally take race's invention to be purely a scientific formulation but race in authoritative scientific speech is derivative of a prior understanding of what it means to be human. Therefore the understanding of race is pre-scientific. This prior pre-scientific disclosure of race is evident in the radically new question that European man posed to itself at the inauguration of modernity: What is Man? or What is a human? This epochal question at the heart of the sciences necessitated the emergent category of race which would appear three centuries after the 1492 inaugural conquest of the so called New World. Evident in Descartes' doctrine is a new definition of the human as a psycho-physical unity which would be be the basis for the concept of Man. For the first time Man becomes the measure of all things where once only the divine could be center. The desire to define the human as a subject, that is, consciousness of all its acts, overthrew the scholastic view of the soul, transforming the essence of the human into mind. The loss of the Christian soul to the rational mind as the essence of the human is not simply a sign of secularization but more fundamentally a further narrowing of the meaning of human being.

The new found modern self as a conscious subject was indeed radical because in projecting its own self assertion, it did so by defining itself as separate and distinct from the natural world, the empirical, and God (the transcendental). How does one come to grips with one's finitude as a human (having bodily passions like an animal) on the one hand while on the other not divine yet having a mind that seems to reflect aspects of divine cognition? This I argue would be the origin of the quest for European man to understand his place in the cosmos and the necessity to differentiate himself from all other entities. The project of differentiation serves the purpose to continually reaffirm Man's place in relation to the divine against all other entities even as the divine as the external standard of measure wanes. The godhead would be overthrown by Man itself. European man replaced God with Man and Christianity with Science. Therefore race cannot be seen as simply a vestigial and recalcitrant concept of a defunct 18th natural history but rather race constitutes the concretization of how European man came to confront its own finitude.

In contemporary discourse on race theory there is acknowledgment of at least two dominant forms of racial understanding: *biological* and *cultural*. There is much consensus that the biological definition of race as a set of fixed inheritable characteristics

is no longer scientifically valid. Past and prominent proponents of the biological and evolutionary determinant view of race were for example, the Harvard naturalist, Louis Agassiz and the social Darwinist, Herbert Spencer. The death blow to biological determinism of early 20th century human sciences was dealt by the father of American anthropology, Franz Boas.[21] Several decades after Boas' devastating critique of the vulgar biological foundations of race, the biologist and geneticist Richard Lewontin would confirm that race has little or no basis in understanding human genetic variation human.[22] In place of biology, according to Etienne Balibar, the concept of culture would come to frame race, therefore a biology would be traded in for culture.[23] Race is now seen less as a *natural kind* but rather more as a *social kind* or social construction.

The shift from biological to cultural would seem to indicate a change in the essence of race, however this shift is only modal and not fundamental. This is in fact how the positive sciences reports the modal change from biological to cultural, as co-dependent on science's progressive advancement. For example, Stephen Jay Gould's convincing demonstration of the flawed logic of biological race science indicates sciences ability to self correct.[24] Is the shift in the mode of race indicative of the scientific progress or indicative of a prevailing interpretation of being? The modal shift points to the positive account of race within the sciences but does not indicate a transformation in the transcendental aspect of race, that is, its link to rational personal existence. Regardless of whether race is reduced to biology or culture, race can in each case be traced back to the concept of mind as the "mark of the mental."[25] The concept of mind is precisely what race and computation share at a foundational level because both rely upon the traditional and enduring prejudice that the human is a rational animal.

In our current interpretation of being as technological, race as a positive object of science appears as a pure social construction. Social construction does not alter the essence of race in anyway. Though the dominant modes (biological and cultural) of race shift, the essence of race remains durable. The modes of race science seem to only reflect the dominant form of world disclosure. The conclusion that for example, the biological and cultural are modes of race, is achieved through thinking the history of being as epochs. Therefore the biological as fixed and rigid reflects the subject/object interpretation of being in modernity while the cultural/informational view reflects the interpretation of being as a flexible resource specific to our current modern technological epoch. Some

21 Franz Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1986).

22 Richard Lewontin, "The Apportionment of Human Diversity," *Evolutionary Biology*, 6 (1972): 391-398.

23 Etienne Balibar, "Is there a Neo-racism", in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991).

24 Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).

25 Ibid. Gould provides a superb history of 19th century biological race science in which he shows the strong link racist science attempted to demonstrate between intellect and race.

have argued that with current advancements in the study of the human genome which link race to specific genes, represents a re-biologization of race.[26] I would argue that the role genetics plays in the scientific concept of race today is less a re-biologization but rather race interpreted in the mode of computational information. In fact the leading U.S. geneticist, Craig Venter, argues that organic life in general is largely computational.

> DNA is the software of life...And that's the key to the evolution of life on this planet. And now the key to the future of life on this planet is understanding how to write that software...I think the fact that these cells are software driven machines and that software is DNA and that's truly the secret of life is writing software is pretty miraculous.[27]

Venter's comments on reality as computation, now widespread across all domains of science, illustrates not simply the technological development of science as techno-science, but also the normative interpretation of what-ever-is is already technological (I will look more closely at the essence of modern technology in section 4). Race as genetic information is in accord with the prevailing interpretation of being as technological but to reiterate, this does not indicate the essence of race.

If we become enchanted by technological advances in which race science transforms into the search for hidden genetic information, it will be tempting to deny the body's role in the intelligibility of race. Prominent cultural critics of race such Paul Gilroy have implied just this; that race is no longer about the body or the phenomenal body but has become invisible genetic information— a radically new re-biologization of race through information technology.

> The call of racial being has been weakened by another technological and communicative revolution, by the idea that the body is nothing more than an incidental moment in the transmission of code and information.[28]

Gilroy sees these technological advancements as fundamentally changing the character of the idea of race. Gilroy is keen to point out this recent transformation of race science, yet what has changed is really the ontological status of biology's object. Gilroy in fact announces that, "[t]he modern times that W.E.B Du Bois once identified as the century of the color line have now passed."[29] One would like to believe such a claim, fantastic as it is. Yet one would only need to watch the evening news or walk out of their home to see that we live in a racially segregated world full of inequity indicating that Du Bois' theory

26 See Michael Omi, "'Slippin' Into Darkness': The (Re)Biologization of Race", *Journal of Asian American Studies* 13, no. 3, (October 2010): 343-358.

27 Steve Croft, "J. Craig Venter: Designing Life", interview with J. Craig Venter, *60 Minutes,* CBS, November 21, 2010.

28 Paul Gilroy, *Against Race* (Cambridge: Belknap Harvard University Press, 2000), 35.

29 Ibid., 1.

of the color line is indeed more relevant than ever. The last two modes of race: cultural (social construction) and informational (genetic code) fall under the new and current interpretation of being, that is, modern technology, with the latter being the most recent mode. I will return to race and its modern technological mode of interpretation in the last section.

5. Modern Technology

What Heidegger observed was that the natural attitude had transformed into what can be called a *natural technological attitude* where objects had become not simply complete and total objectivities "there-for-us," but entities whose identities are interpreted as infinitely flexible. This seems to contradict the modern position of the natural attitude where the "belief in being" posits objects as complete filled out extensions. What I call the natural technological attitude is a further hyper-extension of the natural attitude. The natural attitude is an attitude which does not necessarily disappear but rather it undergoes a mutation in our current modern technological epoch. In the epoch of modern technology there is still a strongly held natural belief in objective being but a new mode in this natural belief in the objectivity of objects shifts from fixed and finite to flexible and infinite. For example the idea of information is an exemplar of something that is infinitely flexible and amorphous with no discernible content until processed by the brain or computer.

According to Heidegger any attitude we take toward the world is based upon a prior understanding or disclosure therefore the natural technological attitude is not an attitude which causes the world to appear in such and such a way but is the naturalized belief of an already given way to interpret the world which goes unquestioned.[30] In order to encounter the world in a natural technological way requires first a non-cognitive background understanding.[31] The prior disclosure or understanding [*Verstehen*] of being upon which our natural technological attitude is pinned is what Heidegger called modern technology.

Much of Heidegger's later thinking on technology is evident in his 1949 lecture and subsequent 1954 essay "The Question Concerning Technology" ("Die Frage nach der Technik").[32] According to Heidegger a new form of normative world disclosure emerges in the 20th century which transforms Western civilization's interpretation of "Man and world" by further covering over *being* through a more focused calculating rationality

30 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 188-195.

31 I will discuss in more detail Heidegger's concept of understanding [*Verstehen*] in relation to racial understanding as prior disclosure of human-being in chapter 7.

32 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), x.

which he broadly construed as technology [*Technik*]. In the previous modern epoch rationality as such was naturalized as a subject representing objects. The metaphysical determination of being shifts from normatively a subject representing an object [*Gegenstand*] to objectless [*Gegenstandlös*]. What's decisive in modern technology is the very basis of the objectivity [*Gegenstandlichkeit*] of objects undergoes a radical shift. This also means that the subject, as that which posited objects in the modern epoch, loses its role as the exclusive source and origin of meaning. The subject Man loses itself as center of representation because the very model of cognition changes. Where once the subject Man was the model of cognition now Machine becomes the model (Man → Machine). Theoretic Turing Machines are the leading example of this shift which I will discuss at length in chapter 3.

A specific challenge that Heidegger presents to the reader in his technology essay, is to bracket the Western prejudice to interpret "technology" or the technological as only entities or as technical objects that serve as means-to-ends. As I will discuss in more detail in the following section, this anthropological tendency confounds any substantive inquiry into race and is only exacerbated with the addition of technology as an object of study. More broadly the tendency in the sciences is to interpret *being* or how things show themselves [*Sichzeigende*] as as beings or entities. This normative mode of disclosure Heidegger called present-at-hand [*Vorstellen*] of which the natural attitude expresses as a *belief* in objective being. Consistent with his early work, *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger stresses that philosophy, more specifically phenomenology, must be concerned with the *being* of beings along with the entities that are disclosed through their presence (being). For Heidegger this does not mean that phenomenology must disregard beings or entities as frivolous but rather philosophy must radically challenge its tendency to privilege beings over being or to interpret being as a being or entity. The main thrust of his long and difficult essay on the questioning of technology is to reveal our anthropological prejudice toward technology and to then demonstrate the possibility that a radically new interpretation of *being* has emerged unbeknownst to the sciences in which the very mode of world disclosure is itself technological. Modern technology captures simultaneously the mode of disclosure and the entities disclosed, both of which constitute the modern technological epoch.

So the question remains what does this new mode of world disclosure look like and how is it different than in a previous epoch? Heidegger argues that in the modern technological epoch beings show-up as a *resource* or standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. By resource Heidegger means that objects appear to be inherently flexible as opposed to fixed and determinant. As resource an object ceases to be the archetypal Cartesian object of the thing as fully and transparently represented in all aspects as a mathematical-physical unity. Rather than simply a fixed object a resource is amorphous and only coming into object-hood when challenged-forth by being called upon by Man.

Heidegger's famous example is the Rhine river which is commanded-forth as a flexible resource; a resource for power generation; a resource for commercial traffic; a resource for fishing and agribusiness; a resource for American tourists. In sum the Rhine river is a flexible resource until called upon by Man through calculative demand.

Again what Heidegger called objectless, simply means any object whatsoever loses its determinant identity but instead attains a new way of being as a flexible and amorphous object— a resource. This does not mean that objects when demanded forth lose their spatial-temporal determinacy. A common way to interpret objectless is that objects shape shift at the demand of the calculating will of Man. The modern technological mode of revealing is an inherently violent one because it confronts the natural world and humans in what Heidegger called enframing [*Ge-stell*]. In Heidegger's ancient Greek examples of being, the encounter with nature was experienced as a welling-up [*physis*] or a nurturing forth [*poïesis*]. Modern technology on the other hand is a commanding forth, as in the extraction of nature through industrialized agribusiness or strip mining. What's key to Heidegger's argument is that for modern technology and sciences in concert with the teleological movement of metaphysical reason, direct access to the objects becomes progressively remote therefore the modeling of nature in terms of a system becomes essential to enframing. The natural world and its hidden functioning had to be challenged-forth by modeling it and interpreting it as a system. Heidegger was particularly critical of cybernetics which in the mid 20th Century was at the forefront of developing the idea of nature as a information feedback system. It is the concept of information-system model that is central enframing [*Ge-stell*].

> If modern physics must resign itself ever increasingly to the fact that its realm of representation remains inscrutable and incapable of being visualized, this resignation is not dictated by any committee of researchers. It is challenged forth by the rule of Enframing, which demands that nature be orderable as standing-reserve. Hence physics, in all its retreating from the representation turned only toward objects that has alone been standard till recently, will never be able to renounce this one thing: that nature reports itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and that it remains orderable as a system of information. This system is determined, then, out of a causality that has changed once again. Causality now displays neither the character of the occasioning that brings forth nor the nature of the *causa efficiens*, let alone that of the *causa formalis*.[33]

Demanding that nature be orderable presumes a model and specifically a precise mathematical model of whatever is to be confronted by man. Enframing as the modeling of nature as an information-system reaches its apex with digital computation whose origin is the over-determination of cognition itself by European man. I look more closely

33 Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 23.

at this peculiar relation between cognition and computation in chapter 3.

While it is easier to grasp how an object like the Rhine river can shape shift into a variety of resources, how organic life is comprised of genetic code or how language is now information for communication, it becomes more difficult to understand how encounter with “objectlessness” is the case for late modern humans in our practical engagements in the everyday world. The natural technological attitude and its belief in the flexibility of entities is in fact pervasive. For example, the human brain development was once believed to achieve an endpoint of maturity in which no new brain cells could develop after a certain stage of adulthood. Neurologists have now concluded that the brain has a plasticity in which new cells can grow and adapt to, for example, brain trauma. Consider how sexuality was interpreted in the modern epoch in relation to how sexuality and gender are understood today. Today sexual and gender identity is far more fluid and flexible than in the previous modern epoch. The case of flexibility is true of racial identity as well as I will look at more closely in the last section of this chapter. The case of technology as grounding the flexibility of objects is now pervasive in which individuals can achieve maximal flexibility and efficiency as an autonomous agent.

As I've mentioned, subjectivity changes in modern technology through the decentering of the subject but Heidegger argues that not only does the world appear as a resource but humans as well. Digital information communication devices provide a very clear example of how humans in modern technological age have become a resource. The now pervasive digital communications devices such as smart phones, essentially hand held computers, used by both white and blue collar workers makes work itself maximally flexible. One's manager can now contact their employee at all hours whether by realtime messaging, email or voice communication. Enframing not only implicates human communication but because all productive output is information, work product itself moves seamlessly regardless of distance and time. One is never really at work but always working where the built and natural environment become flexible places for working such as the cafe, park, train, bus, car, dinner table, bedroom etc. It is now expected in some U.S. corporations that employs are to be constantly online and oncall with maximum flexibility. The spatial-temporal boundaries for work and private life no longer exist. What's critical is the very nature of “what a worker is”, flexible, on call, online and always ready to perform various specialized tasks which in a previous era would have been conducted by separate workers. In the role as a white collar employee, now called a “knowledge worker”, the worker shows-up as a maximal resource that shape shifts until called upon to fulfill a specialized task and function. The advent of smartphones with always on internet and voice connections is Janus faced because on the one hand the worker is transformed into a resource, stripped of a once sanctified boundary, while on the other hand the worker is afforded a “freedom” to take up tasks as a complete individual without the authoritative structure of a work place that is fixed spatio-

temporally with clearly delineated hierarchy. In essence the worker is enjoined by the digital technology to define oneself as a pure independent individual. The worker is a pure individuated person in the most basic sense as she can define at will what she desires and to be committed only to herself as an individual and to the moment. As resource the worker must fundamentally define themselves in a way their work world cannot because it ultimately interprets them as resource. The calculating will, that is, the will to power, remains decisive in modern technology. Many are enchanted by Internetworked devices with there promise of personal freedom. Personal freedom is the pursuit of self-sufficient existence in which autonomy is always at odds with heteronomy. The Internetworked device paradigm is enchanting precisely because it promises freedom from dependence on other humans. A simple and pervasive example of this type of autonomy is the mapping software on Internetworked smartphone devices where no longer does one require to ask and depend on others for directions but rather one relies upon machines to compute one's location and destination.

Our current modern technological interpretation of being as maximally flexible and efficient and its thematization in the natural technological attitude remains an enigma to the very regions of science which have set out to study and research the human and society. Thus far the scientific method has itself been mismatched with the shifting objectivity of its objects regardless of the specialized regions of sciences themselves. What I call here the mismatch between the method and normative world disclosure has profound effects upon contemporary sciences and humanistic studies. Specifically, I argue that *the method of the positive human sciences and humanistic studies have not kept up with the shifting ontology of its objects of inquiry*. Not only does this make incommensurable objects such as race and technology but more fundamentally individual phenomena such as “race” become phenomenologically inaccessible. This mismatch of method and object can be demonstrated with the analogy of a carpenter attempted to build a house out of glass with woodworking tools. I will elaborate in detail modern technological disclosure in relation to human sciences and race theory in section 9 of this chapter. In the next section I want introduce and frame some basic problems the positive human sciences and humanistic studies encounter when attempting to bring together race and technology.

6. Positivistic Approaches to Race and Technology

Attempting to demonstrate the positive intersection of race and technology is beset with some basic problems that occur from what Strasser refers to as the presupposition of Man and world. By positive, I mean in the sense of the positive sciences in which the object of race and that of technology are coextensive, empirically verifiable and most importantly are maintained in their respective regional ontologies. The basis of the problem is that of

limited access. This means that race and technology will remain incommunicably closed off in their distinct ontological regions. Therefore a sociological ontology would be dominated by social and psychological laws while a technological ontology is determined by mechanistic physical laws (fig. 2).

In the previous section I discussed Heidegger's question concerning technology. Heidegger's goal in inquiring into the essence of technology was to understand technology not only as a collection of functional entities but as a specific mode of disclosure by looking at the history of being from the pre-Socratic, Aristotelian inspired — Christian, modern Cartesian, and to our current modern technological interpretation. The dominant view regards technology as instruments used in human centered practices which can be called the anthropological account. Essentially human entities fabricating and using entities as means-to-ends—*homo-faber*. According to Heidegger, the modern tradition, and for that matter positive scientific inquiry into technology, is primarily concerned with beings not *being*. Furthermore human-being is also treated as an entity. In this sense Man and world are presupposed, therefore the human is a determinant object acting upon or impacted by a world of discrete objects. As Heidegger mentions, on the face of it there is nothing invalid about the anthropological account.[34] However Heidegger concludes that the essence of modern technology is not a collection of technological objects and their use as such but rather the existential conditions that make intelligible these objects and practices is already technological.

Andrew Feenberg refers to Heidegger's view as a substantive account of technology because it provides a rubric for not only facts about things but the being of things in the world.[35] The danger in the anthropological account of technology is missing how technology plays a role to more comprehensively constitute the world or in our contemporary sense, how being is already colonized by a natural technological attitude which shapes every aspect of our lives. Implicitly in the anthropological account, human-being is treated as ontologically equivalent to objects in terms of the way in which humans are accessed by the sciences. The positive study of race (Man) and technology (world) echoes some of these same concerns by conflating the social with the technological. In fact the study of race and technology helps elucidate the broader problem between social and technological determinism.

Within the positive human sciences, technology and technological objects have and continue to pose the problem of orthogonality between the social and the technological. Therefore either a technology determines the social or the social determines the technology. The problem, as I've already mentioned, is that for the sciences, the technological and the social have separate and distinct regional ontologies which means

34 Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 5.
35 Andrew Feenberg, *Critical Theory of Technology* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991), 5-8.

what counts as objects of inquiry for them are incommensurable on the basis of their *being*. To return to my analogy of a carpenter with his woodworking tools attempting to build a house out of glass. The carpenter's usual material is timber and his methods and know-how are directed at the being of timber. The carpenter has no skillful mode of access to glass because his tools incorporated into his bodily know-how cannot disclose the glass in the way he can disclose timber. Simply put, there is a mismatch between the carpenter's methods and the object he wishes to access, being the glass. Both social and technological determinism of technology are faced with something similar to the misguided carpenter who forges ahead, trying to hammer a nail into a piece of glass.

Discussing social determinism of technology, Langdon Winner writes this view holds that "what matters is not the technology itself but the social or economic system in which it is embedded." As for technological determinism, Winner describes this view as, “the idea technology develops as the sole result of an internal dynamic, and then, unmediated by any other influence, molds society to fit its patterns.”[36] Technological determinism asserts that technological objects exist in an autonomous sphere one which obeys physical laws that society must configure itself around much like the natural world. Winner concludes that the technological determinist account is naïve and clearly untenable because it assumes little or no influence from the social sphere. Winner instead sets his sights on the social determinist account because it is more widely accepted among social critics, particularly within the positive human sciences, cultural and humanistic criticism. What occurs in the social determinist view according to Winner is that the technological object cannot contribute “agency” on its own terms, therefore technology is wholly determined by the intentions and will of society. The technological object as such, appears as a neutral or an inert thing until put in motion by social relations. In fact in both technological and social determinism the technological object in itself is static and neutral until the object acts under its natural laws or is acted upon by social laws. What's key is in both types of determinism, social or technological— any given technological object remains in a separate ontological region.

Sociology has limited access to the technological object because it attempts to interpret the object with its own set of social laws that are incommensurable to the being of a thing. If we recall our methodological analogy, it is like the carpenter attempting to access the piece of glass as if it were timber. Winner provides an alternative to the hegemonic social deterministic view, what he calls a "theory of technological politics." Winner argues, "[r]ather than insist that we immediately reduce everything to the interplay of social forces, it suggests that we pay attention to the characteristics of technical objects and the meaning of those characteristics."[37] Winner's view is even Husserlian inspired citing the phenomenological motto, “to the things themselves”,

36 Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?", in *Daedalus* 109, no. 1, (1980): 121-136, p. 122.
37 Ibid., 123.

referring to technological objects. By allowing the object to contribute to the constitution of meaning Winner's intention is in the right spirit. The danger, I believe, is to presume that a technological object is discrete unit because its relation to human activity will still bear the mark of either social or mental determinism. By positing a complete object with characteristic properties, meaning will still be determined by a set of causal factors rather than Husserl's view, in which objects are correlates of consciousness, not the cause of consciousness.[38] There is then a tendency to naturally posit material objects as fully determinant in what I introduced earlier as the outcome of the natural attitude.[39] What can occur is simply seeing the object as a completely filled out thing with properties. In the natural attitude we may go straight toward the properties of the object— the "what of consciousness," in the spirit of *Sachen Selbst,* but in our zeal we miss the "how of consciousness." Phenomenologically this means that an object which we take in our natural attitude, such as a hammer, to be self-sufficient can be experienced in varied ways depending on our intentionality towards it.[40] In one moment the hammer is for hammering nails through timber, in another moment the hammer is for weighing down a tarp, while in another it is a rudimentary anvil to straighten-out a bent nail. In all these experiences the hammer is still the self-same hammer but my intentions toward it and the meaning of the acts are each different. Yet the hammer contributes or gives something to these acts by predelineation. By predelineation I do not mean fixed possibilities but rather bounds on how I encounter something. For example, if the hammer was not firm and having weight I could not use it to weigh down a tarp. The hammer must *show-itself* to be something to weigh-down-the-tarp. Yet this showing-itself for me does not occur as a calculation of weight or discrete characteristics but in the moment in which my project requires me to quickly weigh-down-the-tarp. I need not think about the hammer to weigh-down-the-tarp, I am drawn to do so. The givenness [*es gibt*] of the hammer contributes this possibility. Neither does the hammer simply appear *deus ex machina* when I'm in need of a something heavy to weigh-down-the-tarp, but rather, the hammer already exists in reference to the world of my workshop and my projects.

Meaning is constituted by our intentionality toward the object and the objects accessibility. The constitution of objects for consciousness does not imply a subjectivist construction of meaning of the object through a summation or build-up of the object's characteristics in the mind. I will discuss the critical distinction between construction and constitution of meaning in the next section. Objects contribute to their manners (adumbrations) of givenness for consciousness because they are real things in the world and not in the head of the one who perceives. For example, the natural world exists

38 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book,* trans. Fred Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), § 41., 86-89.

39 See chap. 1, sec. 1; chap. 5, sec. 3.

40 See chap. 5, sec. 2.

independently of humans therefore a tree is in *nature* an in-itself. A tree does not depend on our interpretation of it however our interpretation of the tree in perception depends upon its *being* which depends upon its brute existence. This should not be confused with the natural attitude which is an anthropocentric positing of an *in-itself-for-us*.[41]

I advocate for what can be called *transcendental realism* in which the manners of givenness are real parts of the object which contribute directly to the perception of figural organizations or gestalts.[42] While it may be more easily accepted that the natural world exists independently of human perception, it is more difficult to concede that the humanly built world and its technological objects contribute something essential in their organization of meaning that is not already definitely predetermined by humans. It is therefore very attractive to posit, in an anthropocentric manner, technological objects (humanly fabricated) as an *in-itself-for-us*. At the same time, the point is not to maintain that technological objects are autonomous agents with an independent subjectivity of their own. Technological objects such as digital computers are not agents and cannot be bestowed intentionality because they are not conscious. Because perception of objects is both *determinant* and *indeterminant*, objects cannot then be simply *in-itself-for-us* with a fixed set of characteristics and properties in the world. What may already be clear is that both the technological and sociological determinist view's share the similar ground of positing objects as *in-itself-for-us* in which the world will naturally appear as filled with self-sufficient entities for our mastery.

> The world is not a mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar and unfamiliar things that are just there. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things...World is never object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing, and curse keep us transported into Being."[43]

Access to objects does not mean a set of discrete enumerable characteristics but rather the objects reference to what Heidegger called an equipmental totality situated within a horizon of a wider world.[44] The danger of allowing the natural attitude to invade scientific consciousness is evident in the anthropological account of a material artifact. The material cultures anthropologist, Daniel Miller advocates an approach very similar to Winner in order to combat social and linguistic determinism. In Miller's critical view, citing the philosopher of mind— Susanne Langer, the privileging of language is often used as the prime vehicle of social determinism of material and technical objects.

41 Hubert Dreyfus' slogan, adapted from *Being and Time,* is apt here: "Being depends on us, beings don't." Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 255.

42 See chap. 5, sec. 6.

43 Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", 44.

44 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 109.

> Artefacts [sic] are not words, and the differences between them may provide further clues as to what artefacts really are. Langer long ago pointed out that language always works through sequences of sounds, and that as examples of what she called 'discursive' forms, linguistic utterances unfold as meaning. By contrast, objects are typically what she termed 'presentational' forms—that is, they present themselves with all their aspects at one time. Compared with words, artefacts much less often have clear propositional content, and the patterns and distinctions found may not necessarily correspond to units of meaning.[45]

I take artifacts in Miller's case to be primarily human implements such as a tool rather than any object like that encountered in nature such as a rock in a stream or a tree in a forest. While I agree with Miller's assertion that artifacts cannot be reduced to propositional content but neither do artifacts "present themselves all at once" as complete. In fact Husserl has shown that objects only show themselves in perspectives and these perspectives unfold in experience. The meaning of objects unfolds in experience in which objects are constituted for consciousness and not constructed in consciousness. Phenomenologically these partial adumbrational perspectives demonstrate that the identity of objects is both determinant and simultaneously indeterminate.[46] This is why in one moment I can experience my hammer as withdrawn in absorbed skillful hammering while in another moment I can experience the same hammer as heavy, blunt, and unwieldy chunk of steel and wood. Again, as mentioned earlier these multiplicities of experience are had with the self-same hammer. The determinant part of experience finds its home in the natural attitude in which the comprehension of a total object is taken as "present all at once" as Miller implies.

Why is the prejudice to see objects as complete material totalities problematic at all? As Winner argues, what's needed is returning "to the things-themselves", yet what occurs in the materialist view is we close off the unfolding of meaning of an object once we assume that it is discretely present all at once or what Heidegger called *present-at-hand.* Also the scientist may take the determinant and often public definition of an object as self-evident as the starting point of inquiry thereby missing the multiplicity of ways in which an object is disclosed. From the anthropological point of view the world will simply be a collection of discrete functional objects whose definition of use is provided by public opinion.

For phenomenology an artifact is not only meaningful in its atomic function or in its relation to an atomic practice but rather its comprehensive system of references with the world more generally. This existential system of referential relations may be lost once the

45 Daniel Miller, "Artefacts and the Meaning of Things", in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. Tim Ingold (London: Routledge, 1994), 407.

46 Husserl, *Ideas*, § 41., 86-89.

practice and technology are abstracted into the scientific attitude. The problem is that in the abstracted theorization of objects we could possibly miss the system of references that ground the basis for the practice and its technology, this is what earlier Heidegger called the world as the "ever-nonobjective." Aron Gurwitsch writes, "positive sciences take for granted the objects with which they deal and concern themselves with their exploration and theoretical explanation, phenomenology poses the question of the existence of objects and of the meaning of their existence."[47] Thus phenomenology is concerned with the conditions that make possible the intelligibility of those objects and practices at all. For the positive sciences more globally, not only are objects posited as self-evident, but as I've mentioned, the human-being is as well.[48] In this positive view "Man and world" are presupposed to be factually what they are. Therefore a human is a person and the archetype of the person is Man in the modern sense. A person is a being that makes and uses tools [*homo faber*]. The supposition of Man as the human who uses tools is widespread as Heidegger notes.[49] I will discuss in more detail Man as the *a priori* of science and technology in chapter 2 section 9.

Let us examine a possible historical example of race and technology. It is well known that the third United States president, Thomas Jefferson, owned slaves who maintained his colonial bourgeois lifestyle at his mountain home in Virginia called Monticello. At Monticello, Jefferson is famous for using mechanical devices such as revolving service doors, dumb waiters, elevator contraptions to maintain a separation between himself and black slaves who worked below the domestic living and dining quarters of the whites.[50] "Servants bringing victuals from the kitchen and storerooms in the South Wing came along an underground passage and up narrow stairs to emerge outside the dining room, where they placed food on a shelf set into a revolving door, which allowed it, but not them, to enter the room." Considerably more advanced, "Jefferson installed a dumb waiter to hoist wine directly from the cellar below."[51] The benefit of the revolving cabinet and dumbwaiter is they allowed meals to be quickly delivered to the dining room. These technologies reduced the number slaves needed to manage the food service for dinner and entertaining. This had many advantages for a room with limited space which if not

47 Aron Gurwitsch, "The Phenomenological and the Psychological Approaches to Consciousness", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 89-90.

48 See sec. 3. According to Strasser the sciences presuppose man and world in which the former can be reduced to facts.

49 See Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*.

50 See Margaret Bayard Smith, *A Winter in Washington: Memoirs of the Seymour Family,* vol. 2 (New York, E. Bliss and E.White, 1824), 35. Also see reference to Jefferson's dumb waiter in Smith, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* (NewYork, C. Scribner's Sons,1906), 387.

51 "Living with Slavery: Monticello I and Monticello II" accessed May 17th, 2011, http://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/living-slavery-monticello-i-and-monticello-ii

occupied by several slaves could be freed for white guests. Another glaring consequence of these domestic technologies was that it also kept slaves segregated from white guests and family. Slaves could be hidden from view. Therefore devices such as the dumbwaiter functioned as useful technologies to maintain racial segregation between black slaves and the white slave master, the master's family, and his white guests.

A key aspect of Jefferson's domestic technologies such as dumbwaiters is once the food or wine was delivered by slaves and transferred in a mediated fashion through these devices, Jefferson and his white guests would then be required to engage in self-service. Jefferson and his guests would not have to rely solely on slaves to serve them their food nor open their wine. An appearance of self sufficiency could be presented. The idea of the self-sufficient person of the Enlightenment was of course an essential component of Jefferson's intellectual endeavors and political philosophy yet this literally had a insidious underside.

As an instrument the dumbwaiter is tool for use or a means-to-an-end, that is, to support beliefs and practices that maintain racial segregation. As a mere instrument the dumbwaiter is a functional element for man. Anthropologically, racist beliefs guide a set of practices which utilized technologies to achieve and maintain an ideal end state—*herenvolk* democracy. Though the anthropological account is causal and instrumental it is not necessarily invalid because as Gurwitsch mentions, the sciences must enumerate the properties of the practice and thing in a detached theoretical manner. Abstraction of objects is a central characteristic to the scientific attitude. As such, the practice and the tools that appear in the practice are deworlded from their existential structures of significance and reference. All that can appear in the detached manner of scientific consciousness is the dumbwaiter as object and the historical social relations that organize the use of the dumbwaiter in its period in history.

In favor of Winner's argument about embedded politics we could conjecture that not only was the dumbwaiter used to facilitate racial segregation but it was implicitly *designed to do so*. For Winner the idea of designing racist intentions into the technology is key because the technology in general-use in plantation households will reproduce the same implicit racial segregation regardless. Therefore the intentions of its designer, Jefferson, were explicitly or implicitly informed by racist beliefs or as Winner calls, technological politics. In the Marxian sense, social relations are embedded into the technology itself. This means that the dumbwaiter's primary use if not its only use in Monticello is to maintain a racist way of life by attempting to make slaves invisible. I think Winner's theory of technological politics offers an important alternative to the other forms of determinism, one which allows for technology to act, not absolutely autonomously, but effect the social conditions in terms that are inherent to the being of the technology. However the conditions that make possible the dumbwaiter's design is the horizon of a

racist world and its reference to a situated equipmental totality of a slave owner's household and its domestic sphere in which racism structures social relations. The being of the dumbwaiter is referenced by other equipment and human practices. As I've already mentioned there is a danger in analyzing the dumbwaiter atomically because this diminishes the references which make the dumbwaiter intelligible at all, as situated in a plantation household which is itself situated in a racist world—the "ever-nonobjective." What I have attempted to demonstrate here, largely in agreement with Winner, is both social construction of technology and technological determinism usher from a more fundamental instrumental view of technology.

In the figure below I loosely adopt the first two terms (instrumental and substantive) from the Feenberg's rubric for the critical study of modern technology.[52]

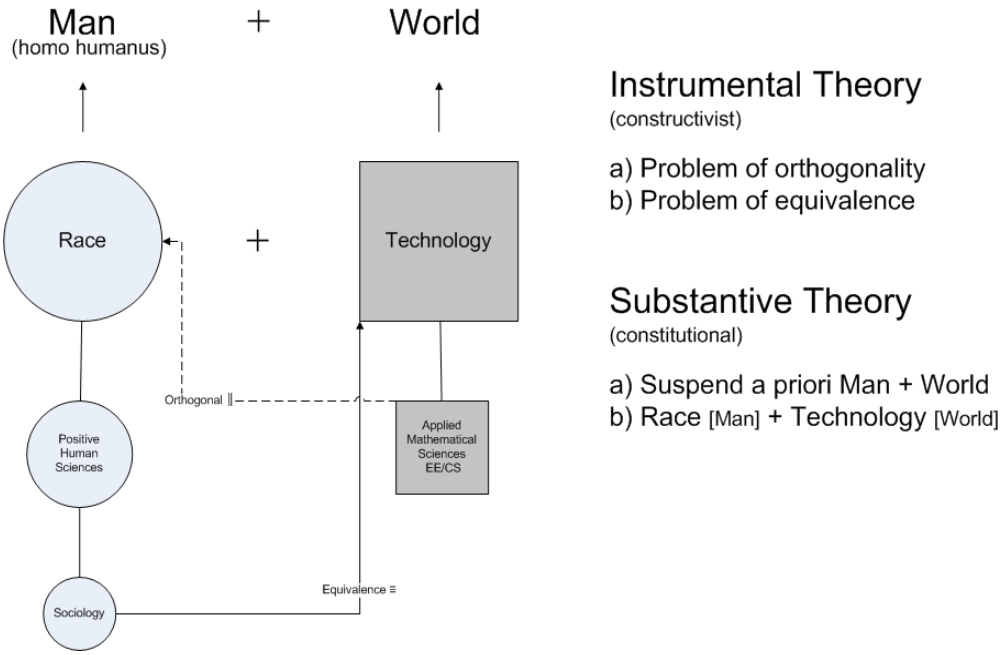

Figure 2.

Figure 2 depicts the basic problem of orthogonality when two regions of science with their respective ontologies are brought together *without* the suspension of the *a priori* of Man and world. As I've attempted to show, a positive account of technology will primarily see technology as a means-to-an-end, that is, as an instrument. In the positive account the meaning of the technology or piece of equipment is constructed by the

52 Feenberg, *Critical Theory of Technology*, 5-8. It is outside the scope of this chapter to elaborate on Feenberg's third analytical frame which he calls the "critical theory of technology" inspired by the Frankfurt school.

subject engaged in a practice or the collective practice conditions the meaning through a structural account as in a sociology of technology. An instrumental theory either becomes frozen with the problem of orthogonality or asserts an equivalence among objects in which an object from region of science absorbs the object of the other into its own incommensurable ontology. Social constructivist approaches to technology and race will tend to assert an instrumental theory. The goal here is to begin to explicate a substantive theory of race and technology which suspends the assumptions of the sciences by not falling into the natural or natural technological attitude. In the following section I will bring more clarity to the distinction between the constructivism which is central to instrumentalist theories and constitutional phenomenology which will be key for a substantive theory of race and technology.

7. Construction vs. Constitution of Meaning

In this section I will briefly demonstrate the distinction between the construction of meaning such as the phrase, “the representation of race” and the constitution of meaning as indicated by the phrase, "the phenomenality of race." Constitutive phenomenology is in essence grounded upon Husserl's theory of intentionality which, as I will demonstrate, represents a critical response to Kant's theory of knowledge. Subscription to Husserl's theory of intentionality does not require that one also assume his theory of the *transcendental ego*. Central figures in phenomenology such as Gurwitsch, Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty preserve many of Husserl's key phenomenological tenets without recourse to his theory of the transcendental ego. In fact Gurwitsch and Sartre directly challenge the existence of any such transcendental ego.[53] It is not necessary nor productive to critique Husserl's allusive concept of the transcendental ego here, suffice it to say that I concur with both Gurwitsch and Sartre's conclusion.

As well it is not my intention to confront and fully work out Kant's theory knowledge in this section but to contrast some key issues between a constructivist position on meaning which ultimately relies upon concepts and phenomenology's non-conceptualist view which is grounded on pre-predicative manifest perception. This will allow us, in a preliminarily way, to be able to demonstrate the general ground of constructivism in the explanation of human meaning in which intellectualism, most clearly exemplified by

53 Cf. Aron Gurwitsch, "A Non-Egological Conception of Consciousness", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1, no. 3. (Mar., 1941): 325-338; Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of The Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960). Emmanuel Levinas, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology,* trans. André Orianne (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1995); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge, 1962), vii-xxi.

Kant, grounds some contemporary cognitivist views and informs discursive theories of meaning.[54] My argument is that in both cases, form (concept, representation, language) is imposed upon matter (objects, bodies, and world) from a top down ontology. This top down ontology can be the cognitive subject, as with Kant, or language and society, as with various forms of discursive and social constructivism.

To be brief, in the Kantian inspired constructivist view of meaning, *concepts are constitutive of experience while for phenomenology concepts are derivative of experience.* Phenomenology inverts constructivist positions by arguing that in perception we experience figurals or gestalts of meaning which only appear *a posteriori* via reflection to be comprised of discrete units and concepts. The ability to decompose an experience into discrete characteristics and properties or transpose an object into a "subject with predicates" in no way implies that we perceive objects as a construction of these units or bits of language.

It may be objected that one cannot conflate so easily Kantian idealism with discursive construction of meaning, such as Foucault's archeology of knowledge.[55] Kant's idealism and Foucault's general theory of discourse are of course not one and the same but my argument is that they both rely upon some vehicle to deliver concepts either an internal cognitive or external social constructivism (social relations or discursive formations) to mediate our encounter with the world. In idealist positions meaning is never immediately given in experience instead there must be a mechanism or system which allows for the passage from immanence to transcendence or from the external world to the internal mind of the subject. The goal then is not to reduce various social constructivist positions to Kantian idealism but rather to demonstrate thematically how old prejudices incessantly re-emerge.

If I am correct that social constructivism broadly construed is derivative of Kant's theory of meaning *construction* then Husserl's theory of intentionality and his account of the *constitution* of meaning will allow us to extend phenomenological methods and insights into the explication of racial and technological experience. The basic question for racial and human identity in general is the following: Does the intelligibility of racial identity, such as the ability to perceive race, rely upon the *construction of concepts* we hold, perhaps in the head or in our discourse or does racial meaning in perceptual experience function in different manner, without concepts and in a pre-predicative manner? The key aspects of concern here in Kant's theory of knowledge are empirical sense intuitions, concepts and ego subject ("I") which must synthesize its concepts. In Kant's view objects are intelligible through synthetic cognitive acts where a subject brings intuitions under concepts. In the famous passage from his *Critique,* Kant is clear that both sense intuitions

54 See chap. 5, sec. 6; chap. 7, sec. 4.
55 See chap. 7, sec. 3.

and concepts are co-dependent.

> Intuition and concepts constitute...the elements of all our knowledge...Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind...The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise.[56]

Kant's reconciliation of the senses with *a priori* concepts is an important achievement yet conceptuality of mind stands at a higher level than does the intuition of empirical objects. Kant's anthropological bent on cognition is more evident in the following from his *Logic* which echoes his *Critique* as well as his eurocentrism.

> In every cognition there is to be distinguished *matter,* i.e. the object, and *form,* i.e. the manner *how* we cognize the object. For example, when a savage sees a house in the distance, the use of which he does not know, he has the same object before him as another who knows it as a dwelling furnished for men. But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in both. In the one it is *mere intuition*, in the other *intuition* and concept at the same time.[57]

Kant is here quite clear that perception is a kind of immanent cognitive activity in which sensuous intuition is brought under concepts in order for the house to be validly intelligible as house for "civilized" European men rather than a brute unintelligible object for so called savages. While Kant certainly states that the "savage" intuits the appearance of the house -object, the savage cannot have a higher conceptual grasp of it in order to issue valid judgments about it. Kant acknowledges in his *Critique* that straightforward appearances require no thinking as such rather they are empirically sensible, yet not meaningful. Kant writes in some cases, "[e]verything might be in such a confusion that-...in the series of appearances nothing presented itself which might yield a rule of synthesis and so answer to the concept of cause and effect. This concept would then be altogether empty, null and meaningless. But since intuition stands in no need whatsoever of the functions of thought, appearances would none the less present objects to our intuition."[58] Kant argues that raw intuitions in themselves require no thought yet in order for them to count towards thinking and finally knowledge there must be a unification between the intuition and the concept. Here we have the general basis of construction in which empirical data is sensed then passed through a constructive synthesis of concepts making possible a thought about such and such. The possibility of such a synthesis in fact indicates the existence of *a priori* concepts which according to Kant are the condition of the possibility of experience.

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56 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* [A50-51/B74-76], 92-93.

57 Immanuel Kant, *Logic,* trans. Robert S. Hartman and Wolgang Schwarz (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), 37-38.

58 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* [A90-91/B122-123], 124.

> Concepts of objects in general thus underlie all empirical knowledge as its *a priori* conditions. The objective validity of the categories as *a priori* concepts rests, therefore, on the fact that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. [59]

Still the condition of the possibility of experience requires some unifying source or center, namely the "I" which is co-presently active in the synthesis. Indeed something must indemnify the construction.

> To render such a transcendental presupposition valid, there must be a condition which precedes all experience, and which makes experience itself possible...This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name *transcendental apperception*...This transcendental unity of apperception forms out of all possible appearances, which can stand alongside one another in experience, a connection of all these representations according to laws. For this unity of consciousness would be impossible of the mind in knowledge of the manifold could not become conscious of the identity of function whereby it synthetically combines it in one knowledge...The original and necessary consciousness of the identity of the self is thus at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances according to concepts... For the mind could never think its identity in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this identity *a priori*, if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its act, whereby it subordinates all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, thereby rendering possible their interconnection according to *a priori* rules.[60]

Central then to Kant's theory of meaning construction is the subject and the transcendental unity of apperception. It is well known that in Kant's conception of consciousness the ego must be co-present with all its representations therefore intuited sensations must necessarily belong to the ego in which the synthetic operation arises. The ego cannot apprehend itself outside of such activity. Therefore as Gurwitsch argues, "in order for the ego to be able to apprehend itself as an identical ego, it must unify the sensory data."[61] Gurwitsch writes further:

> This unification is, according to Kant, an indispensable condition for the strict identity of the Ego of the pure transcendental apperception. This pure transcendental apperception, or the transcendental Ego, is exhausted in an action or in an actual function admitting of an inner articulation, of which the categories as Kant conceives

59 Ibid., [A93/B126], 126.

60 Ibid., [A 107-109], 136.

61 Aron Gurwitsch, "The Kantian and Husserlian Conceptions of Consciousness", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 152.

them are the conceptual fixations.[62]

This captures the essence of construction because perception viewed in this manner is a proactive or spontaneous function of synthesis through the reception of raw sensible data. In Kant's formulation there must be at some level an enumeration of necessary concepts that correspond to the given sensory data. In order for their to be intelligibility of a state-of-affairs, such as "this red bird", requires the mental concepts, "red" and "bird" to be brought together through the activity of the subject. The sensuous object causes but cannot contribute intelligibility, therefore meaning cannot be ostensibly given on the side of the object. Concepts must be built up or constructed in order to experience "this red bird." From this it follows that the statement itself, "this red bird" contains all the concepts necessary for the subject to experience "this red bird". Therefore it would seem attractive to reduce the essential elements of perceptual experience to the statement itself. In this line of thought, one would not necessarily need experience as such to determine meaning but rather the proposition itself carries and transmits the essential sense. The danger in such an assertion is that meaning will then exist on another plane or level of existence separate and distinct from bodily existence despite the intuition of sensory data. If we recall in Kant's view the intuition of the red bird in the world is incapable of providing intelligibility. The very essence of construction will come to bear on racial meaning in much the same way as an attribution of concepts onto bodies. Race as representation only seems plausible once race is determined to be a pure social construction. The outcome is that race is purely conceptual and either exists as a mental concept *in* the mind or *in* society's collective mind, as *doxa* or opinion. In the constructivist view the body is converted into an objective body [*körper*] rather than lived body [*leib*], which is clothed with racial concepts. The consciousness of another lived-body is then devoid of a role in co-constituting racial meaning.[63]

Husserl's theory of intentionality provides a radically different approach to experience in which meaning is not constructed by mind or society but rather meaning is constituted in the unfolding process of experience whose origin invariably leads back to embodied perception. Again Gurwitch's interpretation of Husserl is helpful.

> phenomenology considers acts of consciousness...It is through acts of consciousness and systematically grouped and concatenated acts that objects, processes, events, and occurrences of any description whatever appear and display themselves as to what they are and as to what they count for in our conscious life –in our practical, theoretical, artistic, etc., life.[64]

62 Ibid., 153.

63 See chap. 6, sec. 9 for a more detailed description of the objective and lived body.

64 Aron Gurwitsch, "The Phenomenological and the Psychological Approach to Consciousness", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 90.

While Kant places intelligibility through a proactive synthesis on the side of the subject's mind, Husserl argued that perception is passive yet motivated by the motile kinaesthetic body. Husserl makes an important distinction between the acts of perceptual consciousness and the thing perceived. For example when I perceive a house, I only have one perspective of the house at each moment but as I walk around the house other perspectives genetically come into fulfillment. The totality of the physical house is not experienced in the perceptual act but only adumbrations in a situation under this aspect and so forth. For each perception there exists a horizon [*horizont*] in which further possible perception are anticipated. The anticipations are not psychological states nor are they conceptual but opaque and indeterminant fringes of the thing. In each case an act of perception correlates to the thing perceived what Husserl called the "noetic-noematic" structure of consciousness. Therefore the relationship between consciousness and the thing perceived is not causal but rather a *correlation*.[65] For Kant the thing perceived, the house, exists in physical space as a scientific-mathematico object (in his period based upon Newtonian physics). In Kant's sense there is only the cognition as a manifold of representations and the physico-mathematical entity which we have no direct access, only appearances through cognitive representations.[66] As such, in-itself the house gives no meaning but simply raw unintelligible sense data. Remembering that in Kant's view the house exists only in a physico-mathematical sense as a total discrete object in which we only experience its appearances as a manifold of representations. For Kant concepts make experience intelligible while for Husserl it is the perceptual acts which provide meaning.

Husserl on the other hand distinguishes between the act (noesis) and the perceptual meaning (noema) from the total physical object. The perceptual noema is the house given in each adumbration while the noesis is the situated moment of each given noema. The perceptual noema does not null and void the object in its physico-mathematical existence but provides a new form of objectivity of objects, one in which we do encounter and have direct access. Kant is correct in stating that we can never experience the physico-mathematical object directly (all at once, in a God's eye view) but neither is experience derived from that physico-mathematical object because it exists in an orthogonal deworlded plane of scientific objects. The perceptual noema are manners of givenness, not conceived by consciousness but as actualized in consciousness. The development of these acts within the noetic-noematic correlate presents the house as a continual constitution of meaning with an open and endless horizon [*offen endlös*] of possible

65 See Edmund Husserl *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology,* trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books 1962) § 97. 260-264.

66 A physico-mathematical object is subject to natural laws such as gravity. In experience we can encounter a tea cup falling to the floor but we do not encounter the magnetic gravitational field which causes the tea cup to fall to the Earth.

perceptions that are anticipated. And as anticipations they can be thwarted, therefore as I move around the house to the back and see that it has no back but is a facade only I can correct my experience, not as contradiction of logic but as failure for further anticipations of the house that could have come into fulfillment. In Kant's conceptually grounded consciousness the concept brought together with the raw intuited sensuous data has no horizonal possibilities because the concept of the house admits to a finished an complete entity in accordance to the physico-mathematico house in intuited space and time. In summary, the constitution of meaning radically differs from the construction of meaning which plays a critically important role in distinguishing the phenomenality of racial meaning against the conceptuality of race. The noetic/noematic structure of object constitution relies not on a causal relation between subject and object such that "this object" caused me to have the sensation of "red" but rather a correlation exists in the act and the thing intended which does not close off the object as complete but maintains an open horizon of further possible perceptions that are inexhaustible. Husserl's theory of intentionality is essential in phenomenological description and I will revisit aspects of object constitution in later chapters.[67] Husserl's theory of intentionality remains essential to phenomenology and even central to his student Martin Heidegger's theory of the ontological difference.

8. The Ontological Difference: Racial Fact vs. Racial Presence

Today there is an enormous amount of scholarship on race and racism. This scholarship continues to grow, no doubt due to the undeniable socio-geo-political fact that the issue of race and racism has continuing relevancy for the West and now globally. The majority of contemporary scholarship focuses on how race is constructed through representations, concepts, and language. In fact the majority of scholarly journal articles and dissertations on the topic of race invariably contain the following: "representation(s)" and "race."[68] The general consensus of the field of race theory is reflected in Mark B. N. Hansen's comment, "race, unlike gender, is so clearly a construction, since racial traits are not reducible to organic, *i.e.*, genetic, organization."[69] The dominant and widespread conclusion is that race is a pure construction therefore, as Hansen makes clear, if race is not some natural kind then it must only exist as either a mental or cultural representation. If race is a pure construction (who would want to disagree than to risk being labeled a biological racial determinist) who or what does the constructing? How do these

67 See chap. 5, sec. 4; chap. 6, sec. 6.

68 If one were to conduct a search of scholarly books and journals with the following phrase: "representations of race", several thousand results would be returned. One could presuppose that racial meaning can only be possible through representations.

69 Mark B. N. Hansen, "Digitizing the Racialized Body or The Politics of Universal Address", in *Substance*,33, no. 2, Issue 104, (2004): 107-113.

constructions become naturalized in such a way that they can be expressed as racism(s)?

The social constructivist approach can be broadly construed as an epistemological account of meaning, even in cases where a representing subject is purported to be out of play. Constructivism treats racial intelligibility as an entity such as a concept, representation, or appearance (phenotype). The tendency from within the epistemological stance on meaning, "between the knower and the thing known" is to represent being as an entity or a being.[70] Phenomenologically treating intelligibility as an entity is a problem because we are unable to explicate how meaning achieves its determinant objectivity as an entity at all. The essence of this distinction is captured in what Heidegger called the ontological difference [*die ontologische differenz*], the difference between being [*sein*] and beings [*seiende*].[71] Heidegger's point is that the *presence* of an entity is itself not entity. However the prejudice of the positive sciences is to treat *being* as a representation whether mental, linguistic or cultural. Phenomenology's central concern is the *being of beings*, that is, the way entities show-up for us in lived experience.[72] The question to be posed here is the following: How can the question of *being* bear fruit for understanding race?

The epistemological tendency is expressed when one conflates *facticity* with *factuality* such as in the following way: as the difference between blackness and African American or whiteness and Anglo-European. One can factically show-up as white but factually be black. In the North American context this is also known as racial passing. A more clear example of racial fact versus racial presence is the example of the 44th U.S. President, Barack Obama. Early in 2008 Obama's presidential campaign there were some who questioned whether or not he was factually black, hence authentically black. Phenomenally in everyday experience Obama, bracketing for a moment his stature and fame, shows-up as black while factually he is not African American, but rather the son of a Kenyan and Anglo-American. Obama is factically black but factually not African American. Blackness says something about Obama's racial being while not being "ethnically" African American represents racial facts (beings) or ethno-facts.

Heidegger further categorized the distinction between being and facts as that between ontological (factical) and ontic (factual).[73] The ontological should not necessarily take

70 Joseph Rouse, "Heidegger on Science and Naturalism" in *Continental Philosophy of Science* ed. Gary Gutting (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 123-141.

71 Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology,* trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.), §22, 318-319.

72 A result of Heidegger's critique of subjectivism and his desire to surpass his teacher Husserl, the concept of *lived-experience* and perception more broadly was treated by him as simply another metaphysical trap to be avoided. Heidegger often treats intentionality and perception as a component of cognition. See Kevin A. Aho, *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2009).

73 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 31.

formal precedence over the ontic nor should the ontic be considered null and void. On the contrary the ontical is a critical way in which to access the ontological because the ontic covers over the more primordial disclosure of being. Our example illustrates this covering over when one conflates blackness with the fact of being of African American. Both the ontological and the ontic must be understood together. Still much of the scholarship on race does not make the distinction between being and beings. To be fair, once the epistemological stance is taken one must forgo being for beings. Phenomenologically speaking the goal is to inquire into the "*how of race*" rather than only the "*what of race*". Recall our previous example: How does Obama's blackness show-itself for us in a particular situation? What is the referential relation between one's blackness and the facts about it?

I would argue that the ontological difference is none other than a more radical interpretation of Husserl's concept of intentionality which is based upon explicating the difference between "that which is intended" and the thing "as it is intended". Intentionality refers specifically to the act-structure of conscious of something as something, that is, the "how of consciousness" rather than only the "what of consciousness." The positive sciences are specifically concerned with the "what of consciousness" leading to what Husserl called naturalism and resulting in what Heidegger called "the forgetting of being." Husserl's theory of intentionally originally provides the theme for Heidegger's concept of ontological difference by first making the distinction between "that which is intended" or beings and "the thing as it is intended" or being. If I am correct about the thematic relationship between Heidegger's concept of the ontological difference and Husserl's theory of intentionality, hermeneutic phenomenology and constitutional phenomenology respectively do not represent two incompatible systems but rather a fidelity to the general explication of being. In fact the primacy of perception that Husserl accords to conscious experience and the explication of the non-conceptual background in Heidegger's concept of *being-in-the-world* finds a synergistic home in both Gurwitsch's Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception will become key in chapter's 5, 6, and 7, where I work out in more detail embodied racial and technological experience.

Husserl's early discovery and development of the concept of a *figure on a ground* provides a critically important theme in attempting to understand racial meaning.[74] For example: when I perceive a tree on a forest landscape, though I have my attention focused upon the tree as the figure, there is a fuzzy horizon in which the tree is situated. While I am not explicitly aware of this horizon-background it is fundamental to my consciousness experience of the tree because this background provides a horizon upon which the tree can be intelligible at all. This does not only have the effect of setting the

74 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, § 27. 91-93.

figure of tree off against the background of the landscape in a functional way but in a manifestly meaningful way. By this I mean that the tree exists as intelligible only in reference to the natural world in which it inhabits. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology pays particular attention to these concealed reference relationships between beings as essential to intelligibility. Phenomenology concludes that in fact we only experience an objects with this referential relation to a background and never do we perceive objects as pure abstractions devoid of a world. Husserl's constitutional phenomenology provides a powerful way to understand the relationship between an object and its horizon while Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, for the most part, concerns itself less with consciousness of objects but rather with the explication of the background as the condition of the possibility of encountering any objects whatsoever. In this way Husserl provides us with a set of methods to understand the phenomena of subjective experience while Heidegger provides us with a way to understand the phenomena of *world*.

In order to understand race there must be a return to race not as only constructed representations or facts but racial phenomena. Inquiry into racial phenomena as a presencing of meaning is precisely what phenomenological ontology sets out to explicate. There is something enigmatic about racial presences in which we can pre-reflectively and pre-predicatively interpret racial meaning without an epistemology. Levy-Bruhl comments on the enigmatic nature of racial presence writing, "during the Great War, many people would talk of ‘the Boche’, and as many colonists talk of ‘the Arab’, or many Americans of ‘the black man’. It denotes a kind of essence or type, too general to be an image, and too emotional to be a concept. Nevertheless it seems to be clearly defined, above all by the sentiments which the sight of an individual of the “species” evokes, and the reactions it sets up."[75] It is important to not overdetermine the notion of visual intelligibility and race though in its Western European origin the races that were visibly the darkest occupied the lowest rank in society. However as Gottlob Frege writes below delineating between one so called race and another is not always a case of a simple and factual appearance.[76]

> I have only in the last years really learned to comprehend antisemitism. If one wants to make laws against Jews, one must be able to specify a distinguishing mark by which one can recognized a Jew for certain. I have always seen this as a problem.[77]

I do not imply here that antisemitism relies solely upon racial facts as against racial presence but rather racial presence is the condition upon which racial facts are grounded.

75 Lucien Levy-Bruhl, *The 'Soul' of the Primitive,* trans. Lilian A. Clare (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1965), 59.

76 See chap. 6, sec. 3.

77 Gottlob Frege quoted in Martin Davis, *Engines of Logic: Mathematicians and the Origin of the Computer* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 47.

Phenomena and physical traits should not be conflated, though this is often the case when one does not distinguish between being and beings.[78] So while a German Jew and a so called German Aryan may share the same physical appearance; how the Jew is presenced for the antisemite is a phenomenal one and not one of mere physical appearance. A Jew existing in National Socialist Germany was only a Jew in referential relation to his or her background, fellow Jews, synagogue, neighborhood, the ghetto etc. Physical appearance and phenomenal presence must be distinguished from one another and not conflated in any existential phenomenological inquiry. This is much like the incestuous character, Cholly Breedlove, in Toni Morrison's novel, *The Bluest Eye*, who was physically handsome but was phenomenally wretched due to existing in indigence, misfortune and treachery in a racist society. The Breedloves were in fact physically beautiful but they could only be interpreted in their squalor as ugly.[79] To be sure, anti-black racism and antisemitic racism cannot be said to function identically as Fanon made clear to Sartre.[80] Fanon argues that blackness is for the most part an inescapable presence while for the European Jew if he changed his entire setting, moved to a different part of town, shed his name, extracted himself from a Jewish world and kept this as his secret, he may be spared the camps; but this was of course no guarantee. Yet as I discussed earlier with Husserl's concept of figure/ground, antisemitism and anti-black racism are both figures on a ground of a general and normative conception of the human, that is, Man. As such, antisemitism and anti-black racism are only intelligible in reference to one another other, including other racisms, existing on the general background of modern racial meaning.

9. The Modern Technological Interpretation of Race

Our most recent interpretation of race as a mental or social construction attains a twofold technological distinction; first is the Heideggarian sense of the naturalization of the modern technological interpretation of any entities whatsoever as a malleable and flexible resource (human identity, sexuality, brain plasticity, cyborg, information, work roles, careers etc.); second is in the Husserlian sense of the technological character of scientific reason which disengages itself from immediate experience in a misguided attempt to avoid naturalization which it paradoxically is already caught up in because it chooses to not question its own ground concepts. This leads to the following conundrum of social constructivism: Why is something not real, *i.e.,* not biologically fixed, hence flexible and indeterminant experienced as real and determinant nonetheless?

If race emerges in the modern epoch in reference to the concept of Man as the human, an epoch in which the world was normatively disclosed as subject/object does then the

78 See chap. 6, sec. 4.
79 Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (New York, Vintage, 1994).
80 See chap. 6, sec 8. Fanon's critique of Sartre's etiology of antisemitism in *Anti-Semite and Jew.*

modern concept of race become obsolete? According to Heidegger shifting from modern subject/object to the modern technological— objectless normative interpretation of being does not signal the end of the essence of metaphysics but rather indicates a more radical interpretation of the previous modern world view.

> we may indeed be barely able...to speak of objects anymore. If we pay attention, we see we already move in a world where there are no ob-jects. But to be ob-jectless [*Gegen-standlose*] is not the same as to be without a stance [*Standlose*]. Rather, a different sort of status [Ständigkeit] emerges in what is objectless. The *principium grande*, the mighty Principle, the principle of reason, in no way forfeits any of its power for a world where what is objective [Gegenständige] must yield to a status [Ständigen] of a different sort. Rather the power of rendered reasons adequate [zuständigen] to confirm [Beständigung] and secure everything only now begins to display itself at its most extreme...Modernity is not at an end. It only begins its completion in directing itself to the complete availability of everything that is and can be.[81]

In Heidegger's view, though objects are now interpreted as resource, the role of rationality progresses in a more severe calculative fashion thereby continuing to echoing Leibniz's modern "principle of reason" which states that all things exist for a reason therefore reason as such grounds reality.[82]

How does race normatively disclose humans in the modern technological age? Do the positive human and humanistic sciences take up the natural technological attitude toward being and as such, interpret its objects no longer as discrete objects but rather as *objectless* objects that are flexible, shifting, and on-call? Contemporary scholarship on race seems to demonstrate something like the interpretation of being as objectless and flexible. The contemporary interpretation of human identity reflects modern technological interpretation of being. The sociologist and prominent race scholar, Troy Duster exhibits just this concept of the objectless in his description of race below.

> How can race be both structural and embedded yet superficial, arbitrary, and whimsical—shifting with times and circumstances?... The best way to communicate how this is possible is to employ an analogy—to water or, more precisely, H_2O. While water is a fluid state, at a certain contingent moments, under thirty-two degrees, it is transformed into a solid state—ice. This is an easy binary formulation. But things get more complicated, because when H_2O, at still another contingent moment boils, it begins to vaporize or evaporate. And now the coup de grace of the analogy of H_2O to

81 Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996), 33-34.

82 See chap. 3, sec. 4.

> race: H_2O in its vapor state can condense, come back and transform into water, and then freeze and hit you in its solid state as an ice block; what you thought had evaporated into the thin air can return in a form that is decidedly and consequentially real. In short, H_2O is to serve now as more than just my analogy to race—and, in this context, whiteness. Race, like H_2O, can take many forms.[83]

Duster's analogy is quite clear, race is an incredibly flexible and malleable object yet remains something socially real because it as causal properties like that of natural objects. Flexibility, and this a key point, does not mean that there are no more objects as such but rather the very nature of objectivity has been transformed. This is a distinctly new kind of objectivity one differing from the modern epoch in which science viewed race as taxonomic object. In the modern epoch race was a fixed natural kind indicating the essence of the human, today called essentialism. Now race as a social kind attains a new kind of objectivity. Though race is a flexible resource, analogous to Heidegger's Rhine river, race still must refer to human bodies. The situated embodied human is an invariant of race. Does Duster's analogy capture the phenomena of the lived-experience of race or the human sciences new understanding of its object? I would argue that the flexibility of objects in the natural technological attitude which is the basis for the scientific attitude is normative and does not capture the phenomena of showing-up as such and such a race.

Though racial meaning continually shifts, as an idea it is durable. If race is simply an idea how does it come to mean the same thing for other minds? Duster's analogy of race as H_2O is reminiscent of Descartes' wax whose physico-chemical properties can shift, yet still remains "this wax." Descartes concludes that it is the idea of wax in the mind that allows us to maintain its identity even though its bodily extension is flexible and "whimsical." Does Duster misconstrue race as a substance with accidental properties? Does Duster's concept of race require the mind to maintain coherence of race as does the identity of Descartes' wax as an innate idea?

While we can demonstrate a consistency in the interpretation of being across disparate objects (*i.e.,* positive science's current technological interpretation of race or computer sciences concept of information, *i.e.,* flexible when called upon), there remains something essentially modern about how scientific reduction achieves its object even its infinitely flexible mode. What Duster's asserts is race is an indeterminate flexible object but when called upon it achieves certain determinateness or “realness” for subjects. The conundrum is how to account for social meaning when the thing in question is a part of

83 Troy Duster, "The 'Morphing' Properties of Whiteness", in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness* ed. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica (Durham, Duke University Press, 2001), 115.

human activity hence not de-worlded under a scientific apparatus as is the case of the H_2O molecule under an electron microscope. Social phenonomena such as race is brought under the scientific consciousness through reflection. What's critical, is once taken into reflection, race is reduced to concepts which is the function of scientific reduction. However the conceptual status of the reduced object, *i.e.,* race, achieved through reflection is sometimes taken for the lived-through phenomena itself. That which is reflected is upon in scientific consciousness in which a set of laws can be deduced is taken as though it was experienced as those reflected properties and set of laws. While we can discover some set of laws about race such as laws about anti-black racism as Stuart Hall describes below.

> There is the powerful opposition between civilization (white) and savagery (black). There is the opposition between biological or bodily characteristics and the black and white races, polarized into their extreme opposites—each signifier of an absolute difference between human types or species.[84]

No one would contest the validity of Hall's claim here but the problem for any critique is the following: how do these racial laws of difference and exclusion manifest in lived experience? Because the phenomena shows that anti-black racism in the flesh need not draw upon these rules in order to express racial or racist intentionality.

The abstraction, that is, the conceptual model of race, stands in for the thing as it is experienced. While the positive scientist, such as Duster, interprets race as now technological, he does so from within the scientific attitude which purports as having a subject/object ontology. It is within scientific attitude and its sphere of immanence in which entities will appear as representations. As I introduced earlier, this is precisely how the positive human and literary sciences interprets race, as a representation. The Cartesian subject, that is, the entity that represents is exchanged with language though the science of language and the social silently posit a hidden subject in the background of their inquiry. Idealism will prove to be inescapable as long as the phenomena, and in this case perceptual phenomena, regains it primacy in the founding of human centered meaning.

Duster's now widely accepted view about human identity in general may not simply require an egological conception of consciousness but rather language itself will provide the vehicle for ideal meaning as a social construction. In fact Hall argues that language mediates our encounter with beings and is perhaps the primary way to do so. Below in an excerpt from Hall's cultural media studies primer, language is accorded a central role in

84 Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power", in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies,* ed. S. Hall, D Held,, D. Hubert, and K. Thompson. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 243., as quoted in Louis F. Miron and Jonathan Xavier Inda "Race as a Kind of Speech Act", in *Cultural Studies: A Research Annual*, 5 (2000): 97.

the dissemination of meaning.

> But how does language construct meanings? How does it sustain the dialogue between participants which enables them to build up a culture of shared understandings and so interpret the world in roughly the same ways? Language is able to do this because it operates as a *representational system*. In language, we use signs and symbols – whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects – to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Language is one of the "media" through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced.[85]

Therefore, according to Hall, that which makes objects intelligible is no longer only the modern subject but discourse about such and such. I would argue that the cognitive complex shifts from subjects to the technization of language, yet the principle of reason remains intact across epochs as Heidegger notes. The distinction between the subject and language is critically important because this shift traced by post-hermeneutic skeptics such as Foucault and by association Hall, where the center of meaning making moves from subjects to systemic structures of language (discourse) mirrors that of mechanization of reason which shifts from Man to Turing Machine.[86] Analysis of the function of language within modern technology is not the specific goal of this dissertation but for Heidegger the prevailing role of language in our contemporary age is closely related to modern technology, digital computation, and information.

> Information at one and the same time means the appraisal that as quickly, comprehensively, unequivocally, and profitably, as possible acquaints contemporary humanity with the securing of its necessities, its requirements, and their satisfaction. Accordingly, the representation of human language as an instrument of information increasingly gains the upper hand. For determination of language as information first of all creates the sufficient grounds [zuriechenden Grund] for the construction of thinking machines and for the building of frameworks for large calculations.[87]

I perhaps have moved too quickly by discussing the modern technological interpretation of being and the manner in which all domains of science have in many cases unquestioningly adopted it. Still it is important at this stage to introduce the epochal

85 Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London, Sage Publications, 1997), 1.

86 See Martin Dillon's introduction of the concepts of post-hermeneutic skepticism and semiological reductionism. M.C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997); M.C. Dillon, *Semiological Reductionism: A Critique of the Deconstructionist Movement in Postmodern Thought* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995).

87 Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason,* trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 124.

structure that guides my inquiry and the manner in which modern technology and the natural technological attitude inform contemporary race theory. I will return to what I call the socio-technological construction of race in the last chapter but it will be important to understand what makes a constructivist position possible in the first place and what if anything this has to do with computation. In this chapter I have attempted to flesh out some basic problems we are faced with in an inquiry into race and technology. I've concluded that race and technology can be understood together but not simply as positive objects. Rather we need to inquire into their transcendental character, that is, their hidden standard of measure which I will examine in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. **The History of the Concept of Man**

> For in fact what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything.[1] - Pascal (1670)
>
> The proper study of mankind is Man.[2] - Alexander Pope (1733)
>
> Man so far is the last man in that he is not able—and that means, not willing —to subject himself to himself, and to despise what is despicable in his kind as it is so far.[3]
> Martin Heidegger (1954)

In this chapter I will attempt to layout the normative model of the human that emerges out of European modernity, what Heidegger called *homo humanus*.[4] Modern and modern technological human-being are organized by the concept of Man and synonymous with the subject and personal existence. If we recall the human is always subject to interpretation which I have referred to as its human-being. Accordingly there is one *human kind* with many interpretations. Plural interpretations of human-being do not imply relativism. Western interpretations of the human follows the telos of European reason. Western metaphysics has progressively narrowed human-being along the lines of rational disembodied comportment. Rational disembodied comportment is a paradox.

In the West the rational model of the human, which should only be taken as a model, has come to stand-in-for all possible ways to be human. Man colonizes all possible ways to be. This modern model for human-being could be called a rational monohumanism. The hermeneutic of Man implies a prior disclosure of human-being in order that Man be capable of being encountered as the human. The pre-understanding of Man is the cognitive subject. Though Foucault's study of scientific discourse places the invention of Man after Kant's critical period, I argue the pre-understanding of *homo humanus* takes shape long before Man appears as a discrete object of the human sciences. Still the human sciences play a special role in co-evolution of Man and race, most evident in Kant's anthropology, prior to the publication of his three Critiques (pure reason, practical

1 Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. W.F. Trotter (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1931), 17.
2 Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Man", in *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 255.
3 Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 58. This quotation represents Nietszche's critique of European man of which Heidegger reaffirms in his destruction of Metaphysics.
4 See chap. 1, no. 2.

reason, judgment).

The concept of Man has been largely under-theorized precisely because its meaning seems self-evident. It would seem that Man is self-evidently linked to gender and sexual difference. To be sure, gender and, for that matter, class refer to variations of human-being but race on the other hand not only refers to types of humans but asks two fundamental questions. The first is positive: what is a human? The second is negative: what is not a human? These questions indicate that Man as the human has a special relation to the concept of race distinct from class and gender yet not independent of them.

It should come as no surprise that concept of Man as the human would be thematically embodied in European man signaling the concepts strong correlation to race. In fact the idea of race in its modern origins as a natural kind to its current technological interpretation as a social kind can never be severed from the concept of Man.[5] Though critical scholarship has readily made a connection between Enlightenment rationality and the modern invention of race it does so primarily at the level of epistemology.[6] I called this epistemological approach the "what of race", that is, its discourses, beliefs, facts, figures, depictions and representations. A part of the focus in this dissertation is the explication of the "how of race" as phenomenal knowledge and as such its ground concept which I take to be Man. The concept of Man and race are co-dependent because they each directly reference the human.

Man is a collection of norms that define what a human should be. Race is a phenomenal measure of one's proximity to and embodiment of these norms. These norms are anchored in various interpretations of rationality.[7] The question of rationality of any entity in order that it measure up to the concept of Man must at least fulfill the following three modes.

1. capacity for reason

5 To be clear, the categories of the natural, social and for that matter, cultural, are Western inventions and not universals. When the historian talks about ancient Egyptian “culture” she implicitly measures the Egyptians against the standards of the highest forms of European civilization and its values. It is no wonder that ancient Egypt stands as a hallmark of civilization because they measure up so well against European man.

6 Cf., David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993). Goldberg provides an excellent analysis of the discursive formation of race, in particular his critique of colorblindness. Nonetheless, Goldberg's concern is racial knowledge as epistemology generated from the discourse of human sciences and political institutions and not phenomenological racial encounter. As I've argued elsewhere racial encounter as a phenomena worthy of study is foreign to most race theorists today. This lacunae in race theory is seen in not only the human sciences but post-hermeneutic skeptics such as Goldberg who place language and discourse before experience.

7 Throughout this dissertation I will use the adjective “rational” and the noun “reason” with similar meaning and weight. I do this in accordance with the general usage of these terms.

2. exhibition of reason
3. rendering of reason

The capacity of reason can be reduced to the possession and presence of a human form such as a human body as a whole or as a part, such as a human voice. The capacity of reason is where race is first encountered pre-reflectively as the "mark of the mental" which I will discuss in section 8. The phenomenality of race predelineates the degree of rational capacity and the possible fulfillment of the exhibition and rendering of reason. The exhibition of reason requires the expression of rationality, such as the standard of coherent speech expounded by Descartes. Rendering reason is the ability to reflect (recursive introspection) and provide reasons for such and such in a step-wise fashion or what is commonly called rational deduction. Rendering of reasons is thus an internal mental operation of what is traditionally conceived of as the *mind*. The rendering of reasons in which one reason follows another without contradiction is what Hobbes termed *ratiocination.* The rendering of reasons as ratiocination Hobbes also called *computation*.[8] For Hobbes mental computation was captured concisely by the example of performing an arithmetic function such as multiplication. Yet for Hobbes computation need not only be arithmetical in nature but also syllogistic or propositional reasoning which of course can be externally expressed in speech. Leibniz fully expands Hobbes' rudimentary notion of the computable mental algorithm or what Leibniz saw as the rendering of sufficient reasons and concluded that reason must be the ground of all human knowledge.[9] Kant also shared Leibniz's view that reason's must be objectively rendered in order for it to count as knowledge because the "faculty of understanding" alone does not suffice.[10] Though unexpected, the full extent of the third mode of rationality, of rendering reasons, will be captured in a most radical way not only by the concept of Man but definitively by a Turing Machine which will be the focus of chapter 3.

The *capacity*, *exhibition*, and *rendering* of reason are of course intertwined but present a set of heuristics which European man would apply to the those encountered in the New World and black Africans brought across the Middle Passage. Rational heuristics in relation to race will become more clear in section 6 when I briefly introduce the 16th century Valladolid debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés Sepúlveda on the human status of the Amerindian peoples of the New World. What's decisive trans-epochally (modern to modern technology) is a similar set of heuristics are used to

8 Thomas Hobbes, *The Metaphysical System of Hobbes in Twelve Chapters from Elements of Philosophy Concerning Body, Together with Briefer Extracts from Human Nature and Leviathan*, ed. Mary Whiton Calkins, (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1905), 7.

9 See chapter 3, sec. 4.

10 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), A80-81, B106.

measure computational machine intelligence and consciousness. As I will show in chapter 3, Leibniz will proved to be essential in articulating not only the primacy of cognition but he was also pivotal in formulating the very concept of computation born out of the idea of the rational subject.

The inchoate articulation of the subject in early modern thought is the presentiment of Man. In order to examine the origins of Man in this chapter I will to draw upon Heidegger's de-construction of the subject in conjunction with Foucault's archeology of the human sciences and Kant's anthropology. I will then relate the concept of Man back to the modern concept of race through the historical literary criticism of Sylvia Wynter. Before I begin to work out the subject through Heidegger, Foucault, Kant and Wynter I will first like to introduce some general remarks on the phenomenological recovery of the originary sense of Man.

1. Man the Human [*homo humanus*]

The great crisis of Western existence is that the essence of Man continues to be durable even through its various permutations. In Michel Haar's critical inquiry into Heidegger's treatment of Man and *Being* he glosses some key themes that lead of up to the formation of Man and its evolution. The theme of rationality remains consistent in almost all Western interpretations of the human, resulting in its most extreme version today, as the being that calculates.

> must man be determined...as an amalgam of soul and body, or as that "living entity endowed with language," *zōon logon echon,* which for centuries has been called the *rational animal* and which Technology has recently transformed into its last avatar, "the living entity that calculates" or "works", "the beast of labor?[11]

Haar concisely, perhaps too concisely for the traditional historian, outlines the "red vein" of rationality from Plato to Descartes to our contemporary epoch with the computational view of the human. Though Man becomes a fully formed concept in the age of the Enlightenment and through the subsequent formation of the human sciences, Man continues to endure evermore hidden from view in its current computational form. In fact as I will examine in chapter 3, Man is a norm that organizes the very theory of computation in which, as Haar points out, represents our current normative interpretation of the human. So rather than Man being overthrown in post-modernity according to post-human and post-hermeneutic skeptics, the concept of Man becomes more deeply embedded in our built and computationally ubiquitous world. Computation finds its first articulation in the concept of the rational animal.[12] According to Heidegger the tradition

11 Michel Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man,* trans. William McNeil,(Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 57.

12 See Hobbes' epigraph to chapter 3.

had determined that the human is the "organism" that computes.

> the essence man has been decided long ago...man is an "organism" and indeed an "organism" that can invent, build, and make use of machines, an organism that can *reckon* with things, and organism that can put *everything whatsoever* into its calculation and computation, into the ratio.[13]

Is Man a rational animal? Is the human a rational animal? Are Man and the human one and the same? The determination that humans are rational animals is not new nor is the view that race is tied to reason. Yet it is not clear how race can function to determine some humans as only animals while others as rational animals. The mobilization of race as racism dehumanizes by determining some humans to be animals without reason. The key is, I believe, the notion that even though Man as the human is a special animal it is still believed to exist on a continuum of other organisms.

animality ↔ rationality

As an organism it means that Man is also a biological automata, albeit with the special gift of reason. Man then is a relationship between animality and rationality. The human body is the sign of the organism, of the animality. Therefore rationality would need to be distinct from the animal body, meaning it must be disembodied from itself. The articulation of disembodied reason precedes the concept of Man and goes as far back as Platonic thought. The body is a historical problem for European man. The aspects of animality and rationality constitute what I referred to as prior disclosure of Man in order for Man to become encountered as the model of the human in the modern epoch. If the body as animality and mind as rationality are prior to Man what makes the concept of Man distinct? Is it the loss of God that makes Man the new human?

Incipient in Descartes' doctrine of first philosophy is the concept of Man. Descartes defines Man as a psycho-physical unity, that is, as a consciousness independently conscious of itself. Man is an ideal of the human premised on the notion of self-founding, meaning that Man as the human does not look to external standards, such as the divine, in which to measure itself but rather turns inward to measure itself against itself. Man is the ideal subject which objects stand over and against and an in-itself for-itself. Man is an in-itself-for-itself that represents what-ever it encounters to itself. As peculiar as this sounds the ground concept of Man was formulated not out confidence but out of the anxiety of realizing that humans were finite beings.[14] In the early modern period of Descartes,

13 Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts ,* trans. Gary E. Aylesworth (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 76.

14 In Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche, he writes, "although being-able-to-err is a lack for Descartes, it is also a certification that man is free, is a being founded on himself. Error directly attests to the priority of subjectivity, so that from the viewpoint of subjectivity a posse non errare, an ability not to err, is more essential than a non posse errare." Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume IV,* ed. David

European man's finitude was grasped not as a defeat but as an opportunity to progressively know more about God's infinite creation. Soon after God would be out of the picture entirely.

To live up to the concept of Man, that is, to embody its norms, requires that one autonomously, self sufficiently, and with self-certainty represent the being of the world to oneself without error. To be sure, Man is a challenging norm to live up to, yet tragically this model of being human (a monohumanism) had colonized all other modes and if nothing could be worse European man imposed this model of being human on non-European worlds. Heidegger critically called this Europeanization while Kant positively called it cosmopolitanism.[15] Existentially then, the colonization of non-European worlds by white Europeans occurs not only as a military, economic, and cultural expansion nor even simply at the level of psychology or mind but more fundamentally at the level of being. Comprehensively the worldhood of these "new worlds" is colonized. Colonization then does not occur at the level of subjects and objects but to the background understanding which first makes possible the intelligible of entities (e.g., the modern ontology of subjects/objects). My assertion likely stands outside traditional scholarship on European colonialism because a study of the colonization of being requires an inquiry into racial encounter which hitherto has not been delivered by elite university scholars.

As a normative concept Man functions as an ideal whose achievement is not fully attainable. In fact the very essence of norms requires that they be unattainable in order to orient prototypical behavior. Norms function as a model for how one should comport oneself but, as is the case with the concept of Man, are not formalized in a manner that one could enumerate a set of rules to follow. Therefore one does not generally take up a propositional attitude toward Man in the sense that one holds it as an explicit belief or that one wills it into being. What I mean is the concept of Man is not held as an immanent concept that can be represented or cognized by a subject in order to perform it. Man is then not a belief one expresses about what one should be but rather is an unthematized norm that exists in the background of modern and modern technological

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Farrell Krell (San Francisco:Harper San Francisco 1987), 143. The concept of self founding (modern) vs. founded (Christian) is tied to the revelation of finitude because *error* in representations produces the free relation to objects. This may at first seem counter-intuitive but if for example there was perfect knowledge [*sapienta purus*] as of the creator god, then there would be no cause to turn inward to the sphere immanence. In this way the *possibility* for error provides the opening for subjectivity to appear as necessary to reduce error itself. The revelation of error provides the potential for perfection through degrees and gradations.

15 In response to an interlocutors view that European representation and concepts are desirable Heidegger writes, "That temptation is reinforced by a process which I would call the complete Europeanization of the earth and of man." in *On the Way to Language* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1971), 15. Also see Robert Bernasconi's essay "Levy-Bruhl Among the Phenomenologists: Exoticisation and the Logic of 'the primitive'", *Social Identities* 11, no. 3, (May 2005): 230.

life. Through the ideal sense of Man we understand what it means to be the proper human by how humans should show-themselves and comport themselves. When a human fails to live up to the norms of Man they can either stand out against this background or fail to show-up at all. In either event as hyper-visible or invisible their human-being is not presenced in-it-self.[16]

As I've mentioned the concept of Man grounds Western humanity in a fundamental way that remains hidden yet it structures the way the West fabricates its world. In the previous Christian epoch it was said that "God created man in his own image."[17] In our current modern technological epoch it could be said that Man had wholly usurped God's position by exchanging theology for technology thereby making the world in Man's image. So not only is digital computation modeled upon the ideal model of the human but it is now widely argued that the natural world is now governed by computational processing of information.[18] The Galilean mathematization of nature, which grounds European science in the modern epoch, has today transformed into the computationalism of nature.[19] Both mathematization and computationalism exist on a continuum of the rationalization of nature and go hand in hand with the rational and computational view of the human that I am attempted to uncover here. It is outside of the scope of this present work to critically take up the mathematical and computational interpretation of the plena but I will demonstrate in chapter 5 through the critique of technological extension that cognitivism reflects these broader interpretations of nature as computable information processes. As such, rationality grounds that which is mathematical and computable.

If Man is an ideal and abstract concept how do we explicate it as somehow lived-through? When we broaden out race in its essence, that is, its phenomenological origins, as that which indicates humanity proper we loosen the grip of scientificity and elucidate its referential relation to human-being in its original sense. Husserl introduced the idea of reactivating the original sense of ideal objects in his phenomenology of mathematics and formal logic.[20] In terms of an ideal geometric concept, like the Pythogorean theorem, Husserl argued that it has an origin in the embodied sensuous activity of measuring land. This original [*originaliter*] embodied sense of the early geometers is shed by the sciences in favor of ideal and certain truths directed towards infinite knowledge. Practical measurement leads to the formation of exact ideal geometric forms which in turn improve with continual application. What occurs is the practical aspects of encounter

16 See chap 4., sec 2. Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man.*

17 See. Genesis 1:27

18 Peter J. Denning, "Computing is a Natural Science", *Communications of the ACM,* 50, no. 7, (July 2007): 13-18.

19 See Stephen Wolfram, *A New Kind of Science,* (Chicago: Wolfram Media, 2002).

20 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,* trans. David Carr [Evantson: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 356; *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 9.

with sensuous shapes in the living world, what Husserl referred to as the *lebensvelt,* become detached from the exact and pure mathematical idealizations leading to the Platonic notion that the ideals shapes are *a priori* forms existing outside of and separate from the lifeworld. It is in specialized sciences interest to forget its origins because it believes its own history hampers its progress.[21] However, according to Husserl, the original sense is not forever lost but can be reactivated through recovery of an idea's original sense, even the radical sense of a geometrical ideality. It is clear that a pure mathematical concept cannot be conflated with that of the ideal of Man yet one can take a similar genealogical route as did Husserl with Galilean physics to recover the original basis for human comportment. Again the challenge is the following: How to account for some phenomena when there is no formal representation of it and it functions in the background in a concealed manner?

Husserl's genealogical method is what he called a "radical sense investigation" of an ideal concept.[22] The concept of Man is similarly an ideal concept within philosophical anthropology with roots in the fundamental questions: what is a human? Am I this human? Are they the human that I am? Similar to Husserl's genetic phenomenology of mathematical concepts I will attempt in this chapter a genealogy of Man through the circular interpretation of race and reason as depicted in the figure below. The concept of race can be taken back to its original sense givenness, that is perceptual encounter, even before it becomes the ideal concept in the discourse of the human sciences and modern institutions.

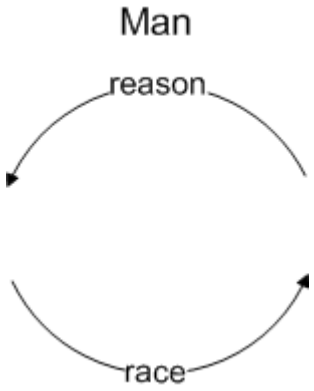

Figure 3.

21 Marvin Minsky states the following: "A dynamic science has no need of its past, it forges ahead", as cited in Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *The Mechanization of the Mind,* trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 43.

22 Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 9.

My argument is that this begins with the emergence of the human as a special type of conscious being that can represent the world to itself on its own terms. This special subject would come to be historically naturalized as the definitive human as Man. I will attempt to recover the orginary sense of race by linking it to the concept of Man and the centrality of cognition. In the next section I will investigate the “special subject” through Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology while continuing to retain Husserl's "radical sense investigation" as a ongoing theme.

2. Heidegger and Man as Subject

As I introduced in chapter 1 Heidegger construes Western civilization through epochs, what he calls the history of being. It will be necessary to briefly revisit the structural movement of the history of being here in order to situate how human-being had come to be pre-delineated as Man in modernity and after.[23] In this section I will be drawing primarily from Heidegger's two later essays "The Age of the World Picture" and "The Question Concerning Technology" published in *Holzwege* and *Vorträge und Aufsätze* respectively, translated into English by William Lovitt and published in 1997 in the collection entitled *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays.*[24]

For the historian the assertion of "epochs of being" may be seen as an oversimplification because a historical factual view of history shows a Heraclitean flux of activities, interests, intentions, events, subjects, and objects with little or no symmetry but rather a disparate collection of phenomena. There is likely no singular event or individual who defines how *being* should function. For Heidegger, to assert that historical figures determine being of an age would be anthropocentrism. The dominant mode of being such as the modern subject/object or modern technology's objectlessness has no specific dates nor definitive chronology as can be given to, for example, North America's Great Depression or the Haitian revolution. The history of being is deployed to reveal a style of an age. According to Heidegger's view, each epoch in the West has a dominant mode of disclosing *being* whose basis is the general unfolding of Western metaphysics. There are of course more than one mode of revealing but as I've mentioned, Western metaphysics progressively colonizes other possible modes of revealing.

The intelligibility of what ever is, that is, its being, functions in what Heidegger called

23 The explication of the history of being exists throughout Heidegger's oeuvre from Being and Time (1927) to well after he gives up fundamental ontology at the point of what has been termed the Turning [*Kehre*] where he forgoes some of his queer terminology and perhaps takes on some new oddities (such as ge-stell) in a later collection of essays published as Holzwege (1952) and Vorträge und Aufsätze (1954).

24 The "Age of the World Picture" was first a lecture given in 1938 whose original title was "The Establishing by Metaphysics of the Modern World Picture" and then appeared with the former title in the collection of essays published in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1952).

the background therefore the explicit logic of how modes of being function remains opaque. This does not mean we must deploy mystical techniques in the explication of being. Being is the interplay of concealment and unconcealment of its meaning function. The function of being recedes into the background in order that we may encounter beings in our everyday practical activities. In our practical encounter and engagement with the world we are most concerned with beings but not the being of beings. The being of beings makes beings encounterable in the first place. In fact the pre-objective nature of being is essential for interpretation of reality in general because, in Heidegger's view, human understanding [*Verstehen*], as practical know-how, works best when it requires no detached reflection.[25] I argue that in order for humans to encounter other humans in their human-being requires some sort of prior disclosure or understanding.

Heidegger begins his story of the emergence of Man by demonstrating a transition between what we can call here the Christian and modern epochs. For Heidegger what is radically new about the modern versus the Christian epoch is the formalization of consciousness, that is, the ego cogito. I would argue this is substantive a shift but not a wholesale rupture in the sense which Foucault charts the orders of Western knowledge or what he called, adopting the Greek term, "epistemes." The transition from Christian to modern can be delineated as that of the theocentric (theologos) to the rationcentric (anthropologos). Some of the essential structures of intelligibility are kept intact to certain degree, that is, they remain ontologically coherent in a way that maintains its metaphysical constancy of being as not only a substance but the highest substance through the concept of perfection. This is what Heidegger referred to as *ontotheology.* Heidegger writes that there is a continuity of ontotheology from the Christian to the modern epoch which shifts from God as ground to reason (Man) as ground.

> The essential transformation of truth to the certainty of representational thinking is determined by the essence of Being as *actus purus.* For this reason, the world of Christian faith remains authoritative throughout...the history of the modern period.[26]

The Thomist concept "*actus purus*"*,* meaning divine perfection, is not only retained in the modern epoch but is an essential structure to interpreting reality through "representational thinking" or rationality. The radicality of the modern epoch is the shifting of the “who” or “what” of logos, that is, from the divine to Man. In the Christian epoch, reality was determined and interpreted according to an external standard of measure, that is, the divine creator or godhead [*gottheit*]. Heidegger writes, "[f]or the Middle Ages..., that which is, is the *ens creatum,* that which is created by the personal Creator-God as the highest cause...to be in being means to belong within a specific rank

25 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 182-195.

26 Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 24.

of the order of what has been created—a rank appointed from the beginning—and as thus caused, to correspond to the cause of creation (*analogia entis*)."[27] In this Christian schema the human was placed within a hierarchy of creatures under the creator god as a founded entity therefore the order of beings or creatures was fixed and immovable. The Christian human in this way was to only interpret himself through the nodal point of the Christian god. If Christian European man was to understand himself as rational, he was rational as so consecrated by the divine. Christian man's rationality was an aspect of his soul and as such was connected to the creator god as that given capacity which was opaque and mysterious but indicated something of his divine place as one of the creator god's creatures. The transformation of the soul to mind will be a key factor in the emergence of Man.

Central to the Copernican cosmology was the notion that somehow the earth was not center of the Christian god's whole creation thereby introducing uncertainty into the theocentric interpretation of reality.[28] Galileo would of course push this decentering of the creator god as arbiter of reality even further with his arithmetical-geometric view of nature as the underlying ordering of the creator god's plan which was infinite but rational to the extent that it must be also a mechanistic universe whose secrets could be uncovered by explaining aspects of its mathematical laws.[29] In the Christian age to think one could grasp the infinite wisdom of the creator god was for the most part unthinkable until Leibniz. Leibniz's attempts to work out a *mathesis universalis* would prove important for the possibility of thinking the infinite. Leibniz's arguments indicate the incipient shift already underway in which Man would become the new highest standard of measure. It is important to stress that a distinction durable throughout the Christian age, including Renaissance humanism, was that European man could never understand nature in the way the creator god does. Leibniz would overthrow this by introducing, if only, the possibility to think the infinite, model it and then make it.[30] As will be discussed

27 Martin Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 130.

28 The Copernican Revolution had been essential in the radical reorientation of the traditional theocentric cosmogony. In his text on Copernican astronomy, Thomas S. Kuhn strongly emphasizes this transition of modern man, writing Copernicus' "planetary theory and his associated conception of the sun-centered universe were instrumental in the transition from medieval to modern Western society, because they seemed to affect [m]an's relation to the universe and to God....Men who believed that their terrestrial home was only a planet circulating blindly about one of an infinity of stars evaluated their place in the cosmic scheme quite differently than had their predecessors who saw the earth as the unique focal center of God's creation. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 2.

29 Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 23-57.

30 Cf., Jean Pierre Dupuy provides an excellent description of the centrality of modeling as essential to contemporary cognitive science's concept of mind by referring back to Vico. Dupuy writes, "Hobbe's system was animated by an idea that later would be famously formulated by Vico as '*Verum et factum*

in chapter 3 Leibniz's work on his universal characteristics, calculus ratiocinator, and machina ratiocinatrix foreshadows Turing's theory of the digital computer and John Von Neumann's computer architecture. Uncannily the concept of Man and its offspring, the digital machine, have theological origins which preserve the ontological character of perfection intrinsic to a divine being and carried over from the Christian epoch.

Much of this transitional move to the degodization [*Entgötterung*] of human/world interpretation is interdependent and coeval with the new understanding of the self as a consciousness with a mind, that is, conscious of being conscious of itself, brought about solely as an act of private will without some external entity, which here means a creator god, catalyzing introspection. This is not to assert that introspection as such is a modern phenomena, but how introspection is carried out in the modern epoch appears to be quite novel. In contemporary terms such an assertion should seem bizarre but we must think of an exemplar of introspection in the Christian epoch such as prayer. Prayer is a special type of introspection, though likely practiced as public oration but nonetheless as catalyzed by an external transcendent. What I mean here is to pray; is to pray to a divine power or entity existing wholly external to European man.

In the Christian epoch the human cannot see it self as separate and distinct from its reference to others and certainly not from the creator god. There is no such concept of the individual for serf, laity, clergy, or sovereign. There is always a Christian subject who devotes himself to the creator. To pray to oneself without the thought of this external transcendent as an act of free willing for and by the self could only translate into a type of personal blasphemy. For us even something as sacred in the Christian epoch as prayer is degodded. From this perspective the introspection that Descartes outlines in *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) was not only without peer but most radically the basis of a new way to conceive of the human.

The Christian soul would give way at some point to the rational mind and this distinction between the two was more than hinted to in Descarte's *Meditations*. For Heidegger, Descartes marks the most original articulation from theocentrism to ratiocentrism. In the theocentric universe the creator god stands at the center as the final and total standard of measure. In the ratiocentric universe Man comes to stand in as center and final totalizing standard of measure for all entities. According to Heidegger a radical shift occurred in which Man begins to appear. Heidegger writes:

> What is decisive is not that man frees himself to himself from previous obligations, but that the very essence of man itself changes, in that man becomes subject...when man becomes the primary and only real *subiectum*, that means: Man becomes that

convertuntur' (“The true and the made are convertible”). This means that we can have rational knowledge only about that which we are the cause, about what we ourselves have produced." *The Mechanization of the Mind* , trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 28.

> being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth. Man becomes the relational center of that which is as such.[31]

Heidegger argues that Man supplants the creator-god as center of meaning and that which all else must be measured against. The *subiectum* is a term which Heidegger carefully traces back to the Latin translation of the Greek word *hypo-keimenon*, meaning that-which-lies-before.[32] The ancient *hypo-keimenon* bears little or no resemblance to the modern subject, Man. Contemporary scholars often take and use the term *subject* as matter-of-fact. It seems beyond reproach to assume that we might not have always been subjects as discrete entities whose commitments place primacy on the "I" in relation to all else. The subject is particular in that it is purported to be self-contained and self -sufficient entity. The self sufficiency of the subject is as much a myth as the Christian subject. Descartes' subject appears out of the force of a self willing or self assertion.[33] How could European man make a self assertion on the basis of itself in which no outside entity or "standard of measure" marks off what it could be? Heidegger argues further:

> What is decisive is that man himself expressly takes up this position as one constituted by himself, that he intentionally maintains it as that taken up by himself, and that he makes it secure as the solid footing for a possible development of humanity....Man makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the *objective*. There begins that way of being human which mans the realm of human capability as a domain given over to measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole.[34]

Again, much like the dissent with the novelty of modern introspection we come up against the same issue with the concept of the subject. While it is certainly true that there were humans in the previous Medieval and ancient periods, still what it meant to be a human, for example in the medieval Christian era, was a being whose intelligibility was in relation to a sovereign who in turn was a carnal mediator to the creator god. What's decisive is the Christian human or Christian subject is one who is founded not self founding.

What is considered to be the general scientific method, that which is take as a given, holds within it, according to Heidegger, the origin of this radical shift, if not the overthrow, of the Christian epoch. In this way we can take science as the by-product of the formation of the concept of Man. In reference to the ethos of modern scientific

31 Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", 128.

32 Ibid., 128.

33 Cf., Hans Blumenberg discusses the emergence of *self assertion* as a significant characteristic of modern Western man as a willful self consciousness to theorize about his world through scientific reflection. Hans Blumenberg, *Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1883).

34 Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", 132.

research Heidegger writes the following:

> Certainly the modern age has, as a consequence of the liberation of man, introduced subjectivism and individualism. But it remains just as certain that *no age before this one has produced a comparable objectivism* and that in no age before this has the non-individual, in the form of the collective, come to acceptance as having worth. Essential here is the necessary interplay between subjectivism and objectivism. It is precisely this reciprocal conditioning of one by the other that points back to events more profound. [my emphasis][35]

Heidegger's assertion is filled with awe as well as anxiety. To assert that never before in Western civilization has there been such an appeal to objectivism is for the most part rather startling. The modern European discovers himself as not already-founded but through his own volition to be his own founding.[36] European man finds himself to be self-caused, radically free but at once completely alone. The great triumph of the modern subject is he understands himself to be freedom and simultaneously this freeing of the self to oneself is also fraught with the anxiety of recognizing one's finitude. But European man was not alone as we know through the so called discovery of the New World. On the one hand the history of modern European philosophy is a magnificent journey of progress and achievement but on the other hand it is also the history of melancholy of European man's search for what it means to be human because he had murdered the father and attempted to supplant him, alone in the wilderness with the natives. In order to flesh out more concretely the argument for the relation of this new subject Man as the normative definition of the modern human and its relation to the concept of race it will be helpful to demonstrate how fundamental the concept of Man is in the transition to the human sciences charted by Foucault. In the following section I will continue to look at the origins of Man through its traces in natural history and race science.

3. Michel Foucault's “Invention of Man”

The history of the concept of Man or the formulation of Man as problem was not an explicit focus of Hedeggarian hermeneutic phenomenology and even less so for Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. As is well known Heidegger's interest was in the explication of being and the human relationship to being. Heidegger's critique of Man targets the tradition's tendency toward the prejudices of anthropocentrism and

35 Ibid., 128.

36 Cf., Heidegger's essay "The Turning." According to Heidegger as a part of the destining of being it will come to pass that the self-founding in which no external transcendent metaphysically covers over being holds both a curse and a blessing, what he called, borrowing from the poet Hölderlin, the saving power of modern technology. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 36-49.

subjectivism. However the history of the concept of Man was of special interest to the post-hermeneutic skeptic, Michel Foucault. It should also be of no surprise that Foucault was a strong critic of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology and Husserl's turn toward transcendental subjectivity. For both Heidegger and Foucault, Husserl's transcendental ego is none other than an extreme form of subjectivism. In a way Foucault's *The Order of Things* can be seen as a response to Husserl's last text published before his death in 1938, *The Crisis of European Sciences* (1936) and a critique of transcendental phenomenology. An examination of Foucault's critique of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology is outside the scope of this present work but the distinction should not be passed over.[37] I briefly take up Foucault's concern with Man in this section because he brings the concept of Man in close relation to the human sciences. The European human sciences are essential in the formalization of the concept of race which, as I will demonstrate, is inextricably tied to the concept of Man.

It is clear that both Heidegger and Foucault are interested in elucidating the emergence of the modern subject, however the former is focused on the critique of subjectivism and cognitivism within European continental philosophy itself while the latter is most concerned with the historical discursive formation of the subject through human sciences and state institutions. The extreme formalization of cognition (computation) and human sciences (race) are grounded upon the concept of Man as the human whose cognitive essence Descartes inaugurates. It is therefore effective to integrate both Foucault's "archeology of the human sciences" and Heidegger's phenomenological critique of *animal rationale* as a way to ground the analysis of race and computation based upon the concept of Man. The concept of Man when broadened out demonstrates the continuity of the prevailing metaphysical interpretation of being and human-being present in the modern technological epoch.

In *The Order of Things,* Foucault argues the concept of Man was "invented" or rather emerged in the modern epoch somewhere after the end of the 18th century. Foucault writes, "[b]efore the end of the eighteenth century, *man* did not exist...He is quite a recent creature, which the demiurge of knowledge fabricated with its own hands less than two hundred years ago..."[38] Both Heidegger and Foucault similarly believe that Man emerges within the modern epoch. I would argue further that Man is a founding phenomenon of modernity itself and no mere character among others. Heidegger's schema of modernity begins with Descartes while Foucault distinguishes the Cartesian cogito as a part of an earlier period, what he calls the classical *episteme.* Foucault sees the first definitive articulation of Man with Kant's investigation of the finitude of subjective experience structured by transcendental *a priori* categories. As a result, Foucault associates the full

37 Few scholars pay much attention to the impact of Husserl on the French post-hermeneutic skeptical thought.

38 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 308.

appearance of Man as a clear object of inquiry with emergence of the human sciences in the late 18th and early 19th century.

An objection could be raised that the concept of Man that I've attempted to examine through Heidegger's analysis of the Cartesian cogito is dissimilar from that of Foucault's attribution to the Kantian subject. However, as I will show, Heidegger and Foucault's concepts of Man are not dissimilar due to the issue of finitude of the representing subject so clearly present in Descartes and then fully degodded with Kant's transcendental system. Therefore Man as the finite and inchoate subject makes its appearance even before the formalization with Kant and the subsequent human sciences. It is not my goal to point out a chronological error in Foucault's theory of the invention of Man but rather to show how the human sciences and its concept of race are pre-figured or pre-disclosed by the birth of the subject which is guided by the doctrine that modern human consciousness is always consciousness of itself and as such is self-founding.

Foucault argues that in the Classical age, prior to the end of the 18th century, European man represented the natural world in a strict grid-like classification scheme in which all entities, e.g. animals and plant life, could be taxonomically represented to man as scientific observer. All entities needed to fall onto the grid or table; whatever could not be clearly and distinctly represented could not count as being a part of existence for European man.[39] In Foucault's view, Descartes' doctrine relied upon the belief that God secures the one-to-one correspondence of *identity* which secured the chasm between the internal immanent sphere and external transcendental empirical world. As such, in Descartes' early modern world, representations matched perfectly to the thing represented. The most startling point that Foucault makes is that in spite of attempting to classify and represent all entities, European man himself could not appear as an explicit object of inquiry on the grid until the formalization of the human sciences, sometime after the end of the eighteenth century.

> When natural history becomes biology, when the analysis of wealth becomes economics, when above all, reflection upon language becomes philology, and Classical discourse, in which being and representation found their common locus, is eclipsed, then, in the profound upheaval of such an archaeological mutation, man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows.[40]

The mutation or rupture that Foucault traces is that “representations” ceased at some point to hold the discursive power to be transparent as an absolute truth claim, the result of which began to shake the classical order of knowledge. In response to this shift from

39 Foucault's concept of representation in the Classical episteme should not be misconstrued as 'representation' as that the cogitare of Decartes.

40 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 312.

absolute veracity of representations to opacity and uncertainty, European man became skeptical of what he could actually know. What's decisive, was not only was European man's knowledge appearing to be limited but through the limits of knowledge he would discover himself as wholly finite—finitude. Foucault argues it was this finitude of knowledge and the knowledge of his own finitude that caused European man to withdraw into himself, into the sphere of immanence for the truth of what he could know about the external world. Foucault calls his articulation of this rupture in which Man appears, the "analytic of finitude." It is through this analytic that Foucault is able to chart at least three overlapping and successive discursive variations in which European man molts into Man, what he calls "man and his doubles."

As mentioned, for Foucault the concretization of the new "Age of Man" is synonymous with Kant's critical system, as the first formalization of the conditions of the possibility of knowing, which as Kant argues, will always come up to a limit of knowing as finite. However, and this lends credibility to Heidegger's broader sweep of what constitutes modernity, we see just as clearly with Descartes' discussion of the existence of God the very problem of finitude and that problem requiring the turn toward immanence. In his *Meditations* (1641), 3rd meditation § 47. Descartes writes the following:

> while it is true that my knowledge is gradually being increased and that there are many things in me potentially that are not yet actual, nevertheless, none of these pertains to the idea of God, in which there is nothing whatever that is potential. Indeed this gradual increase is itself a most certain proof of imperfection.[41]

The doubling that Foucault discusses, in which man turns inward to question the validity of his own representations is clearly present in *Meditations.* However this introspection by Descartes does not manifest itself into a human science until much later, till just after Kant's formalizes the question of the conditions of possibility for any theory of knowledge whatsoever. In Foucault's view the essential recognition of finitude leads to the possibility that Man can appear as both the subject and object of science. Foucault writes, "[a]nthropology constitutes perhaps the fundamental arrangement that has governed and controlled the path of philosophical thought from Kant until our own day."[42] Foucault refers to this period as the "anthropological sleep" in which all the variations of the humans sciences and philosophical systems after Kant, come up against *anthropologos*. If this is so, the period of early modernity from Descartes' *Meditations* and Leibniz's *Monadology* to Kant's critiques was a that of anthropological sleep walking. The invention of Man as a specific phenomena that constitutes the human sciences is in Foucault's view unprecedented.

41 Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 32.

42 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 342.

> The first thing to be observed is that the human sciences did not inherit a certain domain, already outlined...the eighteenth century did not hand down to them, in the name of man or human nature, a space, circumscribed on the outside but still empty, which it was then their role to cover and analyse. The epistemological field traversed by the human sciences was not laid down in advance: no philosophy....no empirical science of any kind, no observation of the human body, no analysis of sensation, imagination, or the passions, had ever encountered, in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, anything like man; for man did no exist (any more than life, or language, or labour); and the human sciences did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism...it was decided to include man (willy-nilly, and with greater or lesser degree of success) among the objects of science...they (human sciences) appeared when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known.[43]

Foucault is quite adamant that there could be no such entity as Man prior to Kant yet Foucault is singularly focused upon the man of the human sciences as an entity in which there could be a unique scientific discourse about. In Foucault's archaeological method in order for an object to count there must be an explicit and authoritative discourse that circumscribes it. Therefore the predelineation and pre-understanding of *sense,* recalling Husserl's radical sense investigation, will not necessarily be of concern to the Foucaultian archaeologist of knowledge.

If I concede the fact that Man is *formalized* from within the human sciences which are in turn formalized in the early nineteenth century, then is there not some prior disclosure that makes the objective representation of Man possible? If we recall in our earlier discussion of Heidegger on understanding [*Verstehen*]; in order for an entity to be objectively and positively encountered and represented a prior disclosure of their being or intelligibility is implied. Therefore in order to formalize Man as a positivity within the human sciences requires an some prior disclosure of the human. In Heidegger's critical interpretation of the sciences he writes, "[i]n order to conceptualize Being, the understanding of Being must have developed of its own accord and have made Being (which is understood, generally projected, and somehow disclosed in it) its problem and theme of inquiry."[44] Conceptualizing “Being”, means for Heidegger, theorizing an object, first through delineating a region of being specific to a domain such as the natural or human sciences. Heidegger writes further, "[o]ne characteristic stage is the project of the constitution of the Being of being whereby a determinate field of being (perhaps nature or history) is, at the same time, marked off as an area that can be objectivized through

43 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 344-345.

44 Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons,* trans. Terence Malick (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 23.

scientific knowledge."[45] Heidegger has shown that traditional philosophical anthropology of the seventeenth century culminating in Leibniz's "principle of sufficient reason" delivers the condition that makes Man a possible object of science. This understanding itself may not be explicit in discourse as such but functions in a background understanding which remains for the most part opaque and indeterminate.

In the previous sections, with the help of Heidegger, I wanted to broaden out the scope of Man through Descartes' early attempts to define the human essence as psycho-physical unity in conjunction with what Foucault saw as the formalization of Man in the human sciences. What's critical, is through the early modern period, from Descartes to Kant, the essential structures of Man were being worked out and this would establish the *a priori* conditions in which Man could become a possible conceptual object for the human sciences. It is also not surprising that the concept of race would be worked out simultaneously with that of Man. In the following section I will discuss perhaps a lacuna in Foucault's archeology pertaining to the question of race which he largely saw as epiphenomenal to the emergence of Man. In fact both Heidegger and Foucault missed the question of race because of the assumption that it was merely a by product of anthropology. I wish to correct this by looking at the centrality of race in Kant's question "What is a human?"

4. Foucault and Kant on “What is Man?” or “What is a Human Being?”

According to Foucault the human sciences that emerged in the 19th century represented the culmination of the crisis of finitude and the failure of the representational schema of knowledge that held sway in the period of Descartes and Leibniz. Different from Foucault's conclusion, I will argue in this section that the problem of race represents just this limit of knowledge that Foucault attributes to Kant's critical period at the end of the 18th century.[46] However the problem of race and racial taxonomy was confronted some

45 Ibid., 23.

46 As I've mentioned, Foucault, unlike Heidegger, was particularly interested in the human sciences as central to the emergence of the concept of Man as they were the first institutional manifestation in which Man appeared as both the subject and object of his representations through scientific investigation.Foucault's discussions on the topic of race and racism were largely connected to the utilization of race by state institutions around the control of life and death of populations, what he termed *biopower*, through techniques and technologies of control and management. Foucault writes "The specificity of modern racism...is not bound up with mentalities, ideologies, or the lies of power. It is bound up with the technique of power, with the technology of power...So racism is bound up with the workings of a State that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power. The juxtaposition of –or the way biopower functions through – the old sovereign power of life and death implies the workings, the introduction and activation, of racism. And it s, I think, here that we find the actual roots of racism." Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College De France 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey, (New York: Picador,

decades prior to the publication of Kant's critiques, more closely associated with Kant's mid 18th century interest in the twin sciences—anthropology and geography. It is also fitting that it was Kant, who prior to his critical period engaged the limits of knowledge through his confrontation with the idea race and the following companion questions: what is man and what is human?

Race science, that is, the investigation and debate over human origins; inheritable physiognomy; geographic dispersion etc., especially concerning Europeans in relation to non-Europeans, was in full swing in the period prior to the formalization of the human sciences in European universities. Kant in fact played an important role in bringing the science of race to the fore through his many lectures, numbering over 70 throughout his career, on the twin sciences of anthropology and geography. In spite of race science's emergence in the mid 18th century Foucault discounts race as not fundamental to the invention of Man writing the following:

> There is no doubt that the natural sciences dealt with man as with a species or a genus: the controversy about the problem of races in the eighteenth century testifies to that...But there was no such epistemological consciousness of man as such.[47]

To reiterate, according to Foucault in order for Man to exist as a special entity it needed to also be an explicit epistemological object for science, that is, both the subject and object of representational inquiry. Could the mid 18th century "race controversy", referenced in passing by Foucault, indicate something about European man's consciousness of self as subject and object of his representations or what Foucault calls man's doubling? It is likely in the previous quotation the "race controversy" that Foucault is referencing included the heated debate between Kant and his former student Herder in which Kant wrote in 1785 a critical and scathing review of Herder's, *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*. According to Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, the Kant-Herder controversy (1784-91) was "one of the most lively public intellectual debates of eighteenth-century Germany." Below Eze recounts Kant's criticism of Herder's views on race.

2003), 258.

47 Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze writes in his introduction to his important reader *Race and the Enlightenment,* "Kant was the first to introduce geography into the curriculumn of study at the Unversity of Königsberg in 1756...J.A. May has calculated that at the University of Königsberg where he spent his entire career, Kant offered as many as 72 courses in anthropology or geography, compared to only 54 in logic, 49 in metaphysics, 28 in moral philosophy, and 20 in theoretical physics. Given these statistics, and the fact that the questions of race and of the biological, geographical, and cultural distribution of humans on earth occupied a central place both in Kan'ts science of geography and in anthropology, it can hardly be said that his interest in the "race question" was marginal to other aspects of his career." *Race and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 2-3.

> Herder naively presumed that truth of purpose in history was, thanks to nature, a given, only to be uncovered and affirmed in experience. Kant,..was of the opposite opinion, and argued that what needed investigating was the principle of reason through which humans attribute meaning or purpose to history....Herder and Kant disagreed on a number of issues: a) Herder, unlike Kant, disapproved of the classification of mankind into various races on the basis of skin color, b) Herder, again unlike Kant, was a cultural pluralist who believed that each culture contains its own unique and incommensurable truth or worth, and as such could not be subordinated or elevated as inferior or superior to another; and finally c), while Kant sought to establish an inherent human rational capacity responsible for historical progress from the "primitive to the "civilized," Herder believed that cultural and historical evolution were accounted for by an intrinsic force or "truth" - which for Herder was God.[48]

Kant's lectures on anthropology and geography, and in particular lectures that led up to the publishing of his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* were given over the last 25 years of the eighteenth century.[49] It is in these lectures that Kant would develop his monogenetic theory of the variety of human races. The fundamental question Kant posed in his *Anthropology* and the lectures leading up to its compilation is: "what is a human being?" As I have been arguing here in this dissertation the essence of race, that is its fundamental question, is "what is a human being?" or "what is man?" and this anthropology according to Kant grounds other three critical questions; What can I know? (Critique of Pure Reason); What ought I to do? (Critique of Practical Reason); What may I hope for? (Critique of Judgment).[50]

By situating the emergence of race within natural history within the representational discourse of the "classical episteme" Foucault makes race epiphenomenal to the emergence of Man and misses the way in which race science, as Kant conceived it, could destabilize what Foucault argues, is the rigidity of the taxonomic representations of classical natural history which in turn would give way to biology in the Age of Man.

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48 Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment,* ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 65.

49 Cf., Foucault's Thèse complémentaire pour le doctorat dès lettres, "Introduction à l'Anthropologie de Kant", accessed August 11, 2011, http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpfoucault8.htm Foucault's complimentary theses for his doctorate in France was a translation and commentary on Kant's *Anthropology from A Pragmatic Point of View* which was text that was developed through a lecture series given over the twenty-five years. The issue of race was front and center for Kant culminating in his heated debate with Herder. It is likely that Foucault was not only familiar with Kant's theory of race but that he is making reference to this controversial debate between Kant and Herder in his passing remark on race in *Les Mots et les Chose.*

50 See Kant's introduction to his *Logic* where he lays out the four questions that should concern the "legitimate" philosopher. Immanuel Kant, *Logic,* trans. Robert S. Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), 29.

Ontologically, classical representation must cohere in a one-to-one causal relation, that is, an empirco-mechanical, relation to the object. In simpler terms, in Foucault's classical episteme, the name of the object and the object named bear an identical correspondence as fully transparent with no room for opacity or uncertainty of the object represented. So for example in the natural historian's taxonomy of human species a “Hottentot” had a set of traits (dark skin, phlegmatic temperament, flat nose, licentious etc.) suited for her geography and climate (turbid zone of Africa) once she was placed in a temperate zone (Europe) it was thought, through a mechanical explanation of the system of nature, that changes should take place in skin color, temperament etc. Under this mechanical view, the Hottentot should become white European over time. It became clear that empirico-causal laws that seem evident in nature do not function representatively in human experience. In his famous essay *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* (1788) Kant asks the following:

> What is race? The word certainly does not belong in a systematic description of nature, so presumably the thing itself is nowhere to be found in nature. However, the concept which this expression designates is nevertheless well established in the reason of the observer of nature who supposes a conjunction of causes placed originally in the line of descent of the genus itself in order to account for a self-transmitted peculiarity that appears in different interbreeding animals but which does not lie in the concept of the their genus.[51]

Here we see how the concept of race is for Kant a *prima facie* example of the finitude of representational knowledge. For Kant race is not clearly explained by physico-mechanical system of nature, that is, the empirical-causal laws, but nonetheless is manifest historically and systematically, hence there must be laws because we see differences but they must be teleological principles that are transcendental, hence hidden from direct empirico-causal description. Kant concludes in his essay on teleological principles that race must be governed by some transcendental laws, that is hidden from human experience in which a “true” natural history could only discover. Furthermore, in reference to race again Kant writes, "[c]hance or common mechanical laws could not have brought out such harmonious relationships. Hence we must look upon such appropriate developments as *preformed*.[my emphasis]"[52] Evidence of the destabilization of the taxonomic order presented by natural historians, such as Kant's contemporary Blumenbach, demonstrated fissures with the geographic and inherited traits of humans spread across the earth. According to Foucault it is this subtle destabilization that reveals the finitude of man's knowledge and then forces European man to turn towards

51 Immanuel Kant, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" (1788), in *Race,* ed. Robert Bernasconi (Oxford, Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 40.

52 Immanuel Kant, "On the Different Races of Men (1775)", in *Race and the Enlightenment,* ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 43.

immanence where he might find the transcendental and laws hidden from objective sight (empirical) that govern human history. Kant's role in the articulation of the invention of Man is seminal according to Foucault. Foucault is emphatic on this issue.

> the Kantian critique..marks the threshold of our modernity; it questions representation, not in accordance with the endless movement that proceeds from the simple element to all its possible combinations, but on the basis of its rightful limits.[53]

Kant saw more clearly than his contemporaries the limitations of natural history and indeed the limits of "classical" representation. So in effect I am in agreement with Foucault as it concerns Kant's understanding of Man but what we have been arguing for is an addendum of sorts that allows for the possibility to integrate the concept of race with the formation of the concept of Man. As we have seen in the previous passages Kant could not reconcile race with the mechanical and representational view of the natural world but began to see, in particular, the history of the human species as operating with some sort of hidden or transcendental laws which could only be evinced throughout the unfolding of human history— as teleological. What was perfectly obvious to Kant was that there were clearly differing groups or on his assertion, races based upon their phenomenal properties, such as the difference in skin color between black Africans and Germans however these empirical differences alone, as taxonomic and representations could not explain how these racial categories cohere in experience. In sum the science of nature could not account for the human experience of nature. What Kant struggles with and will be made clearer in chapter 6 is the failure of the taxonomic representational schemes of the human species, to line up with the everyday perceptions of different races, that is, the difference between fact (representation) and phenomena.[54]

To be sure, Foucault's analysis of discourse provides a powerful insight into our concern of the invention of Man but we need not be bogged down by the discursive wizardry he presents us with in his structuralist approach to language. In fact we can still take his "analytic of finitude" of "man and his doubles" as a powerful lens in which to look at the concept of Man. But what of the issue of race that we want to investigate further with the invention of Man? To recapitulate, according to Foucault's archeology of knowledge, race clearly played the role of classification but only as "representation." Yet racial classification organized different types of humans/sub-humans/ non-humans which seems to implicate European man directly. Our modern theory of race, formalized by Kant, seems to at least have vouchsafed the concept of Man.[55] What is astounding about

53 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 242.

54 Of which there were, in the 18th century, several competing ones but ontologically similar

55 See Bernasconi and Lott's introduction to *The Idea of Race* where it is argued that Kant was one of the first scholars to systematically distinguish the race from human species and begin to formalize the idea of race. *The Idea of Race,* ed. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lee Lott (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2000),viii.

Foucault's shift in "epistemes" is that they are described as absolute ruptures from the previous order of knowledge. The “Age of Man” or Enlightenment is a paradigm shift from the “Classical Age.”

Could a rupture of the scale of the so called discovery of the New World provide at least the catalyst, if not profound upheaval in which European man begins to ask the anthropological question “What is man”? If European man began to search inward for a standard of measure of what it means to be human just as the theocentric meaning of human-being begins to wane (one in which there is was always an appeal to an external entity, i.e., the divine) then the confrontation with the indigenous populations of the New World may not seem to be an epiphenomena or passed off simply as military and economic expansion. In the next section I look at the work of literary critic Sylvia Wynter's who has lucidly linked what she calls "over-representation of man" as the human with the modern concept of race.

5. Wynter's Question of the Human

Sylvia Wynter, strongly influenced by Foucault, argues that there is a critical connection between the concept of Man and the modern concept of race by linking them to what she calls “descriptive statements” that define the human in each *episteme*.[56] The role that Wynter assigns to descriptive statements, borrowed from the cybernetician Gregory Bateson, methodologically aligns well with Foucault's analysis of discourse. However Wynter's deployment of Batesonian “descriptive statements” will regress into cognitivism that I will briefly discuss in section 7. Wynter's focus on the question of the human not only relates to its formation in Renaissance humanism but trans-epochally and trans-culturally. Wynter argues that there is a normative human in each Western epoch as well as in other non-European cultures. It is this engagement with the question of the human which allows for a provocative way to understand the broadening out of the concept of race that I am seeking to develop here.

As she convincingly argues, each epoch has a normative definition of the proper human. The variability of what a human should be becomes more and more rigid in the West. Wynter argues that the Christian human is far more fungible than that of the rational human in the Age of Man. Wynter's argument for a normative human in each epoch is actually more symmetrical with Heidegger's history of being than Foucault's archeology of the human sciences. As mentioned Heidegger, differing from Foucault, places the

56 Cf., Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* use of the 'descriptive statements'. The concept of 'descriptive statements' as utilized by Wynter dovetails well with Foucault's concept of discourse and 'serious speech'. However Wynter's use of 'descriptive statements', as borrowed from Bateson, seems to be propositional meaning that the mental is operative hence arguments grounded upon them will tend toward idealism when fully cashed out.

modern epoch (Foucault's "Age of Man") with the articulation of the positing of consciousness as self representation, called the *subiectum,* first seen most clearly in Descartes. What's more Heidegger, who was originally trained as a theologian, broadly construes two Western epochs of concern for metaphysics and technology; Christian and modern, respectively.[57] As I mentioned earlier, Heidegger argues that in the Christian epoch the interpretation of being was only intelligible through the divine godhead. All entities (beings) were understood to be creatures of God, the omnipotent; omnipresent; omniscient author. The human was made in God's image but was one creature among many in creation, albeit with a soul. The key distinction central to Wynter and Heidegger is to be human then in the Christian epoch meant to have a soul that was capable of salvation. Therefore one could be a heretic or apostate and still be human under this theocentric definition. However if one stands outside Christianity as a Jew, idolater or infidel, and those outside of the European world, such as Moors from the Islamic world or those indigenous to the New World, then one does not have a Christian soul to save hence incapable of salvation then ostensibly non-human.[58] The question of possessing a rational soul against having rational minds will become clearer in the next section, specifically in regards to the indigenous populations of New World.

> [W]hile Western Europe was to effect the transformation of its medieval religious identity, that of the True Christian Self, into the now secularizing identity of Man, it was confronted with the task of the inventing of a new form of binarily opposed Otherness to Man, one that could reoccupy, in secular terms, the place that its conception of the Untrue Christian Self had taken in the matrix religio-cultural conception of the human, *Christian*. In consequence, where the Other to the True Christian Self, of medieval Renaissance in the context of the intellectual revolution of civic humanism, the other in the context of that of Liberal or economic humanism which took place at the end of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth century), Europe was to invent the Other to "Man" in two parallel forms. And, because "Man" was now posited as a supracultural universal, its Other had logically to be defined as the Human Other. In the first form, it was to be the indigenous peoples of the

57 Heidegger's view is that modern technology, whose exemplar is cybernetics/thinking machines, is the consummation of the tradition of Metaphysics which he argues throughout his ouvre begins with Plato and continues, not necessarily linearly, but thematically through Western history. This has of course come up against scrutiny as a totalizing narrative of West culture (Cf. Alain Renaut, *The Era of the Individual*). Though there have been objections, and to my mind Alain Renaut's is one of the most lucid and penetrating, scholars such as Renaut cannot escape the fact that Heidegger through his mastery of Western philosophical thought had captured within West what he called 'Europeanization' as a colonizing phenomena which is tied directly to the formation of the subject ushered in by modernity.

58 Cf. Dante's *Inferno*, where the prophet Mohammad is assigned a special place in Hell for non-Christians.

> Caribbean and the Americas, who, classified as "Indians", were to be discursively constructed as the physical referent of the "savage" and thereby Irrational Human Other to the new "sense of the self" of "Man", defined as, homo politicus and as the Rational Self. At the same time, the enslaved transported African peoples, classified as Negroes, were to also be assimilated to this Irrational Other category, as its extreme form. That is, as a mode of the human so irrational, that it constituted the missing link between (the still divinely created) rational human species and the (equally, still divinely created) animal species: and as such had to be governed and mastered for its own good.[59]

The epochal sweep of Wynter's argument is impressive because it captures, like Heidegger, the red vein of theocentrism present in the rupture from Christian to European secular worldhood. Wynter charts the transition between epochal (Christian to modern) definitions of what a proper human is, the Christian human endowed with a rational soul and the secular European human endowed with a rational mind. The Christian human was defined against the untrue Christian such as a pagan or infidel. Once the European human became fully secularized as Man, as a "supracultural universal", his negation, no longer simply non-Christian but non-rational, was projected upon the so called pagan and irrational indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and the Americas. Having a Christian soul as the prime definition of humanness transitions to mind. The line is, of course, not hard nor fast when this occurs because as we see with Descartes, there is co-mingling of the concept of soul and the articulation of the concept of mind, then with Leibniz a full distinction between the soul and the mind, and finally with Kant we see the degodding of the modern human complete.[60]

Wynter's argument is that the formation of a "Human Other" was initially to frame the indigenous peoples of the New World but with the introduction of black African slavery through the Middle Passage, largely due to arguments against natives' fitness as slaves, blacks were installed as the total negation of European man leading to the formation of the concept of Man. The Negro was deemed to be irretrievably irrational as the polar opposite to Man and as such European man. An important distinction I would make is the Negro cannot be interpreted as Man's "Other" as Wynter's terminology may indicate. Because European man's Other, most clearly seen in Hegelian terms, is European man himself. Unlike Man's Other, the Negro is placed outside of humanity proper and within this logic the Negro stands outside the claim of reciprocity implied in the Hegelian master/slave dialectic.[61] This is precisely why racial slavery cannot be conflated with

59 Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle", in *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America* ed. Mercedes F. Duran-Cogan and Antonio Gomez-Moriana (New York, Routledge, 2001), 43.

60 See. chap. 4. sec. 10.

61 See Edward Said, *Orientalism*. The concept of the Negro stands as a significant lacuna in Said's

Aristotelian “natural slavery” because the Greco-roman formulation had no concept of the self-founding subject Man.

What Wynter helps makes clearer is that in the West the concept of Man is intelligible only in reference to an external entity, being first, the enslaved Amerindians of the New World then the enslaved black African of the middle passage. The emergent concept of Man in its formal designation requires no external entity to define itself but rather its meaning was determined to be self-sufficient and self-certain and as such a self-founding. As we have seen with the questions posed through the history of philosophical anthropology since Descartes: “what is man?” is inseparable from the question Kant poses: “what is race?”[62] Therefore in order for Man to appear as an entity that can be named by the sciences requires a prior understanding of what makes humans intelligible at all. Again, could this prior disclosure that makes Man intelligible be invoked by the so called discovery of the New World? I believe the preeminent 16th century Spanish debate on the issue of indigenous slavery will shed light on the later emergence of the concept of Man in relation to race, reason and the myth of the self founding subject that Heidegger asserts but does not cash out fully because of his and others' neglect of the impact of the New World on European consciousness.

6. The Valladolid Debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda

Prior disclosure of both Man and race appear with the Spanish conquest of the so-called New World—much earlier than the race controversy between Kant and Herder may indicate, though neither Man nor race were explicit discursive objects in the 15th century, as Foucault would forcefully assert. During the period of the conquest of the New World (post 1492) there begins to emerge a new understanding of what it means to be human that shifts from the meaning of what a Christian human (theocentric) should be to what a secular human (ratiocentric) should be. The incipient distinction of the new human, Man, is echoed in Spanish debates on the human status of the indigenous populations encountered in the New World. Based upon Wynter's view I would argue a lasting distinction would be made between the capacity and actualization of reason of the populations of the New World and European man's rationality that would invariably exclude any possibility of black Africans having reason thereby placing the Negro

argument in the discursive formation of the 'orient' which he marginally addresses in his later text, *Culture and Imperialism.* Similar to Wynter who is perhaps inspired by Said's influential work itself, Said deploys and appropriates the concept of Other in the master/slave dialectic from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind.* Said like many post-colonial critics misses the phenomena of human/non-human binary that the logic of racism imparts which nulls and voids any normal attempt in the reciprocity between the master and the slave. I will return to Said and race in chapter 7, section 3.

62 See Immanuel Kant, "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" (1788) in *Race* ed. Robert Bernasconi (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 40.

outside the threshold of humanity. In this period Christian reason transforms into secular reason which in turn transforms into “reason as ground” which sets the stage for the death of God. Copernicus' revolutionary cosmology is coeval with the New World because both so-called discoveries radically reorder the position of man and world.

Inchoate degodization inverts a paradigm prevalent at the apex of the Christian age which is the following: *If one were Christian then one should also be rational.* This paradigm is inverted at the end of the Christian epoch in the following way: *If one is rational then one can be Christian.* This is no mere tautology. To be sure, rationality is the “red vein” of European humanity since Plato but rationality in modernity becomes fully de-godded. Is Man then set a drift without an external reference in which to make intelligible the world? Heidegger may argue that Man is indeed alone but Heidegger neglects or forgets that the New World was the outer horizon in which the questions of the European self would be posed. How can European man understand himself with the loss of god imminent and the unfolding conquest of the New World? European man is drawn to reason out the encounter the New World on rational grounds and not on theological grounds as some may suggest.

At some point during the same period of European conquest of the New World, the Christian *soul* loses its hold on the central definition of being human, replaced most forcefully by the rational mind by the time of Enlightenment. The rupture between the theocentric and rationcentric conception of the human and its mapping to Wynter's two step dehumanization—first the Amerindians then black Africans, is very clearly captured in the great Valladolid (1550-1551) debate between the Spanish Dominican Bishop, Bartolomé de las Casas and the Cordoban humanist scholar and Spanish colonial representative, Juan Ginés Sepúlveda. This debate, which occurred almost a century before Descartes' *Meditations* (1641) gives credence to Heidegger's argument that the groundwork for the emergence of Man as the rational self-founding subject makes its presence at least by the time of Descarte's *Rules*. The Valladolid debate on the human status of the Amerindian people pivots exclusively on the expression of rationality.

In the Valladolid debate, Las Casas was in opposition to the *encomenderos* system of enslaving Amerindians while Sepúlveda was in support of the enslavement and military colonial expansion by the Spanish in the New World. As I've mentioned, the central focus of the debate was on the human status of the Amerindian peoples of the New World and whether or not they were rational humans or natural slaves with limited reason hence, not fully human. On the one hand Las Casas argued on both theological and rational grounds for the manumission of the natives; that they indeed possessed rational souls capable of Christian conversion while on the other hand Sepúlveda argued in proto-secularized terms in which full reason must precede convertibility to Christianity. Sepúlveda argued the Amerindians were irrational pagans as demonstrated by their “peculiar” behavior and

customs therefore they could not fulfill the role of a Christian civilization hence were were justly enslaved by the Spanish. Sepúlveda deployed the Aristotelian argument of "natural slavery" which viewed some were slaves by nature and must be governed by the more rational for their own good.[63] Both Las Casas and Sepúlveda shared the view that to be human meant to have the capacity for reason [*animal rationabile*] but also the actualization and exhibition of reason [*animal rationale*]. The historian John Phelan summarizes below Las Casas' view on rationality in his *Apologetic History of the Indies.*

> Las Casas' ontology went back to Greco-Roman antiquity and in particular to Cicero: "All the peoples of the world are men, and there is only one definition for all men and for each man, and that is that they are rational." Not only is rationality the essence of humanness, characterizing the whole human species, but also it is fully actualized and exemplified by the same inalterable traits in each member of the human race.[64]

The critical point here in the Valladolid debates is the new distinction made on secular terms as "savages without reason" by Sepúlveda against Las Casas' theological argument for rational souls capable of conversion to Christianity. In other words, the distinction appears as early as the middle of the 16th century between rational souls versus the proto-secularized interpretation of rational minds. The concept of the rational soul here is primarily theological but it will give way to its ratiocentric counterpart, mind. In essence the human mind will become a degodded human soul.

Las Casas' defense against the Amerindians seeming lack of reason was due to what he believed to be limited exposure to Christian doctrine and Spanish civilization. In Las Casas' view, if the Spanish missionaries were allowed to complete its evangelizing project by fully indoctrinating the natives in Christianity the native's rationality would flourish much like that of Spanish civilization in the Old World. For Las Casas widespread Christian conversion would be evidence of the rational capacity of the Amerindians.

Critical for Wynter's thesis is that Las Casas made no explicit provision in his arguments for the abolition of black African enslavement which began to emerge at the same time. In fact Las Casas made recommendations (11th *remedio*) and several requests that black Africans replace the fragile native populations as slaves.[65] Wynter isolates this specific distinction between the argument for Amerindian rational Christian capacity and black Africans *de facto* irrationality as constituting the absolute negation of Man. In this sense

63 See Dale A. Turner, *"This is not a Peace Pipe": Towards An Understanding of Aboriginal Sovereignty* (PhD. diss., Department of Philosophy, McGill University, Montréal, 1997)

64 John L. Phelan, "The Apologetic History of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas", review of *Bartolomé de las Casas' Apologetica historia sumaria* ed. by Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 49 no. 1 (1969): 94-99.

65 Paul S. Vickery, *Bartolomé de las Casas: Great Prophet of the Americas*, Volume 13 (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2006), 84.

the idea of Negro finally makes the concept of Man intelligible. This distinction, that pivots on the "soul to mind" transition, would set the stage for a tragic turn in European colonization which was later dramatically catapulted forward by Trans-Atlantic slavery. Las Casas would come to sorely regret this missing argument against black African enslavement.[66] There was never a clear record as to who won the debate and no formal policy on the abolition Amerindian slavery appeared as a result. However the enslavement of Amerindians would subside. The impact of enslavement was incredibly severe on the health of the Amerindians in the Spanish colonies and the productive slave labor pool was diminished. The ensuing genocide of fit Amerindian slaves forced the Spanish to turn to enslaved Africans for free labor through the Middle Passage. There would be no record of debate by the Spanish on either the capability for Christian conversion or for the capacity of reason of black African slaves, as either or both arguments would entail that they were human and hence not natural slaves.

Recalling the profundity of Man's self founding that Heidegger traces through the Cartesian ego cogito, this purported self founding can now be looked at under a different light. European man's will to sever his relation to the godhead and to radically self define himself is beset by the problem of how to define oneself without some external transcendental referent. A pure self-founding is an untenable myth but the myth that is installed as a practical replacement to the godhead, one of white European superiority has been born out by history to be far worse for humanity proper. Does the New World and the Negro provide this empirical transcendental entity? In Wynter's schema the human shifts from Christian self (soul) against Non-Christian (souless) to Man the human (rational) against Negro non-human (irrational). Wynter's argument is that European man's negation, that is, the Negro, provides the condition for the possibility of the concept of Man in the human sciences. I would add to this argument that perhaps the Negro provides an external referent, functioning much like the voided divine transcendent, that makes Man intelligible at all. If Man's essence is *animal rationale* and the Negro is the irrational animal then it follows that they are a part of an inextricable binary. As Man's negation, the concept of the Negro would remain durable and function as Man's unshakable shadow for centuries to come. As will be discussed in the following sections, though race as a concept does not exist in early European modern discourse its essence which is tied to Man as the human is linked to the ontotheology of reason as ground which must be installed as a mythical self-founding.

7. Wynter's Cognitivism

Differing from Heidegger, Wynter's overall thesis of humanism does not place marked stress on the centrality of *animal rationale* or ratiocentrism as the problematic

66 See Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologetica Historia Sumaria.*

interpretation of Man as the normative human. Wynter rather emphasizes what she calls "biocentric" terms made explicit in Darwin's *Descent of Man* which she argues is the current definition of the human as biological entity.[67] Unfortunately I cannot concur with her view that the biocentric definition of the modern human is the central defining feature of Man. The mechanistic view of Man as psycho-physical unity and the mechanistic view of biological life in Darwin are grounded upon an already determined metaphysical disclosure. The biological (Darwin), economical (Smith) are but oscillating terms in which to describe Man because he has already been determined in some way as a wholly cognitive entity which can take up each (biological or economical)– its life and its labor on already cognitive terms.

Wynter unwittingly carries over the some of the assumptions of cognitivism in her thesis of language and "descriptive statements" reverting to a very sophisticated type intellectualism in which she draws upon cognitivism's "myth of the mental" in order to provide the bootstrapping mechanism for world meaning for European man.

> What are the rules that govern our human perceptions? How, in effect, do we perceive and know the specific social reality of which we are always participatory subjects and agents?...To answer this question, I have borrowed the concept of 'subjective understanding' from the artificial intelligence theorist Jaime Carbonnell. Carbonnell suggests that, because humans always know and perceive their everyday world in relation to specific behavior-orienting supra-ordinate goals and their sets of sub-goals or *goal-tree,* aspects of these perceptual-cognitive processes can be simulated by a computer programs that are themselves oriented about such *goal-trees.* These goals therefore determine what is to be perceived and what not perceived, *with invariable* reference to one single criterion— that of their own realization as such goals. Given that since our human behaviors are invariably oriented in the forms of the specific perceptual-cognitive processes by which we know our reality, then the behaviors that we normally display.

Wynter's subscription to Classical A.I. and cognitivism is quite explicit and in many respects aligns her framework with Foucault's tendency toward linguistic idealism.[68] The concept of Man that Wynter innovates through the modern concept of race owes much to Foucault's archeology of the human sciences which in turn is heavily indebted to Heidegger's critique of humanism, one based upon a wholesale critique of cognitivism. In short the critique of Man that Wynter inherits indirectly from Heidegger is base on a radical critique of cognitivism. However Wynter reinstalls the very cognitivism that Heidegger was at pains to dismantle. Wynter's cognitivism is no doubt a result of the often unchallenged and poorly informed adoption of post-hermeneutics skeptics who

67 Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle", 43.
68 See chap. 7. sec. 4.

base much of their criticism on the analysis of language, discourse, and texts disregarding human encounter and experience. Even though Wynter's argument is based upon a top-down cognitivism, of the kind I've been challenging throughout this text, her historical literary analysis of humanism and race remains keen and insightful.

Heidegger's central concern throughout his entire oeuvre was the "question of being" while for Wynter it is clearly the "question of the human." This dissertation is a hybrid of the two, the question of human-being. The nadir of Heidegger's project is humanism because in his rigorous and well thought out critique of subjectivism and anthropocentrism he makes the question of the human intractable and in doing so casts out the possibility for a proper interrogation of subjectivity, one that is freed from metaphysics. Merleau-Ponty rescues Heidegger from misanthropy while at the same time salvaging Husserl's theory of intentionality by locating it as a condition of our bodies *being-in-the-world.* Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology will become more important later on as I seek a better ground in which to interrogate race and computation.

8. Race as the "Mark of the Mental"

In the transition from Christian to secular world the new human as the ideal type needs to be intelligible as Man by being marked off from all other beings as the living being endowed with reason [*zōon logon echon*]. I choose to call this distinction, appropriating the term from Franz Brentano, the "mark of the mental." To be clear, Brentano used the phrase to indicate the intentionality of the content of consciousness while I am here referring to the phenomenal component of racial perception.[69] The history of the concept of Man, which I have attempted broaden out, can be categorized by at least one thing, consciousness. Consciousness is itself an umbrella term in modernity, much like the term Man. There is a tight relation between consciousness and the following terms; cogito, mind, reason, thinking, rationality, subject, self and computation; all of which point to Man. To put it more clearly, consciousness is an emergent category of concern for modern European man. The articulation of the cogito by Descartes captures the centrality of consciousness like no other before him. As mentioned in the previous section, in his *Meditations* Descartes radically evacuates the soul from the centrality of being human and installs in its place *mind,* that is, consciousness. Replacing the soul with mind is a radical move not only in its secularization of Christian European man but in its redefinition of what a human is. In the Christian epoch the soul is the essence of the human, as that which is capable of salvation. The soul is replaced in modernity with the mind as that which has the capacity for reason.[70] The human that would come to be

69 See Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, trans. Antos C. Rancurello, D.B. Terell, Linda L. McAlister, ed. Oskar Kraus (New York: Routledge, 1995).

70 See sec. 6., for the discussion of the Valladolid Debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda on the emergence of the distinction between rational Christian soul and rational secular mind.

defined as Man in modernity would be defined this way by its possession of mind of an interiorized reflective consciousness that represents world back upon itself.

If the history of the concept of Man is bound up in reasoning and cognition, *viz.,* the "mark of the mental," and it is the mental that defines Man as the normative human; can we see a clear line from reason to the modern concept of race? The linking of race, reason and Man is quite evident within philosophical anthropology and the human sciences. The relationship between race and reason is most clearly at home in Kant in his attempts to define a transcendental concept of race.[71] Kant once wrote, "[t]his fellow was quite black...a clear proof that what he said was stupid." What Kant's racist statement demonstrates is not only that he held racist beliefs but more importantly that race and racism is somehow coupled with exhibition of reason. We can infer from Kant's statement that the more black one appears the less rational and hence the less human or not human at all. As Heidegger argues, in the modern epoch it became necessary for Man to distinguish himself from brutes therefore it followed that reason broadly construed as mind could somehow indicate this difference.[72] Furthermore, treading where Heidegger never did, race functions to pre-objectively (phenomenally) and objectively (scientifically) delineate beings on a background of rationality. Rationality becomes a substance in which to measure humanity. Yet what counts as the measure itself historically shifts. Thematically race/racism as the "mark of the mental" can be interpreted on biological, cultural, and even religious ground (e.g., anti-Islamic sentiments).[73]

As I have argued, the essence of race is the question: what is a human, whose answer has been consistently defined as a cognitive being. If we look at any manifestation of race science, more correctly scientific racism, we will see each and every claim directed at the black as not only intellectually inferior but the most intellectually inferior to whites. Though it is most commonly understood that these fallacious scientific arguments in mental innateness have been launched from the biological sciences—history, geography and culture have all been deployed to promote the mental superiority of whites of European descent against all other so called races with the black or Negro consistently place below all others.[74] As I've argued with the Valladolid debates, soon after the initial

71 See Robert Bernasconi, "Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race", in *Race,* ed. Robert Bernasconi (Oxford: Blackwell publishers, 2001), 11.

72 See Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume IV,* 142.

73 In chap. 4, sec. 2., I go into more detail about the referential relation between race and racism. To be clear, racism appear as intentional objects upon an already given understanding of race which in turn references what shows-up as human whatsoever. Racism presupposes a prior disclosure of race, one that does not necessarily contain intentional content as an act of racism does. Therefore race and racism are phenomenologically inextricable from one another.

74 In chap. 4, sec. 2., I develop further a phenomenological interpretation of race which takes what are understood to be separate and distinct classifications, black African, white European, Mongol, Asian,

conquest of the New World, the genocide of Amerindian peoples and the subsequent ramping up of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, black Africans filled the negative space of non-human necessary to make intelligible Man. History could have easily ensnared another group to be the negation of Man but as we clearly understand today this was not the case. Historically we see this from the sketchy natural history of Kant (1777), the buffoonery of the craniometry of Samuel George Morton in (1844), up to the contemporary period with specious statistics of Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* (1994). It is important to emphasize through all the various manifestations of race science as biological (craniometry, phrenology, genetic etc.); geographical/ecological; historical (natural history) ; anthropological (values, technology, arts, sciences etc.); all are decisively reducible to intellectual capacity (*animal rationabile*) and the actualization of reason (*animal rationale*).[75]

9. Man as the *a priori* of Science and Technology

In this section I will briefly introduce the way in which the concept of Man is manifest in scientific consciousness and functions as the hidden standard of measure for its objects which invariably include humans. I have thus far been orienting my critique of Man provisionally through the Cartesian cogito which reveals for European man generally what we have come to accept globally and naturally as consciousness. Consciousness by all accounts within the tradition can in most cases be reduced to cognitive mental relation to objects whatever they may be. However it should remain clear that the Cartesian cogito is an exemplar for consciousness and its technical specifications must not be over-generalized or conflated with other concordant or competing systems within philosophical anthropology, such as that of Hume's bundle of sensations or Kant's transcendental unity of apperception or Husserl's transcendental ego. Still the critical theme that the variety of philosophical anthropologies share as their metaphysical ground universally and with out exception is the subject–as the conscious substance of Man. Scientific comportment is the prototype of representational activity and thinking as such.

The sciences and this includes technology, in particular computational sciences, are grounded by Man as the subject. I refer to the unity of both science and technology as techno-science.[76] Being the subject of technical science means the active mode of

hispanic, semite, etc... as only intelligible in reference to one another. This schema is based upon a bipolar interpretation of human rationality where white is rational and black is irrational. Other races will appear on the continuum from white to black.

75 See Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

76 The *paradox* of modern technology is not that technological revealing was ushered in by science as an applied physical science in a linear history but rather the other way round. Meaning that the calculation of the reduction into technique is itself the essence of modern technology. Therefore

representing objects to consciousness. In this way Man is the *a priori* of techno-science. The concept of the *a priori* was of course central to Kant's theory of knowledge. For Kant *a priori* knowledge is that which makes any experience possible such as the categories of time, cause, and substance. Man is however not a transcendental category in the Kantian sense. Man as *subjectum* is not a pure *a priori* but an *a priori* structure of scientific comportment, i.e. as a particular stance on the world. As mentioned, Man is a normative way-to-be human but is taken as the human itself in which European man gladly found its anthropological home. Man as a type of human comportment is formalized and reaches its most clear and explicit manifestation from within techno-science. However, Man as normative human comportment colonizes all other ways to be human through an extreme projection of rationality.

What's most profound about Decartes' *first philosophy* is not only the appearance of consciousness on the modern scene but that the act of the scientific reduction (the revelation of the 'I'), implies that modern science itself is grounded by Man as the subject. This does not make science illegitimate in any way but what is assumed by every science, no matter what region, is a subject with a universal humanity. The purported universal humanity of the subject has its origins in the European world. Because science, specifically Western, is taken to be universally valid across cultures today through the belief that its method is the primary method for truth, its origins and the European humanity embedded within its structures remain hidden from scrutiny not only at the level of facts and fact production but more fundamentally at the level of being. For the most part the hidden assumption of humanity that grounds the subject of science secures an already predetermined understanding of human-being. In reference to the hidden subject of science Husserl writes the following:

> Mathematical natural science is a wonderful technique for making inductions with an

science already had as its ground the technization of reflection which we refer to as the Cartesian reduction. Heidegger writes.. "One of the essential phenomena of the modern age is its science. A phenomena of no less importance is machine technology. We must not, however misinterpret that technology as the mere application of modern mathematical physical science to praxis. Machine technology is itself an autonomous transformation of praxis, a type of transformation wherein praxis first demands the employment of mathematical physical science. Machine technology remains up to now the most visible outgrowth of the essence of modern technology, which is identical with the essence of modern metaphysics. Modern technology for Heidegger is not simply the application of physical sciences to practical concerns. Therefore civil engineering is not simply the application of physics to engineering problems such as confronted in erecting a highway or retrofitting a building in earthquake prone regions. Heidegger in a similar fashion as Marx and Engels sees modern machine technology as having its own historical trajectory that cannot be reduced to the emergence of the exact physical sciences but rather coeval in their manifestation. The originating or foundational aspect of both science and machine technology is metaphysics. Martin Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 116.

> efficiency, a degree of probability, a precision, and a computability that were simply unimaginable in earlier times. As an accomplishment it is a triumph of the human spirit. As for the rationality of its methods and theories, however, it is a thoroughly relative one [that is, relative to the subjective activities of pure consciousness]. It even presupposes a fundamental approach that is itself totally lacking in rationality. Since the intuitively given surrounding world [Umwelt], this merely subjective realm, is forgotten in scientific investigation, the working subject is himself forgotten; the scientist does not become a subject of investigation. (Accordingly, from this standpoint, the rationality of the exact sciences is of a piece with the rationality of the Egyptian pyramids.)[77]

Husserl's lament with the scientific reduction is primarily the fact that subjectivity is covered over in favor of abstraction. As Husserl fully admits, scientific abstraction enabled the tremendous success of European sciences. The status of consciousness itself, as normalizing that which it encounters is not Husserl's explicit concern, only the recovery of the subjective realm which grounds science, that is, the lifeworld [*Lebensvelt*], the world of everyday straightforward experience. It is necessary to further radicalize Husserl's critique of the ontological status of the subjective standpoint itself. The subject of science is for the most part hidden from scientific inquiry itself which in a profound way transposes the subjectivity of the subject to the objectivity of the object therefore the transformation of the subject ceases to appear as constitutive of any phenomena that may be represented. The working scientist's subjectivity (empirical) which is existentially grounded upon the structures of the lifeworld is abstracted away as non-essential to the representing scientific activity. Another abstraction occurs in which the emergent scientific consciousness, that is, a subject representing its object, is abstracted with the only the represented object remaining. Scientific consciousness is not simply informed by the concept of Man but is rather Man's most radical exemplar. *The subject of European science is always already Man as the organizing principle of scientific consciousness regardless of the empirical subjective and existential conditions of scientific activity. Therefore any individual from any culture enacting European science in which scientific consciousness is activated, organizes its relation to objects with Man as the hidden standard of measure*.

Why must it be inevitable that the positive human sciences take the subject Man as its *a priori*? Has the concept of Man ever been an issue for the human sciences? If Man emerges at the moment when European man becomes both the subject and object of his representations (consciousness that is conscious of itself) then in almost a clandestine act the scientific attitude covers over the activity of the *who* of scientific representation. Therefore hidden deep within the reduction's deepest and darkest corners lurks a prior

77 Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 295.

disclosure of European humanity in which all objects accessed and encountered are measured against. The human sciences must accept this covering over without question otherwise the entire enterprise of calculative reflection is placed in jeopardy.

We can recall Husserl's fundamental critique of modern science in the *Crisis* where he writes of the model of science as a "*garb of ideas that we take for true being what is actually a method.*"[78] For Husserl, when the model or garb of ideas [*Ideenkleid*] stands in for reality itself, science loses its relation to truth despite its glorious achievements. Thematically the problem Husserl raises, that of the model standing for the thing itself, is precisely what the concept of Man has achieved through the sciences. Husserl's crisis of the sciences, which primarily implicates the problem of naturalism, can be extended to the human sciences where, as Foucault argues, the concept of Man becomes formalized and reaches its apogee. Husserl would be one of first European philosophers to reveal this issue. What's more, Husserl's student Aron Gurwitsch has perspicuously shown that the cogito is itself equiprimordial with science. What this means is an incipient psychology emerges with the scientific inquiry itself. This distinction is important because the scientific method covers this over to a certain degree in order achieve the objectivity of the object as a certainty (in chapter 4. I will examine more closely the quest for certainty idealized in scientific comportment through the phenomena of *being-certain*). As I mentioned in the beginning of this section the prior disclosure that makes entities show-up as entities at all, here being the *a priori* concepts of science, is not a concern for the sciences themselves. The scientific attitude was also of prime interest to Husserl's student, Heidegger who was concerned with the problem of representing *a priori* concepts from within the sciences themselves.

> The preliminary definition of the Being (understood here as what something is and how it is) of nature is established in the "basic concepts" of natural science. Although space, locus, time, movement, mass force, and velocity are defined in these concepts, the essence of time, movement, etc., does not become a problem in its own right...Original ontological concepts must instead be obtained prior to any scientific definition of "basic concepts"...The "fact" of the sciences, i.e. the factical constituent of the understanding of Being that is necessarily included in them as everyday way of behaving toward being, is neither a tribunal for founding the *a priori* nor the source of our knowledge of the *a priori* but merely a possible clue to the primordial constitution of the Being of, for example, history or nature.[79]

Here Heidegger, like Husserl, argues that philosophy's task, is to explicate the ontological concepts of this prior disclosure of being that the sciences take for granted. It is perhaps easier to see how this is limiting for a physical science such as physics or pure

78 Ibid., 51.
79 Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons*, 25.

mathematical objects such as Husserl's example of geometry, but once we move into the human sciences, such as history, anthropology or sociology, the problem is exacerbated significantly.[80] What I mean by this is a human science must necessarily represent the human as an object by the subject of Man of which it assumes is out of play. More firmly put, not only is Man assumed to be out of play but it cannot be represented from within the method itself. *The result is that any human which is encountered in scientific representation is secretly placed against the standard of measure of Man*. On the essence of the Cartesian doctrine Heidegger writes the following:

> Man founds and confirms himself as the authoritative measure for all standards of measure with which whatever can be accounted as certain— i.e., as true, i.e., as in being –is measured off and measured out.[81]

When the cultural anthropologist or the urban sociologist inquires into the activities of her "native" informant the ontology of Man is enacted in such a way as to stand in the background as the standard of measure for which the native is to be measured and which the scientist is to be normalized into. The scientists takes on in a hidden manner the normative stance of Man over and against its object of inquiry. The non-white cannot be normalized in relation to the method precisely because the human science's ground concept of Man itself negates the being of the non-white as abnormal in reference to it. Therefore, if the essence of Man is overdetermined to be cognitive, as I've argued, once put into play as the *a priori* of the human sciences, its object of inquiry is then placed within a specific measure of cognition as well. This means that as a part of the hidden standard of measure, cognition and reason becomes that which the entity in question will be determined through and measured against.

Any human entity will be trapped in this logic of Man of which the human sciences cannot get behind.[82] What's decisive is the *a priori* of Man is established prior to epistemology. My argument then, is distinct from philosophers of science, such as Sandra Harding, whose important critique of the purported objectivity of the sciences begins at the level of second order scientific reflection, that is, epistemology.[83] Ontology is prior to the determination of epistemology and the representation of facts and is the structure of the condition of possibility of epistemology.

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80 See Edmund Husserl's essay, "The Origins of Geometry", in *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* trans. David Carr (Evanston Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 353-378

81 Martin Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* trans by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 151

82 The human scientist is thematically "thrown" in the manner that Heidegger argues dasein is in its thrownness.

83 Cf., Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural?: Postcolonialisms, Feminismsm and Epistemologies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

I would also argue that this normalizing of the subject of science and making abnormal the object of science as that which cannot measure up to Man occurs regardless of the race, class, and gender position of the inquirer itself. Therefore, a black sociologist whose object are non-whites is regardless functioning in the mode of subject, as that which represents beings within scientific consciousness and therefore ontologically activates Man from within the method. The very logic of the reduction in the human sciences, as any of the modern sciences, obfuscates this ground of the subject as its condition of possibility. Therefore implications of this critique of Man as the subject of the scientific reduction goes much further than the problem of objectivity because scientific consciousness in this sense assumes what counts as the correct stance on the world. It is not simply a question of reflexively taking account of how the inquirer effects the conditions of the object of inquiry, rather the inquirer sets forth a relation in which scientific consciousness is the hidden standard of measure for any such object of inquiry, be that human, animal, or machine.

In light of the attempt in the previous sections to layout the history of the concept of Man, when we ask the question: "What is Man?" it can no longer be assumed this question is posed in only a positive manner. As I've suggested , simultaneously a negative question is posed: What Man is Not? Man's negation is not his Other nor his alter-ego, which in truth is his selfsame, but rather Man's negation is the "*damned*," as Frantz Fanon had argued in *Black Skin White Masks*. What is this uniquely European and Eurocentric invention, called Man today? Again we can refer to Haar for a polemical summary of Man.

> The History (*sic.*) of man from the Greeks to our time is indeed the History of the ever more firm and autonomous self-positing of the essence of man.....Cartesian and Kantian man delimits and assumes the finitude of a will to knowledge, a will nonetheless infinite in principle. Man of the human sciences, giving way to the will to will, exploits his own funds, sections himself into sectors that can be objectified and measured...The History of man is that of an absolute emancipation...He has become the entire relation, the pure medium, the sole object, the sole study of the unique subject: himself.[84]

Man as "absolute emancipation," very much a slogan, is very telling. However Haar conspicuously neglects the fact that the very historical projection of Man as an "absolute emancipation" would necessitate an "absolute domination" and absolute negation of those who appeared as non-man or rather non-human. Haar inadvertently hits upon this very point that Man is his own selfsame Other and no more, writing, "[f]rom what has man not liberated himself? He has delivered himself from any relation to an Other than

84 Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man,* 59.

himself, to God, to nature, to being..."[85] As direct consequence to racial encounter Haar's conclusion reveals an impossibility of an essential reciprocity in a dialectic of recognition within a racist background.[86] For Man, his other is Man himself or European man himself. For example the black stands outside this normative ontology. As Wynter forcefully argues the Negro remains outside normative human intersubjectivity yet is the necessary negative pole in which Man becomes intelligible at all. Therefore the modern formation of race cannot be seen simply as an epiphenomena of the sciences but rather plays significant role in who or what shows-up as human.

The ascendancy of Man can be characterized by the central interior organizing principle for European humanity, that is, rationality. Rationality has been the lauded universal capacity of European civilization, what European man has used to mark itself off as distinctly more perfectly human from all others. This is precisely why race can be interpreted as the "mark of the mental," as the phenomenal presence of rationality. Today European rationality has transformed into its most severe version, what Heidegger called calculative rationality. Calculative rationality escalates abstraction further away from thinking to-the-things-themselves, from the existential conditions in which things matter for us—Husserl's lifeworld. Though seemingly distant, computation is a clear manifestation of calculative rationality which has its origins in the modern invention of Man. Just as Man is the hidden standard of measure for science, Man is also the standard of measure for modern technology. Digital computation presupposes Man as the human. As I've attempted to show, race is grounded upon Man therefore both race and computation despite their radically abstracted regions of being are nonetheless rooted in Man. In the next chapter I will sketch a preliminary outline to demonstrate the relationship between Man, mind and computation. The goal of course is to shed light on the possible relation between race and computation, a relation that will be shown to be grounded upon the logic of Man as the normative human being in modernity.

85 Ibid., 59.

86 See Jean-Paul Sartre's existential phenomenological treatment of Hegelian recognition in the section entitled "The Look", part 3. chapter 1. section 4., *Being and Nothingness,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), 252-302.

Chapter 3. **Man, Mind and Computation**

> By RATIOCINATION I mean *computation*.[1] Thomas Hobbes (1656)

> In the prevailing Western interpretation of man as *animal rationale,* man is first experienced within the compass of *animalia, zōa,* living creature. Then ratio, *logos,* is attributed to the being that has thus come forward as the chief property and distinguishing feature of *its* animality, as opposed to that of mere animals.[2] Martin Heidegger (1961)

> It is no accidental fact at all that the rise of the modern science of nature was accompanied by the discovery of the cogito, that is to say, of consciousness.[3] Aron Gurwitsch (1966)

Computation can be taken to be the essence of Man [*homo humanus*]. Inversely the concept of Man is the hidden organizing principle of the modern theory of computation. As the above quotation from Hobbes states, computation points to a type of thinking, which presupposes a narrow view of reason, called ratiocination. Today we simply refer to it as reason. Though a narrow view of thinking, ratiocination has come to define the normative human as *animal rationale.*[4] Descartes announced in his doctrine of *first philosophy* that the essence of Man, as the human, is *cogitare.* We are led to believe that what a digital computer does is not so much different then from what a rational animal does, that is, manipulate abstract symbols in order to process logical propositions about of states-of-affairs in the world.[5] If we recall in the beginning of chapter 2 the following

1 Thomas Hobbes, *The Metaphysical System of Hobbes in Twelve Chapters from Elements of Philosophy Concerning Body, Together with Briefer Extracts from Human Nature and Leviathan*, ed. Mary Whiton Calkins, (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1905), 7.

2 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume IV,* trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco 1987), 142.

3 Aron Gurwitsch, "The Place of Psychology in the System of Sciences", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press 1966), 68.

4 For example, when the contemporary economist makes his list distinguishing between low skilled and high skilled labor; deeply buried within the two employment categories is a distinction between reasoning and the body which taken as a whole is determinant of the kind of human one needs to be. The knowledge worker uses reason and the service worker uses mere bodily movement. The high and the low is a distinction of the intellect which the economist represent as 'skill'. Antonio Gramsci makes a sincere effort to correct this writing: "There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*." *Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 9.

5 Tim Crane, *The Mechanical Mind: A Philosophical Introduction to Minds, Machines and Mental Representation 2nd* edition (London: Routledge, 2003).

questions were posed in the modern epoch: Is the human a rational animal? Is Man the human? Modern computation presents the evolution of these modern questions formulated in the following way: Is the human a computer? Can a computer be human? Is this not a tautology?

Turing's now famous question, “Can machines think?” was preceded long ago by another question: Can Non-European's think?[6] The question of non-Europeans and reason was discussed in the last chapter.[7] This is the originary question posed by European man when he encountered the New World, linking up the modern invention of race with the invention of Man of which computation is derivative. This question is all but forgotten in the teleological development of European reason. As I've mentioned, modern computation represents the most recent and profound development in the telos of European reason. Computation has in fact transformed the way in which we now interpret self and world. This transformation is not well understood yet it is widely and exuberantly accepted as a matter of fact, most especially by the sciences. Martin Davis affirms the computational interpretation of the brain and mind which he seems to take as one and the same.

> The role of mechanism in human cognition was much discussed in the 17th century, in particular by Descartes, Hobbes, and La Mettrie. The question has been subject of renewed interest in the context of the possibility of machine intelligence. Of course one is very far from understanding the workings of the human mind, but there is every reason to believe that one of the things our brains do is to execute algorithms. Whether that is all that they do remains unknown although Okham's razor does suggest that as a parsimonious thesis.[8]

Turing's thesis does not represent some arbitrary aspect of mind as could be concluded from the above passage from Davis. The Turing Machine in essence achieves the mechanization of formal logic and logic, as Jean-Pierre Dupuy argues, for Western civilization is “the highest form of thought” and as such defines the highest form of animal life [*zōon logon echon*], that is, the human.[9] A definitive limitation of human existence occurs when thinking is systematically reduced to logic and logical rational existence is determined to be the only proper way to be human. Commenting on this narrowing of existence and being Heidegger writes, "[l]ogic does not treat being directly, but deals with thinking. 'Thinking' is of course an activity and comportment of humans,

6 Alan M. Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", *Mind,* lix, 236 (October 1950): 433-460.
7 See chap. 1, sec. 6.
8 Martin Davis, "The Myth of Hypercomputation", in *Alan Turing: Life and Legacy of a Great Thinker,* ed. Christof Teuscher (Berlin: Springer, 2004), 208.
9 Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *The Mechanization of the Mind,* trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 33.

but still only one activity among others."[10] Still, when reason is taken to its essence the strong thesis held by Davis and others is that it reveals a mental mechanics, the ideal of which is referred to as an algorithm which in turn is the basis of computation. Computation is then no mere cultural or literary metaphor of European rationality but rather represents the prevailing mode of thinking in our current modern technological epoch. As Davis alludes, computation's origins are based upon the determination of the human as the rational animal, the very same origin as the concept race. The question of rational existence pervades European man's reflection upon that which is deemed to be animal, human, and machine.

animal ↔ human ↔ machine

From the very inception of modern thought, as seen with Descartes to the present, a prevailing question has been the following: how can one possibly distinguish between animals, humans, and machines? Therefore how can Man be truly distinct from animals and Non-Europeans?[11] One will notice how this tripartite schema of entities (animal, human, machine) maps onto the epochs (Christian, modern, modern technology) that I had introduced in the previous two chapters. The Western philosophical practice of iteratively defining and redefining rational personal existence is central to these and other questions.

A significant lacunae in contemporary race scholarship has been to miss the question of the machine as entailed here, seeing only discourse on animality (biology) and humanity (culture) as relevant to race. In one sense race theorists see digital technology to be a mere instrument of anti-racist or racist will, as a matter of enchantment or disenchantment.[12] On the other hand those who are engaged with the critical inquiry of digital technology, such as post-hermeneutic skeptics or post-humanists, argue that the

10 Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic,* trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1984), 18.

11 In order to surpass the tripartite distinction between animal, human, and machine, post-hermeneutic skeptical thinking seeks to blur the lines between the three entities by arguing there is little difference between them because they simply exist on a continuum of the same substance. The problem is that this no less surpasses the traditional ontology than sides steps it thereby returning in another, sometimes cloaked, form. A monism and dualism of substances are two sides of the same coin which in the end require the mental to put either in motion. Traditional prejudices of being as substance is reified in often unexpected ways seen in the diverse and provocative writings of Mazis, Haraway, and Bateson. See Glen A. Mazis, *Humans, Animals, Machines: Blurring Boundaries* (New York: SUNY Press, 2008); Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 465.

12 See "Sound Effects: Tricia Rose Interviews Beth Coleman", in *Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life*, ed. Alondra Nelson and Thuy Linh N. Tu (New York: New York University Press, 2001). 146.

traditional boundaries of the animal, human, and machine are no longer relevant.[13] Post-hermeneutic skeptics feel that because rationality has been knocked off its pedestal the modern liberal subject has become destabilized hence all entities must be treated as ontologically equivalent.[14] A consequence of the post-hermeneutic view is that if the human is no longer central then neither is race. Race theorists ignore technological experience while posthumanists are ill equipped to accommodate racial experience. Race theorists and post-hermeneutic skeptics are in fact ships-in-the-night missing the phenomena; that the technological world and the racist world are one and the same.

The exercise in this chapter is to demonstrate that the modern theory of the digital computer is modeled on the concept of Man which is itself a limited and narrow model of the human. If we recall in chapter 2 the concept of Man functions as an "ontico-ontological" entity therefore the human-being must be *autonomous, self-sufficient, and with self-certainty represent the being of the world to itself without error from within the sphere of immanence*. Man is a normative ideal and as such is the organizing principle for what we take naturally as the human person. From this myopic perspective the proper and full human must not only have the capacity for reason but must exhibit reason (expressively as speech and comportment) and most importantly render reason effectively, that is without contradiction or error (reflective introspection). As will I show in the following sections according to the tradition, human reason is fundamentally prone to error because Man is thought of as a composite of animal and mind, hence rational animal. Regardless of the composite nature of Man, thinking must be directed toward perfection whose model had been up till the modern epoch, divine cognition. Leibniz would make an unprecedented move in the modern epoch by arguing that it was Man's duty to now think the unthinkable, that is, infinitude. From the traditional perspective casting out animality would secure the possibility of suppressing error more completely. Therefore rationality that can be separated from animality, that is, the human/animal body, would be highly attractive. Turing's thesis would provide the possibility for the external and automatic execution of reason needed to demonstrate that rationality was no mere metaphysical conjuring trick.

In the following sections I will first describe the significant aspects of Turing's thesis. I will then outline the essential relation between mind and Turing machines through the mode of modeling. The concepts of the model and modeling are essential for cognition. A Turing Machine is in fact a very specific model of cognition. Cognition is founded upon the function of modeling which in turn relies upon a set of cognitive models (God, Man, and Machine). As I introduced in chapter 1, the three epochal models of cognition are

13 See Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

14 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 84-112.

based upon a dialectical relation of finitude and infinitude. In order to see more clearly how the model of human rationality evolves into contemporary digital computation it will be helpful to look at Heidegger's critical examination of *error* in Descartes' thinking and the notion of *reason as the ground of being* in Leibniz. Leibniz is one of the most important foundational thinkers of computation because as early as the mid 17th century he had conceived of the some of the essential components needed to mechanize rationality (machine, program, and data) in order for digital computation to become possible. If Turing is the father of computer science, Leibniz is surely its grandfather. In order to demonstrate the link between Leibniz and Turing I will briefly discuss some key innovations of Leibniz, specifically his *calculus ratiocinator* and *machina ratiocinatrix*. This not to say that Leibniz's other innovative approaches such as the formalization of binary math were not also critical in the development of modern computation. The path from Leibniz to Turing is certainly not linear and there are of course many important philosophers and mathematicians that have proven pivotal in the development of modern computation such as Pascal, Boole, Frege, Babbage to only name a few. However the goal here is not to provide an exhaustive history of computing facts but to reveal the primacy placed upon cognition and personal existence in the West and in this sense Leibniz radically captures the essence of reason and computation.

Following my discussion of Leibniz I will look a two fundamental components of modern computation, *effective procedure* and the *digital principle* both of which derive from Leibniz's view of proper human reasoning. Again it should be noted that the formalization of algorithms (effective procedure) and binary math (digital principle) is not a complete list of the key components of Universal Turing machines and modern computers but are just two of several components which demonstrate their deep relation to the modern subject, Man. The computational requirements of an effective procedure and the digital principle reflect what I call computational certainty in our current modern technological epoch which is a further radicalization of self-certainty, the a hallmark of scientific consciousness central to the previous modern epoch. In the next to last section I will return to the theme of infinitude and the essential role it plays in modern computation by examining contemporary theory in computer science. Some may simply balk at any relation whatsoever between divine infinitude and the notion of infinite resources essential to theoretic Turing machines. Such detractors may say: There is no such thing as an *infinite tape*! But they are just as likely to say: There is no proof that God exists! It is not the actuality of God nor the actuality of an infinite tape that counts but the idea of them that provides the direction in which to project ourselves because the self, as Sartre has forcefully argued, is *nothingness*. The problem is that the infinitude deployed in modern technology seeks the maximization of reason which elides all other possible ways to be. One distinct accomplishment of Turing's thesis is that through its mechanized model of reason it provided the first evidence that there was such a thing as a

human mind. In the final section I conclude that if Turing machines provide evidence of the mental then it also provides more profoundly evidence that the concept of Man must exist as well. My conclusion challenges the widespread assumption that "Man is dead" and we are now all "post-human" in light of digital technology.[15]

1. Turing's Machine

The flourishing of mathematics and logic in the works of Gottlob Frege, David Hilbert, Bertrand Russell, Kurt Gödel, Alonzo Church and of course A.M. Turing in the early to mid 20th century would establish the distinct possibility of logical machines and perhaps thinking machines. Specifically, Turing's 1936 essay "On computable numbers, with an application to the *Entscheidungsproblem*" provided just this move for the possibility for the mechanization human logic.[16] Turing provided a way to mathematically define exactly what an algorithm (Leibniz's rational procedure) was and a way to compute any procedure that conforms to being an algorithm. Mechanized reason would be achieved most ingeniously with his eponymous Turing Machine, the abstract mathematical model of our contemporary and ubiquitous digital computers. To be clear, a Turing Machine is a mathematical model and not the computer that sits under your desk on which you write emails and surf the World Wide Web.[17] As Davis stresses Turing machines "are mathematical abstractions that do not, and cannot exist in the physical world."[18] A Turing Machine is a unique type of discrete finite automata or automatic machine that initiates its own computing procedures until completed. However Turing showed that his finite/infinite automata could not compute all functions, a clear example is demonstrated by the machine halting-problem. Undecidables such as the halting-problem are not the immediate concern here.

> Turing's Thesis: *Any process which is procedurally effective, that is algorithmic in nature, can be expressed by a Turing Machine.*

Turing Machines (infinite/finite automata) have the following capabilities:

1) an infinite one-dimensional tape that contains a finite input string

15 See N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
16 Alan M. Turing, "On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem", Proceedings of the London Mathematical Society 2, 42 (1936-7): 230-26.
17 John Von Neumann, no doubt directly informed by Turing's thesis, is often given credit for the concrete architecture of a complete digital machine, known as the Von Neumann architecture.
18 Davis, "The Myth of Hypercomputation", 197.

2) can read/write and erase a symbol on each space on the tape.
3) the read/write head mechanism can move from left to right and can store and retrieve a symbol at a current tape location
4) it can change its internal state through its machine table (program) which specifies exactly the next action the tape head should take to assume a new internal state.

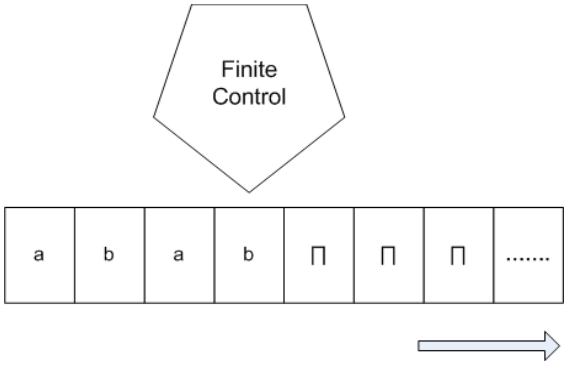

Figure 4.

When computation is initiated the machine begins from an existing state. At each sequence the tape head reads the symbol on the space in its current location. The control unit then checks the machine table for its next action. Depending on the value of the symbol at the current location and the value on the machine table, it writes a new symbol at the current location of the tape head which places the machine in a new state and then moves either left of right to a new position over a space on the tape. Computation will continue indefinitely unless a halting state is specified on the machine table.

The Turing Machine is a closed system of computing, meaning that once computation is initiated no further inputs are allowed. All inputs are specified by the machine table or program prior to computation in order for there be a definite result. The effective certainty of the output is predicated upon the "closed computation" at run time requirement. If we recall the skeptics turn towards immanence that Descartes specifies in the reduction is thematically similar in that all external input, senses, opinions are forbidden in order to achieve clear and distinct ideas. Closing off input at run time is specified in the Turing automatic machine model (*a-machine*) in order to limit the introduction of error in any given algorithm. The Turing Machine mimics the turn towards immanence and the shutting out of the world. The requirement for right reason is a closed-off immanence which will provide the basis to reason effectively by avoiding error. Effective reasoning with certainty is key to the Turing model of computation, what Turing called an "effective procedure." I will discuss in more detail the significance of effective procedures in section 6.

2. Turing's Machine as a Model of a Model

Until Turing's startling thesis there was little evidence that human reasoning was in fact ratiocination. Turing provided an incredible leap forward in realizing that aspects of human rationality could be mathematically formalized and mechanized. For some, digital computation provided clear evidence that the human must be a psycho-physical unity in the sense Descartes theorized several centuries prior. As Vincent Descombes argues, cognitive psychology adopts the computational model of mind but I would also add, cognitive psychology ignores the fact that "mind" is based upon a prior historical presupposition that the human is a rational animal.

> The important thing about the computer is that it works with information, that it manipulates symbols, that it stores and looks up elements in its "memory", that it classes messages, recognizes physical shapes, and so on. It matters little whether the computer proceeds as we do when it carries out such operations. For a psychologist, the crucial point is that a computer is able to do these things...the reason psychologists have been so impressed with the performance of the computer is that before its advent they were not sure they had the right to believe in the reality of cognitive processes.[19]

What was key was Turing showed that reasoning could be executed independent of the human itself. Man could place that which he deemed to be essential to himself outside himself in order to observe what was previously thought of as a *black box*, that is, the human mind. Davis writes below that Turing modeled his abstract machine upon human algorithmic reasoning or computation, similar to Hobbes theory of ratiocination.

> Turing introduced the term computable for his characterization of algorithmic solvability which he developed by imagining a human being carrying out a computation, and by removing, one after another, successive layers of irrelevant complication, arriving at his celebrated notion of what has come to be called a *Turing machine.*[20]

What's striking is that this now naturalized understanding of the human as a cognizing being is itself only a model. As Jean-Pierre Dupuy argues, the mind is in essence interpreted by cognitive science, "*as the model of the faculty of modeling*."[21] Dupuy's point is a critical one because consciousness as thematized by Descartes as thinking substance, a consciousness that is conscious of its own representations, necessitates the function or mode of modeling the external world. If a closed-off *for-itself* must reconcile with the external world in a way in which its representations must be resolved internally then those representations must function in rudimentary way as models of the external

19 Vincent Descombes*, The Mind's Provisions: A Critique of Cognitivism*, trans. Stephen Adam Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 67.

20 Davis, "The Myth of Hypercomputation", 197.

21 Dupuy, *The Mechanization of the Mind,* 40.

in-it-self. From Dupuy's point it follows that mental representations can be understood as inchoate models. Therefore representational thinking [*cogitare*] is a mode of modeling reality. Modeling is perhaps one of the most fundamental activities of modern science and it was Descartes that was one of the earliest to formalize science in a rigorous manner.[22] It is clear that Turing extends the model of the faculty of modeling in a profoundly new way.

The finitude of European man is precisely the realization that mental representations cannot encompass or account for the entirety of the object represented, they are only, in Descartes' sense, finite and susceptible to error. It is well known that Descartes used God as the vehicle to cross the chasm he judged must exist between immanence and transcendence. For Descartes the only entity that can represent the thing completely and purely without contamination or dependence is the divine cognition of the creator god. Divine cognition intuits the whole of being manifestly and immediately. The act of thinking by humans is a sign that they cannot intuit the whole but only aspects themselves, that is as representations of the *in-it-self*. Descartes believed that mental representations are for the most part *compromised* at some level, that is as sensory, passions, externalities etc. because the body mediates this relation and as such is prone to error. The Cartesian reduction is essentially a method for the maximal reduction in error in thinking through doubt.[23] What's critical is in Man's finitude it finds the freedom to know as its own choice to know progressively more. There is then built into representational thinking the need for maximal reason through *being-certain.*[24] Progressive maximal reason characterizes the quest for certainty. What will be more clear with Leibniz is that maximal reason must be directed or aimed at the infinite. Man as the human is the being that is certain and this must always be maximized. I will discuss *being-certain* as a particular mode of human comportment in relation to race in chapter 4.

The quest for certainty in knowing through representation places a demand on representation itself. In the earlier excerpt from Davis' concise description of computability, representation remains an essential component of computation in which both mental representation and its derivative, machine computation, endeavor to clear out "successive layers of irrelevant complication." Furthermore the demand of certainty on mental representation as a procedure of modeling the world requires that as a model it defines the bounds of what can be known beforehand. In the modern sense, the

22 See Arturo Rosenblueth and Norbert Wiener, "The Role of Models in Science", *Philosophy of Science*, 12, no. 4 (October 1945): 316-321.

23 See Nicolas Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité.* Aron Gurwitsch notes that Ernst Cassirer interpreted Malebranche's project as the search for truth through the elimination of error. Aron Gurwitsch, "The Place of Psychology in the System of Sciences", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evantson, Ill: Northwestern University Press 1966), 56.

24 Certainty in relation to thinking and human comportment of whiteness will be discussed at length in chapter four.

representational model of the world needed to function as if it must encapsulate the world, ultimately *standing-in-for-the-world*. From the rigid modern model of being: that which cannot be represented or be a part of the mental model does not exist, meaning that it cannot count in terms of certain knowledge. The Turing Machine is the latest instantiation of the quest for certainty because it attempts to make more perfect the procedure for modeling *being* through the formalization of algorithms. A Turing Machine pushes through the limit of finite modeling by providing the possibility of the extension of infinity in modeling by mechanizing algorithms. The Turing specification extends the openness of algorithms which by definition allow for the computing of a data set of any size. Davis concisely defines this unique and powerful dimension of algorithms.

> Almost all known algorithms have this same property: although intended to deal only with finite initial data, and always yielding finite results, they will behave correctly regardless of the size of the data. In fact one of the principle measures of the complexity of a given algorithm is based on its "asymptotic" behavior—that is, its behavior as the size of the initial data increases without limit.[25]

Therefore distinct from the modern sense of finite representation, Turing machines are capable of infinite representation, so rather than a fixed model as a totality of being, a computational model totalizes being by constantly increasing the range of what can be represented. Computation proves to be an infinitely flexible approach to modeling reality as an ever expanding model of reality. Computation transforms modern representations rigidity of modeling by formally and mechanically installing the Kantian notion of *progressus ad infinitum*.[26]

Contemporary philosophers, cognitive scientists, neuroscientists and psychologists have adopted computation as the model of human cognition and consciousness. In the weak sense the computational model is simply a limited model to help us understand cognition and in the strong sense the mind and/or brain is seen as something like a very powerful and complex parallel computer.[27] The digital computer, as conceived by its early founder, Turing and developed further by the mathematician, John Von Neumann and cybernetician, Norbert Wiener, essentially models the function of mental representation seen in both classical and cognitive psychology and philosophy's model of the mind. Descombes argues in his important critique of cognitivism, *The Mind's Provisions*, Turing's theory of computation was the basis for what we take to be cognitive psychology today.

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25 Davis, "The Myth of Hypercomputation", 197.

26 See chap. 1, sec. 1. on Kant's regulative principle.

27 See Tim Crane, *The Mechanical Mind: A philosophical introduction to minds, machines and mental representation* 2nd edition. (London: Routledge, 2003), 83-85; Drew V. McDermott, *Mind and Mechanism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), 2.

> It is well known that the emergence of cognitive psychology was linked to the invention of the computer. The basis of cognitivism would be in that case be a new psychology, itself a result of technological innovation...the cognitivist conception of mind has been derived not from cognitive psychology but...from a particular philosophy.[28]

Computation relies upon the model of the mind developed over four centuries of philosophical anthropology. It is incorrect to state, as is often done in science, that the mind/brain complex processes information computationally because it is the computer that is modeled on a presupposition of how the mind should normatively function.[29] The "mind as computer" is equivalent to "computer as mind" hence as mentioned in the opening section, we have a tautological description. Put more clearly, it cannot be assumed that discrete mental states are processed in a computational fashion in the brain when the very nature of those "mental states" as states at all is merely conceptual itself.[30] So its not so much that the mind/brain complex is a computer but rather the other way around, where the computer is made in the image of the animal endowed with reason, Man [*zōon logon echon*]. Thereby adding to Dupuy's provocative statement, *computation is a meta-model of the model of the faculty of modeling*.

The common sense understanding of mind as computer covers over the historical fact that the mind is itself a conceptual model. Therefore our taken-for-granted and widespread view of the computational explanation of human and world is not recent but rather it has been slowly evolving out of the seed of human rationality. The theme of

28 Descombes, *The Mind's Provisions*, 67.

29 The Computational Theory of Mind (CTM). Computation is not merely a metaphor here, though at times it seems only to be. The inquiry into computation as metaphor requires the approach of the cultural studies to flesh out further (See N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* or *My Mother Was a Typewriter*). To be sure, computation within philosophical anthropology is no metaphor but the interpretation of how the mind actually cognizes its objects as the manipulation of symbolic representations in a formal and functional manner. The view is widely held in some form by Noam Chomsky, Jerry Fodor, Steven Pinker, and Andy Clark.

30 While CTM refers primarily to mind, the common metaphor in cognitive science is minds are like software while brains are the hardware. Not far afield from this view is A.I. Computer scientist Drew McDermott who writes in the introduction to his book *Mind and Mechanism*: "I will be arguing that people have minds because they, or their brains, are biological computers. The biological variety of computer differs in many ways from the kinds of computers engineers build, but the differences are superficial. When evolution created animals that could benefit from performing complex computations, it thereby increased the likelihood that some way of performing them would be found. The way that emerged used the materials at hand, the cells of the brain. But the same computations could have been performed using different materials, including silicon. It may sound odd to describe what brains do as computation, but, as we shall see, when one looks at the behavior of neurons in detail, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that their purpose is to compute things." Drew McDermott, *Mind and Mechanism*, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press. 2001), 2.

computation seen in Hobbe's theory of human nature and in Turing's theory of algorithmic computability are of a piece.

Today what has occurred is the mind-model, characterized by the concept of Man, and the computer model have in some sense not only merged but computational thinking or in Heidegger's words, calculative reasoning, has begun to overtake the previous model of Man as the ideal of rational existence. While some might reject the notion that Descartes' doctrine is an inchoate theory of mental modeling, it stands that the theme of modeling rests on the fundamental acknowledgment that human reason has its limits. The existence of the finitude of both human and machine reason has been a clearly established problem. What's decisive is that in essence, reason models that which it encounters. As Descartes' ego cogito relies upon the model of infinite cognition in order to construct a new model of the human (*homo humanus*), computation relies upon the model of Man in order to set forth a new model of cognition, what I have called simply, *Machine*. Computation indicates a shift in our contemporary understanding of the human but as I will argue in the last sections of this chapter a very different conclusion can be reached as to the efficacy of the concept of Man which still prevails though in a more hidden manner.

By inverting the paradigmatic model of computation as a model of human cognition we can achieve a new perspective on modernity itself. The Cartesian cogito still remains central to the interpretation of today's modern human, and it should be no surprise that it is the essence of computation. In fact computation shares some distinct similarities with the Cartesian cogito which will be discussed later. To be sure, for Descartes consciousness as mind had no home in either brutes nor machines yet the traditional Cartesian ontology has proven to be incredibly durable. It can be said that one of Turing's greatest achievements was to not only to provide a mathematical model to mechanize rationality but also to provide the conceptual framework in which it could be concretely placed in a machine that was separate and distinct from a conscious human subject. This latter achievement is critical because Turing demonstrates that the aspect that has traditionally marked off humans from all other beings in the West, that is, rationality, can be mimicked very highly (as long was we take logic as the exemplar of higher cognitive function) by a non-human machine automata. In effect Turing radically de-centers the subject as the sole source of reasoning. Still this seeming overthrow of Man the subject is in reality not complete because rationality is for the most part preserved.

3. Finitude and Error

The problem of error in reasoning has been a central issue with those concerned with human rationality and computation. As I briefly introduced in chapter 2, error as it relates to cognition and the essence of Man is twofold, and as I will show later, is essential to

computation which is captured by the base-2 or the digital principle.[31] In this section the model of cognition is, as in previous sections, the Cartesian reduction. Firstly, error is a necessary condition for subjectivity. Recognition of Man's finitude and the ability to err also entails the turn toward immanence in which introspection can begin. Counter-intuitively Heidegger asserts that "although being-able-to-err is a lack for Descartes, it is also a certification that man is free, is a being founded on himself."[32] Such an assertion is paradoxical because finitude and error signals not necessarily abject failure but an opportunity to know for oneself. What's key is though finitude is the actual condition in which Man discovers himself it also presents him with the *possibility* for the expansion of knowledge, initiated by self-assertion. Recursively the subject appeals or makes a call upon the self, no longer to an external divine standard seen in the Christian epoch. Heidegger elaborates further:

> The fact that man errs and so is not in immediate, continuous, and full possession of the true certainly signifies a limitation of his essence...finite...Man is not in possession of absolute knowledge; thought from a Christian point of view he is not God....Error directly attests to the priority of subjectivity, so that from the viewpoint of subjectivity a *posse non errare*, the ability not to err, is more essential than a *non posse errare.* Where no possibility of error exists, there is either – as in the case of the stone – no relationship to truth at all, or – as in the case of an essence that is absolutely knowing, that is creative – a binding into pure truth that excludes all subjectivity, that is all reversion of a self back to itself.[33]

Heidegger is not in this instance referencing divine cognition when he says "absolute knowing that is creative" rather he is referring to Hegel's absolute spirit. However when he says "*non posse errare*", divine cognition can be implied. Man's limitation as the being that errs seems unlikely to be seen as anything positive because in the sense of divine cognition there is no such thing as error—*non posse errare*. However for Man the acknowledgment of error establishes a free relation to any object whatsoever because he has now the possibility and the duty to progressively avoid error. *Error creates a field for freedom* where no freedom could exist for say, a stone or where absolute divine knowledge cannot err at all. It can be argued that the field is itself freedom— freedom from the godhead, as the basis and requirement to reason for oneself.

Heidegger argues that neither stone nor brute has this relation to truth, not simply because they do not possess speech but because they cannot err. A stone has no relation to being because intelligibility is not an issue for it. An animal can of course fumble but it cannot ask: "why did I fumble?" Therefore an animal cannot be *subjectum* because it

31 See chap. 2., sec. 1. note 14.
32 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume IV*, 143.
33 Ibid., 143.

cannot inquire into its own finitude, *i.e.,* "why do "I" err?"

> *homo est animal rationale* – man is the animal that confronts face-to-face. A mere animal such as a dog, never confronts anything to its face; to do so, the animal would have to perceive itself. It cannot say "I", it cannot talk at all. By contrast man, according to its *metaphysical doctrine*, is the confronting animal which has the property that it can speak.[34]

Heidegger is here thematizing the Cartesian doctrine which makes the distinction between the human and the animal as one that is characterized by the ego cogito and language. As I argued in chapter 1, in our modern technological condition we take personal existence to be a natural given as something that we cannot get behind. However it must be recognized that the "I" is entirely a modern invention (as is Man) and one specific not only to humans but European man. The sentential requirement for the evidence of human reason is of course predominant today. For Descartes as for the tradition, coherent speech is the test for rationality. This same test of coherent speech is reenacted by Turing in his Turing test for machine intelligence.[35] What's puzzling is that an animal has no relation to truth because it cannot err and has no field of freedom to question, no subjectivity as such. Yet it is not unfounded that animals possess some kind of rudimentary if not highly advanced consciousness in that they display conscious adaptive life; behaviorally some sort of intentionality towards their world, though it seems not to be anything propositional.[36] Therefore the animal possesses consciousness without reason. What is decisive is that the Turing test for machine intelligence will demonstrate that a machine can imitate coherent speech, form propositions, even in the case of specialized A.I., reason about internal states. But some like John Searle are adamant that a computer does not possess something akin to human consciousness. The central thesis of Searle's "Chinese Room" thought experiment is precisely this, a machine, presumably a Universal Turing Machine, can heuristically mimic intelligent external behavior but this, according to Searle, does not fulfill the necessary and sufficient conditions for consciousness because a computer does not have a biological brain as do humans or even animals for that matter.[37] For Searle the biological given of

34 Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 61.

35 Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", 433-460.

36 Cf., Martin Heidegger's detailed discussion of the distinction between the worldlessness of the stone and the world poverty of the animal in his 1929-30 lecture course *Die Grundebegriffe der Metaphysik, Welt-- Endlichkeit-- Einsamkeit* translated as *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude,* trans. William McNeil (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 185-192.

37 Searle writes, "Intentionality in human beings (and animals) is a product of causal features of the brain. I assume this is an empirical fact about the actual causal relations between mental processes and brains. It says simply that certain brain processes are sufficient for intentionality. (2) Instantiating a

the human brain is where consciousness must originate from. Therefore if we fully unfold Searle's argument, radically different from an animal which possesses consciousness but not reason, a Turing Machine possesses formal aspects of reason but no consciousness. A similar conclusion was reached by Descartes who believed that both automata (here a Turing Machine is very special type of finite/infinite automata) and brutes lack reason but the distinguishing factor was some immaterial thing called mind.[38]

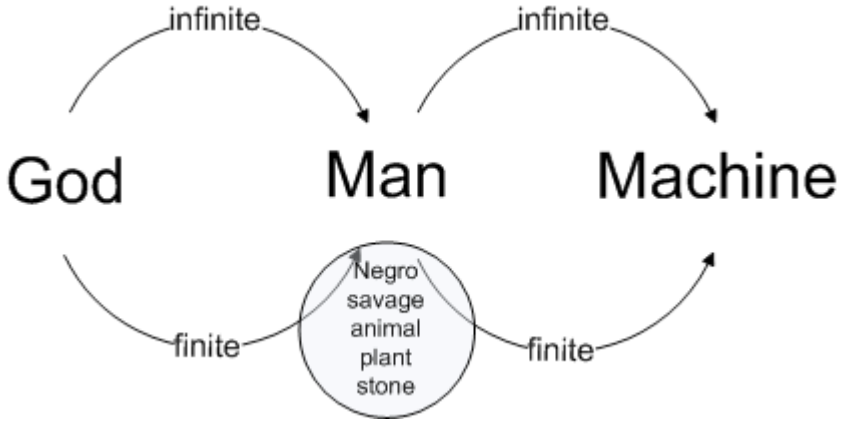

Figure 5.

Above, figure 5 depicts the dialectical relation of finitude and infinitude thematized across the three Western epochs (Christian, modern, modern technology) and their corresponding models of cognition of concern in this dissertation. Below the cognitive model I've termed “Man” are the referential categories of wholly finite beings that in the European science have been deemed to be devoid of a relation to infinitude. If as the Tradition asserts and is clearly more forcefully argued today as *homo est animal rationale* then to be rational can only be so in relation to one's finitude and simultaneously directing this so-called lack towards infinite reason.

The question of animals in relation to reason and consciousness is quite important and reoccurring theme within the history of philosophical anthropology. As discussed in chapter 2, Wynter has made a strong argument for the linking of animality to racial classification by demonstrating that the category of the savage and especially that of the

computer program is never by itself a sufficient condition of intentionality." John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs", in *Mind Design II*, ed. John Haugeland (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T Press, 1997),

38 The British empiricists challenge to the Cartesian rationalism was, among many things, a critique of rational behaviorism of Descartes. Locke writes: "'tis one immaterial Spirit, that makes the same Life in Brutes;as it is one immaterial Spirit that makes the same Person in Men, which Cartesians at least will not admit, for fear of making Brutes thinking things too." John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: Chapter XXVII: §12.

Negro, stands in evolutionary anthropological terms as the “missing link” between European man and primates. The belief was that non-European indigenous populations represented an earlier stage of cognitive development from that of modern Europeans therefore in order to discover the laws of the modern European mind one could better understand them by peering into its more primitive state, that is, the so called “savage mind.”

To reiterate some key points, the view of Man as the model of the human and its relation to truth is possible because of the field of freedom created through the realization of its own finitude. In this traditional view according to Heidegger what emerges is the subjectivity of the *subjectum*. The problem with this view, and Heidegger is keen to point this out, is that brutes, and I include racialized entities, are seen to have a limited relation to truth because they do not inquire into their own finitude in the way that European man has set forth as a subject within immanence. Even translated into Christian doctrine, if a “savage” who by definition is not Christian cannot have *the* possibility or idea of the divine from within immanence, then he cannot realize his own personal finitude. If the savage cannot realize his own personal finitude then he cannot have a field of freedom in which subjectivity can emerge and where a relation to truth is made manifest.

As it should be clear from the traditional perspective the “ability not to err” is a profound opportunity in which Man finds itself. Human thinking which is finite, *i.e.,* limited and error prone, always stands in relation to the infinite. Therefore the cogito is related to the possibility not to err and the possibility to achieve the intelligibility of the whole. In Man's “ability not to err” he must shoot-for being as a whole which means Man must direct its finite thinking toward the infinite as its limitless goal and in doing so will allow for the continual unfolding of human knowledge. This shooting for the whole is in fact essential to Leibniz and his universal characteristics of reason which endeavors to assign a number to every being that is in order to compute relations between those beings. In the Cartesian doctrine divine cognition functions as a model for the cogito because the *posse non errare* points to or shoots for perfection. Perfectability will be worked out in detail by Leibniz and forever transformed and degodded by Kant.

Divine cognition is infinite as is divine creation itself, they are one and the same as rational in the view of either Descartes or Leibniz. Therefore in Leibniz's view, as will become clearer, if the infinite is rational then a rational system can be produced by Man who is made in the divines image, in order to make an assignment for each and every entity in creation. In doing so Man can shoot-for the “ability not to err”, *i.e.*, limit error by rigorously formalizing the *a priori* rational structure of being. Each numbered entity's relation to every other entity can be relate-able to one another through some mathematical function. These functions taken together, *i.e.,* rigorously formed, algorithmically can compute any being and as such any relation between beings can be

computable.

One could say that the cogito understands itself in relation to divine cognition and nothingness. Heidegger quoting Pascal writes, "Man is a *medium quid inter Deum et nihil."*[39] Both the finite (Man) and the infinite (divine) play an essential role in both Leibniz and Turing 's theory of computation which is based upon a finite set of manipulable symbols (discrete finite state machine) on an infinite tape as its memory. Nothingness does not possess divine cognition nor thinking but remains mere stone or brute.

In the formulation which places Man between God and natural world as the animal that reasons it becomes more clear rationality must be the mark of Man as the human and cognition must mark itself off from all other entities. This of course has been the abiding question of race incipient in the early modern concern with the question: "what is man?" The human status of non-Europeans would initially be veiled under latent *theo-logic* terms in which reason held to the Christian perspective by a hair in the model of the Christian soul (*de l'âme)* to finally give way to a secular mind (*penser*) grounded upon the idea a self founding rational substance.

Not surprisingly one of Descartes' most ardent and productive critics, Leibniz, captures the essence of cognition and as Heidegger argued, would fully articulate the scope of modernity. In his 1714 *Monadology* § 83-4, Leibniz writes the following:

> Among the differences which exist between ordinary souls and minds, some of which I have already noted, there are also the following: that souls, in general, are living mirrors or images of the universe of creatures, but that *minds are also images of the divinity itself* [my emphasis], or of the author of nature, capable of knowing the system of the universe, and imitating something of it through their schematic representations [*echantillons architectoniques*] of it, each mind being like a little divinity in its own realm.

As Descartes had fatefully begun, Leibniz interprets a wholly new human, one who can now begin to radically reorder the relation to God by turning toward the sphere of immanence. Leibniz stresses more fully than Descartes, that the mind is itself a mirror of the infinite (divine). It will be clearer in the following sections as to the significance of the mind to infinitude as related to divine perfection be we can see that if the mind was indeed a mirror of God, hence perfection, then the Turing Machine as a thinking machine should also reflect some aspects of perfection as well.

39 Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 143.

4. Leibniz's Reason as Ground [*nihil est sine ratione*]

Let us continue the inquiry into Leibniz's view of reason because it is he, according to Heidegger, who more than any other captures the basis of modernity, one that leads into modern technology. Leibniz's critique of Descartes was that he moved too quickly to prove the existence of God as an idea of the infinite alone but needed to demonstrate the *possibility* of God first.[40] Hence the possibility of the infinite is the *a priori* of the idea of infinite.

> In brief, I do not yet know, for all that, whether such a being [God] is possible, for if it were not possible, there would be no idea of it....For to prove that he exists, it would be sufficient to prove that he is possible, something we find nowhere else, as far as I know. Moreover, I infer from that there is a presumption that God exists. For there is always a presumption of the side of possibility, that is, everything is held possible unless it is proven to be impossible.[41]

According to Leibniz in order to prove the possibility of the infinite (God) as something that can be glimpsed in the mind one needed a more rigorous method then simple general rules. This could be accomplished by a finite set of propositions done so in its most rigorous form such as a mathematical proof. Clearly it was here that Leibniz moves further than Descartes by suggesting a detailed formal "system" of proof broadly construed.

> In brief, it is to construct arguments only in proper form [*in forma*]. I seem to see only people who cry out against me and who send me back to school. But I beg them to be a little patient, for perhaps they do not understand me; arguments in proper form do not always bear the stamp of *Barbara Celerant*. Any rigorous demonstration that does not omit anything necessary for the force of reasoning is of this kind, and dare I say that the account of accountant and a calculation of analysis are arguments in proper form, since there is nothing missing in them and since the form or arrangement of the whole reasoning is the cause of their being evident.[42]

What's important in Leibniz's seemingly casual communication, is that he sees not only the formalization of arithmetic into algebra as essential for a calculus of reason but his intentions are much more broad in that any procedure, such as that of an accountants book keeping, can be decomposed into formal steps. Leibniz's thinking is foreshadowing

40 Interestingly this is also Husserl's critique in *Cartesian Meditations* but differently in that the move to the reduction ended too soon, Husserl felt Descartes did not take the reduction all the way to the *transcendental ego* and saw this as a missed opportunity of which Husserl would attempt complete himself.

41 G.W. Leibniz, "Letter to Countess Elizabeth", in *Philosophical Essays* trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 238.

42 Ibid., 239.

the notion of an computable algorithm. Leibniz's approach leads much later to the theory of algorithms and a formal way to define them, which Turing's thesis would advance greatly. Leibniz specifies that only the irrelevant parts of a procedure be omitted. If we recall Davis' concise characterization of Turing computability also specifies that "successive layers of complication" should be removed when any procedure is formalized and defined as Turing computable. This is an important distinction because classical logic which Leinbniz was engaged in and the advanced lambda calculus central to the Church-Turing thesis requires essentially the same directive of casting out the opaque and ambiguous parts of a practice once rendered and formalized into an algorithm. The simple question is: what gets lost in such formalization? From the phenomenological perspective which I will discuss in detail in chapters 4 through 6, the most important and foundational aspects of human existence would tend to be lost in such a rigid formalization of practical experience.

Inspired by Descartes' *General Rule* of the clear and distinct, Leibniz ultimately calls for the rendering of reason through the mathematization of propositional logic whose own truth claims could be contained wholly within its own structure. What I mean here is that the *formal form* itself needs to sufficiently demonstrate its own truth claims. Therefore reason must be evinced in its mode, through its own syntactic structure. A true proposition is valid on its own grounds as self-sufficient. A contradictory or false statement is not only not valid but it is not rational, *i.e., non-being*. Therefore the *rendering* of reason is itself central to cognition. The rendering of reason as I've argued at the outset of this chapter is the third and most demanding component of rationality and one which Turing machines excel over and above humans in both efficiency and perfectibility.

This claim will be clearer as we proceed but first it will be important to delve a bit deeper into the philosophical implications of formalization in terms of the innovative approach Heidegger takes to Leibniz's maxim: *Nihil sine ratione,* nothing is without reason. We can recall that Descartes loosely (perhaps too loosely for Leibniz) defined rationality by a subject engaging in coherent conversation. Leibniz adds to the idea of coherent speech, its rigorous formalization, construed as the "principle of sufficient reason" which he called the *principium nobilissimum et grande,* the highest of all principles. What marks the expression *nihil sine ratione* as radical for Heidegger is that in all its variations, both negatively as Leibniz expresses it or positively such as "everything exists for a reason," cognition becomes articulated as totalizing—all *being* is rational and all that is not rational is *non-being*. In his 1955-56 University of Freiberg lecture course Heidegger lays out the significance of Leibniz's principle of reason as ground:

> For Leibniz, the title of the principle of reason reads, when thought strictly and completely: *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis,* the fundamental principle of

> rendering sufficient reasons....When as is the case of Leibniz's discovery and defining of the principle of sufficient reason, a mighty Principle comes to light, thinking and cognition in all essential regards enters into a new sort of movement. It is the modern manner of thinking in which we daily reside without expressly perceiving or noticing the demand of reason to be rendered by cognition. Accordingly in a more historically concealed than historiographically visible manner, Leibniz determines not only the development of *modern logic into logistics and into thinking machines* [my emphasis]**,** and not only the more radical interpretation of the subjectivity of the subject within the philosophy of German Idealism and its subsequent scions. The thinking of Leibniz supports and molds the chief tendency of what, thought broadly enough, we can call the metaphysics of the modern age.[43]

Leibniz's expression "nothing is without reason" is striking for Heidegger because the copula "is" means *being* with all its ontological import. Therefore, all that is in its *being*, exists for a reason, hence if one cannot propose a sufficient reason for such and such, that is, as a verifiable and correct judgment then "it" cannot count for Man, "it" does not exist. This is precisely what Heidegger found astounding about Leibniz's principle *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis*. Reason needed to be rendered [*reddendae*], "because a truth is only a truth if a reason can be rendered for it." The rendering can only be rendered as "*propositio vera*" a true proposition as a correct judgment. Quoting Leibniz, Heidegger writes: "judgment is *connexio praedicati cum subjecto*....as the unifying unity of subject and predicate, supports their being connected is the basis, the ground of judgment— it gives the justification for the connection." The rendering of reason is "ratio" which Heidegger translates from Latin as "account." Reason is only rational if it can be accounted [*ratio*] for, that is, reckoned. Reason becomes ratio in this sense as the modern formulation of thinking as such. What does the rendering of reasons look like? We get a sense of the rendering from the earlier quote in his letter to Countess Elizabeth in which Leibniz, in a bit of tongue and cheek, asserts one need not always draw upon the syllogism such as *Barbara* to demonstrate rationality yet this is ideally what is entailed. As the need to render more perfectly, that is, mathematically, more rigorous formulation is required. Therefore, as we have mentioned earlier, formal logic represents the highest form of rendering reason, hence the highest form of thought and the highest ideal of European man. This will prove decisive for computation because its explicit function is to mathematically process propositional logical statements procedurally (algorithmically) and perfectly (digitally).

Because of the turn toward immanence in modernity, as demonstrated by the ego cogito, one's relation to the external world is mediated through cogitations as representations as that which is presented to the subject. Remembering Descartes' dilemma; how can we

43 Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 33.

inquire into the validity of these representations of the sensuous external world but only by correct judgments about them. Accordingly Leibniz argues with his *principle*, that these judgments do not suffice in and of themselves unless they can be accounted for and reckoned. Positively for Leibniz all of being can be accounted for if it is rational and it must be since a divine creator made it so. Therefore the rational structures of the natural world and Man's place in it are guaranteed by God, though, and this is the essence of the principle, it is European man's duty to make them explicit and account for them. In our contemporary and colloquial sense of "sufficient reason" it seems as if it would imply "good enough" however by "sufficient reason" Leibniz means forcefully rendering reasons objectively and completely. Whatever object in which the *mind* represents to itself must presented fully as a complete object as rendered by reason as perfectly as possible.

Heidegger's deconstruction of Metaphysics in which he accords Leibniz's thinking of the "principle of sufficient reason", a special place also implicates cybernetics (cognitive sciences) and computer science ("thinking machines"). Though in his official writings Heidegger never explicitly discusses the mathematical innovations of Turing or von Neumann in the area of computational machinery he sees it as an inextricable part of the culmination of metaphysics in modern technology. In fact in 1976 the same year as his death, Heidegger stated in *Der Spiegel* "cybernetics is the metaphysics of the atomic age."[44] For Leibniz it is not enough to define the reason in behaviorist terms. If the natural world was subject to rational laws of God as Galileo had demonstrated, that is, the mathematico-physical laws of the exterior world; the interior world of the mind must be subject to these laws as well.[45] What's more the mind was the nodal point in which European man could discover this perfection therefore the mind is accorded, though this seems obvious, centrality above all else.

If we recall the theological concept of perfection as the divine author itself was for Christian European man unfathomable to achieve for himself. The great break that Leibniz makes is that even though infinite perfection is unattainable for humans it becomes possible to think about the infinite and for the first time to direct human reason toward the infinite. On the face of it the ability to think and reason about the infinite is an astounding accomplishment and when taken to its fruition can only alter fundamentally our interpretation of *being* in which Man assumes a central role. Heidegger writes, "the

44 As quoted in Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *The Mechanization of the Mind*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 90.

45 Leibniz writes in the opening to his *Preface to a Universal Characteristic* (1678-79) "There is an old saying that God made everything in accordance with weight, measure, and number. But there are things which cannot be weighed, namely, those that lack force and power [*vis ac potentia*], and there are also things that lack parts and thus cannot be measured. But there is shape, and arithmetic is, in a certain sense, the Statics of the Universe, that by which the powers of things are investigated." in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing 1989), 5.

completeness of the reasons to be rendered—*perfectio*—is what originally guarantees that something is, in the literal sense, firmly established—secured in its stance—as an object for human cognition. Only the completeness of the account, perfection, vouches for the fact that every cognition everywhere and at all times can include and count on the object and reckon with it."[46] Radically, Heidegger argues, the theological origins of perfection of the divine author are reinterpreted through *ratio* therefore in modernity there is a quite explicit rationalization of perfection that is once and for all a possibility for European man. It is perhaps now a bit clearer how something like philosophical angelicism is an enduring thread in the telos of European reason.

5. Leibniz's *Calculus Ratiocinator* and *Machina Ratiocinatrix*

The significance of Leibniz for modernity was not only recognized by Heidegger but also the polymath and cybernetician Norbert Wiener, though Wiener's interpretation is primarily through the lens of the science of mathematics, logic, and cybernetics. It is important to stress that both the founder of cybernetics and one of cybernetics greatest critics, Heidegger, both saw that Leibniz captured something essential about rationality and modernity. Wiener writes the following:

> The philosophy of Leibniz centers about two closely related concepts – that of a universal symbolism and that of a calculus of reasoning. From these are descended the mathematical notation and the symbolic logic of the present day. Now, just as the calculus of arithmetic lends itself to a mechanization progressing through the abacus and the desk computing machine to the ultra-rapid computing machines of the present, so the calculus ratiocinator of Leibniz contains the germs of the *machina ratiocinatrix* , the reasoning machine. Indeed Leibniz himself, like his predecessor Pascal, was interested in the construction of computing machines in the metal. It is therefore not in the least surprising that the same intellectual impulse which has led to the ideal or actual mechanization of processes of thought.[47]

As Wiener suggests, Leibniz's influence on what we call computer and information science and more broadly our current information age is often lost in the history of technology.[48] Leibniz was not contented with the only theorizing about propositional logic as a calculus of reason but like Pascal before him, he went on to build a calculating machine called the *Stepped Reckoner,* which could perform the four basic arithmetical functions, add, subtract, multiply, and divide integers.[49] If it were not for Leibniz's

46 Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 120

47 Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1948), 12.

48 For example in the *Biographical Dictionary of the History of Technology* there is no mention of Leibniz and his Stepped Reckoner (London: Routledge Reference, 1998)

49 Michael J. Beeson, "The Mechanization of Mathematics", in *Alan Turing: Life and Legacy of a Great*

conceptualizing a *universal language* necessary for the formulation of mathematical reason, conceptualizing an analytic engine, and his binary system it is not likely that digital computation would exist in the form it does today. Furthermore his attempt to construct a calculating machine presages Turing's seminal theory and its contemporary actualization of general purpose digital computers in everyday life. Wiener writes of this important link: "The calculus ratiocinator of Leibniz merely needs to have an engine put into it to become a *machina ratiocinatrix.* The first step in this direction is to proceed from the calculus to a system of *ideal* reasoning machines, and this was taken several years ago by Turing."[50] Leibniz's envisioned the *calculus ratiocinator* to be a universal method that would reduce all reasoning to mathematical notation and calculation. So Leibniz's previous example, the accountant's book keeping procedure, could be described through mathematical notation and then universally understood or run by a machine. The *calculus ratiocinator* would specify a formal procedure or algorithm which in turn would require an engine that could execute each of the steps of the algorithm in order for it to be the actualized in *machina ratiocinatrix,* a reasoning machine. Defining a universal algorithm that could effectively process any such logical statements with a definite result proved difficult to accomplish.[51] In the mid 19th century George Boole would extend Leibniz's ideas to develop Boolean Algebra in his now famous text, *The Laws of Thought.* The goal that Boole shared with Leibniz was to rationalize practical activity, again like the decision making process of the accountant, which takes the calculus of reasoning far outside the sphere of the lonely mathematician and logician. As well in the mid 19th century Charles Babbage would specify and engine very similar to Leibniz (17th century) however neither were able to advance the concept of reducing an algorithm to its simplest form and in an universally applicable way to fully realize the *machina ratiocinatrix*. An incredible advance in mathematics and logic would be required for the realization of a formal reasoning machine and as Wiener states and this is what Turing

Thinker, ed. Christof Teuscher (Berlin: Springer, 2004), 77- 134.

50 As quoted in P.R. Masani, *Norbert Wiener 1894-1964* (Boston: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1990), 219.

51 Cf., Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*: By rationalizing human action procedurally through rational abstraction Leibniz advances a peculiar and troubling aspect of logic, mathematics and science. If we recall Leibniz believed that any activity deemed rational, e.g. accounts book keeping can be formalized. Each step can be decomposed and given a formal syntax and logical structure. So for example the statement "this ledger is green" which is then transformed into a universal statement "this S is p." In continual decomposition of activity to effective rules the contexture of the activity is in each case stripped or abstracted away. The question is: what gets lost in the abstraction for the purposes of human knowledge? Does human knowledge overall suffer because of this abstraction? Does that which gets abstracted away provide meaningful insight into human-being? From the phenomenological perspective the answer to the latter question is yes. Husserl has shown that the whole structure of mathematics and logic is founded upon perceptual experience of the world yet the sciences and here the computer sciences with its machine formalization of logic functions without concern of the origin of its objects in the life-world [*lebenswelt*].

provided.[52]

As we have seen with Heidegger's interpretation of Leibniz's *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis* in the previous section, the application of a calculus ratiocinator coupled with an engine would lend enormous credence to Leibniz's view that nothing exists without reason. This would mean that in effect every aspect of human existence could be rationalized through the mathematization of propositional logic. Leibniz writes of his universal characteristics for human calculus, "[f]or, I said, just as there are predicaments or classes of simple notions, so ought there to be a new genus of predicaments in which propositions themselves or complex terms might also be set out in a natural order....I inevitably stumbled onto this wonderful observation, namely, that one can devise a certain alphabet of human thoughts and that, through the combination of the letters of this alphabet and through the analysis of words produced from them, all things can both be discovered and judged." Leibniz concludes with his vision of a thinking machine below.

> I have contrived a device, quite elegant, if I am not mistaken, by which I can show that it is possible to corroborate reasoning through numbers. And so, I imagine that those so very wonderful characteristic numbers are already given...I can immediately demonstrate through numbers, and in amazing way, all of the logical rules and show how one can know whether certain arguments are in proper form.[53]

Leibniz's vision was the following: *If reason grounds being then all beings could be assigned some number and functions could be computed on those entities to output solutions to practical problems.* Hence every human's relation to itself, others, and the natural world could be computable. In comparison to the mathematization of nature that Husserl notes of the vision of Galileo, we can see the radical extension of this with Leibniz of not only the natural world but the new world of the mind. Both the inside and the outside of a human could be shown to be rational and in being rational must be law-like. The mathematization of being is in essence its rationalization. But to fully realize the rational being of human and world that which is rational must be rendered by Man, hence computable. Computation or what can be today called computationalism is the latest development in the Galilean mathematical interpretation of nature (nature is written in math) not a competing nor xenogenic theory of nature.

If we recall the Christian model of divine cognition of the one supreme being that intuits the whole of being, we can see within Leibniz's vision and those after him how the mirror of the infinite in the mind of Man provides the model for belief that the whole cannot be directly intuited but each ontological region could be mapped and hence *thought* one

52 P.R. Masani, *Norbert Wiener 1894-1964* (Boston: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1990), 219.

53 G.W. Leibniz, "Preface to a Universal Characteristic", in *Philosophical Essays* trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing 1989), 6-10.

region at a time. As well, if we recall the inauguration of modernity begins with the turn towards immanence as a *self founding* act in the face of Man's finitude. However, and this is decisive, in order to progress continually forward for Man's purported self founding as thinking for oneself, it would require an external entity to colonize all regions of being with rationality. Like the first figure savage and then the Negro, as an entity external to Man, with life but no reason, Man would need to construct and artificial entity, a thinking machine as the entity with no life but with reason to further the project of cognizing divine creation. It is precisely the mechanization of reason, through defining algorithms (*recta ratio, in forma*) that make Turing's solution to Leibniz's goal so powerful and signifies a radical leap from the modern epoch to modern technology. For in Heidegger's view the ground already established, that is, the epochal understanding of being, captured by Leibniz's work in the 17th century provided the conditions for the possibility of computing machines over three and half centuries later.

6. Effective Procedure and Computational Certainty

Turing's thesis provided a very important leap in mathematics for the specification and formalization of an algorithm. Though the concept of an algorithm has been central to mathematics in the West since the ancient Greeks, Turing's thesis solidly grounds rule governed rationality in a completely mechanical way. Computer scientists Dina Goldin and Peter Wegner describe the role of algorithms in computation as follows: "Given some finite input *x,* an algorithm describes the steps for effectively transforming it to an output *y,* where *y* is *f(x)* for some recursive function *f."*[54] Hence an algorithm is an effective procedure of finite steps which always ends in a definite result. For our purposes an algorithm is the mathematical formalization of what Leibniz called reasoning in proper form [*in forma*]. An algorithm captures the mechanics of reasoning in a stepwise and recursive fashion with a finite set of steps that can be infinitely repeatable. In other words it is a method that specifies set of fixed rules and when processed (in the head, analogue, digitally, etc.) no matter how many times, will always comes up with the same result.

A Turing Machine is ideally suited for describing effective procedures that require absolute certainty. For example, if one looks at the process for starting one's car each morning. One can decompose the process into a finite number of steps in order that each time the result is a running engine. This is in effect the method of rationalizing a very mundane process but it can be formalized into a set of rules that could be given to an individual who has never attempted the task before or defined as machine readable program that a computer could mechanically simulate or even physically perform (e.g.,

54 Dina Goldin and Peter Wegner, "The Church-Turing Thesis: Breaking the Myth", eds. S.B. Cooper, B. Lowe, and L. Torenvliet, *CiE*, LNCS 3526 (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2005), 157.

executed by a robot).

Turing's thesis states that any effective procedure (algorithm) for determining the values of a mathematical function can be computed by a Turing Machine. In essence if any algorithm can be computed by a Turing Machine then the test or definition for an algorithm is one that can be computed by a Turing Machine. In fact today mathematicians and logicians have accepted that the test for an algorithm is that it be Turing computable. Though an algorithm supplies an effective procedure or rules to compute a mathematical function, it does not itself need to result in a numerical output. We understand that a mathematical function such as multiplication sets up a relationship between numbers, as in 2 x 2. Turing's thesis claims that its machine specification provides a solution for computing a function on integers in the most basic and simplest way possible. What's more, because a Turing Machine's, as any modern computer, is reduced to binary mathematical scheme (also formalized by Leibniz) not only is the input on the infinite tape series binary but the machine table as well. Then entire machine is digitally described, *viz.* binary, making it universally readable by another similar class of machines. This means that a Turing Machine can simulate any other Turing Machine and as such is termed a Universal Turing Machine and leads to the powerful idea of universal and general purpose computing.[55]

Turing's thesis of computability along with Alonzo Church's work resulted in the combined *Church-Turing thesis* which takes together the three classes of functions, (λ definable, recursive, and Turing-computability) to reach the formal definition of computable functions necessary to determine what an algorithm is.[56] Though Turing's intention was the application of his thesis to theoretical mathematics it would later found the discipline of computer science which in turn has dramatically effected all other domains of the sciences. The Turing Machine is the rigorous formalization of the most extreme reduction of reason that even Descartes himself could not have imagined. What is critical to stress for demonstrating the apotheosis of cognition is the concept of the algorithm, as I've argued, is thematically none other than right reason in proper form that is born out of the image of Man. The algorithm as the sign of proper reason is the essence of the abstract Turing Machine.

7. Perfection and the Digital Principle

In the previous section I had already introduced the argument that the essence of the Turing Machine is its radical reduction for the specification of an algorithm and as such

55 Ibid.,162.

56 Eugene Eberbach, Dina Goldin, and Peter Wegner, "Turing's Ideas and Models of Computation", in *Alan Turing: Life and Legacy of a Great Thinker* ed. Christof Teuscher (Berlin: Springer, 2004), 159-194

provides Western man with the first concrete mechanized model of cognition. By concrete I mean a mechanical model that is separate and distinct from formal logic which is both abstract and normative in the sense that it, formal logic, represents proper thinking in which practical human reasoning is but a limited expression. What's innovative about the Turing Machine model of cognition is that it accounts [*ratio*] for rationality by the "securing of the calculability of possibilities for reckoning."[57] The demand of the machine model is the requirement of perfection which is captured in the notion of an effective procedure (algorithm) and the digital principle. There is no greater threat to a Turing Machine specified computation than an error. Any community of engineers and scientists takes this notion of casting out error, no matter how its defined, as essential. It can be said that the veracity of any object, what ever that might mean for any given domain of science, is an important goal. We can say, in its most general sense, that error is the enemy of science. It can be argued that the very basis of Western science is founded upon such a requirement for knowledge. Gurwitsch writes that for the Cartesian philosopher Malebranche the problem of error was of central concern in his famous text *The Search After Truth* (1674). Gurwitsch writes that *De la recherche de la vérité*. was likely the "first psychological system, in the modern sense of the term, thus presents itself under the form of a science of errors, and its final goal is to enable us to avoid them."[58] Can we say that the Turing Machine is a part of the history of the "science of errors" and how to avoid them as much as it is a part of the history of cognition and technology?

Perhaps the second most important figure in the history of computer science is John von Neumann, who I think captures the essence of the problem of errors in general computation very well in his seminal 1948 lecture, "The General and Logical Theory of Automata."

> Thus a computing machine is one of the exceptional artifacts. They not only have to perform a billion or more steps in a short time, but in a considerable part of the procedure (and this is a part that is rigorously specified in advance) they are permitted not a single error. In fact, in order to be sure that the whole machine is operative, and that no potentially degenerative malfunctions have set in, the present practice usually requires that no error should occur anywhere in the entire procedure.[59]

In the previous quotation von Neumann refers to general computation which includes analog computers such as the Differential Analyser built by Vannevar Bush. However von Neumann notes in this lecture that analog computing devices, like Bush's, introduce

57 Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 121.

58 Aron Gurwitsch, "The Place of Psychology in the System of Sciences", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evantson, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 66.

59 John von Neumann, "The General and Logical Theory of Automata", in *The Collected Works of John von Neumann Volume V.* ed. A.H. Taub (Oxford: Permagon Press, 1963), 292.

an unacceptable level of errors into any procedure and thus cannot provide certainty in computing. As early as 1948 von Neumann foresaw that digital computation would prove to be the most effective because of what he called the *digital principle*. John von Neumann presciently writes, "[i]t seems likely, however, that the binary (base 2) system will, in the end, prove preferable, and a number of digital machines using that system are now under construction."[60] While an effective procedure demands certainty in each of its steps the application of a binary coding in which a position is either on or off (1/0) provides the least room for error in computation in comparison to analog approaches, though not completely. When representations of internal states is reduced to the efficacy of either “on” or “off” positions of binary notation the room for error is significantly lowered. Furthermore, the binary states or on/off positions are realized at the physical level of the machine. So an integer such as the number 1 is actualized through a voltage state in the computer processor. The electrical physical state represents a computational state. I would argue that Turing machines specification of “base 2” for computing functions over integers and formalizing effective procedures takes the notion of clear and distinctness in reason beyond the point that either Descartes or Malebranche could have conceived. Below John Haugeland provides a clear description of the digital principle.

> Such a technique is digital if it is positive and reliable. It is positive if the reidentification can be absolutely perfect. A positive technique is reliable if it not only can be perfect, but almost always is. This bears some thought. We're accustomed to the idea that nothing— at least , nothing mundane and real-worldly— is ever quite perfect. Perfection is an ideal, never fully attainable in practice. Yet the definition of 'digital' requires that perfection be not only possible, but reliably achievable.[61]

Haugeland's comments on the meaning of the digital principle are quite profound in regards to what I've outlined as the finitude and corruptibility of human cognition. This is because the digital principle introduces a kind of perfection that hitherto had never been conceivable from within the dominant model of human cognition, *i.e.,* Man. Prior to digital computation perfection was only a possibility in the mind because the mind was only a limited mirror of the divine. This mirror reflected only “rays” of divine cognition. Therefore perfection was *possible* for Man but never *actual* because, as I've already indicated, in this Christian cum secular view of human cognition, Man is not the divine. Infinite perfection was actual in that it was one and the same with God who was on Leibniz's account a necessary being, *i.e.,* actual, but was for humans unknowable as merely contingent beings, *i.e.,* not necessary. Both the mathematician, von Neumann and the philosopher, Haugeland, agree that no longer is perfection only a *possibility* for Man but with the invention of the Turing Machine perfection is an *actuality* in our modern

60 Ibid., 294.

61 John Haugeland, "What is Mind Design", in *Mind Design II* ed. John Haugeland. (Cambridge. MA: MIT Press, 1997), 10.

technological epoch. The demand for perfection in Man and now in Turing machines according to Heidegger can again be traced back to its articulation in Leibniz through his *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis.* In Heidegger's 1955-6 Freiburg lecture he writes the following:

> The perfection of technology is only the echo of the demand for *perfectio*, which means, the completeness of a foundation. This demand speaks from out of the *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis,* from the fundamental principle of rendering sufficient reason...Modern technology pushes toward the greatest possible perfection. Perfection is based upon a thoroughgoing calculability of objects. The calculability of objects presupposes the unqualified validity of the *principium rationis*. It is in this way that the authority characteristic of the principle of reason determines the essence of the modern, technological age.[62]

If we follow Heidegger's argument the "demand for *perfectio*" is articulated as an issue centuries before the Church-Turing thesis. Turing makes radical leap forward in actualizing Leibniz's principle. Though Turing machines represents a radical departure in modeling cognition, its ground was Leibniz's principle of reason [*principium rationis*]. Therefore the Turing Machine as model and digital computers seem to be a part of a normative teleology of rationality in the West.

8. Infinitude and Super-Turing Computation

If we recall in section 2 of this chapter, the "mind" in the view of cybernetics and contemporary cognitive sciences, as Dupuy argues, is "*the model for the faculty of modeling*." Keeping in mind that the finitude of knowing, the limits to knowing demonstrated in Descartes' reduction, requires a modeling function which has been broadly construed as mental representation. Representations are understood then as incomplete models of things and not the *thing in-itself*. What I've included in this view is that the Turing Machine is itself a model of this faculty of modeling which inverts the taken-for-granted view that the "mind/brain complex is a computer." Again the computer is a meta-model of the model for the faculty of modeling. I would argue the function of modeling is itself a clear sign of finitude because unlike divine cognition, it attests to the fact that human thinking cannot manifestly grasp the whole of being. The model *represents* an incomplete view of being but must project it as schematically interpreting the whole. This was the essence of the crisis of European sciences for Husserl in which the method, *i.e.,* the model, should not be taken as reality itself, that is, as the whole. Yet science and technology does just that, time and time again as seen with the view that the "mind/brain complex is a computer." Husserl's critique of naturalism directed against classical psychology of his time is as easily applicable to widespread computationalism

62 Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 121.

seen in science today. Differing of course from Dupuy's important history of cybernetics I have chosen to bring the mind-model back to its origins in order to capture the essence of the modern meaning of the human. I've done this by schematically working out the formation of the modern human in the transitional period from Christian to Modern world through the inchoate concept of race in relation to reason. Moving from the origins of mind in the Cartesian view to the concept of mind in the mechanized Turing view should not be seen as simplistic shorthand but rather demonstrates the coherent conception of the human throughout modernity to our contemporary period of modern technology.[63]

Returning briefly to Descartes, we have seen two distinct modeling features of mind, first, is the idea of the infinite which thinking must shoot-for and second, is finite representation of objects itself which are but incomplete models of what ever objects appear to Man. It is precisely these two aspects of modern knowledge, infinite and finite that are essential to the universal Turing Machine.[64] As a discrete finite state machine, a Turing Machine mathematically represents states through digital or binary representation. Unlike any finite state machine or finite automata, a Turing Machine has theoretically an infinite tape or memory. I do not mean that the concept of the infinite in a Turing Machine's memory tape is analogous to a divine being. An infinite tape cannot be equated to divine cognition.[65] Still a Turing Machine requires the idea of the infinite much like the concept of Man requires the idea of the infinite in order to free itself to the ability not to err [*posse non errare*]. This is significant because a Turing Machine, like the human mind holds onto, so to speak, the possibility of the infinite, though only a theoretical possibility. The question is if a Turing Machine is theoretical and many of the practical limitations such as physical infinite tape and infinite run-time do no exist: why spend time thinking about Turing machines if they are not actual? One of the early pioneers of artificial intelligence, Marvin Minsky, asks from the perspective of a computer scientist, “why study infinite machines at all?”

To be sure, we will always be confined, in real life, to machines which are finite. But I

63 See Martin Davis, *The Universal Computer: The Road from Leibniz to Turing* (New York: Norton & Co., 2000)

64 It should be noted that the Turing Machine is a conceptual machine and the theoretical basis for actual digital computers. In actuality and contemporary CMOS digital computers as production units are largely based upon John von Neumann's specifications. The Turing Machine is a mathematical model of computation. Keeping in mind the premise that digital computation is itself a model of mind.

65 I am aware that Turing proposed not only the concept of an automatic machine (*a-machines*) for computation but oracle machines (*o-machines*) as well. An *o-machine*, unlike an *a-machine*, takes input from an external agent during computation. This agent is an oracle and is a set that contains an undecidable, *i.e.,* uncomputable information. An o-machine is interesting in that it is an explicit call, both metaphorically and procedurally, to an external transcendent, except mathematically this is an infinite set.

> assert that it is not always the *finiteness* of the machines that limits their uses; more usually it is either (1) the *practical limitations of running time* or (2) the conceptual complexity of their structures or "programs"...it would seem profitable to study the theory of machines in which the amount of machinery is not itself a limitation. But it would not be profitable, at least form our point of view, to study machines which are really infinite either in initial endowment or in effective speed of operation. Thus, it would seem unrealistic to consider a machine which, when started, already contains the correct answers to all answerable questions in English! Nor would it seem realistic to study a machine which could test in finite time, an infinite number of cases or hypotheses (and thus tell us whether or not Fermat's Last Theorem is true by examining all the cases). A compromise seems inevitable; we must consider machines which have at each moment only a finite quantity of structure, but which are capable of being extended indefinitely as time goes on— "growing machines."[66]

Implicit in Minsky's statement is a *theo-logic,* being that Man must realize that itself and the material world are distinctly finite, for it is not God, but, and this is what goes in tandem, infinity must be a continual possibility in order to think for itself, that is, grow knowledge. What should sound familiar is Descartes's theory of mind is premised on just this exact relationship between the finite and the infinite, *i.e.,* Man's knowledge is finite but the idea of the infinite (divine) provides the possibility of knowing more of *growing knowledge* like Minsky's "growing machine." As I've shown in Leibniz's critique of Descartes proof for the existence of God, one must first have the possibility of the infinite and not only the idea of the infinite. Minsky's understanding of Turing machines recapitulate Leibniz's argument for the necessity of first having the possibility of the infinite. The critical distinction between human thinking (Man) and thinking machines (Turing) is the latter has mathematically formalized the concept of infinity within its structure as open and unlimited. The Turing Machine is an instantiation of infinite representation while within human cognition it cannot be represented. Turing machines go further than human cognition in maximizing the infinitude of algorithms.

There are four aspects of infinity that are specific to a Turing Machine which emerge out of the expressiveness of an infinite tape; *infinite initial configuration*; *infinite architecture*; *infinite time*; *infinite alphabet*. Taken together these extensions of the concept of the infinite allow for an infinite number of representational internal states required to achieve what Eberbach, Goldin, and Wegner, call "Super-Turing Computation." My purpose here is not to engage directly the Eberbach et al. critique of the "strong Turing thesis" of closed computing but rather to demonstrate the essential role infinitude plays in modern computation more generally. Below for our purposes I include and quote directly three of the four extensions of infinite tape that Eberbach et al.

66 Marvin Minsky, *Computation: Finite and Infinite Machines* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 65-66

outline.

1) When Turing machines preserve some information from one computation to the next, we can obtain an unbounded growth of its initial configuration, and we need to model it with an *infinite initial configuration.*
2) Any system that is not expected to halt on it own needs to be modeled by allowing *infinite time*. This applies to many interactive systems such as operating systems, servers on the Internet, software agents or viruses or evolutionary programs.
3) When modeling massively parallel scalable computers or the Internet we do not put restrictions on the number of computing elements. Allowing infinitely many computing elements (infinite of architecture) can be modeled by an *infinite number of Turing Machine tapes,* or an *infinite number of read/write heads*, resulting in an unbounded parallelism....Just as the large memories of digital computers provide a practical approximation to Turing Machines' infinite tapes, so does system scalability, such as scalable massively parallel computers or dynamic networks of autonomous agents, provide a practical approximation to the infinite architecture of super-Turing computers.[67]

A contemporary and concrete example of the three cases of Turing Machine *extension of infinity* quoted above by Eberbach et al. is seen with client/server architecture of Google's World Wide Web search. Google's link relative search queries require an *infinite initial configuration* because new and concurrent relative search variables are continually being introduced to the database along with millions of new web documents. For Google to accommodate the exponential growth the global search database requires an infinitely open architecture to continually add servers or "computing elements" as per the *infinite number of Turing Machine tapes* model. The search queries are modeled upon *infinite time* because the entire massively paralleled system is in no way permitted to halt. Because of Google's clustered machine architecture an enormous failure of physical machines is allowed in which at least three extensions of infinity are clearly at applicable in this real-world internetworked system.

That the concept of the divine cognition and Descartes' evil demiurge would at play a role in the Google computational universe is likely the last thing its engineers conceived of when they came up with the unofficial corporate motto: "Don't be evil."[68] Still the Google mantra is more akin to Voltaire's Dr. Pangloss, "the best of all possible worlds." How could a computational universe succumb to evil? It is by design simple and perfect, that is, digital, diverse, and infinite. The essence of Descartes and Leibniz is remarkably

67 Eugene Eberbach, Dina Goldin, and Peter Wegner, "Turing's Ideas and Models of Computation", in *Alan Turing: Life and Legacy of a Great Thinker* ed. Christof Teuscher (Berlin: Springer, 2004), 175-176.

68 See "Don't Be Evil", last modified on 26 February 2011, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don't_be_evil.

present even in institutions that have little history themselves and little or no concern for the past, recalling Minsky's slogan, "[a] dynamic science has no need of its past, it forges ahead."

As I've suggested with Leibniz's critique of Descartes, the possibility to conceive of the divine, perhaps only as its model, is a defining mark of the emergence of the concept of Man. What is profound about this modeling of the infinite is that Man, as a calculative rational animal, *could not only interpret divine creation for itself but also effect it.* From within the previous Christian epoch, Christian man had no such conception of itself to manipulate creation because it was only a creature, albeit a special creature, among creatures. Only the divine effects creation in this conception. What greater evidence is there today of Man's usurping the divine through modern technological will other than global climate change? From the perspective of the crisis of global climate change it seems clear that the metaphysical entity, Man, has in a brute force manner placed itself as center, the being that dominates nature but still fails to grasp the whole and never will. What is consistent with the argumentation along the lines of the apotheosis of cognition is that Man in response to realizing that it had eclipsed the divine in terms of effecting the course of the natural world, fully intends to deploy his own *computational messiah* to solve the imminent global environmental crisis, that is of course some permutation of technology based upon computational machinery.

9. Computation as the Apogee of Cognition

To recapitulate the traditional view, if the essence of Man was thinking [*cogitare*] as a psycho-physical unity, Man of its own volition, not solely the *divinus*, was chartered to rigorously discover its mental physics as a set of rational causal laws one following the other that could be rendered by formal propositions, in essence be computable.[69] A curious shift had occurred sometime after Turing's thesis which turned on the head the previous epoch's order in which Man as the model upon which the thinking machine was based. As I introduced at the beginning of this chapter, contemporary cognitive sciences have concluded that it is now the computer which is the model of the human. If we recall the models of cognition looked something like the following with each model preserving the relationship of finitude and infinitude from the previous model:

God [Infinite intuition] → Man [finite representation] → Machine [finite/infinite representation]

69 Quite strikingly, yet somehow not surprisingly, Husserl felt similarly writing in the *Crisis* "Every people, large or small, has its world in which, for that people, everything fits well together, whether in mythical-magical or in European-rational terms, and in which everything can be explained perfectly. Every people has its 'logic' and, accordingly, if this logic is explicated in propositions, 'its' a priori." Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,* trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 373.

Today the functionalist view of human consciousness defended by prominent scholars such as Jerry Fodor and Steven Pinker utilize the following schema with the divine completely out of the picture:

Machine [finite/infinite representation] → Man [finite representation]

Turing's thesis represents, perhaps in a limited way, evidence that the mechanical and functionalist view is on the right track. This was certainly Wiener's vision of computation who wrote, "[w]e thus see that the logic of the machine [Turing Machine] resembles human logic and, following Turing, we may employ it to throw light on human logic."[70] This is only plausible if the traditional mechanical view of human thinking was in some sense mostly actual and real rather than being itself only a limited model of the human. As I've stated in section 1 of this chapter what emerges is a *tautology of models* in that the *computer-model* of mind is also the *mind-model* of the computer. Historically there is no doubt which model precedes the other—the metaphysical model of mind is antecedent to Turing's model. Also in the beginning of this chapter I made a distinction between strong and weak views of human/machine cognition within the rubric, now called broadly, the "Computational Theory of Mind." Wiener perhaps represents one of the earliest views that could be called the computational theory of mind but one that is base upon *resemblance* and not in direct function as we will see in the view of Fodor in the next section. What's decisive here is with Wiener the human and machine model are distinct with the human model preceding the machine. Therefore "Man as the model" founds the organization of "machine as the model" of cognition as the above graphic depicts but which is now inverted. In this view minds are computational which can be interpreted at various levels of the mind/brain complex as in the analogy of software/hardware. So in one sense the manipulation in the mind of mental representations is computational and/or at the neuronal level of the brain the firing of neurons is at base a complex biological binary switching system. The inversion of the models of cognition does not indicate the eradication of the concept of Man but rather the nodal point in which Western culture begins to interpret what ever is. In fact the model of Man is quite essential to our current computational view of human being yet somehow Machine usurps Man's role as the arbiter of being.

10. Computation as Evidence that Man Exists

I have been moving rather swiftly across the historical currents in philosophy and technology by charting a line from Leibniz to Turing. Could the history of metaphysics and cognition be so consistent in the West? According to Heidegger this is the case but not in a historiographical way. Heidegger writes, "[m]etaphysics grounds an age, in that

70 Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1948), 129.

through a specific interpretation of what is and through a specific comprehension of truth it gives to that age a basis upon which it is essentially formed."[71] Heidegger was incredible prescient to see cybernetics as the culmination of metaphysical world interpretation when he did considering it was only the mid 20th century when few saw the real effects of cybernetics and the development of information technology. Except for the historian of ideas and other scholars, cybernetics has been largely forgotten. It was only as recently as the 1990s when the revolutionary nature of Turing's work was acknowledged from within mathematics and computer science.[72] According to Dupuy the cybernetics movement was pivotal in orienting the development of cognitive sciences and neurosciences both of which are a dominant focus in Western university research on human consciousness. This in turn has deeply impacted Anglo-American analytic philosophy which find themselves today as strange bedfellows with the cognitive sciences and psychology.

For some it will be a surprise that early moderns such as Descartes and especially Leibniz had provided the basis for the possibility of Turing machines. That the cogito is a distant relative of the computer lends enormous credence to Heidegger's critique of Metaphysics in which *being* had been, until Turing, dominated by a thorough-going anthropocentrism and subjectivism. The advent of Turing's remarkable thesis would prove a boon to psychology and contemporary cognitive science by bootstrapping the now defunct project of cybernetics. In effect the new found ability to place the concept of Man into a machine made the concept of Man, (which according to Foucault was diminishing as soon as it appeared) seem real. What I mean here is the concept of Man could be shown to fulfill the notion of cause and effect in relation to reasoning. Tim Crane describes this more clearly below.

> a mechanical explanation of the mind must demonstrate (at the very least) how the mind is part of the world of causes and effects – part of what philosophers call the 'causal order' or the world. Another thing which a mechanical explanation of the mind must do is give the details of generalizations which describe causal regularities in the mind. In other words, a mechanical explanation of the mind is committed to the existence of natural laws of psychology. Just as physics finds the laws which govern the non-mental world, so psychology finds out about the laws which govern the mind: there can be a natural science of the mind.[73]

The universe of causes and effects and the evidence of them is the mark of the natural science. Classical psychology in its origins hoped to achieve the very same level of

71 Heidegger "Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* 115.

72 Cf., Martin Davis, "The Church-Turing Thesis: Consensus and Opposition", ed. A. Beckmann et al. *CiE 2006*, LNCS 3988, (2006): 125–132.

73 Tim Crane, *The Mechanical Mind,* 6.

causation demonstrated by the natural sciences by discovering the psycho-physical laws of consciousness. According to this naturalistic view then if Man's essence could be shown to be a part of the causal order of nature, as a psycho-physics then it could be as real as a physical body and be subject to an equivalent set of laws.

As should be clear from the previous quote Crane's view is a contemporary version of the classical view of the human. For those that adhere to the psycho-physicalist vision the Turing Machine is incredibly attractive. Fodor and Pinker are perhaps the most well known contemporary adherents of the psycho-physicalist view of mind. Fodor writes affirmatively of Pinker's view of mental computation below.

> Thus, too, the idea that some, at least, of what makes minds rational is their ability to perform computations on thoughts; where thoughts, like sentences, are assumed to be syntactically structured and where 'computations' means formal operations in the manner of Turing. It's this theory that Pinker has in mind when he claims that 'thinking is a kind of computation'. It has proved to be a simply terrific idea. Like Truth, Beauty and Virtue, rationality is a normative notion; the computational theory of mind is the first time in all of intellectual history that a science has been made out of one of those. If God were to stop the show now and ask us what we've discovered about how we think, Turing's theory of computation is far the best thing that we could offer.[74]

For Fodor it is clear that the Turing Machine is Western man's first piece of empirical evidence that Man exists as a psycho-physical unity. Fodor's functionalist view represents a more extreme version presented by Davis at the beginning of this chapter. What I mean is the following: if thinking is indeed a “kind of computation” and if a machine (Turing Machine) can mimic this then this provides empirical evidence that type of normative thinking (rationality) must exist. Therefore for Fodor and Pinker, no longer do we need to reply upon and blindly defend the versions of rationality that have been hitherto purely abstract theories of mind. In this way the Turing Machine is the embodiment of the concept of Man.

If we recall from the beginning of this chapter, Turing also posed the following question: “Can machines think?” What is striking is though the Turing Machine proves that Man exists it also challenges that Man is the center of reason too. So on the one hand the Turing Machine proves the existence of Man while on the other hand it implicitly questions its place as center and arbiter of being. The extreme functionalist view held by Fodor and Pinker and even its more sober perspective from Crane is by all accounts the antithesis of the existential phenomenological view of human-being. In Merleau-Ponty's final chapter entitled “Freedom” from his *Phenomenology,* he opens by writing the following.

74 Ibid., 6.

> it is clear that no causal relationship is conceivable between the subject and his body, his world or his society. Only at the cost of losing the basis of all my certainties can I question what is conveyed to me by my presence to myself. Now the moment I turn to myself in order to describe myself, I have a glimpse of an anonymous flux, a comprehensive project in which there are so far no 'states of consciousness', nor, *a fortiori*, characteristics of any sort.[75]

Merleau-Ponty in effect denies that both causation and states, *i.e.,* the essence of functional view cognition and the Turing Machine, are the essential truths that Man has discovered about what a human is and that it is that human. It is not the place here to provide a phenomenological response to the cognitive-technological interpretation of the human. I will provide, if only preliminarily, a phenomenological response to the primacy of cognition and human existence in chapter 5.

To conclude, Turing's thesis and its abstract machine formalized the vision of Leibniz and the possibility of an entirely new entity, that is, a thinking machine. Man had theoretically and in our contemporary period placed a new species of cognition into the world one based upon the cognitive models of previous epochs, that of the Christian Age [*divine intellectus*] and the Age of Man [*animal rationale*]. That the Turing Machine had captured specific forms of reason, in a mechanical way cannot be contested. However whether or not a Turing Machine when properly executed not only displays but possesses intelligence is entirely contested and uncertain. While the question of machine intelligence and the possibility of an independent machine consciousness would be a natural progression in the critique of cognition it is extraneous to my overall analysis of the epochal models of cognition.[76] My project thus far is certainly less ambitious than the critique of classical and contemporary A.I., because I have been only interested in the interrogation of the cognitive models (God, Man, Machine) in relation to the question "what is a human being?" which relates back to the essence of race. Computation points to Man's desire for an angelic ascent from his finitude as fallen flesh. Race time and time again is an indication of the Fall, and those condemned to the flesh. What I would like to look at in the next chapter is analogous to the central feature of Turing machines, what I referred to as *computational certainty*. By inquiring into the *a priori* of philosophical anthropology that grounds the digital computer I hope to demonstrate how the *quest for certainty,* now most explicitly manifest in digital computation, was essential for the

75 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* trans. Colin Smith [New Jersey: Routledge 1962] p. 434

76 Cf., Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computer's Still Can't Do.* Dreyfus' treatise on classical A.I. still stands today as the most profound and enduring criticism of mechanical rationality and the hope of machine consciousness, if not the primacy of rationality as a whole. While other prominent philosophers such as John Searle have made their criticism of A.I. based upon the inability for computers to demonstrate consciousness as a necessary and sufficient condition of rationality, Dreyfus has gone farther by challenging the assumption that representational consciousness is the *sine qua non* of human-being.

articulation of the normative human (Man) in modernity. Heidegger's criticism of self-certainty in the existential mode of *being-certain* will prove decisive in demonstrating both the origin of computational certainty but more importantly, bringing back into view race as a phenomenological problem, one which always leads back to encounter.

Chapter 4. **Man, Whiteness and the Embodiment of Certainty**

> Truth, meanwhile in metaphysics changed to the distinctive trait of the intellect (*humanus, divinus*), comes to its ultimate essence which is called *certainty...*The essence of truth of man's natural behavior must be certainty.[1] Martin Heidegger (1973)

> Since some things can be, although they are not, and some things now are; those which can be and are not are said to be potency, but those which already exist are said to be in act. But existence is twofold: one is essential existence or the substantial existence of a thing, for example man exists, and this is existence *simpliciter.* The other is accidental existence, for example man is white, and this is existence *secundum quid*.[2] Thomas Aquinas (1255)

In the previous chapter, I concluded that the digital computer as conceptualized in Turing's thesis provides us with a critical mechanized feature of epistemology, what I called *computational certainty*. Epistemology, as inaugurated by Descartes, demands that in order to know what we know we must have certainty of knowing. The phenomenon of certainty is manifest in the digital computer by its ability to perform computable logic functions that are self-sufficient, representational, efficient, recursive, infinitely repeatable and all performed without error, that is, perfectly. Computational certainty mimics what Husserl saw as European science's normative conception of maximal reason, *i.e.,* formal logic, and as such the ideal and proper model for human thinking. Formal logic was conceived of as the "normative model" humans should follow to reason effectively. In fact what the last chapter should have made clearer is the digital computer successfully models the mode of *being-certain* that Descartes articulates in his definition of mind which is itself a model. This strain of rationality remains durable in all its variations throughout Western philosophical anthropology. What I've attempted to demonstrate thus far is the durable theme running through the history of Western thought, where "what it means to be human" continues to be reduced to rational calculation. Certainty seems to play an essential role in cognition as a normative mode of world disclosure for European man. Below I've sketched out certainty in relation to Heidegger's history of being: Christian, modern, and modern technology.

God (salvational certainty) → Man (self certainty) → Machine (computational certainty)

1 Martin Heidegger, "Metaphysics as the History of Being", in *The End of Philosophy*, trans by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 20-24.

2 Thomas Aquinas, "On the Principles of Nature (De Principiis Naturae ad Fratrem Sylvestrum)", in *An Aquinas Reader,* ed. Mary T. Clark (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 43.

In chapter 1 I charted three models of cognition: God, Man, and Machine each of which also correspond to the last three Western epochs in Heidegger's history of being.[3] Though the three models of cognition seem to implicate entities such as God and Machine as distinct from humans, *certainty* explicitly refers to a mode of human comportment in relation to these epochal models of cognition. Certainty as a naturalized mode in specifically the last two epochs, modern and modern technology, invariably refers to rational human comportment as the one true mode of existence above all others (e.g., perceptual experience and phenomenal knowledge).

Because rationality demands certainty it seems self evident and most familiar to us, yet similar to what St. Augustine said about time, when one attempts to say exactly what certainty is, it seems ineffable. As well, for the scholar or scientist the achievement of certainty of knowing seems to be so obvious that to question it seems ludicrous. However self-certainty is a historical achievement that is essential to the history of the concept of Man as its style of comportment. The concept of Man is the hidden basis for scientific consciousness but it is by no means limited to the domain of science and technology.

In the present chapter I continue the inquiry of the phenomena of certainty as a way to elucidate the meaning of whiteness and its relation to being human today. How could whiteness and the phenomena of certainty have any relation at all? What's more how could a digital computer relate to any of these? Contrary to the second epigraph by Aquinas, white or whiteness is not considered here an accidental property, *secundum quid* nor a biological or cultural fact. There is here a sense that the statement “this man is white” (*hic niveus est*) suffices to explain a state of affairs much like a substance with accidental properties. This naturalistic or physical explanatory model, grounds a familiar propositional account of meaning, that is, a subject with predicates. This propositional account tells us only the whatness of an entity and not the how of showing up as white as a pre-objective meaning. This distinction between the “what” and the “how” is hinted to when we casually compare the terms “white” and “whiteness.” White is a color fact while whiteness is the way something presences. Because, as I've argued, *if race is the "mark of the mental" as the phenomenal indication of one's humanity, whiteness is then the positive "mark of the mental" as that being that is certain in its comportment of being human as rational above all other beings and being the hidden standard of measure for any human entity whatsoever.*

First, I begin with the question; What is the essence of whiteness?[4] In my current

3 See chap. 1, sec 1.

4 To be clear, I do not deploy *essence* in the sense of a fixed *essentia* that directly informs essentialism, that is a fixed and static representation or concept. Essence used here points to the immediate manifest meaning that is non-conceptual and pre-thematic. This may help us elucidate just how we find whiteness wholly intelligible in perceptual experience without drawing upon the concept or objective racial fact of white.

approach I will not ask this question from the perspective of the historical human sciences nor cultural literary studies (e.g., whiteness studies).[5] I will begin from existential phenomenology in the hopes of complementing existing methods of inquiry that have taken whiteness as their object. I will not look at the representations of whiteness, that is its ideal constructions, concepts, or objective facts (social or racial) but whiteness as a certain comportment or style of behavior. Therefore it becomes critical to begin with a non-representational account of whiteness, one that is not psychological (private) nor anthropological (cultural).

1. Certainty

My preliminary approach begins with the phenomena of certainty [*Gewissheit*] in regards to right reason and its possible unity in the phenomena of whiteness. I will argue that certainty's relation to race (as the intelligibility of humanity) is that whiteness is the embodiment of the certainty of being intelligible as human, durably and consistently across moments and situations. Isn't this what *being-white* means, to never have to question if you appear human from moment to moment? If this is correct then whiteness is a particular achievement of the certainty of identity.

The price to be paid for this achievement would be born most conspicuously by those that exist in *certain uncertainty*, those Fanon called the *damned*. In this chapter I will look for the essence of whiteness in an unlikely place to interrogate anything racial, the Cartesian cogito, because it is assumed in philosophy that any ego pole; empirical, transcendental or otherwise exists prior to identity.[6] It is in the cogito in which we can witness the emergent conditions for secular Man [*homo humanus*], the entity upon which the European sciences pinned all their hopes and tore asunder nature (see fig. 1), the imaginary zone where Man projected the *damned.* I would even conjecture that the discovery of the cogito is perhaps codependent on the so called discovery of the New World by European man. Could Man be intelligible without a 1492?

It should remain a concern for the reader throughout this chapter that the quest for

5 The recent formation of the subfield called "whiteness studies" within race theory scholarship had by the early 1990's finally taken seriously "white" as a meaningful racial category worthy of critical reflection by white scholars. There of course had been a long lineage of a *de facto* whiteness studies by African American scholars such as W.E.B Du Bois at least a century before but it did not become whiteness studies until white scholars themselves engaged in these critiques. Texts such as *The Wages of Whiteness* by David R. Roediger, *How the Irish Became White* by Noel Ignatiev, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* by George Lipsitz and *Love and Theft* by Eric Lott interrogate whiteness primarily from the discipline of history and cultural studies; are representative of an early wave focused on labor/class based analytic of race that is heavily indebted to the Marxist historical materialist, C.L.R. James.

6 The *"racial"* in the sense used here relates race as being generally understood as predicative, that is tacked onto or added to consciousness, not constitutive of consciousness.

certainty exemplified by the cogito (scientific consciousness) may seem distant to whiteness or any contemporary conception of race that has been delivered over by the positive human sciences (anthropology, sociology, geography etc.), biological life sciences (genetics), humanities and criticism (black/Africana studies, post-colonial studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies etc.). Unfortunately there does not appear to be much previous scholarship on the topic of certainty and race at all. Again, much like race and computation, certainty and whiteness at face value can be easily interpreted as orthogonal and any attempt explicate their referential relation could be seen as an exercise in obfuscation. I hope to convince the reader otherwise and by doing so introduce how phenomenology can describe objects and phenomena that appear in any given epoch (though, from the perspective of current science methods are seen as incommensurable) are in fact grounded upon a cohesive interpretation of being, that is, how reality shows-up for us. Existential phenomenological methods can, from the rubric of ontology (the science of being), help describe the immediate manifest meaning of an object, such as in embodied perception, and its referential whole as a general style of world disclosure that is specific to Western civilization in a given period or epoch. In the first opening epigraph of this chapter Heidegger states: "*The essence of truth of man's natural behavior must be certainty.*" Heidegger is here criticizing the naturalization of Man as the being upon which all other beings are to be judged as the new essence of truth in the modern age beginning with Descartes.

I have chosen the explication of the Cartesian cogito, not only because of its specific technical and radical articulation of a peculiar mode of knowledge in the West, but more importantly because it is an exemplar of European Man's normative intentional structure of world disclosing. In his discussion of Descartes' *Rules,* Heidegger writes, "[i]n it [*regulae*] the modern concept of science is coined. Only one who has really thought through this relentlessly sober volume long enough, down to its remotest and coldest corner, fulfills the prerequisite for getting an inkling of what is going on in modern science."[7] It is perhaps in these coldest corners where we can locate the origin of certainty as the essence of whiteness. What's more this preliminary approach is an attempt to make visible race outside of the fashionable approaches of social constructivism, textual idealism, and performativity.

There is a certain trepidation with a non-conceptual approach to human identity because race is generally understood as representational, that is, a collection of social facts, structures, legal facts, psychological facts, linguistic representations etc. Therefore a non-

7 Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings* (New York:Harper & Row, 1977), 276. Throughout this chapter I use the term *Cartesian cogito* to refer the specific foundation of scientific consciousness, that is specific to Western and modern European Sciences. Reference to the *cogito* will be specific to the explicating the procedures of the reduction while reference to scientific consciousness will be utilized more generally.

conceptual (non-representational) approach to race can be a sketchy proposition especially in the case of whiteness because even within the sphere of representation, whiteness remains oblique and more commonly referred to as an invisible privilege.[8] To be sure, to link whiteness to the cogito through the phenomena of certainty is unusual and still more implausible to have introduced this through the ontological status of the digital computer. The goal of chapters 2 and 3 was to establish that both Man and computer are derivative of the cogito and the cogito has been firmly established as the essence of the human. Though today we often treat the cogito as simply a philosophical artifact only worthy of discussion in esoteric fields, it still remains efficacious and durable. It will be the goal here to again traverse the concept of consciousness to flesh out how such a being can be encountered as the one who has the capacity, actualization, and the ability to render reasons. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the last component of rationality, rendering of reason, is where computation makes its mark and transforms rationality of Man into calculative reason of modern technology.

In this chapter I will first introduce the possible relation between the phenomenon of certainty and the phenomenological and historical approach to race. Second, I will compare the quest for certainty in science which demands transparency in knowing with phenomenology's critique of certainty by explicating the phenomena of opacity in perceptual life. Third, as an entry point to the inquiry of certainty in Western thought I will continue the explication of Heidegger's epochal argument by looking at *salvational certainty* in the Christian epoch and its passage to modernity, as that of *self-certainty*. I will then focus considerable attention on two sections of Heidegger's discussion of certainty; one that appears as an appendix to his essay, "The Age of the World Picture" contained in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* and the other from the essay, "Metaphysics as History of Being" which appears in *The End of Philosophy*. I will conclude by relating certainty to the comportment of Man [*homo humanus*] as being-certain by looking at the issue of objectivity in mundane scientific practice.

Whiteness is difficult to grasp in our dominant sense of "race as representation" precisely because it is a paradox. Adapting Sartre's famous slogan for consciousness and bad faith, it can be said that whiteness "is not what it is and is what it is not." If the racial comportment of *being-certain* has anything to say about whiteness it is this; *whiteness is the embodiment of a norm that purports to be disembodied, that is, objective, self-sufficient, and self certain.* Put more succinctly: *whiteness is the embodiment of the norm of disembodiment, that is, rationality.* In this way whiteness becomes the norm of all norms as the phenomenal color of rational personal existence.

8 See George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

2. The Basis for the Interrogation of Certainty and Race

It is no coincidence that the origin for the interrogation of *certainty* in this chapter is inspired by Fanon's phenomenology of anti-Negro racism in *Black Skin, White Masks.* In his discussion of his own self-conscious as a "negating activity", he adds this interior horizon of self negation is foregrounded upon the background or exterior horizon of a racist world in which "the body is surrounded by an atmosphere of *certain uncertainty.*"[9] Thus, if showing up as black is surrounded by the *certainty of uncertainty* then perhaps *certainty* or *being-certain* will tell us something about whiteness. Uncertainty as a mode of being known and knowing the self in a manifest and immediate way is captured most lucidly through the prose of Ralph Ellison in the opening paragraph of *Invisible Man.* Ellison writes, "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me...When they approach me they only see my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination— indeed, everything and anything except me."[10] Ellison is referring to ontological invisibility, that is, the invisibility of his showing up in the world as being-human. Ellison's protagonist describes how he is presenced for whites as variations of being seen as a danger or being passed over as apart of the background, that is either being hyper-visible or hyper-invisible. In his fictional prose Ellison points to the "*atmosphere of certain uncertainty*" in much the same way that Fanon describes his own experience in Post-War France, that is, not so much as a collection of individual mental acts of racism but an atmosphere of racism, of the uncertainty of appearing as human. There is then already in the background an understanding of what a human is in its presencing in such and such a way. Ellison's protagonist cannot be certain whether his humanity will be presenced from moment to moment. Existentially then, there is only the certainty of uncertainty. It's not surprising that this phenomenon would lead Fanon to study the psychopathology of racism and colonialism in clinical settings while working as a psychiatrist in Algeria.

In chapter 6 the atmosphere of uncertainty will be looked at in depth through the phenomenality of blackness or showing up as black in an antiblack world. The inverse of this is to ask what does it mean to appear as white in an antiblack world. What does it mean when one's humanity is presenced as a certainty? Is there such a thing as a *being-certain* of ones humanity for-itself and for-others? If European man had become the autonomous and therefore self-certain being, how if at all is certainty manifest in an everyday manner? Is *being-certain* a part of the phenomenal manifestness of whiteness embodied in secular bourgeois European Man or what Wynter calls, *ethnoclass man*? If Man is the normative model of being human as I have argued, whiteness in its perceptual facticity could perhaps embody this through the presencing of certainty, that is, a

9 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 110.
10 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: 20th Century Library, 1947), 3.

perceptual wholeness of a subject that manifests the certainty of rationality and as certain, is indubitable.

The particular phenomenological approach to race that I have been developing throughout this dissertation is one which interprets racial (human/subhuman) categories as a set of referential relations in which each is implicated by the other. Therefore a referential relation exists between each racial category and style of racism. Again, this referential relation is something that Fanon had challenged scholars to investigate in his postwar critique of race and the human sciences, *Black Skin, White Masks*. In it he argues that anti-Semitism and ant-Negro racism share the same fundamental logic of racial categorization, where white is defined as the most superior and black as the most inferior race. Those racial categories in-between are interpreted in relation to the bipolar or, as Fanon called it, Manichean logic of whiteness and blackness. Each racial category is only meaningful in relation to all others in the overall set. In this phenomenological view, the logic of race functions upon a continuum in which each understanding of what a racial category is, is a figure that is placed upon a background of a basic understanding of what an ideal human should be, that is, factically *being-white* and factually white of European descent.

As the human sciences and criticism have shown, racial meanings shift along with the referential relations between them, but it is also clear that the modern invention of race has a durable logic of superiority/inferiority in which those of lighter skin are interpreted as more human or fully human to those who have darker skin. Du Bois called this the "color line", that is, a continuum between lighter and darker races which conspicuously places white Europeans on the highest rung of this hierarchy and black Africans on the farthest rung.[11] What's often disconcerting to scholars of race and inequality is that the logic of racial supremacy does not simply function as the pure act of will of individuals in a society, such as a racist conspiracy. Though often in our natural attitude and in the opinion of the public it seems that certain acts are clear acts of the will to racism such as the beating of the black motorist Rodney King by several white police officers. In such a determination of race as explicit act of will, racial meaning must appear then as racial knowledge; as mental content or rather a representational idea that mediates a relation between two entities, *i.e.,* knower and the thing known (a subject and an object).[12] I have referred to this as the representational or the epistemological account of race. This epistemological account of race not only treats the knower and thing known as entities but racial meaning is also treated an entity. What does it mean to treat meaning as an entity?

11 See W.E.B. Dubois', *Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 54.

12 See David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993).

I will demonstrate here that racial meaning is not an entity but rather the how of disclosing such and such a human. This racial know-how functions in the background as an understanding that we unreflectively take on as a set of dispositions of how to comport oneself in relation to others. Let's briefly look at an example: *a woman seated at a bus stand immediately clutches her purse tightly when a black teenage boy sits next to her*. Such a situation cannot be interpreted as explicitly an act of racist will but an unreflective racial intention in which an already backgrounded understanding of black boys as a danger is functioning. This unreflective racial understanding does not exclude the fact that the woman can question her own actions through a willful act of reflection and determine for herself if her behavior was improper or justified. This existential phenomenological inquiry into racial meaning should not be misconstrued as an argument for a *racial unconscious* in which we have little or no recourse to introspection and thus freed from responsibility for our actions. On the contrary the phenomenological approach demands a depth and rigor of description in which the lived through experience and phenomena of race needs to be explicated without the biases of both intellectualism and behaviorism which convert meaning, such as perceptual racial meaning, into object-facts thereby abstracting it out of its place in existence as situated phenomena.

Racial competency is not innate in the subject nor somehow cataloged as a set of formal instructions to follow. There are a set of naturalized background meanings, of which the *prima facie* exemplar is the cognitive determination of the human, which exists in order to make intelligible a set of mobile racial categories. The backgrounded interpretation of the human as an already understood proper human, historically seems to be one who shows-up as *being-white*. Being-white functions in the background as an invisible norm which has become the standard of measure for all other entities. In chapter 2 I introduced the idea that epistemology hides within itself “Man” as its highest standard of measure. I will draw upon the concept of the *a priori* of Man as well here in this chapter. At a glance this argument can be seen as an unfair critique but as any contemporary historian can attest, both racial inequality and racial domination by whites of European descent over non-Europeans is historically consistent and peculiar to the modern and contemporary period.

The distinction between the concept of race and racism is one that can be only be understood as the relationship between a figure on a ground. I do not mean to haphazardly deploy one of the foundational tenets of Husserlian phenomenology, figure/ground, as a mere metaphor. Racism, e.g., anti-Semitism, is an intentional object that exists on a background of an already existing understanding of race. In this way racism, whether as an act of will or belief is a figure on the ground of racial understanding. The background practices which bring together our Western culture's normative way to be human are for the most part opaque in that they are not categorically a set of facts that have an objective sense about them which we can enumerate. However

the intentional structure of racism and race can be explicated. The phenomenologist's task is to bring the background and its pre-objective transcendental sphere to light by making the familiar uncanny. I have chosen here and as the basis of this dissertation to elucidate the problematic background understanding that stress *cognition* as the primary essence of the human which in turn are inconspicuously expressed in race and computation. In order to make uncanny the relationship between race and cognition it is important to begin to look at the intentional structure of cognition in which the phenomena of certainty plays an integral role. I will begin in the next section by looking at the cognitive determination of the human within the sciences quest for certainty.

3. Transparency and Certainty vs. Opacity and Faith

Modern Western sciences grounded by philosophical anthropology has made its central quest the achievement certainty in knowledge. Certainty itself is not an entirely new topic within philosophical anthropology yet I believe it deserves further examination in relation to Man [*homo humanus*] as the ego pole of science and as the normative human.[13] Could the quest for certainty achieved through theoretical reflection via reduction hold a clue to the essence of whiteness as *being-certain*? There is a tendency to take *being-certain* as naturally constitutive of our human endeavors. Reflection on certainty in any manner is something peculiar, particularly if we are concerned with its emotional content. Certainty, as concerned here, is not to be misconstrued with a psychological fact or mental state, though certainty as *being-certain* shares a kinship with this mental state of certainty as confidence, as in one's tone of voice.[14] Certainty of fact as in "I am certain that I locked my front door" does not disclose a mode of knowing but a belief which is but an echo of knowledge. I am particularly interested in certainty in its mode of knowing by focusing on its centrality to epistemological, that is, representational thought. Certainty is the attempt to make clear and distinct, (that is completely transparent truth claims) through reduction by a process of doubting one's presuppositions. Certainty in method is fundamental to the reduction for Descartes and appears as early as *Rules* (1628).

> In the subjects we propose to investigate, our inquiries should be directed, not to what

13 Cf., Both Ludwig Wittgenstein (*On Certainty*) *and* John Dewey (*The Quest for Certainty*) dedicate full length philosophical works on interrogating certainty through language and the pragmatic philosophy of science respectively.

14 Cf.*,* Wittgenstein writes, "[w]hen someone has made sure of something, he says: "yes, that calculation is right", but he did not infer that from his condition of certainty. One does not infer how things are from one's own certainty. One does not infer from the tone of voice that one is justified. Certainty is *as it were* a tone of voice in which one declares how things are, but one does not infer from the tone of voice that on is justified." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty,* trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1969) 30 6e.

> others have thought, nor to what we ourselves conjecture, but to what we can clearly and perspicuously behold and with certainty deduce; for knowledge is not won in any other way.[15]

Descartes' *First Philosophy* was to provide the indubitable ground for science in general as the foundation for the quest for certainty. As I argued in chapter 3, while Descartes was preoccupied with the limits of human reason, the Tradition responded to finitude not by embracing both opaque and clear knowledge as intrinsic to one another but rather endeavored to cast out the opacity of human experience as the enemy of reason. Martin Dillon makes very clear the radical distinction between the "search for truth" and "the quest for certainty."

> the search for truth is an attempt to pierce the opacity of the world, an effort to make our conjectures about the world as accurate as possible. The quest for certainty, on the other hand, is an attempt to eliminate the opacity of the world altogether and make it entirely transparent; an essay to expel all conjecture or supposition from our knowledge.[16]

The opacity of truth refers to the acceptance that we cannot have perfect and absolute knowledge of world, self, and things. If we recall a fundamental aspect of rationality seen in formal logic, algorithms and ultimately Turing machines (*a-machines*) is the elimination of the opaque and unclear reasoning.[17] Formal logic and Turing machines strip away, what is deemed from the perspective of science, irrelevant aspects of experience in order to arrive at the most precise and certain steps in a proof or an algorithm. For example, take a statement such as the following: "this computer table is brown." Once this is transformed through formalization this state-of-affairs would be the following: "this *S* is *p*." Once formalized, the state-of-affairs loses all situated and sensuous meaning in favor of precision that can conform syntactically and perfectly each and every time it is deployed. From the perspective of classical computer science opacity will introduce error into computation. As Husserl understood, technical formalization of reason such as logic jettisons embodied existence in the lifeworld [*lebenswelt*] in favor of a science in search of Platonic ideals.[18] Phenomenologically the acceptance of opacity or ambiguity is not a resignation from the search for knowledge but rather the acceptance of the conditions of any knowledge in general. Such an acceptance we can call *faith* in the world and our practical activities in it. Husserl indicates such acceptance as the

15 Rene Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes,* vol 1. I, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 5.

16 M.C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 10.

17 See chap. 3., sec 2.

18 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,* trans. David Carr (Evantson: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 356; *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 9.

embracing of existence, writing, "we can also say that an actual world always precedes cognitive activity as its universal ground, and this means first of all a ground of universal passive belief in being which is presupposed by every particular cognitive operation."[19] I would as Merleau-Ponty does, exchange the term "belief" with "faith" because "belief" will place the embracing of opacity within a cognitive, that is, mental sphere.[20] A belief requires ego reflection, that is, "I believe in x." There is then an representative object of which the subject "I" can present to itself an object, that is, a belief. Faith in the world, unlike belief, is our prereflective awareness of our surroundings. Our existential faith has no object as such to represent to itself nor conditions of satisfaction which must be achieved in order to have practical encounters within our world.

In contradistinction to certainty, there is faith. It should be stressed that this is not a theocentric concept of faith nor faith in the actions of others (such as "I have faith in her ability to appear in court") but rather an existential faith of *being-in-the-world,* what Merleau-Ponty called a *perceptual faith*.

> we see the things themselves, the world is what we see: formulae of a kind express a faith common to the natural man and the philosopher...but what is strange about this faith is that if we seek to articulate it into theses or statements, if we ask ourselves what is this *we,* what *seeing* is, and what *thing* or *world* is, we enter into a labyrinth of difficulties and contradictions.[21]

The problem that Merleau-Ponty is concerned with is perceptual faith is so common and universal to our human world, once we try and sequester it as an object of scientific inquiry its fundamental character slips from our grasp. More critically in agreement with Husserl, Merleau-Ponty argues that there is a conspicuous elision of faith in theoretical scientific fact production, meaning that our practical embodied engagements with the disclosure of knowledge are left out of the final analysis of science. The return to perceptual faith that we ourselves have as we are our bodies had become the central phenomenological project of Merleau-Ponty and Husserl before him.[22]

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19 Edmund Husserl ,*Experience and Judgment,* ed. Ludwig Landgrebe, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 30.

20 Though unfortunate, Husserl's Cartesian language, can guide us to the distinction between faith and certainty, as it has for Merleau-Ponty. Yet for Husserl the Cartesian method as his exemplar had placed him ultimately within the quest for certainty.

21 Merleau-Ponty, *The Invisible and the Visible,* ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 3.

22 Though Husserl's own charter for transcendental phenomenology is clearly within the purview of the quest for certainty, he nonetheless intuitively grasped the fundamental aspect of knowledge acquisition through perceptual experience. In Husserl's *The Origins of Geometry,* the central thesis is that of the history of geometry in pursuit of the ideal forms had all but eradicated the origins of Euclidean geometry's corporeal nature which started from the sensuous intuition of measurement of things in the world. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* , 353-378.

Perceptual faith is an integral part of everyday life, such as running to catch a streetcar. What I mean here is that as an existential structure we have faith in the ground under our feet as we run to catch the streetcar. We are not certain of the fact of the solidity of the sidewalk we use as the path to the streetcar. There is nothing like *being-certain* of the firmness of the ground before us because we cannot represent it to ourselves as we run-to-catch-the-streetcar. There is no *ego* as such that could be certain of this fact. As Sartre has shown in an involved practical situation the egological self, the representing ego that is the conditional basis of certainty does not exist.

> all the non-reflective memories of unreflective consciousness show me a consciousness *without a me,* and since, on the other hand, theoretical considerations concerning consciousness which are based on intuition of essence have constrained us to recognize that the *I* cannot be apart of the internal structure of *Erlebnisse,* we must therefore conclude: there is no *I* on the unreflective level. When I run after a streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no I. There is a *consciousness of the streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken*, etc.[23]

In Sartre's example there is no "I" co-present with the action of running-to-catch-the-streetcar. Perceptual faith then is being at home in ambiguity and contingency of lived through experience [*Erlebnisse*] of everyday life. In this example of running-to-catch-the-streetcar, one's faith is not limited to *terra firma* but the world comprehensively, meaning that we let it (world) hang together is the *givenness* [*es gibt*] of the world. The world is given over to us as we are given over to it. What's more, perceptual faith does not only include the manifold of things but includes self/other relations, meaning that there is an intersubjective faith that is manifest in the background. As will be discussed at length in chapter 6, a racist world poses a problem for intersubjective perceptual faith because the figure/ground relationship of race/racism annihilates the open unlimited horizon [*offen endlös*] of intersubjectivity. The opacity of perception constitutes the texture of the background. It is the background in the sense of the figure/ground referential relation that is the condition of the possibility for entities to be encountered as what they are. The demand of certainty in representational thinking will either miss the background entirely or determine it to be extraneous noise. With the background cast out in the quest for certainty the world will only appear as a collection of self-sufficient entities whose intelligibility cannot be constituted by their existential referential relations to one another but rather can only be constructed by a representing subject.

The insistence on the co-presence of the "I", that is, an egological subject, as the norm of existence tends toward the obliteration faith in the opacity of world. What emerges is a pursuit to certain knowledge by means of technique that reduces *logos* to *ratio* and

23 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Transcendence of Ego,* trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York:Hill and Wang, 1960), 48-49.

rationality. Recalling Michel Haar's profound condemnation of *homo humanus* below.

> man nourishes and exhausts himself in the immense tautology with which he is nevertheless contented; even if he has not expelled anxiety and death from himself, he professes to have cleared them of their archaic, metaphysical weight and to have reduced them to psychological or medical questions, that is, to *techniques*. Technical questions are not questions, but clear-cut problems, solvable or at least cleared of any enigma.[24]

Haar's notion of the clearing of "enigma" through the technization of reason is analogous to Dillon's critique of the elimination of "opacity" in favor of certainty. Accordingly, Man becomes convinced of being *self-certain* through the scientific attitude and the ability to transform and dominate the natural world at will. In this way, Man is his own measure to what is being revealed to be known and the already factual. As Haar lucidly points out and is also key to Heidegger's concept of the essence of technology, the opacity of questioning or interrogating our world is transformed via scientific reflection into a technique. There is then a technization of reflection which transforms knowing into technical knowing. Modern technology and computation's essence is derived from the calculative nature of Descartes' initial revelation of consciousness as a purported self founding act.[25] This is what Heidegger called "calculative thinking" as the technique of the Cartesian reduction in which the essence of modern technology or *technicity* is revealed. Scientific consciousness as outlined by Descartes contains within it a radical freedom from theological dogmatism yet deep within its radical procedure is an enormous violence which lays the foundation for Man as subject. Unfortunately a religious dogmatism is exchanged for a techno-scientific one. In the following sections I will look closely at Heidegger's analysis of the Cartesian cogito in order to understand better the nature of this violence.

4. Certainty as a Being or a Mode of Being

As was mentioned in the previous section on transparency and opacity we generally take

24 Michel Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 59.

25 Heidegger writes, "Its [calculative thinking] peculiarity consists in the fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize, we always reckon with conditions that are given. We take them into account with the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates. Such thinking remains calculation even if it neither works with numbers nor uses an adding machine or computer. Calculative thinking computes. It computes ever new, ever more promising and at the same time more economical possibilities. Calculative races from one aspect to the next. Calculative thinking never stops, never collects itself. Calculated thinking is not meditative thinking, not thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is." Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), 46.

“certainty” as a known thing or property of the thing, such as the statement: "her victory is a certainty." The copula "is" indicates the *being* of the victory as certain. In the case of the Cartesian reduction we take as matter of course its being certain as an essential characteristic of proper thinking. Therefore it doesn't seem necessary to flesh out certainty much further, except to treat it as a state in the development of right reason and proper scientific method. If we suspend the belief that certainty is a fixed state or property of something how will this effect how we understand certainty and more importantly how will we view the cogito and reason more broadly?

In our example what should be striking is that certainty grounds the "victory" in some essential way. How does certainty ground the thing in-itself? In a way “certainty” makes the victory an object for a subject. Certainty grounds the victory and in grounding it makes it a valid fact. In the case of an object, representational thinking transposes it, the representation of the object as an achievement in its totality can only be as such if it is certain. The object takes-on in the cogitation the mode of certainty. Therefore what science calls objectivity is also convertible with subjectivity as that which is certain. Objectivity and certainty are interchangeable only when the subject is taken into account. Science reduction for the most part covers over the subject of the doing of science in favor of the solidity of the certainty of the object (in-itself). In this way there can be no objectivity without subjectivity. *In fact to assert the subjectivity of the subject of science seems to directly undermine the objectivity of the object*. Self certainty as mode of knowing that grounds not only self consciousness but what the object stands over and against, that is, the subject. This is what Heidegger refers to as a special kind of subject because any object that is interpreted as an object is made so by a subject.[26] Scientific objects are an exemplary case of just this type of subject/object formation.

By introducing the question of certainty as a mode of knowing I hope to now be able to look at Descartes' inauguration of this certainty more closely by drawing upon Heidegger analysis. The central question I will want to keep in mind is the upcoming sections is the following: how is it that the cogito can pass from immanence to transcendence via the vehicle of the God as an idea? According to Heidegger the only way to do this is through the mode of certainty in which certainty is not simply a state of achievement of knowledge but the way one *should* know anything whatsoever. This is for Heidegger a new way of willing the self into being. The vehicle of the infinite is not vestigial but a necessity of this move to a new mode and new essence of the human. While on the one hand certainty seems to be an obtuse and esoteric technical feature of a by gone rational system, it (certainty) is the normative mode of how to know what we know according to Heidegger. The problem in this chapter has been the following: is it feasible to connect the normative mode of willing thought to what a proper human being is and referencing

26 Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics", 273.

this to whiteness/race?

5. Certainty as a Phenomenological Problem

It is well known among Descartes scholars that the goal of the Cartesian reduction is to come to clear and distinct ideas that are indubitable and in being indubitable are certain in and of themselves. A being that is certain is considered to be the ideal end state of an idea, fact, or concept that is proper to right reason. The concept of certainty is understood as being both positive and negative in that on the one hand clearing a ground for science [*prima philosophia*] by establishing a method that casts out obfuscation or doubt is highly desirable while on the other hand the *demand* is itself violent on the basis that it shuns aspects of thinking, such as the opacity of pre-objective background knowledge. According to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty the opaque background conditions are the horizon that makes anything intelligible whatsoever. Therefore what we take as concrete knowledge is grounded upon a set of background practices, as Dreyfus calls them.[27] I touched upon the issue of opacity in section 3 by drawing upon Merleau-Ponty and Sartre's philosophy of existence which should give us a sense that cordoning off the human into immanence will continually lead to the problem of reconciliation with the natural world of other minds.

Heidegger placed marked stress on certainty as a phenomenon though he did not dedicate full works to it. Still, making certainty a phenomenological problem is unique to Heidegger. In chapter 2, I discussed Heidegger's concept of the modern human as a self founding that is essential to the *subjectum* as opposed to being founded by an external entity, *i.e.*, the creator god. The act of self founding through introspection is profound because it places the requirement of defining the entity that thinks as the sole responsibility of its own thinking acts or cogitations. I cannot think of a more bizarre phenomenon than to turn into oneself to find meaning as a self that is autonomous from the external natural and human world. The audacity of a such a move once laid bare is quite astounding. The idea of wholly independent thought articulated by Descartes is the seed of what we understand as the modern individual who believes that he or she must not be compromised or in Kant's view, heteronomous. Descartes writes in *Discourse on Method*: "I had already recognized very clearly in myself that intelligent nature is distinct from corporeal nature, taking into consideration that all composition attests to dependence and that dependence is manifestly a defect."[28] What I call being compromised relates here to dependence or heteronomy versus independence and autonomy in thinking. Is Heidegger's focus on certainty simply a rhetorical technique to

27 Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World,* (Cambridge MA: M.I.T. Press, 1991), 10.

28 Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy,* 4th edition, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 20.

place stress on the formation of the subject as something new in European science, culture, and civilization? It seems that the phenomenological inquiry into certainty is not at all a poetic technique for the communication of this new essence of the human but constitutes some ground concept of how Man emerges as the new point of reference of not simply the self but world as a whole. If as Heidegger and Haar have argued, this new ground needed to be Man itself; the entity asking the question is the one grounding that possibility.[29]

6. Salvational Certainty and the Godhead [*Göttheit*]

Heidegger argues that self grounding through certainty as its mode does not emerge *deus ex machina* as some argue is the case for the Cartesian subject.[30] While it seems to be true that consciousness in its mode as cogitatio/cogitatum is incredible novel it is theologically grounded. For Heidegger self certainty as a further development of Metaphysics as a history of being, is modeled upon Christian salvational certainty. What Heidegger termed *salvational certainty* (also referring to it as revelational certainty) was dependent on Christian man's faith in the creator as that which sustains the order of things in which man can with certainty be assured his place in creation is stably fixed.

> What is truly real (*actus purus*) is God. Reality (*actualitas*) is the effecting causality which of itself brings about the stabilizing of independent constancy. Causality, however, is not exhausted in the effectuation of the constancy on earth of all that is not divine, that is, created. The highest causality is the *actus purus* as *summun bonum*, which as the final goal (*finis*) predestining everything and thus elevating everything to its true constancy anchors all reality of what is real in the first cause. For this reason, that the real being which is man, created in the image of God, must above all bring about his reality by holding fast to the highest good, that is, by faith (*fides, qua creditur*). Through faith, man is certain of the reality of the highest real being, and thus at the same time also of his own real continuance in eternal bliss.[31]

The “revelational truth” of salvation meant that one was human in-as-much as one had a soul capable of being saved in the eyes of the creator god.[32] I discussed this briefly in the

29 This could also be an *a priori* to Foucault's man of the human sciences which for Foucault in the later emergence of the human sciences where man is both subject and object of inquiry as a double.

30 Timothy Reiss writes, "the idea that a private, self-reflexive subject could think, act and exist in isolation had no tradition behind it. Quite to the contrary, one would have to look hard to find anything of the sort before the European seventeenth century, although we glimpsed emergent beginnings. Certainly Descartes' teachers held no such view." *Mirages of the Selfe : Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe.* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 471.

31 Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, 23.

32 Martin Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* trans . William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 147.

description of the Valladolid debates in chapter 2, section 6 by demonstrating the distinction between the rational Christian soul and the transition to the nascent secular rational mind. The truth of one's salvation as guaranteed was precarious at best, that is, "*by himself, man can never become, and be, absolutely certain of this salvation*" other than through trusting in his salvation or his redemption, through faith.[33] There was no absolute knowledge of one's ascent to heaven because this was predestined in a perfect and divine and infinite plan of which mortal man as a creature had no such comprehension—infinitude as such was unthinkable for medieval Christian man. The prime mover as the highest cause effects all change but does not change itself as it is perfect and as long as this remained true that which is created, man and nature, remained secured in its intelligibility.

As arbiter of whatever was, the "creator god" was then the final authoritative being, the ultimate final cause, one mediated by the clergy and sovereign monarch. This final cause relied upon the authoritative interpretation of the clergy. Still his authority given over to men was absolutely co-dependent on the godhead. In the modern sense dependency as has been indicated would need to be cast out in stages by the Cartesian reduction and more generally by science. According to Heidegger European man in the Christian epoch was chained to the truth of an external transcendent. The ordering of whatever-was was fixed and immovable by the prime mover. The essence of salvational certainty is the following: *faith in the possibility of salvation secured not the hereafter but the here and now; meaning that this salvational certainty secured the truth in the godhead as the stabilizing force that allowed reality to hang together.* Then for Christian man there was no anxiety for determining what one should be or become, this was already preordained and demonstrated by one's fixed position in the Christian world. The fixed hierarchy of creatures and in particular classes of Christians, (e.g., clergy, aristocracy, military, peasants, and slaves) indicated the shape of some preordained plan.

There would be a radical overthrow of the Christian interpretation of being leaving Western man alone and free to himself, yet full of anxiety upon this new groundlessness. This is where I argue the origins of Man [*homo humanus*] emerged. European man would need to establish a fundamentally new certainty in himself. As Heidegger argues below, the guarantees intrinsic to the fixed plan of the Christian world were destabilized.

> a liberation, although without knowing it, is always still freeing itself from being bound by the revelational truth in which the salvation of man's soul is made certain and is guaranteed for him. Hence liberation from the revelational certainty had to be intrinsically a freeing to a certainty [*Gewissheit*] in which man makes secure for himself the true as the known of his own knowing [*Wissen*].[34]

33 Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, 21.
34 Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture", 148.

The entire nature of truth changes in which it is up to Man to discover truth upon a basis which he had to somehow found. According to Foucault it would take perhaps two centuries before this grounding was to be complete. However Foucault would prematurely suggest that as soon as Man established itself as ground, Man ceased to be the primary nodal point of meaning, that is, the new emergent center would not hold for long. This shifting of truth from the transcendent sphere (*divinus*) to the immanent sphere (*intellectus*) altered fundamentally not only what European man can know but how he can know what he knows. Salvational certainty breaks forth into self-certainty.

The phenomenological problem that *certainty* poses is not only what it indicates within epistemology but more importantly, as Heidegger asserts, is what it means to know universally for European man. Therefore self-certainty conditions knowledge in a new way.

> Certainty here is not taken only as an addition to knowledge in the sense that it accomplishes the appropriation and the possession of knowledge. Rather, certainty is the authoritative mode of knowledge, that is, 'truth', as the consciousness, conscious of itself, of what is known.[35]

I would here translate *certainty* as a style of knowing, a style that manifests authority and validity. The issue of authoritative knowing as objectivity will emerge in section 12 where I look at the phenomena of *being-certain* in relation to showing up as such and such a race.

It should not be a surprise that the creator god plays an essential role in the early ontologies of first person consciousness. It is by no means vestigial. By this I mean that for Descartes and Leibniz, to grasp the finite as Man they would need to cling to the infinite as mirror reflection of its possibilities in order to make the leap to self founding as a certainty. This is precisely what Heidegger means when he says "revelational certainty had to be intrinsically a freeing to a certainty [*Gewissheit*]." The passage to self founding had to be willed but that will-to-power needed a model in which to base itself. That initial model was divine infinite intuition.

7. Self Founding and Degodization [*Entgötterung*]

For Heidegger the essence of this shift from Christian to modern is the fundamental transformation of certainty; *being-certain* in the modern epoch would be the sole responsibility of this new man for himself and by himself. Science emerges in the modern epoch as the *prima facie* exemplar of this certain knowing that no longer required the godhead to order what ever was. Man of course becomes the focal point of interpreting reality. Descartes' method for *prima philsophia* captures this radical

35 Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, 20.

overthrow which is why after four centuries not only does he continue to be relevant but many of the epistemological problems he posed in the 17th century continue to reemerge, frustrate, and confound contemporary philosophy. For Heidegger, Descartes' method is the demonstration of the radically new emergent Man, the subject. The following excerpt from Heidegger's appendix to "Age of the World Picture" captures the radical nature of Descartes' project.

> Descarte's metaphysical task became the following; to create the metaphysical foundation for the freeing of man to freedom as the self-determination that is certain of itself. That foundation, however, had not only to be itself one that was certain, but since every standard of measure from any other sphere was forbidden, it had at the same time to be of such a kind that through it in the essence of the freedom claimed would be posited as *self-certainty*. What is this something certain that fashions and gives foundation? The ego cogito (ergo) sum. The something certain is a principle that declares that, simultaneously (conjointly and lasting and equal length of time) with man's thinking, man himself is indubitably co-present, which means now is given to himself. Thinking is representing, setting before, is a representing relation to what is represented (idea as *perceptio*).[36]

What is radical is this new certainty as self-certainty is no longer co-dependent upon the salvational selection of something outside, that is, an external standard of measure, such as the divine as final cause. Therefore man is no longer selected by the divine but as the new secular human is one that must *self-select* by a procedure of intellectual perspicuity that casts everything external to the cogito out of bounds. As Descartes' method vehemently specifies, the subject requires that it should have no standard of measure outside itself, therefore there needed to be a self-instituting ground upon which to found knowledge of anything. Thinking in the sense of the Cartesian doctrine indicates that self founding be a process of self-institution or auto-institution. Auto-institution is also a characteristic component of Turing machines or automatic machines in that a computer is designed to execute its own programs automatically. Heidegger argues that this foundation (*fundamentum*) for Descartes had to be the ego cogito. What is more the Cartesian reduction necessitates the co-presence of the “I” with thought as the necessity of certainty. Thinking becomes a representing something to the self in which the self is a doubling back upon itself.

Knowledge needed to be secured to the self through *representation*. The representation of an object needed to come to resolution as true but it could be reconciled with the object itself in its most rigorous sense of the indubitable. Though an external transcendent could no longer provide the basis for intelligibility, the idea of the infinite could indeed provide certainty within immanence.

36 Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture", 148-149.

The immediate presentation of things gets placed within the rigid structure of representation where things that appear become objects to be mastered. Heidegger writes, "representing is making-stand-over-against, an objectifying that goes forward and masters."[37] Objects within representation lose their opaqueness as adumbrational presentations and their referential comprehensiveness to the world as a whole. In representation the thing perceived becomes the object that is seized through calculation.

8. Calculability and Mathēsis

The procedure of securing requires *calculability,* that is, an *a priori* structure to project the thing represented. For Heidegger the calculating as *mathēsis* circumscribes in advance whatever is being investigated. The mathēsis of the reduction inevitably leads to the causal explanatory model of knowledge, one which is fundamental to European sciences. According to Heidegger *Ta mathēmata* for the ancient Greeks meant "that which man knows in advance in his observation of whatever is and in his intercourse with things."[38] *Mathēsis* is not that the being of beings must be inherently quantifiable but rather the desire for the mathematical is predisposed to that which must be quantified. Heidegger goes on to say that the mathematical cannot in this way be reduced to the numerical or as essentially the same as quantity but more fundamentally the mathematical is linked to numberness "because numbers represent, as it were the most striking of always-already-knowns, and thus offer the most familiar instance of the mathematical. Furthermore Heidegger says, "[i]n no way, however, is the essence of the mathematical defined by numberness."[39] In Heidegger's discussion of modern science the aspect of framing the bounds of the possible evidence *before hand* is central to scientific explanation. Furthermore this securing beforehand of whatever evidence can be discovered is the securing of what ever is to a certain veracity, that is, truth as fact [*factum*]. For Heidegger this does not mean that modern science is illegitimate and false but on the contrary this securing beforehand, that is, circumscribing in naming and calculating its possible objects of inquiry, has resulted in enormous success for itself.[40]

37 Ibid., 150.

38 Ibid., 118.

39 Ibid., 118-119.

40 Heidegger writes,"the sciences are not in a position at any time to represent themselves to themselves, to set themselves before themselves, by means of their theory and through the modes of procedures belonging to theory...If it is entirely denied to the science scientifically to arrive at its own essence, then the sciences are utterly incapable of gaining access to that which is not to be gotten around holding sway in their essence...That which in the sciences is not at any time to be gotten around -- nature, [m]an, history, language -- is as that which is not to be gotten around [Unumgängliche], intractable and inaccessible [unzugäglich]." Martin Heidegger, "Science and Reflection", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 177.

The mathematical for science is a pre-understanding that is needed in order for it encounter its objective objects. Therefore the mathematical access to being is the prior understanding [*verstehen*] necessary for science to achieve certainty in its objects whatever they may be.

9. Subjectum to Subject

When the *reduction* is brought to its furthest stage in which the subject has a grip on that which is indubitable, one is left with the cogito as the only thing [*res*] that is certain. Here we come to *consciousness that is conscious of it self*. Though the contents of my thoughts such as the idea of a "red Pontiac Firebird", though imperfect and tainted, tells me that in spite of this imperfect idea, I know that I am the one doing the cogitating regardless of the content. The I'ness, if you will, the ego pole of the cogito, indicates an independence from an external authoritative entity, external natural world, and the external world of others too (this detachment from others will of course lead to the perennial problem of the "problem of other minds" that still remains unresolved within philosophy today). Man as a thinking thing is in absolute isolation here. How does consciousness ground itself and what does the grounding? In order to move forward in this revelation of freedom to define the meaning of my world I must ground it and since I can no longer seem capable of grounding it on an external transcendent authority, *i.e.,* godhead or its mediators, e.g., clergy and sovereigns, I must ground it upon that which is left thinking from the ego pole, that is, the ego cogito.

Heidegger's interests lie in the history of being and the eschatology of Western Metaphysics as Janus-faced; as both a triumphant rise of science and technology and a decline of the primordial understanding of being. According to Heidegger the subiectum (subjectum) is the Latin translation of the Greek word *hypokeimenon* which he translates as "that-which-lies-before, which as ground, gathers everything onto itself."[41] This Greek subject, *hypokeimenon,* contains no "I" as such but lets presence that which is before the self. What's important in this distinction is the contrast between types of human-being; pre-Socractic Greek and modern European (though perhaps the Greek one is idealized by Heidegger). In the Greek sense the human has no understanding of an ego pole and as such let's opacity nourish the truth of being as *phusis* or letting the world well up for the self. In contrast, the modern meaning of human being is one that makes a demand on the world in which objects stand over and against the self, as a special "I" subject which represents the world as a collection of objects to be counted and calculated. Due to this demand the "I" subject is opposed to the object. It can be said that this relation is grounded on violence which is marked by certainty.

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41 Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture", 128.

10. Freedom from Error

As Husserl pointed out, in perceptual experience objects as figures on a ground are both determinate and indeterminate, meaning that a thing is only intelligible in relation to its background. Therefore the interior and exterior horizons of the thing perceived do not present themselves as complete fixed objects, that is, from the perspective of a God's eye view. Intelligibility of objects is made possible through the references in which the thing is situated. The referential relations that make possible the constitution of the object are themselves not representable though they make possible objectivity itself. Though, without reflection, we anticipate more of the thing perceived and can do so optimally, we never grasp the thing in its totality. However the Cartesian reduction purports that proper reason is just that, a mental operation of the seizure of totality of thing as object through its representing act. This is what Heidegger calls a mental "assault of rules", the rules being the procedures for proper thinking. In representation, the cogitation seizes the thing as object from its referential relations. The Cartesian reduction does not do so optimally but must do so maximally, that it not only without error but to infinitely repeat this procedure of the "assault of rules." The elimination of opacity from the situation, contexture, and adumbrational phases of an object is a securing of a *freedom from error*. In terms of casting out error, science and computation follow an essentially similar path.[42]

In the Cartesian reduction the meaningful relationship between the figure ground is deemed to impinge on the possibility of attaining clearness and distinctness of the thing known, that is, the atomic discreteness of the object as a representation. This impingement if not cleared out would introduce the possibility of error. Therefore a veridical space opens up for the emergence of facts that can construct clear ideas and concepts. In this way the outside world must be built up or constructed from atomic parts which cohere in the mind. The cogito cannot place the resolution or verification of an object on the outside world but must make the resolution only within the sphere of immanence. Somehow each representation that emerges in immanence must pass through towards transcendence, meaning each idea must come to match up with the external world. The cogito is of course that link between the immanent sphere and the transcendental. This is precisely why it must be that which is certain. The cogito must in some way be first anchored in immanence without recourse to the outside because to be dependent on sensuous body and world [*res extensa*] would introduce error. In order to achieve a resolution between immanence and transcendence without dependence on the external world, Descartes would of course require the idea of God. The possibility of perfection, which I am not, is the condition that enacts the cogito to activate as a substance. The idea of God provides the conditions for being-certain in the early modern Cartesian doctrine of mind. As is well known, Kant would thoroughly challenge the

42 See chap. 3, secs. 3,6,7.

ontological argument for God and fully secure Man's place as center.

11. De-worlding [*Ent-welt*] and Object [*Gegenstand*]

There is within cogitatio/cogitatum relation as certain representation an objectification that de-worlds or enticates objects. Not only are objects de-worlded but the representing *subjectum* stands detached from world the too. The *subjectum* in relation to the *ego* as the representation to self does so as the act of cogitation that turns away from the world as perceived. This turning away is necessary for the demand for certainty where the subject limits as best it can the contamination of ideas by not allowing the outside to impinge. This aspect of the objectification of self as subjectum is critical because the subjectum, as should be already clear, is the basis for scientific consciousness. Again, scientific consciousness purports objectivity, that is, freedom from the empirical, the bodily extended natural world. In this detachment from the world the subject claims autonomy from anything outside itself and in this way renders itself not likely to commit error or having the "ability not to err" and as such achieves authority in being objective. In this way "certainty is the authoritative mode of knowledge" manifest as scientific comportment as a style of knowing that one knows what one knows.[43] With this model of the human as Man valid thinking becomes only the sphere of purely mental acts. Purported detachment as the state of objectivity, is critical to certainty as the essence of whiteness. The appearance of objectivity is central to the phenomena of whiteness.

As has been the phenomenological method deployed throughout this dissertation, it becomes important to clarify the *how* of phenomena and not only the *what* of phenomena. The reduction gets us to the ego cogito which formally gets to the *what* of the grounded being in its substantiality. The explication of the phenomena of certainty on the other hand delivers to us the *how* of the cogito in it mode of being. It is in its mode of revealing that enables us to delve into the problem already posed: how can the subjectum possibly be self grounding? The modern self is consciousness as it has been shown, that is, *cogitare*. It is this self, consciousness of being consciousness, that is the only thing [*res*] that can be certain. Thinking then can only proceed on this footing in the mode of certainty. What does Heidegger mean when he says "*The essence of truth of man's natural behavior must be certainty*?" Here “truth” is the only thing left intact in the reduction, that is, consciousness that is consciousness of itself. Certainty is a mode of *being-in-the-world* as that being that is normatively defined as a representing consciousness. On the one hand scientific consciousness must move forward in a detached manner as the antithesis of embodied and situated existence. On the other hand scientific consciousness is itself always already *thrown*, meaning that despite its purported detached stance on being it is inhabited as a style of comportment which is

43 Heidegger, "Metaphysics as a History of Being", 20.

being-certain. Being-certain indicates the proper and ideal style of comportment of modern European man. European man's whiteness is existential or factical not only factual such as a color fact. Being-certain says more about whiteness than heritage or phenotype. The origin of being-certain and being-white is scientific consciousness.

12. Scientific Consciousness and *Being-Certain*

Science critics have done well to point out the problems of scientific objectivity starting with epistemology as its *a priori.*[44] The only problem with such an approach is that taken as a given epistemology confers its own ontology (which I have been working out here) which can escape description therefore allowing the natural attitude and epistemology to appear as the starting point of knowledge when existentially they are not. A critical approach to epistemology that does not explicate the ontology of science but its formal practices to shed light on racial and gender inequities may assert the following: The problem with modern scientific inquiry is that any given field is overrepresented by white men, who will tend to secure and promote their own, that is, white mens', interests and agendas which consistently keep out or oppress white women and racial minorities. In response a partial solution to this problem would be to make the scientific enterprise as such more inclusive by providing access to its training and research institutions. But does inclusiveness alter the normative ontological status of science? Does the ontological status of science and scientific consciousness already predelineate how a human should comport itself? I am certainly not arguing against such inclusiveness in science here, but for the interrogation of its basic concepts. Neither am I saying that any science founded upon the traditional metaphysical interpretation of the human is defunct. On the contrary history has shown the sciences, particularly the physical and natural, to be incredible successful as both Husserl and Heidegger concluded. It would seem that a critique of the lack of representative members of society in science and the critique of a science's basic concepts are altogether two entirely different approaches. An anthropology of science mentioned here, is sharply delineated from phenomenology because it keeps distinct the human domain of doing science, which is its explicit object, from that of the ontological status of science.

How can we then look at race in science if not primarily at something like the issue just raised? My argument is that the ontological status of science, which is grounded by the self-certainty of the subject, already makes at least two essential demands beforehand: what counts as legitimate science and who counts as its standard of measure.[45] Therefore both the object and the subject of science must move forward with certainty. In the space of scientific research the self-certain is manifest in the achievement of objectivity.

44 Cf., Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural?* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).
45 See chap. 2, sec. 9., "Man as the *a priori* of Science and Technology."

Recalling what was mentioned earlier, the achievement of an objective scientific fact requires a representation by a subject. This representation demands that the "I" be co-present with the object. As co-present with object the "I" is simultaneously conscious of itself as consciousness of an object. What's critical here is the meaning of "co-presence" is that the "I" and the subject exist in parallel in which the "I" stands guard over the subjects subjectivity, hence the indemnification of the object as cleared from error. To make this clearer if we take an everyday activity such as "cutting an onion" but as a requirement of the act(s) your self is split with one part of the self doing the cutting and the other part watching over the act. In any practical activity, at least, the act of detaching oneself from the situation will invariably lead to a loss of absorption in the activity. The peculiar demand that we gleaned from Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian reduction is that the "I" exists "conjointly and lasting and equal length of time" with the subject. The co-presence of "I" subject as consciousness of self is what indemnifies the object as clearly delineated and atomic thing.

The subject/object complex is covered over in scientific research as a part of its essential structure. What is decisive is not only that the subjectivity of the subject remain hidden in representation of an object but the subject is itself covered over as co-present. Also recalling that the "I" subject/Man, is the secular standard of measure (no longer the godhead) for any object in question. *Man as the standard of measure remains fundamentally hidden.* The objectivity of the object is the product of a set of psychological acts.[46] If the essence of the modern human is in someway captured in the special "I" subject's representations of an object then there is in an originary way an already racial aspect to scientific inquiry because it already normatively posits the subject of science as Man. This is only correct however if it has been demonstrated that the special "I" subject as Man is basis of the normative definition of the human. It was the goal of chapter 2 to outline this possibility.[47]

For white scientists "doing science" it becomes rather straightforward that the already invisible relation of subject to object remains seemingly neutral. If the identity of those subjects comporting themselves as scientists is a ethnically and sexually diverse, even better. The neutrality of scientific comportment is so because it remains familiar and reinforcing of an already understood background of the proper way the world should show-up. White scientists are natives in the world of science so to speak. Phenomena that would bring to the fore sciences own normativity are subtle and would otherwise go unnoticed except in situations where the familiar is made uncanny. The demand of self-certainty of the subject becomes a problem when the subject itself cannot be intelligible

46 This is precisely why Aron Gurwitsch in agreement with Cassirer correctly argues that the incunabulum of classical psychology is coeval with natural science because the quest for certainty through the reduction of error begins as a rudimentary psycho-physics.

47 See chap. 1., sec., 9.

as a subject who can free itself from dependency of the body, e.g., passions, relations with others, and the natural world. As Fanon has argued, a person of color is already suspect and must placate her impending dependencies that would, according to Descartes, lead to a defect in thinking.[48]

During my graduate studies a fellow graduate student and Fulbright scholar (placed in Egypt) had the fortune and privilege of attending a seminar in the sociology department at our home university. The topic of this seminar was the political economy of development in "third world" nations. The professor running the seminar and all the students in the seminar were white except for the Fulbright scholar and two other students. Most all the students had planned to conduct or completed qualitative field work and sociological research looking specifically at development issues in developing countries, hence their interest in the seminar. Each student throughout the course of the semester introduced their research area, hypotheses, and if possible, preliminary research data gathered. The Fulbright scholar, had already conducted research in Egypt and eagerly participated in discussions throughout the semester. Several other graduate students discussed their work in South East Asia, Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe etc. This seminar was according to the Fulbright scholar's account a great success in terms of the quality of discussion and overall knowledge he gained. However it became clear later in the semester that the questions being asked of the Fulbright scholar had a peculiar hidden, yet to many, innocent assumption. The assumption by several of the graduate students was that the Fulbright scholar was himself Egyptian though in actual fact he is Somali-American. This was only made clear to him when questions were directed to him in the seminar which assumed that he must be Egyptian. Why would other students regardless of their own race interpret the Fulbright scholar as being an Egyptian researching Egyptians? Is this simply a category conflation in which the Fulbright scholar's blackness/Arabness become intuitively linked with his field of study, Egypt? If the Fulbright scholar was white would he have been prereflectively and/or naturally interpreted as Egyptian?

It could be objected that the phenomenon of perceptual racial conflation in no way indicates a belief in a defect in his reasoning and specious research agenda. Because it can be argued that the interpretation of the Fulbright scholar as Egyptian is orthogonal to the interpretation of the quality of his reasoning and science. In a formal sense this objection is accurate because perceptually his blackness could be intuited as commensurable with Egyptian-Arabness of which there are Egyptians, such as Nubians, who perceptually show-up much like the Fulbright scholar. However in comparison in another case a fellow Finnish-American sociology student at this same university department, whose research site was Helsinki, Finland, reports almost never been

48 See chap. 6, no. 4.

perceived as Finnish by other U.S. Scholars. Inversely implicit in the assumption was that the Fulbright scholar, a man of African descent must have some direct extra-scientific relation or connection with his research site. Hidden deep in the natural attitudes of some of the seminar attendees was perhaps an understanding of his inability to be objective, that is, being detached and dispassionate about his research. Somehow he was interpreted by others as emotionally invested in his research in way the white graduate students seem incapable of doing.

What this phenomena reveals, is not that these students set out to project their racist will against the Fulbright scholar to subtly derail his project, but rather it demonstrates that in the background there was an already operating interpretation of how he exists in relation to the world more generally. Unfortunately at least within the enterprise of science this means that he is compromised before he even begins. Upon light reflection it would seem innocent to think that he was Egyptian and then to correct the assumption upon discovering facts that he was indeed not Egyptian. This is a casual everyday phenomenon, particularly in partially integrated institutions. However its everydayness and the ease in which we generally pass over it does not mean that these basic phenomena are not fundamental. In fact it is in this average-everyday practical engagements with others where the deep meanings of race exist. The perceptual phenomenality of race requires that in order to make assumptions or utter speech acts in which race is made explicit there needs to be an already grounded understanding of how humans show-up in the world. Therefore articulating something about race requires prior understanding of racial meaning. To the chagrin of the critic and the human scientist this dint of race remains opaque and hidden in the background only appearing in moments. The problem is the phenomena that may make whiteness intelligible at all recedes into the background "once we seek to articulate it into theses or statements" and in doing so "we enter into a labyrinth of difficulties and contradictions" as Merleau-Ponty has argued.

The hidden *a priori* of science is the historical subject Man which is easily passed over in the physical sciences because it seems inconceivable that Man's subjectivity is constitutive of the objectivity of a natural object, like an atomic particle. However in the historical human sciences this hidden *a priori* is not as easily neutralized because Man is the standard of measure of objects that are human. This is where the concept of Man most clearly rears its ugly head but it is by no means the initial and only domain in which this alerts us to a crisis.[49] It behooves any serious theorist of race to not only pay special

49 This should be an addendum to Foucault's key point in the last chapter of *Les Mots et Les Choses* in reference to the emergence of Man in the early 19th century within the human sciences where for the first time Man is both subject and object of positive scientific inquiry. Though a profoundly important argument that Man emerges as a problem within scientific discourse after the end of the 18th century in Europe does not mean that Man wasn't a problem prior to the emergence of the human sciences.

heed to race science but to the human sciences broadly construed precisely because of its covering over the *a priori* of Man which is its ground concept.

The nascent yet penetrating articulation of the subject Man as exemplified by the Cartesian reduction is one that achieves self-certainty solely through thinking as mental acts which through the calculation of representation, secures the objectification of any thing under inspection by de-worlding the object that is objectified, including itself (*subjectum*). Anything outside this prototype of the human as being-certain remains in effect uncertain, that is, not securely free from error, not objective, not autonomous, not an authority of any kind. Though we have been discussing scientific consciousness generally, self-certainty is not limited to the sphere of the science and techno-scientific praxis. Rather authoritative knowing as self-certainty has set itself up as a norm that colonizes other possible ways of being-human.

Self-certainty as the mode of authoritative knowing has become set of structuring dispositions for Man as the prototype of the human, paradoxically embodied in European man. Being-certain is paradoxical because in essence it is a specific mode of comportment that purports disassociation from the lived body. As we know traditional and contemporary thought holds the view that the lived body introduces error into representational thinking. Being-certain and racial whiteness are linked in a fundamental way. Whiteness is the phenomenal identity of certitude, in which one shows-up as that which is least likely to be assimilable to nature. What is critical about this paradox is that the phenomena of whiteness does not function in causal relation to the fact of being a white person of European descent. There is an ontological difference between the color or historical fact of white and *being-white*. Therefore a racial fact itself does not guarantee that one can be always be encountered as being-certain hence a full expression of whiteness. Whiteness or any type of racialness for that matter is always situated and contingent. Therefore relationship between whiteness and certitude is correlative and not causal. What I mean here is that a factually European white individual such as a poor white can show-up as not fully white because he does not express fully rational comportment or the "mark of the mental." Sociological analysis would likely interpret this as a problem of class which would be correct in the factual socioeconomic definition which is already indicated by the compound of “poor” and “white.” However a poor white's whiteness shows-up in the potential and actualization of being-certain which is compromised by lacking the presence of full rational comportment, that is, the capacity, exhibition, and rendering of reason. Still the poor white's capacity for reason is not in question as in the case of those that show-up as black or other nonwhite. We can then say that whiteness is the phenomenal measurement of certainty while on the opposite pole, blackness is the measurement of uncertainty. A poor white can “clean up his act” so to speak by changing his appearance, altering his accent, acquiring new tastes, attending the proper institutions. This would require the poor white to transplant himself into a new

world one that stands in stark contrast to his former one. In sum, acquiring and exhibiting a new style modeled upon scientific rational comportment in which the concept of Man prevails.

In the explication of some key aspects of the Cartesian reduction and this articulation of a new self I do not mean to argue that today we are still rigidly within the frame of the subject laid down by Descartes. Rather by highlighting certainty by way of Heidegger's analysis I have attempted in a preliminary way to shed light on certainty as a durable thread in the various epochal interpretative mutations human-being has undergone in the West. As I concluded in the last chapter the Machine stands as a new model of cognition and certitude but this is not a xenogenic development, rather it emerges from the concept of Man that prevailed in the modern epoch. Computation represents a more radical expression of self certainty because it advances at least two aspects of the concept of Man: disembodied reason and error reduction in reason. Thus far I have focused my critique of the cognitive determination of the human by looking at the mind model, sphere of immanence and the subject. The peculiar view of the human as a psycho-physical unity not only colonizes our prevailing interpretation of the subject (*res cogitans*) but the world interpretation more generally (*res extensa*) which includes the human body and the external environment. In the next chapter I will look at how the body is misinterpreted by both traditional and post-human views of embodiment by drawing upon the phenomenology of both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.

Chapter 5. **The Body and Technology**

> every appeal to 'objectivism' and 'realism' remains 'subjectivism'.[1] Martin Heidegger (1961)

In this chapter I will attempt to demonstrate the relationship between the concept of Man [*homo humanus*], whose essence Descartes characterized as the sphere of the mental [*mens sive animus*], and that of the external world. This relationship can be described as cognitive-technological because both the internal mind and the external world are believed to be governed by a similar set of natural physical laws. By cognitive, I simply mean mental representation or states that include reasoning, willing, desiring, believing that is grounded upon reflective consciousness where the "I" accompanies all the subjects representations.[2] Heidegger critically referred to this as *representational thinking.* Technology construed in the traditional way is posited as instruments for means-to-ends human activity or tools-for-use. Heidegger as well considered this common sense anthropological interpretation of technology, as mere instrument, to be also informed by traditional prejudices.[3] If we recall from chapter 1, Heidegger viewed our contemporary view of technology, what he termed, modern technology, as not only characterized by traditional prejudices but an even more severe and progressive form of modern representation which he referred to as calculative reasoning.

Drawing upon the pre-Socratic model Heidegger argued that technology in its originary essence is not only a medium for world disclosure but rather is itself a particular mode of disclosure when taken in the original Greek sense of *technē*.[4] For example, Albrecht Dürer's chisel discloses some truth in a piece of wood. Dürer's skill is to nurture forth meaningful shapes that are in a sense already present in the wood and only Dürer in his

1 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume IV*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco 1987), 141-42.

2 For the most part in this dissertation I have been working within the Continental tradition of German and French 20th century *existential phenomenology.* Within the analytic tradition of philosophy of mind the commonly held view is that cognition is the very basis of what it means to be human. Michael Thau writes, "[t]here are, of course, many different kinds of mental phenomena, but one important kind falls under the rubric of cognition; cognition involves thinking and the point of cognition is, at least in part, to yield truths, to give us true beliefs about the world. So, to the extent that we understand what's involved in believing, we'll have at least the foundation of an understanding of cognition." *Consciousness and Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

3 Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 13.

4 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", in *Poetry Language Thought* (New York: Harper Row, 1971), 59.

own skillful style can bring-forth these forms. In such an interpretation the chisel is not functionally a medium between mind and world but rather allows the wood to be intelligible in a way that cannot be seen with the naked eye, with one's bare hands or even another implement such as a pre-historic stone edge. To be sure, Dürer's chisel is ideally suited for his craft and art yet as a piece of equipment it simply plays a role in the activity of the disclosure of meaning.[5] How simple craft technology enables the disclosure of meaning is not self evident.

There is an important distinction between *world disclosure* and *world representation.* The latter concisely characterizes the tradition's quest for certainty while the former is related to the essence of wonder and it is the task of the phenomenologist to attempt to describe it. Merleau-Ponty argued that the human body is our primordial access to the world but we must suspend our prejudices to treat the body as an arbitrary substance or object-thing which the mind must animate. In the preceding chapters the focus has been largely how the Western tradition has defined the human as a psycho-physical unity and its internal mental processes. In this chapter I will demonstrate how this traditional view of the human also transforms the way in which the external world is interpreted, including the body.

It is not the goal of this chapter to draw a causal line of significance between race and technology by way of the body but it is important to clarify that race and technology refer to both the objective [*Körper*] and lived-body [*Leib*] in distinct and overlapping ways.[6] Often, race theory and technology studies scholarship assume only the objective body in their analysis and rarely make an attempt to describe the phenomenal body.[7] This is in part due to the fact that the meaning of the phenomenal body escapes the gaze of representational thinking in second-order reflection of science.

1. Cognitive-Technological Interpretation of Body and World

Modern technology within the Western worldview orients the meaning of the body and technology in a way that places meaning making (disclosure) on the cognitive (representation) terrain whether this is intellectual or empirical. In general the body and

5 Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", in *Poetry Language Thought,* 70.

6 See Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences*, 106-107. Husserl considered the objective body [*Körper*] to be the physical organism as system of processes and states observed by the natural sciences while the lived-body [*Leib*] he saw as our kinaesthetic body which has consciousness perceptual experiences. See also Aron Gurwitsch, *Human Encounters in the Social World,* trans. Fred Kersten (Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1979), 52-53.

7 See Paul Gilroy, *Against Race* (Cambridge: Belknap Harvard University Press, 2000); Emily Martin, "Body Narratives, Body Boundaries", in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 409-423. In Gilroy's or Martin's view the body is an object whether as anthropological or biological object.

technology merely mediates the relationship between mind and world as that between internal and external. An influential example of the intellectualist approach is seen with Michael Polanyi's theory of "tacit knowing." An equally popular contemporary and largely empiricist approach is seen with the "extended mind" thesis put forth by the cognitive scientist Andy Clark and the philosopher, David Chalmers. I will look at "tacit knowing" and the "extended mind" thesis in more detail at the end of this chapter.

What I will attempt to demonstrate is that the intellectualist and empiricist approaches to the body and technology are two sides of the same coin of a Cartesian vision of a mind extended out into an alien world. In this view everything external to mind, most disconcertingly including the body, are extended substances [*res extensa*]. Therefore our very general understanding of technology, such as simple tools or complex machines, is deeply corrupted by prejudices that we have of ourselves as subjects who are deemed to be cognitive all the way down and, as will be discussed with the concept of *extension*, cognitive all the way out. In the modern view technology loses its role in *world disclosure* and instead is inserted into *world representation*. This relationship as I have indicated elsewhere is normatively cognitive where object, others, and world must come to be represented by the subject in some fashion. As well this cognitive-technological relation will tend to be a causal one; such that an external object caused me to have an experience of a red apple or I have the concept of red and a concept of apple which I synthesize and project onto a given object. This view of the human, one held steadfastly by the second order reflection of science, interprets the human as extending outward to the world to clothe it with meaning. The prejudice of scientific consciousness is outlined by Dreyfus.

> Traditional ontology has always sought to understand the everyday world by finding something on the level of the occurrent [present-at-hand], such as substance, sense data, or representations in transcendental consciousness, that is supposed to be intelligible without reference to anything else, and then sought to show how everything else can be seen to be intelligible because it is built up out of these self sufficient elements.[8]

Here Dreyfus refers to traditional ontology (philosophical anthropology) as that which places centrality in the sphere of immanence as the origin of meaning making. As discussed in the previous chapter modern subjectivity is of a special sort, one where the "I" is co-present with the subjects thinking therefore naturalizing all interaction with the world. Naturalization posits self-sufficient objects, what Heidegger called present-at-hand [*Vorhandenheit*] or what Dreyfus translates as *occurrent*.[9] Technology in this

8 Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1991), 122.

9 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 99-103.

naturalistic view mediates this cognitive relation to the external world. In the Cartesian ontology, technology such as equipment, the human body, and the natural world are extended entities and as such necessitate cognition [*Erkennen*] to be intelligible as Heidegger remarks below; the ideal of which is mathematical disclosure.[10]

> in criticizing the Cartesian point of departure, we must ask which kind of Being that belongs to Dasein we should fix upon as giving us an appropriate way of access to those entities with whose Being as *extensio* Descartes equates the Being of the 'world'. The only genuine access to them lies in knowing [Erkennen], *intellectio*, in the sense of the kind of knowledge [Erkenntnis] we get in mathematics and physics.[11]

The problem for this modern view of the human is the following: how can the subject, closed off in the sphere of immanence, resolve its representations with the transcendent world? As I discussed in chapter 3, Descartes employed the idea of a veridical God to cross the chasm from immanence to transcendence.[12] What's critical here in our secular understanding is that no matter what the medium (God, language or technology) the passage from immanence to transcendence will tend to give ontological priority to the mental sphere because either must serve as an artificial medium for the subject to make contact with the world.

Merleau-Ponty's position is that humans are existentially already geared into the world by having a body, therefore, neither do we need to make contact with nor do we need to be inserted into the world through intellectual acts. In the traditional view technological equipment is seen self-evidently as an extension of mind.[13] Technology then becomes essential to the modern project of world mastery, as a tool of the will of Man. The cognitive-technological relation of Man and world is demonstrable from our most basic everyday interpretation of technology such as tool use to the complex systems of digital networked media.

I argued at the end of chapter 3 that cognitive scientists, particularly functionalists like Fodor and Pinker, see Turing machines and digital computation as an enormous leap forward toward the fulfillment of cognitive-technological interpretation of the human. As I've mentioned this narrow model of the human as mental reckoner is modeled by the digital computer.[14] Digital computers once construed as “thinking machines” give credence to traditional ontology by concretely demonstrating that propositional logical symbol manipulation can be extended into the world of things. What cognitive or mental extension demonstrates for the most part is a new variation on an old prejudice by taking

10 See chap. 4, sec. 8.
11 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 128.
12 See chap 3. sec. 2.
13 Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind", in *Analysis* vol 58 no 1. (1998): 7–19.
14 See chap. 3, sec. 4-5.

the mental out-of-the-head and placing it in the world. Inverting a metaphysical paradigm does not necessarily overthrow the previous one as Clark and Chalmers contend but rather reifies it. In effect, Clark and Chalmers claim that cognition is offloaded onto objects, particularly technological ones such as pocket calculators and most especially digital computers.[15] As I've demonstrated in chapter 3 a digital computer extends the power of an algorithm. The problem arises when the algorithm stands in for human thinking itself. While a human being can compute an algorithm in-the-head this type of thinking does not constitute the ground of human existence nor the highest form of humanity but rather only a very special type of human capability, one that is derivative of a more primordial way of *being-in-the-world*.

To begin to understand technology in a broad sense I will first look at the basic phenomenology of tool use by adapting Heidegger's phenomenology of equipment which reveals that practical comportment with tools is non-cognitive and non-conceptual. Drawing upon Heidegger's keen insights I will show how break-down cases (non-serviceability) of tools can lead to a natural belief in the objectivity of objects. In turn, I will introduce how our natural tendency to interpret a world of objective objects, what Husserl called the natural attitude [*natürliche- Einstellung*], provides a basis for what I have termed cognitive-technological interpretation of the human and world by the sciences which Merleau-Ponty called the prejudice of the world [*préjujé du monde*].[16] Then I will discuss how in lived-through practical experience, perceptual phenomena do not reveal transparent and determinant objective objects for us but rather opaque objects that are both *determinant* and *indeterminant*. The determinant and indeterminant aspects of objects encountered in the world reveal that human perceptual experience is transcendental in nature, meaning that our encounter with the world is not absolute and transparent but opaque.[17] Once I've introduced both the natural attitude and its phenomenological response I will lay out the problems the natural attitude poses for the interpretation of general tool use by looking at the phenomena of the blind man's cane. Here I will introduce the prejudice of a tool as a type of mental extension. I will offer Merleau-Ponty's response to *tool as extension* by drawing upon his view of bodily incorporation of technology. The prejudice of the traditional view is summarized by the slogan made famous by Marshall McLuhan to characterize new electronic media which he called “the extensions of man”, a view which is pervasive and taken as self evident.[18] With the basic problems of the cognitive-technological prejudices laid out I will then

15 See Clark and Chalmers, "The Extended Mind", 7–19.

16 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, trans. Fred Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 5; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. Colin Smith (New Jersey: Routledge 1962), 53.

17 See chap. 4, sec. 3.

18 See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press,1994).

critically take up N. Katherine Hayles' concept of bodily “encoding”, Polanyi's theory of "tacit knowing", and Clark and Chalmer's “extended mind” thesis.

2. Non-egological and Proto-theoretical Tool Use

Western civilization's basic understanding of technology is anthropocentric and instrumental. This means that the Western natural attitude towards everyday technologies are taken as implements or tools that are means-to-end, is also an instrumental attitude.[19] In fact the “means-to-end” instrumental attitude is a part of a more general tendency toward objectification of being. The instrumental view was for Heidegger an anthropological interpretation which places the subject as the sole source of meaning. However, as Heidegger had demonstrated as early as *Being and Time* and as late as *Holzwege,* the anthropocentric and subjectivist account of tool use is only part of the story of human-world interpretation. The instrumental attitude reveals for us a world of presumed objects as objectivities, meaning that we interpret tools, such as a hammer, as a discrete in-itself-for-us and as such as fixed being. In such a view this fixed entity is free from any type of variance such as manifold of perspectives in which to interpret its intelligibility. As well the horizon of any posited thing-in-itself is deemed to be negligible. This means that we naturally posit our hammer to be an entity we possess from a God's eye view. A hammer is a hammer as a “matter-of-fact” instrument with fixed properties that is self-sufficient. In sum, we objectify our world and it seems quite natural to do so. Yet is such an attitude defensible for science to presuppose?

In order to demonstrate the prejudice of the cognitive-technological determination of human-being it will be important to look at concrete phenomenological examples, one now made famous by Heidegger.[20] In what follows I will provide here a variation on Heidegger's phenomenology of equipment from *Being and Time*.[21] The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that we often naively deploy a logical analysis to explain how the world hangs together as a type of taken-for-granted common sense. Existential phenomenology has shown that cognitive activity as such is not indicative of most basic everyday phenomena such as tool use; meaning that when the phenomena are rigorously explicated cognition is not the fundamental basis for getting around in the world.

Let us take two experiences of hammering a nail into a wooden two-by-four board and call them experience A and B, where experience A precedes B in time while using the self-same physical hammer. In experience A, I hammer a nail into the two-by-four with deftness and skill, thereby driving the nail through the entire board with one stroke. By

19 See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

20 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 99-103.

21 Ibid., 99-103.

experience B I am a bit fatigued but I have a lot to get done before it gets dark and pick up the pace. With these aspects of duress, fatigue and rushing to complete the project before nightfall, the hammer becomes heavy and the board and nails become gray and fuzzy in the failing light of dusk. I begin to lose my grip on the activity and the mood changes in concert with the failing environmental conditions. In experience B, I miss the nail entirely hitting my hand which was holding in-place the two-by -four. Of course I am in extreme pain, I take the hammer and fling it across the yard screaming some expletives. Is a psychological explanation sufficient for both phenomena or does only experience B demonstrate a psychological state?

In experience A, the hammer as lived-through was not experienced as an objective hammer as such because my project of hammering was going well. In experience A, I was fully absorbed in my project therefore the hammer ceased to be a discrete object for me thereby withdrawing from explicit attention. It seems strange to say that the hammer withdraws because as an aspect of the physical world determined by causal laws of physics neither the hammer nor I disappear physically, they are both objective bodies [*Körper*] extended in space and time. In experience A the hammer resists being thematized in any way. In experience B nothing could be more different. In experience B I lost my absorption in the project of hammering and begin to thematize the hammer and the failure of the situation therefore a *reflective cogito* emerges, to use Sartrean language. In experience B I am no longer geared into the situation and the once skillful activity quickly deteriorates into haphazardness.

In experience B the hammer shows-itself to be this heavy and unwieldy thing in an overall background environment which impedes the possibility of hammering well in the failing light of dusk. In experience B, I must pay closer attention to the hammer, the nail, the board— the interior horizon of perception. In experience B the hammer shows-itself to have definite properties, heavy, awkward etc., and the nail and board lose their relation to the hammer and so on. In short, I must insert an objective relation into the project of hammering. What invades the experience of hammering-well is a reflective attitude, where one *represents* objectivities in a situation which is the marriage of two ill suited procedures. When mental representation invades what Dreyfus calls *absorbed coping,* it is likely that breakdown conditions will emerge and the project will go awry. The phenomenal distinction between experience A and B is in A there was no reflective ego to represent the hammer as heavy or unwieldy while in B there was the emergence of reflection, an ego appeared as a correlation between the "I" and hammer or subject and object. The self is in a sense split; in which the "I" stands outside the self that is doing the activity and represents to the self the situation enumerating all its discrete properties.[22]

I have briefly described two very different experiences in hammering with the self-same

22 See chap 4. sec. 12.

hammer. Though the experiences were radically different, the hammer is the self-same through out A and B. In our natural understanding of these now past events I will tend to interpret the hammer as the objective thing that was the hammer *qua* hammer. It does not occur to me that I phenomenally experienced the hammer in a transcendental way, meaning that phenomenologically even when we experience the hammer as having objective characteristics in the breakdown case we actually never had a one hundred percent sense datum presentation of the hammer in its totality as wholly physically objective; only perspectives on the self-same hammer. In short I did not and can never have total possession of the hammer from all perspectives as a complete atomic object.

3. The Natural and Cognitive Attitude

What the example in the previous section elucidates is that we perceptually never experience the world in objectivities yet we conclude that there must indeed be objective realities out in the world for us.[23] As I have already mentioned, Husserl called this taken-for-granted understanding of our world, the natural attitude. Interestingly, the natural objectification of entities or beings would be termed later by Heidegger as *present-at-hand* [*Vorhandenheit*]. What is critical in our natural attitude toward hammers and hammering is that in the breakdown case we take the objectivities revealed through the reflective stance on objects such as, unwieldy, heaviness, metallic, shiny, wooden handle, shape, etc. as the essential properties of the hammer - as a physical object – to be what the thing is. Once defined as a physical object we only interpret the objects as an *in-itself* thereby shedding its relation to the world in which is makes sense to do hammering, its *referential totality* and the project– an existential outlook. Furthermore the reflective attitude which allows for the thematization of the hammer with primary and secondary physical properties becomes proto-theoretical, what Husserl called the categorical attitude, which grounds a more developed theoretical attitude. The theoretical attitude in turn can lead to the radical detached attitude of sciences (second order reflection). Below is a depiction, albeit in a linear fashion, of the escalation of thematization from basic reflective awareness to the scientific consciousness.

reflective → proto-theoretical attitude → theoretical attitude → scientific attitude

As I've mentioned with the traditional prejudice to see only discrete objects it becomes very natural to slip into seeing the hammer a simply an object for use, that is a tool for use as an instrument, no more and no less. Therefore the instrumental view of technology as a means-to-ends is grounded by the natural attitude. While it is not surprising to take this as matter of factuality we may miss the tool in its more comprehensive relation to our projects, that is, tool-use in its facticity. This means how the hammer shows-itself in

23 See Martin Heidegger, "*The Essence of Truth*", trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum Press, 2002), 150.

my embodied experience in which the tool becomes embodied by withdrawing from reflective consciousness.

From the point of view of classical psychology and its naturalistic outlook hammering appears as a line of causation in which the mind's will is extended into the world causing one to extend the hammer from the hand and when swung from the pivot point of the shoulder through the bend of the elbow towards the nail in a fixed position, the nail is driven into the wood through successive repetitions of the identical movement. The hammer in this physical description is a bit of extension from the body which is itself an extended thing. The mind's cognitive process of hammering requires a series of calculations that are computed in a timely manner. In this logical view hammering is then a psycho-physical process calculation and causation that act upon the external world.

In our most basic and taken-for-granted sense technological things or tools such as a hammer maintain an objective position in relation to human action. What I mean here is we naturally take the hammer to be a wholly distinct and discrete object from and for the carpenter. In other words, at all times and at all places (spatio-temporally) the hammer is an independent object-thing. The truth of this is beyond question for the physicist of the natural world but more importantly this truth is more essentially our belief about the world. What I've tried to show is that the taken-for-granted or naturalistic view of our hammer is in-itself not wrong as a tool-for-use however this does not describe the phenomena itself only the product of reflection.

When in use, the hammer ceases to exist as a discrete object in the situated nexus of the absorbed project of hammering. Heidegger's trenchant explication of the phenomena of hammering reveals that the hammer is ready-to-hand [*Zuhandenheit*] where the subject to object relation plays no role in skillful activity. Therefore not only does the hammer (object) withdraw from explicit attention but egological consciousness (subject) as well. The whole relation of subject (carpenter) cognizing object (hammer) withdraws. This absorbed and skillful hammering cannot be explained by mental representations because the co-presence of the “I” that guarantees the representation is represented is itself not empirically present. This does not mean that understanding of the situation is lost in the non-egological constitution of meaning. Heidegger writes that "immediate self-losing perception, carried along by what is perceived, is both non-conceptual and no-regarding. By paying no explicit attention to being, nor grasping it conceptually, we are free to lose ourselves in what we encounter."[24] Heidegger stresses that the absorbed flow of a skillful activity, such as that of the master carpenter hammering a nail, is non-conceptual, meaning that one need not synthesize concepts in order to act nor does one need to “regard” or reflect on what one is doing in that situation.

What does it mean when a natural belief in a world of discrete entities colonizes or

24 Ibid., 150.

"invades consciousness?" Klaus Held very clearly defines the way in which the natural attitude invades our interpretation of self and world by positing complete objects for us.

> the existence of the object...according to my understandable belief—transcends its subjectively situated appearance; it exists "in itself", "objectively." [sic] In this way, an existential judgment about objects constantly— tacitly, so to speak— invades consciousness in the natural attitude, saying: they are, that is, objects have an existence that is independent of both subject and situation.[25]

Held argues that the natural attitude in effect grounds and is the starting point of what Dreyfus characterized as traditional Cartesian ontology, where objects are seen as self-sufficient. It is the natural attitude which is the starting point of the sciences. Thus the natural attitude often goes unquestioned by the positive human sciences, humanistic studies and the traditional philosopher. Once the natural attitude is comprehensively taken up by the sciences it becomes a general thesis called the *préjujé du monde* as a naturalistic world attitude of cause and effect that can be further reduced to its mathematico-physical properties and relations. Today these functional relations have surpassed the mathematico-physical, in the sense of Galilean physics, and are now interpreted as Turing computable. Husserl's critique of naturalism, an outcome of the allowing the natural attitude to colonize being, holds as securely for modern computation as it did for Galilean mathematization of being. Computationalism is then derivative of naturalism and in fact they are in essence interchangeable terms for the scientific world-view.

The tendency that Held reveals in our everyday being with things is there is always the possibility for stepping back when the serviceability of tools or things fails thereby conditioning the emergence of what I have called a proto-theoretical attitude toward things. In this proto-theoretical attitude the tool emerges out of absorption into a breakdown condition of the kind that Heidegger and most recently Dreyfus have made pains to explicate by rigorously paying attention to the phenomena of skilled practice.[26]

In our example, the hammer emerges into a discrete object (*present-at-hand*). Husserl called this a "doxic conversion" where an objectifying relation comes about through an emergent cognitive subject.[27] The cognitive subject and the objectivity of the object emerge coevally and are absolutely co-dependent. There is a movement from pre-

25 Klaus Held, "Husserl's Phenomenological Method", in *The New Husserl* ed. Donn Welton (Bloomington, IN : Indiana University Press , 2003), 18.

26 See Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise", APA Pacific Division Presidential Address 2005 Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association 79:2 (November 2005).

27 Edmund Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences,* trans. David Carr (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University, 1970), 12.

reflective absorption to the proto-theoretical to the detached theoretical and finally, to the scientific attitude. The general thesis of the natural attitude conflates the pre-reflective experience with the reflection on experience or the meaning content of the act of reflection on the pre-reflective experience. What is key is the reflection comes to stand-in-for the immediately straightforward perceptual phenomena. Therefore the product of reflection— a set of objective properties of an object is assumed to be part of the lived-through phenomena.[28]

Detached reflection is the central act-character of the scientific reduction. The crisis for science is that in its incredible success the technological character of science, marked by a radical detachment, comes to overdetermine the phenomenon itself.[29] The natural attitude of everyday life or what Heidegger called *average everydayness* is then not epiphenomenal to the scientific method but rather constitutive of it.[30]

The pervasive concept of *extension* that I have introduced in relation to tool or equipment use relies on this very naturalism that Husserl warned against. The idea that technology is an extension of the human body such as a hammer or a blind man's cane reveals this deep prejudice of naturalism. Husserl writes, "naturalism looks at man as filled-out extension and thus considers the world in general only as nature in a broader sense."[31] It is of course from Descartes that we receive our first formal interpretation of corporeal reality as self-sufficient substance external to mind. The West's general attitude toward technology is one of a naturalistic view of human being as fundamentally a cognitive subject that is co-extensive with a world of objects.

The question that I will develop further is the following: is the prejudice of extension part and parcel of a larger prejudice which believes that all human activity is cognitive? Put more simply: is an overdetermined cognition at the root of extension? As Merleau-Ponty and especially Heidegger have shown human cognitive activity is only one aspect of being human. Merleau-Ponty has shown in his phenomenology that perception founds [*Fundierung*] the possibility of any cognizing activity or proto-theoretical activity such as pointing, categorial intuition or demonstratives, predicative or propositional judgments, even language in general.[32]

28 Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1958), xxix.
29 See chap. 2. sec. 9., note 77.
30 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 69.
31 Husserl*, Crisis of European Sciences,* 315.
32 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 174.

4. Transcendental Clue of Perception Explicated through Intentional Analysis

We now have a better understanding of the tendency to accept as self evident the belief that the world is comprised of a collection of self-sufficient objects. In spite of our belief the natural attitude itself remains unthematized in our everyday life, again in what Heidegger called our average-everydayness. However what phenomenological intentional analysis shows us couldn't be more different. The world is not experienced as a collection of mere objects each requiring a a private cognitive subject to make them intelligible. Intentional analysis shows that objects in perceptual experience are both determinate and indeterminate. To be clear, perception and sensation are mutually exclusive because perception indicates the transcendental nature of encounter with the world in which one is situated in which meaning is always immediately manifest. Sensation on the other hand refers to physiological notion of the body as an mechanical apparatus with discrete data acquisition and informational processing capabilities where meaning is a by product of some mental calculation.

By the very nature of perception we can only have a partial perspective on an object at a given moment and as we move closer to the object in question the *un-sensed* sides of the object come into fulfillment or not (in which case we adjust our grip on the object). By unsensed I mean from the perspective of biological physical science in which no discrete and actual visual sense data is registered by the retina and the visual sensory system. What's more the unsensed sides of the object such as a computer desk, that is, the bottom, back, and inside of the desk as I view it from the front are co-perceived with the sensed side. As I move around the desk the back comes into fulfillment as the side that was once unsensed now becomes seen and now evident in actual sense data. From the physiological and biological perspective the unsensed sides should play no role because they are not registered as data points by the visual system. Yet in straightforward experience we perceive more than the physical light spectrum hitting the retina tells us. How can this be?

The sensed and un-sensed parts of the desk are not just implied together but experienced as a gestalt. This gestalt in perception should not be construed as divine intuition or a God's eye view. What's more, the other objects that exist in relation to the desk provide not only referential meaning (book case in reference to pens, writing tablet, computer etc.; as a whole make a study) but more basically their own perspectives on the desk itself. Merleau-Ponty remarks "thus every object is a mirror of all others." What could Merleau-Ponty possibly mean by this remark?

> When I look at the lamp on my table, I attribute to it not only the qualities visible from where I am, but also those which the chimney, the walls, the table can 'see'; but back of my lamp is nothing but the face which it 'shows' to the chimney. I can therefore see

> an object in so far as objects form a system or a world, and in so far as each one treats the others round it as spectators of its hidden aspects which *guarantee* [my emphasis] the permanence of those aspects. Any seeing of an object by me is instantaneously reiterated among all those objects in the world which are apprehended as co-existent, because each of them is all that the others 'see' of it.[33]

Merleau-Ponty is not imputing a vulgar form of anthropocentrism to office furniture here but arguing that the other objects such as the sofa in front of the desk and the bookcase to the right of the desk contribute their perspective to the disclosure of the desk by the creation of shadow, reflection of sunlight, smell of paper, etc.. These objects form a system of references which in turn makes each one intelligible as what it is. For me, the un-sensed side of the desk is the side facing the sofa. In fact every un-sensed side of the desk is a side facing and presenced in the face of something else. Even though in this instance my attention is focused on the desk, the sofa plays its part in the intelligibility of the desk. No doubt it seems peculiar that an inert object such as a sofa that exists on the exterior horizon of the perception of the desk would play such an integral role to the constitution of its meaning yet these objects are all within the phenomenal field and a part of consciousness whether explicit or not.

To reiterate Merleau-Ponty's critical point, things form a system of meaning for me therefore the perception of the desk as part of a totality is itself already meaningful. This is why a computer desk floating in the middle of the ocean loses its referential meaning to the home in which it was situated. A computer desk floating in the ocean is factually a desk yet factically its whole referential meaning from that of being a computer desk in my study and its reference to the practice of writing, surfing the world wide web etc. is de-referenced. Floating in the ocean the computer desk becomes something for shipwreck survivors to float on to surf waves with but not for completing and unfinished novel. So an artist's depiction of a computer desk floating in the ocean replete with computer, lamp, book, pen etc.— is simply absurd because the depiction makes uncanny the everyday of computer desks of which we generally do not take a theoretical attitude towards. This is perhaps an essential truth about the work of art.

What's clear in straightforward lived experience of the manifold is that I do not experience the desk as a discrete atomic part but as a whole, as a figure on a ground. The desk is situated within my study which is within my flat which is within a building which is on a street and so on. The desk is a part of a referential totality of significance which means the desk is only intelligible within reference to this totality, which is comprised of books, chair, computer, lamp, paper, pens etc. This referencing is non-explicit meaning that I am not deliberately aware of each relation, yet each referencing relation plays a fundamental role in my project(s) and the constitution of a world I inhabit with

33 Ibid., 68.

familiarity. This referential totality might seem obvious to the anthropologist yet what it indicates is that an object as intended is never intended in isolation but always within a horizon and within one human world.

These acts present us with the transcendental character of perception in which perception of an object always contains more than is given in actual sense data. This "more" of the transcendental character invites us to further anticipate other possible or potentialities in experiencing the desk. Still with the lack of objectivating fixity of perception in a God's eye view we as human beings also have a powerful ability to get an optimal grip on objects which Husserl called the *teleological* nature to move toward the thing and achieve a better and better normalizing stability in our world. The teleological aspect of perception provides perhaps the determinant feature of the object yet the adumbrational (perspectival) nature of perception in which we experience only a partial aspect or part of the object reveals the perceptual act as also indeterminate. What could be seen as the paradoxical nature of perception; that what I see is both determinant and indeterminate is in fact not a paradox at all. The intrinsic *statelessness* of perception allows for continual optimization. Therefore the transcendental, the more to never be exhausted, guarantees further optimization and inexhaustible possibilities to be.

To be clear, my beliefs about objects in my world are related to my perception of them but are not reducible to perception. Neither does the intelligibility of an object hold a one-to-one causal relation between the perception and the belief. The transcendental clue of perception, that there is more than sensed, the anticipatory, and the unclear horizon of the thing as continually unfolding and never completed, demonstrates that in the most basic aspect of *being-in-the-world* we have as humans integrated with our world the capacity for error and for readjustment. It is our capacity to integrate error, not our ability-not-to-err (*posse non errare*), that affords a richer experience of our world. This is why when we experience a visual illusion it is not so much an error in the processing of information indicating the inability for human perception to compute a scene but rather our body attempting to get a more and more refined grip on the outer horizon of our perceptual field.

> If, on a sunken path, I think I can see, some distance away, a broad, flat stone on the ground, which is in reality a patch of sunlight, I cannot say that I ever see the flat stone in the sense in which I am to see, as I draw nearer, the patch of sunlight. The flat stone, like all things at a distance, appears only in a field of confused structure in which connections are not yet clearly articulated. In this sense, the illusion, like the image, is not observable, which means that my body has no grip on it, and that I cannot unfold it before me by any exploratory action. And yet, I am capable of omitting this distinction and of falling into illusion. . .The fact is that correct and illusory vision are not distinguishable in the way that adequate and inadequate thought are: as thought, that

> is, which is respectively consummate and lacunary. I say that I perceive correctly when my body has a precise hold on the spectacle, but that does not mean that my hold is ever all-embracing; it would be so only if I had succeeded in reducing to a state of articulate perception all the inner and outer horizons of the object, which is in principle impossible.[34]

It is therefore incorrect to see illusion as an indication of the unreliability of perception. Viewing perception as always somehow suspect in simply a reification of the old prejudice which distinguishes between appearance and reality. Illusion should be taken as constitutive of perceptual experience and the fact that we are incapable of an "all-embracing" God's eye view the world.

5. Incorporation vs. Extension

In his *Phenomenology,* the chapter entitled "The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motility" Merleau-Ponty demonstrates that a traditional account of the body and technology fails to described the phenomena of embodied existence. Merleau-Ponty argues that in our everyday practical engagements in the world, not only does the subjectivity of the subject and objectivity of technology withdraw, as Heidegger demonstrated in the mode of read-to-hand but more remarkably technology such as a hammer becomes incorporated into our "corporeal schema" or body schema.[35] In lived-through experience of hammering the body appears as the third term between subject and object where a primordial pre-objective intelligence is manifest, one which grounds objective and theoretical thought itself. One of Merleau-Ponty's most convincing examples of this phenomena of incorporation is his description of the blind man's cane.

> The blind man's stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, increasing [my translation] the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight. In the exploration of things, the length of the stick does not enter expressly as a middle term: the blind man is rather aware of it through the position of objects than of the position of objects through it. The position of things is immediately given through the extent of the reach which carries him to it, which comprises besides the arm's own reach the stick's range of action. If I want to get used to a stick, I try it by touching a few things with it, and eventually I have it 'well in hand', I can see what things are 'within reach' or out of

34 Ibid., 296-297.

35 In *Being and Time* Heidegger discusses a phenomena similar to incorporation writing: "When for instance, a man wears a pair of spectacles which are so close to him distantially that they are 'sitting on his nose', they are environmentally more remote from him than the picture on the opposite wall...Equipment for seeing - and likewise for hearing, such as a telephone receiver - has what have designated as the inconspicuousness of the proximally ready-to-hand." *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 141.

> reach of my stick. There is no question here of any quick estimate or any comparison between the objective length of the stick and the objective distance away of the goal to be reached. The points in space do not stand out as objective positions in relation to the objective position occupied by our body; they mark, in our vicinity, the varying range of our aims and our gestures. To get used to a hat, a car or a stick is to be transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of our own body.[36]

Here Merleau-Ponty discusses the *generative* nature of perception and experience with equipment. Initially for the novice the cane (stick) may reveal some objective properties of objects encountered, because it comes up, for the first few times, abruptly against things thereby revealing itself as unwieldy from the hand to the thing tapped on. As Merleau-Ponty notes the objects encountered provide awareness of the cane therefore the cane does not in-itself reveal the objects. As one develops skill with the cane, things tapped on or dragged across no longer reveal this object as banged into or this abrupt steep dip down off an unknown thing but rather the cane discloses the gravelly road and the painted lines of the crosswalk and the smooth cement sidewalk, that is, a contiguous world of rich meaningful texture that is full of intelligible references and relations.

As the experience with the cane becomes normalized and optimal the meaning of things encountered takes on a whole new significance. Once achieving an optimal grip with the world the cane ceases to be a cane as a clumsy thing in a alien environment. Most radically Merleau-Ponty describes this as the *incorporation* of the cane into our body schema. The body schema is the human body's tacit and reflexive sense of itself in the world.[37] The body schema and its tacit cogito should not be confused with physiological proprioception because the latter only interprets the human body as the ability to compute spatio-temporal coordinates as bio-feedback without semantic meaning. The theory of the body schema on the other hand not only provides a basis for reflexively understanding of our motile body in space but that these very bodily engagements with the world disclose meaningful things for us in a unitary fashion. Perception is not mechanistic but manifestly meaningful. Therefore embodied perceptual meanings are not latent phenomena as would be the case if we followed classic physiology. In this way our natural attitude toward the cane as extended thing that is involved in a pyscho-physical process no longer coheres. The psycho-physical process cannot account for bodily incorporation of the cane as such because it forces cognition to mediate between self and world.

To understand the phenomenology of incorporation of technology generally one must

36 Ibid., 143. In the 1962 Colin Smith translation, the word *augmente* is translated problematically as "extending". I've translated it more appropriately here as 'increasing' or enlarging the scope.

37 In chapter 6 I will further discuss the body schema in relation to race.

suspend the natural attitude of objectification of objects most especially that of treating the body as ontologically equivalent to the material world. In equivalence, body [*res coporea*] and world [*res extensa*] are treated as uniform substance, as co-extensive. Once equalized, body and world, become primarily subject to psycho-physical laws which is a grave error.[38] If one does not suspend the *préjujé du monde* we can only see our body and material things extended from them, such as a cane, as sensor-neural apparatus that are causally linked up with mind/brain complex. Take the markedly different understanding of the blind man's cane by the anthropologist Edmund S. Carpenter, a co-author and colleague of Marshal McLuhan.

> Just as a blind man's cane extends his body, providing information a hand or foot might provide, so electric media extend our senses, to a global scale. Our electronic nerve endings now reach every part of the world and we function as humans acting on sense data provided by these electronic extensions.[39]

The implications of the cane as model for electronic media will be developed later on in this section but as a first step it is important to work out bodily extension before we can move into mental extension. For Carpenter (as for McLuhan) the blind man's cane can only extend out from the body as a sense receptor or apparatus. The body and the cane are two of kind substance that sense data that is meaningless until brought under concepts in the mind. In this example we see how this interpretation of technology takes on aspects of the Cartesian view of body and world as co-extended substance and aspects of Lockean empiricism which sees the body as a bundle of sensations that are dead in and of themselves. Of course the concept of extension figures prominently in Carpenter and McLuhan's as the subtitle of perhaps the most famous text on media studies, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.* The idea that technologies are extensions of mind to body to world misses the phenomena of meaningful disclosure one achieves with things such as our earlier example of hammering for the master carpenter. Like the blind man's cane the hammer becomes incorporated into our body's tacit intelligence of the world. However we do not absorb the hammer as substance into our biology but rather we incorporate the hammer into our perceptual system. Perceptual consciousness

38 More recently we see a similar problem of ontological equivalence with the science studies theory of Actor Network Theory of Bruno Latour and his concept of actor and the concept of the cyborg in Donna Haraway. In both concepts humans, machines, and animals (more strongly in Haraway) are made to be ontologically equivalent, this is done so to avoid the danger of anthropocentrism yet this is no real solution to the problem of subjectivism by means of annihilating the distinction between human intentional consciousness and that of non-human. See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

39 Edmund Carpenter quoted in David Burmester, "Electronic Media: Media Probes", *The English Journal* 72, No. 4 (1983): 95-97.

is intelligence without cognition. The hammer does not receive sense data from the head of the nail and then transfer that sense data through the hammer's head, down the shaft into skin of the hand then through the nervous system as data points to then be brought together by the brain and mind. Carpenter's concept of extension relies on this faulty notion of empiricist cognition. As well the concept of extension assumes an already prefigured objective world for us with only causal relations however as Merleau-Ponty says there is a "pre-objective world" prior to and the condition of the possibility of the objective world.[40]

6. Extension as a Basic Prejudice of the Cognitive Attitude

The naturalistic belief that technology is an extension of the human body is nothing new. However what grounds this naturalistic belief, that is, the prejudice of cognitivism, is little examined. We see most clearly the naturalization of extension and cognition as far back as empiricism of Locke and Hume. It is well known that for Locke and for Hume (who faithfully follows Locke here) that the formation of ideas from the simplest to the most complex are first caused by sense impressions or sensations.[41] Locke argued that ideas have an origin in sense experience and are not innate as Descartes believed.[42] Similar to the phenomenologist the empiricist believes that all knowledge stems from experience but this point is where the similarities end. According to the empiricists all ideas have an origin in sensations. Each atomic or discrete sense unit is built up to construct simple ideas and then those “simples” are built up further to form complex ideas and so on. These impressions leave their mark on the mind and through repeat experience come to provide knowledge about the world. The sensory impression as a discrete unit is itself lacking in any meaning. It is the cognitive apparatus of the mind that makes intelligible the data by building or constructing them up from an atomic unit all the way up to knowledge. The notion of sense impressions or sensations is a durable within psychology and physiological accounts of perception. Merleau-Ponty argues that both classical psychology and physiology make the same error by adopting the empiricist theory of sensation in the example of the “constancy hypothesis.”

40 See Merleau-Ponty's epigraph at the beginning of chap. 6.

41 In his *Treatise,* Hume proposes the following: "all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent." David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* 2nd edition, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978), 5.

42 In his *Essay* Locke poses the following question: "When a Man begins to have any *Ideas* [sic]? I think, the true Answer is, When does he first has any *Sensation.* For since there appear not to be any *Ideas* in the Mind, before the Senses have conveyed any in, I conceive that *Ideas* in the Understanding, are coeval with *Sensations*; which is such an Impression or Motion, made by some part of the Body, as produces some Perception in Understanding." John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), 117.

> Physiology, to which the psychologist turns as to a higher court of appeal, is in the same predicament as psychology. It too first situates its object in the world and treats it as a bit of extension. Behaviour is thus hidden by the reflex, the elaboration and patterning of stimuli, by a longitudinal theory of nervous functioning, which establishes a theoretical correspondence between each element of the situation and an element of the reaction. As in the case of the reflex arc theory, physiology of perception begins by recognizing an anatomical path leading from a receiver through a definite transmitter to a recording station: equally specialized. The objective world being given, it is assumed that it passes on to the sense-organs messages which must be registered, then deciphered in such a way as to reproduce in us the original text. Hence we have in principle a point-by-point correspondence and constant connection between the stimulus and the elementary perception. But this 'constancy hypothesis' conflicts with the data of consciousness and the very psychologists who accept it recognize its purely theoretical character.[43]

In the empiricist theory of knowledge as cumulative sensations the *transcendental* nature of perception is missed completely. Again as both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty stress there is more *intended* in perceiving than is given in positive sense data evidence.[44] The empiricist dilemma of the sensed and unsensed was quickly glossed in the previous section but it is important to return to it again here. Merleau-Ponty argues that in the basic example of seeing an object in perception there is a perceived side of the object and its un-sensed side. For example in the perception of a house the front is seen but not the back in direct *sense datum,* that is, physical optical data received by the retina. However the backside of the house is co-constitutive of the front side because in perception we experience the whole house as that which is something to walk into or something to inhabit. The un-sensed side is in fact objectively not a part of empiricist thesis of sense impressions because the un-sensed side cannot, in this physicalist account, impress something into consciousness which is not a sense datum as such. There is then a deeply held positivism in empiricism or more correctly positivism is grounded by a deeply held empiricism. In the "how" of perception, not the what of perception, the perceptible side and the apperceptible side are co-percieved which, as I've mentioned in the earlier section, sets the stage for an experience which is both determinant and indeterminant and ultimately we "must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon."[45]

In Merleau-Ponty's critique of empiricism he notes that the empiricist view holds that the sensation is a quality of consciousness and fails to see it as the quality of the thing perceived. So for example, I have a conscious experience of the red brick not a

43 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 7.

44 Cf. Jitendra Mohanty writes in his essay "Perceptual Meaning": "The way the perceptual object is given hides, rather than showing, the object meaning distinction." Topoi 5 (1986): 131-136.

45 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 6.

consciousness of red, as a sense quality alone. The redness of the brick exists on the side of the object not in my mind as an impression, *qualia*, or some ideal concept. Though the redness is a real part of the brick, as manifest red is itself not perceived as a singular property. When I clearly see a red brick on the ground in front of me I see it as a gestalt or whole. All its parts do not exist independently from its being.[46] In experience there is never pure red of the physical color spectrum. I never experience red in this physico-chemical sense. Therefore the red brick does not first come to me as a meaningless bundle of sensations nor, in the intellectualist account, through a synthesis of concepts such 'red' and 'brick'. In straightforward perception I experience only the redness of the apple, of the fire truck, of my 1968 Pontiac Firebird. Merleau-Ponty advocates a type of *transcendental realism* because the color red is intrinsically a part of the whole thing as it is perceived.[47] The redness of the apple is a dependent part of the apple's givenness as it is constituted in perception.

> Objective thought...knows only alternative notions; starting from actual experience, it defines pure concepts which are mutually exclusive: the notion of *extension,* which is that of absolute externality of one part to another, and the notion of *thought* which is that of being wrapped up [*recueilli*] in himself...the notion of *cause* as a determining factor external to its effect, and that of *reason* as a law of intrinsic constitution of the phenomenon... The perception of our own body and the perception of external things provide an example of *non-positing* consciousness, that is, of consciousness not in possession of fully determinant objects...These phenomena cannot be assimilated by objective thought.[48]

Only in objective thought, when one is in the natural and cognitive attitude (present-at-hand) can I force a separation of red as a optico-retinal datum. In the second order reflection of science I can take this further and extract the physico-chemical properties of the red. Both natural reflection and the second order reflection of science remain distinct

46 The meaning and the object are given immediately to me in a situation. For the University protester the red brick is something that in the moment of protest affords picking up and throwing through the Chancellor's window. The protester need not reflect on its separate properties and make some calculation. The red brick does not first come to the protester as a meaningless bundle of sensations nor through a synthesis of concepts, such as "red + three dimensional rectangle = brick".

47 Transcendental realism here is not to be confused with the Husserl's indictment of Descartes in *Cartesian Meditations* in which he wrote, "Unfortunately these prejudices were at work when Descartes introduced the apparently insignificant but actually fateful change whereby the ego becomes a substantia cogitans, a separate human "mens sive animus"? and the point of departure for inferences according to the principle of causality in short, the change by virtue of which Descartes became the father of transcendental realism, an absurd position, though its absurdity cannot be made apparent at this point." Of course, Husserl proposed transcendental idealism against a realism which converts the ego to substance.

48 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 49.

from the embodied phenomenon of redness of such and such.

In what follows it will be important to make a distinction between sensation and perception because the two are in no way interchangeable. A sense datum as a unit of experience is unitary, discrete and atomic. A sense datum as atomic in and of itself is meaningless. Some operation must be performed to consolidate these sense atoms into meaningfulness. This must invariably lead to brain information processing and a cognitive attitude. Therefore a sense datum must be summed in some way to have meaningfulness to give way to a feeling of pain, heat, cold, redness etc. A sensation as a discrete unit in this strict sense is meaningless while a perception is always manifestly meaningful in some way. For example the biological function of my hand provides just this physiological thesis of perception. In the empiricist view there must be in my hand a cascading set of receptors or nerve endings that can pick up each sense datum and send those discrete impulses, say of the texture of the chalk board to the brain where the sense points are concatenated to form the lively feeling of dry smooth yet gritty roughness of the chalk board. In this view there is a tight causal chain between sense impression caused by an external object through my extended arm into my mind. The sensation must then provide a constant one-to-one relation between the object sensed and the mind which classical psychology calls the "constancy hypothesis."[49]

The thesis of technology as simply extensions of the human is played out mostly clearly in McLuhan but are perhaps even implicated as metaphor in the postmodern view of the *cyborg* most notably in N. Katherine Hayles' view of the post-human. To be fair, Hayles rhetorically points to incorporation as distinct from cognition but drastically misses the mark by defining incorporation as mere movement or habit as repetitive response to stimuli. When in fact incorporation of media, e.g., keyboard or cane, is bringing the technology into the body schema and as such becomes temporarily a part of the schema but not part of the biological organism, through what Merleau-Ponty called, our *tacit cogito*[50]. Incorporation is then essential to bodily intelligence. However Hayles misinterprets Merleau-Ponty by unwittingly providing an empiricist tinged account.

I mean by *incorporating practice* an action that is encoded into bodily memory by

49 Cf. no. 41-42. Hume argues that a sense impression "exactly represent" that which the mind has an idea of, hence a constancy between the sense and the idea. Merleau-Ponty writes critically, "in principle a point-by-point correspondence and constant connection between the stimulus and the elementary perception. But this 'constancy hypothesis' conflicts with the data of consciousness and the very psychologists who accept it recognize its purely theoretical character."

50 Cf. Chapter 6 where I discuss Merleau-Ponty's theory of the *tacit cogito*. The tacit cogito is not to be misconstrued with something like Polanyi's "tacit knowing" which implies theoretical knowing and ultimately epistemological concerns. Polanyi's "tacit knowing" must invariably make recourse to mental knowing because "tacit knowing" is according to him simply a covered over and more automatic mental operation. Merleau-Ponty treats perceptual knowing and cognition on two separate levels of consciousness though not mutually exclusive.

> repeated performance until it becomes habitual. Learning to type is an incorporating practice, as both Connerton and Merleau-Ponty observe. When we say that someone knows how to type, we do not mean that the person can cognitively map the location of the keys or can understand the mechanism producing the marks. Rather, we mean that this person has repeatedly performed certain actions until the keys seem to be extensions of his or her fingers.[51]

What's striking about Hayles' account is how she deploys repetition, habit, encoding and extension in much the same way that empiricists describe the build up of sense impressions.[52] Hayles' account exchanges sensation for information by relying on terms such as "encoding" into memory which sound very much like Locke's account of sensations which are impressed upon the mind.

While she is absolutely correct that an experienced typist does not have a "cognitive map" of the keyboard, she reduces experience to mere habitual movement thereby jettisoning the varieties of bodily intelligence along with her, I believe, important critique of intellectualism. The problem that arises in an account of repetitive habit is it errs on the opposite side of an overdetermined cognition where bodily intelligence is described as simply a response to stimuli like Pavlov's dog.

For Merleau-Ponty, a skill is not the continual forced repetition of a movement into muscle memory in a mechanistic way but rather to inhabit the practice by incorporating into our body schema which provides the ability to adapt and be generally open to any specific situation. In Merleau-Ponty's description of the master organist he critiques the intellectualist account of technological embodiment, as Hayles cites, but he also challenges the empirical mechanistic account too, one which Hayles unfortunately recuperates. Merleau-Ponty writes that the experienced organist when encountering a different organ for the first time "sits on the seat, works the pedals, pulls the stops, gets the measure of the instrument with his body, incorporates within himself the relevant directions and dimensions, settles into the organ as one settles into a house. He does not learn objective spatial positions for each stop and pedal, nor does he commit them to 'memory'."[53]

Again, the distinction in Hayles' account of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of incorporation seems almost accurate but the phenomena is itself missed. The function of "repeated performance" as the formation of "habit", in our English usage, cannot account for what Merleau-Ponty calls the *sensible sentient* or bodily intelligence that enables, as

51 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 199.

52 The English translation of "habitude" into habit is a bit misleading. A better translation would be "to inhabit"; to live in a practice and embody it intelligently not as *mere movement* as the term 'habit' for English speakers intimates.

53 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 145.

in Merleau-Ponty's previous example of the skilled organist, to make that skill, as a specific embodied skill, portable to other different and varied organs. The distinction is the portability of skill our bodies have is specific to human bodies as a way of *being-in-the-world*. While mammals other than humans clearly have the basis of embodied skill they do not exhibit the tendency to incorporate technology in a similar fashion.

What's decisive about the human tacit cogito, is its general openness to new situations in which the body can inhabit a practice and incorporate a technology in a unified manner. Furthermore, the body's own intelligence to adapt its body schema as open and unlimited to alien equipment signals a critical distinction between human and machine. Humans incorporate machine technology such as a automobile and not the other way around. An automobile does not care if a human is in the driver's seat. The human and machine cannot then be understood as potentially equivalent substances as implied by Gregory Bateson's remark in *The Ecology of Mind*, by posing the question: where does the human body begin and end in reference to the blind man's cane?[54]

Still it would be an error to place all the meaningful aspects of the phenomena of playing an organ on the side of the embodied subject alone. Because the equipment must be perceptually intelligible to the practice as well, that is, it must show-up and be serviceable as an organ. Though in Merleau-Ponty's example an entirely new organ presents itself with variations and differences in location of levers and knobs. It is not likely that a master organist would be at home in a Boeing 747 cockpit even though they both share a superficial organization. The referential relation of pedals, knobs, and levers must abide by a general law of organs in which each varied piece of equipment shows-up as some type of organ, something which to play. Many who live in a society or culture with organs would no doubt be able to differentiate between organs and airplane cockpits. Though for someone that does not play on organs, the phenomena of invitation or playability will not make itself present as it will to a master organist. I do not mean that the organization of the organ must be ordered through a set of fixed rules of placement of levers, pedals, knobs etc. but rather must present a figural or gestalt organization for the organist. What's important here is the organ plays a role, one that is not obvious, meaning the organ must *invite* the embodied practice in a gestalt of its varied affordances to be a piece of equipment that can be played.

It becomes clear that we must examine our metaphorical language because it is mistaken to conflate *incorporation* with *extension* as Hayles does here because the latter is the antithesis of the former. This is precisely the danger the critic faces where rhetoric itself becomes the sole object of inquiry and not the phenomena. In this dangerous line of work there is often a tendency to let metaphor stand in for the phenomena itself.

Posthumanist criticism has its limits but even a scientist converted to philosopher like

54 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 465.

Michael Polanyi misses parts of the phenomena of bodily incorporation with simple tool technology. Polanyi, unlike Carpenter or Hayles, adopts what Merleau-Ponty would call a contemporary intellectualist account of meaning through tool use. To reiterate, the blind man's cane naturally appears to us in the cognitive attitude as an intermediary device between the cognitive complex of mind to hand and then to external world. Even attempts to dislodge perception as representational thinking (theoretical knowing) in favor of "tacit knowing" fall prey to this traditional prejudice. The basis of Polanyi's theory of "tacit knowing" provides difficulties because he levels the distinction between pre-reflective consciousness and reflective consciousness.[55] Polanyi writes thus: "I shall speak of 'knowing', therefore to cover both practical and theoretical knowledge."[56] As I've tried to demonstrate with our hammer example, practical activity and theoretical activity are two very distinct types of human comportment. In fact practical engagement tends to proceed our ability to theorize about the practical matter itself.

Even if we for the moment pass over this odd conflation between practical and theoretical knowledge, the basis of Polanyi's theory of "*tacit knowing*" bifurcates the phenomenology of embodied consciousness by separating perceptual consciousness into what he calls the two terms of "tacit knowing", the *proximal* term and the *distal* term. The proximal term is the internal impersonal and non-conceptual biological event we have when presented with stimuli that occurs out in the world. The events in the world that our attention is focused upon, such as a "stop sign" is the distal term. So for example I may be driving my car towards a "stop sign" and immediately begin to skillfully depress my foot on the brake peddle bringing the car to a stop. The thing attended to, the "stop sign" stimulates a whole set of skills and "know how" at the biological level which are, what Polanyi calls, *subcepted*. The subcepted skills are not immediately accessible to reflective consciousness as such. There is an internal (*proximal*) correlation to external (*distal*) stimuli. Polanyi describes the proximal and the distal below.

> we are aware of the proximal term of an act of "tacit knowing" in the appearance of the distal term; we are aware of that from which we are attending to another thing, in the appearance of that thing. We may call this the phenomenal structure of "tacit knowing."[57]

Accordingly, the stop sign as the distal term is the causal clue to tacit bodily knowledge of knowing how to stop the car skillfully. In order to account for intelligent internal states Polanyi must create chasm between immanence (though biologically grounded) as internal biophysical-mental states and transcendence as the external world. In light of Polanyi's distinction between proximal and distal, immanence and transcendence must

55 Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester Mass: Peter Smith 1983), 11.
56 Ibid., 7.
57 Ibid., 12.

remain mutually exclusive. Therefore Polanyi's theory of "tacit knowing" could be interpreted as a type of psycho-physical parallelism or more clearly put as bio-psycho-physical parallelism. Merleau-Ponty would characterize Polanyi's view as intellectualism.

> Intellectualism cannot conceive any passage from the perspective to the thing itself, or from sign to significance otherwise than as an interpretation, an apperception, a cognitive intention. According to this view sensory data and perspectives are at each level contents grasped as (*aufgefasst als*) manifestations of one and the same intelligible core. But this analysis distorts both the sign and the meaning: it separates out, by a process of objectification of both, the sense content, which is already 'pregnant' with a meaning, and the invariant core, which is not a law but a thing; it conceals the organic relationship between subject and world, the active transcendence of consciousness, the momentum which carries it into a thing and into a world by means of its organs and instruments.[58]

Once the sphere of immanence is made separate from transcendence this will invariable necessitate a theoretical consciousness to bridge the divide. Therefore Polanyi presents us with a thesis for *theoretical knowing* rather than "tacit knowing." Polanyi argues that this separation is the basis of "tacit knowing", that is, between the proximal and distal terms. The proximal term functions like concepts which can be assigned to external phenomena or the distal term.

Let's return to the issue of incorporation and extension by looking at Polanyi's view of the blind man's cane. Below Polanyi applies his intellectualist thesis of "tacit knowing" to tool use which subsumes aspects of both empiricism and rationalism.

> Anyone using a probe for the first time will feel its impact against his fingers and palm. But as we learn to use a probe, or to use a stick for feeling our way, our awareness of its impact on our hand is transformed into a sense of its point touching the objects we are exploring. This is how an interpretative effort transposes meaningless feelings into meaningful ones, and places these at some distance from the original feeling. We become aware of the feelings in our hand in terms of their meaning located at the tip of the probe or stick to which we are attending.[59]

There are two key stages of skill development described above, novice and competent. In Polanyi's view the novice experiences or feels the cane in the hand and as such the two, cane and hand, are separate and distinct from one another. The third component is the "meaningless feelings" transmitted from the cane which seems like a very Lockean interpretation. Polanyi argues for the competent user, the initial feeling of the cane in the hand is transformed into the sense at the point of the cane as it moves across objects. In

58 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 152.
59 Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension,* 13.

Polanyi's view the newly developed meaningful sense becomes proximal in relation to the distal objects encountered. The proximal is the well formed sense of whatever the end of the cane comes up against. The external objects (distal term) that are encountered would continue to be meaningless unless the proximal term had formed. The proximal term then functions much like a concept and as such Polanyi's theory is in essence a conceptual one.

Against Polanyi I would argue that it is not so much that the novice cane user experiences meaningless sense data from the cane but rather when touching the street curb one's grip on the curb, that is, optimal intelligibility of it is not fully developed. The novice cane user does not feel the cane but the illegible objects he encounters. Perhaps breakdown conditions are imminent but this should not define the lack of skill of the novice. For even a novice experiences at times some form of absorption in a practice, meaning the *subject-representing-object* (present-at-hand) relation should not be assumed to constantly foreshadow all moments. Merleau-Ponty's view of the phenomena of the novice and competent cane user presents some similarities to Polanyi's but with what I believe to important subtle differences. Merleau-Ponty writes, "[o]nce the stick has become a familiar instrument, the world of feelable things recedes and now begins, not at the outer skin of the hand, but at the end of the stick."[60] In Merleau-Ponty's words the objects for the novice are encountered as "feelable" which is an entirely a different phenomenon than in Polanyi's theory because feelable does not imply a disengagement of meaning in the sense of “meaningless feelings” as Polyani describes. There is, as Merleau-Ponty argues, perhaps no barest sensation without any meaning.[61] Therefore, while there is a marked distinction between a competent user and a novice in the degree of ease of mobility there is nonetheless intelligibility. Therefore the curb for the novice cane user presents itself as more of an obstacle than a safe path on which to walk. This new obstacle or obstruction now experienced through the cane will cause disequilibrium where the cane itself loses its coupled relation to the body. This may result in a breakdown condition like the hammering example in section 2. As discussed earlier, the capacity to incorporate error and striving toward the optimal is essential to perceptual experience. The initial experiences of fumbling are in fact the basis of any skill. Once a skill is highly developed the subject does not simply jettison those earlier incoherent experiences but rather they remain sedimented in the embodied practice. The sedimented skill should not be confused with a "proximal term” which is none other than concept. A key problem with Polanyi's theory of "tacit knowing" is because it is at bottom conceptual it will have serious difficulty integrating error into practice; in fact it seeks to detach its relation to these prior breakdown situations.

While Polanyi is objectively correct to state that it is the hand that connects up the cane

60 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 152.
61 Ibid., 152., 297.

which probes an object, phenomenally the meaning is not in the hand nor at the sensing tip of the cane but in the world. Merleau-Ponty also seems to imply that for the competent user the sense is at the end of the cane. Merleau-Ponty does however clarify his position which demonstrates the important difference from the intellectualist view of Polanyi. For example, it is not as if I feel in my hand the cane then the curb, but the curb all at once. Also I do not even feel the objectivity of my hand because there is the experience of the phenomenal being of the curb. As one gets the cane "well in hand" the cane ceases to be an object with “its point touching objects” as Polanyi suggests, but rather I am touching the curb and more generally, as I have argued, disclosing the street, the neighborhood, the city, in short my world. Merleau-Ponty writes further, "the pressures on the hand and the stick are no longer given; the stick is no longer an object perceived by the blind man, but an instrument with which he perceives."[62] This does not mean that once the cane ceases to be an object it disappears into nothingness but rather the cane becomes incorporated into the body schema and within the body's reflexive intelligence of the tacit cogito. In an absorbed skillful practice the cane withdraws from explicit attention, again just like our previous hammer example. This is precisely why when one taps an object one is not tapping as such but touching the thing perceived. The cane is no longer a probe at all but a part of the body. In skillful and absorbed practice with the cane there is no such thing as "sense of its point touching the objects we are exploring", there is just perceptual encounter with an already meaningful world.

The cane example in which a "bodily synthesis" occurs by bringing the instrument into the body schema signals a profound bodily intelligence that is primordial to all other potential thinking we can enact as humans. Technology that works well for us is technology that we as our bodies can incorporate into our everyday practical engagements with things and world. In this opacity of perception the world hangs together for us almost magically. It is easy to dismiss this as mystical because in posterior reflection we lose grasp of the lived-through because we force a logical analysis on phenomena that obeys only causal laws. This is where logical analysis must work backwards by recreating the event on terms that have no home in experience which is why the phenomena is not only missed but forced to conform to the cognitive model. The ability to incorporate is a part of what can be called the general thesis of human perception as the ability to respond to the general situation which entails this profound tacit bodily intelligence (tacit cogito).

If in each case the body had to respond to specific stimuli which it "encoded in its memory" we could not respond to the inexhaustible variety of perceptual phenomena we find ourselves experiencing. Therefore perception cannot function with proximal terms or concepts that are separate from the objects encountered. Merleau-Ponty writes, "[a]ny

62 Ibid., 152.

mechanistic theory runs up against the fact that the learning process is systematic; the subject does not weld together individual movements and individual stimuli but acquires the power to respond with a certain type of solution to situations of a *general form* [my emphasis]."[63] Here Merleau-Ponty is referring to classical physiology and behaviorist models of cognition that are derivative of empiricism. If we adhere to the causal view that the stimulus causes us to have such and such experience it will become necessary to fill a database in our minds of just what to do when we come into contact with each past thing again. This leaves little room for the capacity for coping with new experiences because in each new perception the exact stimulus won't be found in the database of past experiences. In fact as Husserl remarks each experience is unique and will never be experienced again.

A naive empiricism invades Carpenter's and Hayles' understanding of technology as extension. While for Polanyi the cane on the other hand is clouded by intellectualism in the distinction between proximal and distal which attempts to separate the sign and the meaning. Merleau-Ponty summarizes the empiricist view below.

> One is tempted to say that through the sensations produced by the pressure of the stick on the hand, the blind man builds up the stick along with its various positions, and that the latter then mediate a second order object, the external thing. It would appear in this case that perception is always a reading off from the same sensory data, but constantly accelerated, and operating with ever more attenuated signals.[64]

Naive empiricism requires, as Merleau-Ponty argues, a logical summation of dead meaningless sensations passed through the cane through the sense receptors of the hand. The summation can only be carried out by a cognitive process. Both the philosopher of mind and the layman come to this conclusion through the natural attitude. What Merleau-Ponty shows in his *Phenomenology* is both the empiricist and intellectualist account of experience inevitably lead to an explanation of human perception as representational, with internal mental states that are either caused by external stimulation of sensory organs or *a priori* synthetic concepts. As I mentioned earlier the materialism of the empiricist and the idealism of the intellectualist are in the end two sides of the same coin.

In this current section I wanted to explicate the distinction between our lived-through experience with technology by briefly examining the concept of incorporation as well as understanding how in our natural attitude we come to objectively represent to ourselves an anthropological use of tools through the concept of extension. The notion that media and new media are extensions of the human falls within the rubric of the instrumental view of technology which is derivative of the naturalization of cognition in human comportment. The instrumental view of technology, as I introduced in chapter 1, is part

63 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 142.
64 Ibid., 152.

and parcel of our natural attitude to self and world more generally.[65] The natural attitude is in turn implicitly adopted by the sciences who then authoritatively, through its causal-explanatory models, convert the implicit into the *préjujé du monde* as not only an authoritative way to interpret being but the only definitive one. As I've shown a variety of cognitive attitudes are present in the interpretation of technology of simple tools such as a cane. In the next section I will look at a contemporary form of *préjujé du monde* which attempts to remove the body as the objective medium between mind and world, resulting in mental extension built upon a similar spurious supposition of bodily extension.

7. Computation and Mental Extension

In this final section I want to demonstrate how traditional ontology is a vicious circle, that is, how contemporary views— from simple tool use to complex digital computers are often grounded upon a naturalistic conception of the human. In the previous sections we have been looking at the examples of tool use; the first example being the "hammering with a hammer" and the second "the blind man's cane." From these examples we see just how natural it is to believe that simple tool technology extends out from the brain/mind complex. Even when we try to avoid such a naïve view we can fall back into empiricism as I've shown with posthumanist new media scholars such as Hayles. Is this prejudice carried over into the interpretation of modern technology such as calculators or digital computers? Is a digital computer just another species of technology like a cane or hammer?

Superficially there seems no significant relation between the cane and the digital computer, specifically the powerful and complex personal computing devices we are accustomed to using today. I perhaps reinforced this view by concluding in chapter 3 that Turing machines are modeled upon the model of the mind in which the apex of human thinking is considered to be private mechanized symbol manipulation. If human rationality is private symbol manipulation and the Turing Machine is a model of this then it follows that computers, as external to minds, provide something like mental extension. Similar to the idea of physical limb extension with a cane, computation can be taken naturally as mental extension.

In fact the idea of computer as mental extension is already quite prevalent. Clark and Chalmer's “extended mind” thesis is premised upon the idea that cognition is not something that is cordoned off into the skull but is also distributed out in the world. Within the traditional perspective the idea of mental extension will seem incredibly novel and attractive because, as I have argued in chapter 3, the advent of Turing Machine model and general purpose computing dislodged the traditional view that only human subjects reason mechanically or think in general. To put it more concisely, Turing's thesis

65 See chap. 1, sec. 5.

demonstrated that mechanical reasoning can be accomplished by a machine and not only by a human. However as I have argued Turing's thesis provided two important distinguishing features about human cognition: on the one hand it demonstrated Man is not center but on the other hand it reaffirmed the prejudice that humans are rational animals by providing an, albeit limited, concrete mechanical model of the human mind as software that could be mechanized and place into a machine. Rationality itself emerges unscathed with Turing's displacement of mechanical reason. Below it would seem that thematically Turing's thesis informs Clark and Chalmer's view of "extended mind." In fact it is not likely that this recent variant in cognitivism, *i.e.,* "extended mind", would be at all possible without Turing's thesis.

According to Clark and Chalmers, in order to extend cognition pass the limits of what they call the "skin/skull boundary", humans have since time immemorial used technology to do so. In this sense all technology is a form of mental extension. On the face it this is an entirely plausible view when talking about specific mental acts such as arithmetic. Neil Levy summarizes well the simplicity of the "extended mind" thesis.

> Think of mathematics, for instance. Even arithmetic, beyond a certain level of complexity, requires pen and paper— or a computer screen, or clay tablets, or what have you— if it is to be performed at all. Multiply 23,789 by 54,553. Without pen and paper, the calculation is beyond me. Perhaps you can perform it; there are short cuts that can be learned (though I suspect that these short cuts themselves rely on ways of extending cognition beyond the boundaries of skin and skull).[66]

It is absolutely true that if I perform an arithmetical function such as multiplication of 2 by 2 I can accomplish it in my head, but larger integers such as 245,723,494 by 45,992,000 will require a tool, like a simple pen and paper to the complex, such as a desktop computer. What's critical about Levy's example or Clark and Chalmers' many examples is that they are looking at a very specific and narrow type of thinking, calculative representational thinking. Can mental acts serve as the theme and basis for most all human comportment in which to situate the "extended mind" thesis? In doing so, proponents of the "extended mind" thesis will tend to totalize human existence as cognitive, and not just all the way down as rationalist skepticism expounds but, as I've argued, all the way out.

Take Clark and Chalmer's key example of visual rotation of a two dimensional geometric shape on a computer screen through the use of graphics software.[67] The fact that I can utilize computer software with a rotation button enables me to rotate the figure without the mental exertion required if I were to imagine the rotation through a private mental operation in my head. Still we'd have to assume that if I were to rotate the image by

66 Neil Levy, *Neuro Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 39.
67 Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind", in *Analysis* 58 no 1. (1998): 7–19.

myself this would be a pure mental act. Again, though less conspicuous than the earlier arithmetic example, aiding skillful mental operations is still aiding the mental sphere where detached reflection structures the phenomena. However, as I have made pains to argue, detached reflection is only one aspect of everyday human comportment, one that is derivative of perceptual experience.

In fact Clark and Chalmer's "extended mind" thesis requires a *ceteris paribus* condition between human thinking and the visual rotation software running on the computer.[68] If it is the case that "all things being equal" [*ceteris paribus*] between how I rotate and image in my "mind" and the way the rotation program manipulates data executed on the computer hardware, then "extended mind" thesis holds. However the *ceteris paribus* condition is a fallacious assumption because in no way can I say that the way I visually rotate an image as an embodied human is equivalent to the mechanical function of a computer's program (software), data input, and hardware. The founder of phenomenology as early as 1900 in his critique of psychologism presented the tradition with a response to claims similar to Clark and Chalmer's 1998 "extended mind" thesis.

> The example of a computer makes the difference quite clear. The arrangement and connection of the figures which spring forth is regulated by natural laws which accord with the demands of the arithmetical propositions which fix their meanings. No one, however, who wants to give a physical explanation of the machine's procedures, will appeal to arithmetical instead of mechanical laws. The machine is no thought-machine, it understands neither itself nor the meaning of its performances. But our own thought-machine might very well function similarly, except that the real course of one kind of thought would always have to be recognized as correct by the insight brought forward in another. This latter thinking could be the product of the same or thought-machines, but ideal evaluation and causal explanation, would none the less remain disparate.[69]

Husserl has in mind here not a digital computer but a calculator, still the critique holds quite well for computers. Husserl argues that one cannot conflate the natural laws of a calculating machine's mechanical hardware with the logical laws of thought in arithmetic. Held writes, "the electronics of a computer (i.e., hardware)– follows a completely different set of laws (namely physical laws) than the chains of symbols that one calculates with the machine (i.e., software). Psychologism cannot explain this difference.

68 Dreyfus, arguing against Classical A.I. researchers like Minsky, writes, "whenever human behavior is analyzed in terms of rules, these rules must always contain a *ceteris paribus* condition, i.e., they apply 'everything else being equal' and what 'everything else' and 'equal' means in any specific situation can never be fully spelled out without a regress." Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), 57.

69 Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations Volume I*, trans. J.N. Findlay (New York: Humanity Books, 2000) § 22, 103-104.

It replaces the question about the right kind of thinking with what is essentially a scientific, empirical description of thought processes..."[70] I introduced the basis of this error of conflation in chapter 3 in the discussion of models.[71] The problem is that Turing machines complicate the distinction between the physical laws of the machine, the psychological laws of logic, and the empirical laws of data input. Davis argues that it is an illusion to conceive the three; machine, program, and data as distinct from one another.

> Before Turing the ... supposition was that ... the three categories, machine, program, and data, were entirely separate entities. The machine was a physical object ... hardware. The program was the plan for doing a computation ... The data was the numerical input. Turing's universal machine showed that the distinctness of these three categories is an illusion. A Turing Machine is initially envisioned as a machine ... , hardware. But its code ... functions as a program, detailing the instructions to the universal machine ... Finally, the universal machine in its step-by-step actions sees the ... machine code as just more data to be worked on. This fluidity ... is fundamental to contemporary computer practice. A program ... is data to the ... compiler.[72]

I would agree with Davis' conclusion in regards to the unity of Turing's specification of machine/program/data but only with the context of computational machinery. Yet the danger that Husserl alerts us to re-emerges because Turing machines are invariably referred back to human thinking and something like the human mind as I've shown in chapter 3.[73]

Let's take a more practical in-the-world example than image rotation on computer screen. In the state of California, USA it is legal for motorcyclists to travel in between traffic lanes of vehicles on multi-lane state highways. The colloquial term for this is called "lane splitting." The lane splitting practice is often seen in dense bumper-to-bumper traffic for two primary reasons: frequent stopping of a motorcycle causes fatigue in the left hand due to constantly depressing the clutch lever and the risk of overheating the engine due to idling in traffic. Lane splitting requires an enormous amount of skill to navigate a narrow space and avoid being hit by other motorists moving in dense traffic. It would be incredibly useful to have a computer laser vision system that could determine if there is enough space to pass between upcoming vehicles— such as a warning system. One can imagine such a warning system that calculates the space between vehicles and their direction of movement in order to predict if there is enough room to pass and more importantly if a vehicle will likely cut you off. An algorithm can be conceived to

70 Klaus Held, "Husserl's Phenomenological Method", 11.

71 See chap. 3, sec. 2.

72 Martin Davis, "The Myth of Hypercomputation", in *Alan Turing: Life and Legacy of a Great Thinker,* ed. Christof Teuscher (Berlin: Springer, 2004), 198.

73 See chap. 3, no. 6.

compute these relations. Computation is very well suited for aiding the very dangerous lane-splitting practice. Who would not want such an incredibly useful computer vision technology on their motorcycle? Still the question is not about a useful piece of equipment, for even a hammer is useful but it is not the ideal type of technology Clark and Chalmers have in mind.

The lane-splitting warning computer example fulfills Clark and Chalmers' loose definition of “extended mind” by providing a tool that extends human capabilities interacting with the external world. The question remains, is the lane-splitting warning computer extending the capabilities of my mind? When I lane-split and predict the opening and movement into my lane of other vehicles is this a type of computation? If lane-splitting were a fact of mental operation then there is no question a lane-splitting computer would be an extension of mental calculation, hence “extended mind” thesis holds. However in the practice of lane-splitting none of the mental operations seen in solving an arithmetic problem or rotating an image are present at all. The practice of lane-splitting is an example of *absorbed coping* in which the motorcycle becomes incorporated into my body schema and as such the motorcycle withdraws from explicit consciousness. The distance on either side of my motorcycle is not a matter of measuring space but a feel for the road and other vehicles.

The question is how do I *know* if another vehicle immediately up head on the right is going to move into my lane? Mentally I don't know but my body does. Just as I inhabit my motorcycle these other motorists inhabit their vehicles. The movements of cars on my right and left are like bodily gestures with a similar motor intentionality of a human body because these motorists have bodies and these bodies inhabit their cars. For these other motorists the car becomes incorporated into their body schema. The motor intentions of these other drivers are transferred to their cars and we can see the beginning of these intentions and respond to them. Just as when we see someone begin to greet us we don't need to wait for the entire greeting to follow its course to completion in order to respond; we know even before it begins to fully take shape. Responding to these gestural movements is not a matter of reflection but a reflexive bodily know-how. This type of embodied know-how is in fact orthogonal to the mental operations “extended mind” thesis presumes.

The “extended mind” thesis cannot be universalized in such a way as to be applicable to the fund of perceptual experience. If it were applicable in the broad way that its authors intend, then the “extended mind” thesis should explain the blind man's cane phenomenon. The “extended mind” thesis cannot be helpful in describing the phenomenon of the blind man's cane because as I have shown through Merleau-Ponty's theory of bodily incorporation, lived-through perception of skillful coping with a cane is not a cognitive phenomena because it has none of the requisite mechanistic properties of

either internal or external causation.

To be fair, Clark in particular, calls for an inversion of the functionalism of Fodor and others by asserting that cognition is "off-loaded" into the environment through technology and no longer centered in the head. Any digital computer already accomplishes the de-centering of mind in the head by ostensibly placing it in a machine that sits on your desk or in the palm of your hand. As I have discussed in the chapter 3, Turing machines de-center the limited aspects of the mental only, not the human. The Turing model of rationality is no doubt sentential, *viz.* coherent propositional language, but it still provides the basis for machines that Clark and Chalmer's use for the their classic image rotation example. As well Clark argues for broader view of rationality that no longer rigidly conforms to propositional logic.[74]

> for while classical approaches excelled at modeling rational inferences that could be displayed in *sentential space* [my emphasis], connectionist work excelled at modeling those dimensions of rationality best conceived of as *skill-based* [my emphasis]..By 'skill-based dimension of rationality' I mean the reliable capacity to perform 'inferences' in which the inputs are, broadly speaking, perceptual and the outputs are, broadly speaking, motoric.[75]

What should sound familiar with Clark's critique of the mechanistic intellectualism of Fodor, is that the type of connectionist view that buttresses the "extended mind" thesis is the other mechanistic theory of cognition held by empiricism. Trading in the intellectualist mechanistic account of reason for the mechanistic empiricist account inverts a paradigm but does not fundamentally raze to the ground the psycho-physicalism that they both inherit from the tradition.

What's decisive about Clark's view is that by placing cognition 'artifactually' in the world there is a further distancing away from the phenomena, such as that of technology incorporation which I have argued is a part of our primordial basis for *being-in-the-world*. What I mean, is the "extended mind" thesis misses the way our bodies intelligently cope in situations and with things without the psycho-mechanistic complex that it reinscribes into the environment. The solution to the overdetermination of internal cognition that Clarke rallies against is not to replicate immanence as a transcendental aspect of the environment.

If the "extended mind" thesis were limited to only the type of mechanistic calculations that are indicative of the cognitive attitude and not to human existence generally then one could almost appreciate Clark's challenge however his view is far more comprehensive.

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74 See Andy Clark "Reasons, Robots, and the Extended Mind", in *Mind and Language,* 2 (2001): 121-145.

75 Ibid., 123.

> The most significant twenty-first-century frontiers, however, are those not of space but of the mind. Our most significant technologies are those that allow our thoughts to go where no animal thoughts have gone before. It is our shape-shifter minds, not our space-roving bodies, that will most fully express our deep cyborg nature.[76]

The outcome of the globalization of cognition is not the popular slogan favored by cognitive scientists which they like to call the "embodied mind" but rather something more akin to the "enminded body". Everything external to the body becomes enminded as well. The overarching theme of the cyborg and "extended mind", understood in the terms similar to Donna Haraway and N.Katherine Hayles, is that traditional ontology of the cognitive subject artificially places a boundary between human, animal, machine, and natural world. To be sure, this traditional boundary was clearly erected by modern European reason however it is not sufficient to assert, what I call, an *ontological equivalence* of beings as substance. As I've attempted to demonstrate with Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology,* the human body is distinct from other objects including our blind man's cane. Therefore the body is a natural and phenomenal self. Returning to Gregory Bateson's provocative question: "consider a blind man with a stick. Where does the blind man's self begin? At the tip of the stick? At the handle of the stick?"[77] The boundary of the phenomenal self is delimited by our bodies sense of itself, its tacit cogito, without which we could not incorporate skillfully and intelligently anything like a cane at all. In the cyborg view, of the kind Clark advocates, an enormous leveling effect occurs across the being of beings which on the face of it challenges the concept of Man but not its essence which historically has been "the mark of the mental." Rationality endures in its permutations; from substance to the current form called information which, much like Locke's sensations, are dead and meaningless. There is perhaps a forgetting of the body which Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology* attempts to recover. The forgetting of the lived-body in favor of the objective body is by no means be the sole problem of cognitivism because the same prejudice is far more global. As I will argue in the next chapter the problem of race and racism is first lived-through by our bodies before objective thought makes its theories about human identity. The phenomenal body represents a significant lacuna in the inquire of contemporary race scholarship.

76 Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs : Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2003), 198.

77 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1972), 318.

Chapter 6. **The Phenomenality of Race**

> The first philosophical act would appear to be to return to the world of actual experience which is prior to the objective world, since it is in it that we shall be able to grasp the theoretical basis no less than the limits of that objective world, restore to things their concrete physiognomy, to organisms their individual ways of dealing with the world, and to subjectivity its inherence in history.[1] - Merleau-Ponty (1945)

> Any theory of perception, therefore, which insists that we perceive only meanings or meaning-structures, as much as any theory which entails that we perceive things but no meanings must be wrong.[2] - J.N. Mohanty (1986)

I have discussed thus far that race and computation play a fundamental role in the teleological development of European reason. Yet computation provides not a metaphor but the model for right reason and race indicates the embodied manifestation of right reason. In reference to race and reason Fanon writes in *Black Skin, White Masks,* "my unreason was countered with reason, my reason with real reason."[3] Fanon concludes that "when I was present it was not", referring to reason.[4] In this chapter I return to questions introduced in chapter 1 regarding race as a non-conceptual phenomenon yet as a particular kind of everyday know-how in which we all participate. As such, human intelligibility as the concealing and unconcealing of humanity is already racial prior to concepts, folk beliefs, and the second order reflection of the sciences.

As I introduced in chapter 1, what we take as two distinct forms of race theory, biological (innate) and cultural (social construction), are in fact *modes of race* that emerge out of scientific consciousness.[5] Both biological and cultural modes are grounded on racial encounter, that is, phenomenality. Between the phenomenality and scientific consciousness of race stands the natural attitude. The two primary scholarly domains which examine race, historical humanistic criticism and the positive human sciences, have been unable to say anything meaningful about racial encounter and the field of perception in which our living bodies are the zero-point orientation.[6] Perception and the

1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge 1962), 57.
2 J.N. Mohanty, "Perceptual Meaning", *Topio* 5 (1986): 131-136.
3 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 132.
4 Ibid., 119.
5 See chap. 1, sec. 3.
6 Edmund Husserl, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Ingo Farin and James G. Hart (Dordrecht:

natural attitude are not readily distinguished by the sciences and as such are deemed to be a part of the realm of *appearances* while science concerns itself with *reality* in which science feels certain it has the only proper access. The modes of scientific access to race, biological and cultural, have come to stand in for the phenomena itself. Racial perception is so close to us that it often escapes inquiry because rather than explicating the phenomena, there is a tendency to move too quickly to representations, that is, the epistemological account of race. In this chapter I will attempt to provide a preliminary phenomenological account of racial know-how as pre-objective knowing which is the ground of racial knowledge.

1. The Problem of Human Identity

What does it mean to describe the phenomena of race in its immediate manifest presence as a "return to the world of actual experience?" The being of race in its manifestness tells us something different from how race is understood in both public opinion and the second order reflection of the sciences. Both belief and judgment refer to the classificatory scheme for the human species in either a naturalistic biological or constructivist anthropological frame. This is not to say that other concepts of identity such as gender, sexuality, and class do not figure in the delineation of humanity. They are taken together as co-conspirators in human intelligibility. By “human intelligibility,” I mean the situated way in which humans are interpreted as humans or even subhuman (which is the particular purview of race). Yet there is something peculiar about race, in that it can and has placed individuals, groups, communities, and even nations wholly outside the threshold of humanity proper. That both the phenomena and perhaps the concept of race can do such a thing, dehumanize or place one outside of humanity, challenges the taken-for-granted way both the public and scientific modes take race today, as objective classifications of humans *qua* humans. As discussed in chapter 2, there has been a naturalizing or rather a normalizing of the rational animal as the ideal human type, who's history is covered over as timeless and universal.

Race in its essence, is the question of being within humanity or not. Because race is about human intelligibility it is also part and parcel of intersubjectivity; the way we co-dependently share a world through a primordial communication specific to humanity. Yet, if as I argue, the condition of race is the voiding of humanity and if humanity is the condition of the possibility of intersubjectivity, it follows that our normative conception of humanity grounded on the concept of Man cannot be assumed to be universally accessible.

It may seem obvious that racism would pose a significant problem for intersubjectivity. Yet what might this look like? How deep does racism go in impacting human interaction

Springer, 2006), §5, 6.

in its most mundane and quotidian? The implication of the pervasiveness of racial intelligibility, down to the pre-reflective human perceptual schema, is that we are all implicated in racial intelligibility. However some of us benefit more than others and still others are condemned by a racial logic to the point of dehumanization. The goal of this chapter is to begin a preliminary sketch of how race is lived in the lifeworld as embodied reflexive knowledge by looking at racial perception, racial self consciousness, and intersubjectivity. To establish what I have called the *phenomenality of race*, I will draw directly upon the existential phenomenologies of Heidegger's *Being and Time,* Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* as well as key essays from Merleau-Ponty's *Primacy of Perception.*[7]

The route to a preliminary sketch of the phenomenality of race takes three, perhaps loosely, intertwined paths.

a) The Distinction Between Phenomenon and Appearance: drawing upon Heidegger's critical introduction of the concept of "phenomena" in *Being and Time,* I will argue is the fundamental lacuna in the contemporary study of race. Racial appearances invariably refer to phenotype therefore passing over the entire intentional structure of racial perception as the primordial phenomenon that grounds the universal meaning of race.

b) The Lived Experience of Race: Through an analysis of Fanon's psycho-existential phenomenology of anti-black racism and Merleau-Ponty's concept of the body schema and the body image I will discuss how one's racial presence impacts and inhibits the normative development of the phenomenal self or what Merleau-Ponty called the *tacit cogito.* Can there then be something like a pre-reflective *racial cogito* that is prior to personal existence*?*

c) The Problem of Intersubjectivity: In the last sections I will look at the genetic phenomenology of perception of Merleau-Ponty in relation to intersubjectivity within the horizon of a racist world.

Before I begin to delve into the phenomenological study of race it is important to briefly look at the urgency of Fanon's project of decolonization and his relation to Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, two key figures in existential phenomenological humanism which reached its apex in mid 20th century France, Germany, and United States. Fanon was able to critically take up and apply existential phenomenology to the description of race from the first person perspective.

7 Phenomenality here means the unitary event of immanence and transcendence in pre-reflective existence.

2. Fanon and Existential Phenomenology

Both Fanon and Merleau-Ponty's perspectives on existential humanism emerge out of the tumultuous period between World War I and World War II, including the independence movements in European colonies. Fanon was a colleague of Sartre and closely read both *Being and Nothingness* and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception.*[8] As well, Fanon contributed to the influential WWII period journal established and edited by both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, *Les Temps Modern*. Sartre's relationship with Merleau-Ponty began at the École Normale Supérieure with intense focus on Husserlian phenomenology and Hegel's system, a long period of collaboration at the journal *Le Temps Modern*, then ending in estrangement till Merleau-Ponty's untimely death in 1961. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology* is a fundamental critique of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness.* Both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty represent the apex of French existential humanistic phenomenology.

Sartre was more than just an interlocutor of Fanon. As with Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Fanon had a deep intellectual friendship that was antagonistic and abiding, lasting up until Fanon's death also in 1961, culminating in Sartre writing the influential preface to Fanon's posthumous and most widely disseminated text, *Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's critique of Sartre's Hegelian system is explicit in *Black Skin, White Masks* and specifics of it will be discussed later. Fanon made clear to Sartre, that the violence of the colonial situation is part and parcel to the crisis of European man, not an epiphenomena, but constitutive of it. Sartre clearly agreed with Fanon on the crime of European colonialism and racism.

Unlike Merleau-Ponty, Sartre meditated deeply on the crisis of colonialism and racism, writing essays and articles on African liberation and the Negritude movement. Sartre and Fanon shared similar views on the project of decolonialization and in particular the independence of Algeria, at the time an embattled colony of France. Fanon would join the Algerian independence movement while Sartre argued for an end to colonialism and torture as an influential public intellectual in France. Like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty was against colonialism and the torture carried out by French paramilitary forces in Algiers, yet Merleau-Ponty was critical of revolutionary independence of French colonies and found the Marxist rhetoric of Sartre to be dogmatic.[9] While Fanon was influenced by the

8 David Macey writes that Fanon attended lectures by Merleau-Ponty in the post-war years. See *Frantz Fanon: A Biography* (New York: Picador, 2002), 126.

9 The critique of revolutionary independence movements in Africa is discussed by Merleau-Ponty in an interview conducted January and February 1958 and published in *Signs* (1964). Merleau-Ponty was an ardent critique of colonialism and specifically torture of Algerians rebels at the hands of French paramilitary during the Algerian War. However Merleau-Ponty felt that complete independence and severing of relations between African independent states would have a deleterious affect on these former colonies thereby inhibiting progress and there inclusion into the modern world, the world of Europe and the West. One could argue that Merleau-Ponty was both prescient and naïve because in

phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, he provides a profound critique of the normative phenomenal body [*corps phenomenal*] in light of colonialism and anti-black racism. Fanon's appropriation and critique of Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception will be discussed later. Fanon's critique of phenomenological ontology of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty is relevant to the human sciences as well because it advocates a teleological suspension of the *a priori* of Man as the human.

Within the positive human sciences the problem Fanon articulates as *non-being* of the black, is not an issue for it. What I mean by this is the human sciences already begins with the concept of Man as the *a priori* normative human.[10] In order to forge ahead the human sciences must take for granted what a human being is and what intersubjectivity is, therefore the how of intersubjectivity is pursued with a remarkable assumption. If the "what of intersubjectivity", that is, human *being qua being* is assumed, then this places the "how of intersubjectivity" into crisis because all humans are treated as equivalent ontologically. A human science, like any science for that matter, in itself cannot question its very ground because it cannot move forward without its predelineated given. While philosophical anthropology does not seal away or black box intersubjectivity as such, it too falls into the same problem that it must assume that there is a universal intersubjectivity that posits a normative set of processes for human interaction. Philosophical anthropology must then explicate that process of interaction between human entities as equivalences.

In a most radical way Fanon threw into relief this taken for granted normative stance in light of European colonialism and anti-black racism. Fanon's criticism in *Black Skin, White Masks* of Sartre's Hegelian ontology of the for-itself and in-itself and the dialectical process of human recognition is an important example of this critique. Against Sartre, Fanon argues that the black is wholly outside the dialectic of "self and the other." Therefore the recognition of the black is not held as a possibility within this Hegelian ontology because the humanity of the black exists as "non-being." This must not be understood as being factually non-human in the biological evolutionary sense (though in the origins of the science of race in its biological mode this was the case) rather non-being is the existential condition in which one is denied the possibility of human intersubjectivity. Simply put, this means that one exists in a dehumanized manner as an ongoing process and to be interpreted by society as not fully human. In this way we cannot assume that the dialectical relation self and Other functions as a universal basis for intersubjectivity in a racist world. Radically, Fanon's phenomenology of human

many cases in Africa for example independence movements led to the installment of what Fanon called "national bourgeoisie" but this did not sever complete relations with the former colonial powers, rather colonialism was in effect reordered via economic and ideological dependence as Sartre would argue in *Situations.*

10 See chap. 2., sec 9.

experience starts from non-normative cases such as the black or Arab under colonialism. This is vastly different from Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, or Merleau-Ponty whose systems for the most part are normative philosophical anthropologies from the stand point of European man only.[11] This pre-reflective consciousness of other humans or raced entities is a central concern of this chapter because this phenomena, as I argue, is a fundamental understanding of our contemporary Western and modern technological world that functions in the background.

Along with drawing on Fanon's descriptions of the "lived experience of the black," I will discuss Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception and apply his subsequent development of a radical primordial ontology to the study of racial difference and racism. What makes Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology interesting here is that we can take a close look at the experience of race and racism from the fact that much of what we understand race difference to be is lived by the perceiving body. Much of the theorization of race privileges abstract epistemological concepts of racialization that explain structural and discursive formations of racial ideology and representation.[12] As I've introduced in chapter 1 this area of race scholarship, objective racial knowledge, can be seen as an epistemological approach to the study of race.[13] In the epistemological account race is reducible to a concept that is cognizable by mind on an abstract de-worlded level. However emphasis on the abstract objective constructions of race that appear at both the structural and discursive level such as through media, juridical, and institutional, neglects the problem that race is experienced through the lived body both individually and generally as our bodies.

I argued against the widespread consensus in the sciences that race and racism are deployed conceptually or through a system of beliefs alone. Rather, race plays a more essential role that functions in the background of everyday existence. This transcendental aspect of race hides its meaning function, yet it operates seamlessly in an everyday manner. We for the most part understand race without ever having been provided explicit definitions or taught a set of rules of behavior, nor do we need to reflect upon whether this person or that person is such and such a race. The know-how for pre-reflective understanding of human-being is established in even the earliest years of life or the so-

11 In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty does spend considerable time on the case of Schneider (a clinical case taken from the work of Gelb and Goldstein), who suffered from brain lesions in military combat. However the case of Schneider was intended to elucidate normative perceptual function and not to stay within the world of Schneider for his total project of bodily perception. In a radical way Fanon's asks, how does one exist humanly when considered non-human?

12 Cf., David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993); Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies,* ed. S. Hall, D Held,, D. Hubert, and K. Thompson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

13 See chap. 1.

called stages of child development. I also argued that in order to reveal the origin and essence of race it is critically important to suspend the natural tendency to provide a causal explanation, thereby reducing race to an instrument of the will whether individual or collective. While it is not wrong to argue race and racism have been used as means-to-ends toward socio-political domination this does not reveal race's essence as the modern basis for the disclosure of human-being.

3. Phenomenon and Appearance

What can at first seem to be a false distinction between the production of facts (ontical) and phenomenological inquiry (ontological) will be critically taken up in this particular section and more generally throughout this chapter. This distinction was briefly introduced in chapter 1, in what Heidegger called the “ontological difference”, that is, the difference between *being* and *beings*. Racial facts, such as representations or opinions, are the objects of inquiry for the positive sciences, cultural critics, and journalists. Appearances are linked to facts in a *causal relation* and remain the basis for the social constructivist account of social reality. For phenomenology, *phenomena* cannot be reduced to *appearances* as Kant does and consequently the positive sciences do, which here includes the positive human sciences and humanistic criticism. Explanation is traditionally the purview of the positive sciences but not exclusively. Description is the goal of phenomenology. Phenomenological description cannot be interpreted in the traditional sense in which *being* is treated as a substance with attributes.

To understand the relationship between a phenomenon, an appearance, and “a fact” it is helpful to draw upon Heidegger's attempt to describe "phenomena" in *Being and Time.* For Heidegger, a phenomenon is that which *shows-itself-in-itself* as a specific way in which things can be encountered. In our first natural sense an appearance can be "that which looks like something, that which is 'semblant', 'semblance'."[14] A common example can be something like the following: "I came across a someone in a cafe this morning who bore a striking resemblance to Mark Twain." Yet I know this cannot be Mark Twain because everyone knows that he is no longer alive. So the man looked like Mark Twain but this was only in resemblance. The man's resemblance to Mark Twain is only a “mere appearance.”

As well, in our everyday sense appearances are something which “seem” to indicate a state-of-affairs. For example, as I run down the street the Earth seems to be flat but in reality the sciences have shown that the Earth is indeed round. In this line of thinking that which seems to be the case, the appearance of the Earth being flat, is in reality quite different. In this sense appearances are not only unreliable but have been shown by

14 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 51.

science to be patently false and should not be trusted; they are in a word, illusory.[15] In another sense even more closely aligned with the sciences, “appearances” are linked through a causal chain of something that remains incapable of being directly encountered such as disease in an organism.

> This is what one is talking about when one speaks of the 'symptoms of a disease' [“Krankheitserscheinungen”]. Here one has in mind certain occurrences in the body which should themselves, 'indicate' [“indizieren”] something which does *not* show itself... Thus appearance, as the appearance 'of something', does *not* mean showing-itself; it means rather the announcing-itself by [von] something which does not show itself.[16]

In the above example the usage of an “appearance” indicates some underlying condition. The appearance in this sense is not the condition *in-itself.* The condition, such as the disease in Heidegger's example, remains hidden and is not encountered in experience. Appearances then are the positive expression of a hidden truth that remains incapable of being encountered in straightforward experience. In sum, it is science that discovers such truths, for example the etiology of such and such disease through its symptoms and underlying causes. It is the discovery of underlying causes in which Western science remains triumphant. Access to the condition itself can be had but this must be through a reductive method. In Heidegger's example of disease, a medical procedure maybe performed such as tests on tissue samples and so forth. Appearances, for the positive sciences, provide a way to access the hidden nature or truth of the thing in question.

For our purposes here it is of special interest to take up the conflation of “phenomenon” and “appearance” that is widespread in the positive human sciences and humanistic criticism. The problem of appearance and reality is of course a perennial question of the sciences and philosophical anthropology and is formalized with Kant's treatment in his first *Critique*. To be clear, Kant's goal was to account for subjective experience based upon a mathematico-physical reality of Newtonian physics. For Kant the *thing-in-itself* could only be accessible to divine cognition as a manifest intuition. However in Kant's view, finite cognition, that is, human subjective knowledge, the thing-in-itself can never be intuited as such but rather only as appearances and aspects [*respectus*] of the thing. Of course the notion of finite aspects were already recognized by Descartes.[17] Therefore phenomenon, that which shows-itself, is already an appearance of that which is un-encounterable and remains absolutely inaccessible, hence transcendental. Kant called the "purely intelligible cause of appearances in general the transcendental object" in which "we can ascribe the whole extent and connection of our possible perceptions, and can say

15 See chap. 7, sec. 3. The notion of truth as grounded in scientific reality will be essential to Appiah's critique of the validity of the concept of race.

16 Ibid., 52.

17 See chap. 2, sec. 3, no. 40.

that it is given in itself prior to all experience." Kant says further:

> but the appearances while conforming to it [transcendental object], are not given in themselves, but only in this experience, being mere representations, which as perceptions can mark out a real object only in so far as the perception connects with all others according to the rules of the unity of experience.[18]

Kant's theme of the impossibility of direct access to entities is echoed in Foucault's general theory of discourse which posits that discourse mediates all encounters with entities. The theme of Kant's idealism will be key in my critique of the constructivist account of race in chapter 7.

Heidegger is careful to distinguish between the common sense notions of appearance and the problem of appearances arising in the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant defines phenomenon and appearance as unitary in that intuited phenomena are only appearances of something completely hidden hence absolutely incapable of being encountered.

> According to him [Kant] “appearances” are, in the first place, the 'objects of empirical intuition': they are what shows itself in such intuition. But what thus shows itself (the “phenomenon” in the genuine primordial sense) is at the same time an 'appearance' as an emanation of something which *hides* itself in that appearance—an emanation which announces.[19]

Still, I would argue that both our common sense and scientific view of appearance thematically owes much to Kant's notion of appearance as distinct from the thing-in-itself. To be clear, there is a marked distinction between Kant's transcendental objects and the notion of transcendence within phenomenology. As I've already mentioned, for Kant the transcendental object can never be met up within in experience, yet they cause experience while at the same time are absolutely hidden. In phenomenology, for example, the transcendental aspect of perception such as the backside of house seen from the front, while not given as raw sense data (sensations or retinal impressions) is appresented and co-perceived with the front.[20] This is why we experience a house as something to enter or walk around and not as a two dimensional facade. There are then many more possible perspectives to experience of the house as one moves around about it from front to back, inside/outside etc. Therefore within phenomenology experience is transcendental because the being of the house has an inexhaustible horizon of perceptual possibilities that can be anticipated and even crossed-out. These anticipations are not cognitively representable as

18 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 441-442. [A 494, B 522 – A 495, B 524].

19 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 54.

20 Appresented here means that though the back of the house is co-present with the presented front the appresented back is not registered through physiological sense data because the field of perception creates a coherence of the whole of the house which implies the hidden aspects.

such but transcendental aspects.

On the matter of transcendence Heidegger states the following, "Being is the transcendens pure and simple." In sum, vastly dissimilar to Kant, we encounter the transcendental aspect of things in experience but transcendence itself is not an epistemologically representable fact about things it is rather about possibilities. Heidegger writes,"[h]igher than actuality stands possibility."[21] The transcendental nature of experience of entities is not absolutely hidden but rather is concealed from us as a necessary part of experience.[22] The concealment of being cannot be conflated with the notion of absolute inaccessibility. The problem is further exacerbated because the being of entities is covered over by the natural attitude and as such is passed over by the sciences and its second order reflection.

> Within a 'system,' perhaps, those structures of Being—and their concepts—which are still available but veiled in their indigenous character, may claim their rights. For when they have been bound together constructively in a system, they present themselves as something 'clear', requiring no further justification, and thus can serve as the point of departure for a process of deduction.[23]

What's important for phenomenology is that in order for things to appear as objective entities with characteristics that can be enumerated, a more primordial disclosure must take place. Therefore in order for entities to be accessed by science they must somehow be first disclosed as phenomena. This primordial encounter or first contact, if you will, is often assumed as self evident and needing no further clarification as Heidegger indicates in the above quotation. The problem is that in the science's quest for certainty the phenomena are easily passed over in favor of appearances. In a sense phenomena hide themselves but this hiding cannot be equated with the line of causation from either Kant's transcendental object nor from the science's naturalistic distinction of an underlying causal condition. The now well known slogan of Husserl "to the things themselves!" [*Sachen Selbst*] repeated in Heidegger's *Being and Time* is a fundamental tenet of phenomenology and a critical response to more than just neo-Kantianism but the positive sciences as well.[24] The maxim "To the things themselves!" does not mean to intuit the world as a divine being nor shun the world through the scientific reduction but rather to elucidate our basic encounter with the world, one which is prior to cognitive acts and the condition of the possibility of any knowledge at all, that is, perceptual experience.

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21 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 62, 63.

22 Cf., chap. 5, sec. 4. Any "perceptual given" hides its objective meaning rather than clearly exhibiting its function. This is what Merleau-Ponty, citing Max Scheler, referred to as the crypto-mechanism of perception.

23 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 60.

24 Ibid., 58.

How does the distinction between phenomenon and appearance relate to the prevailing view that race is a social construction? Some leading sociologists who study race such as, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's stress the need to develop a sociological structural account of race which stresses the explication of structural facets of race and racial exclusionary practices.[25] I will take up Bonilla-Silva's approach to the social construction of race in more detail chapter 7. These structures are in effect "social facts" or what can be called "racial facts", such as income inequity, mortality rates, disproportionate incarceration rates of blacks and Latino men in U.S. penitentiaries etc. As such, these "racial facts" cannot in and of themselves be directly encountered in experience. Such an assertion seems peculiar at first glance because for the most part the sociologist never makes a delineation between her sociological concepts as models and perceptual experience. For example, one could visit San Quentin prison in California and peer into the prison yard, cells or barracks and see that many of the prisoners are indeed black and Latino. However this would not be the fact of disproportionate incarcerations rates themselves. The fact of incarceration rates are collected through quantitative analysis. The presence of blacks and Latinos in San Quentin's yard is then only the appearance of the fact of the California statewide incarceration rate which is overrepresented by black and Latino men. Therefore, in the sociological sense, we only experience the appearance of racial facts not the facts themselves. The sociologist can access these racial facts only through reductive scientific method and in the case of incarceration rates, through quantitative, that is, mathematical methods. Mathematical access, as the countability of entities, is not the one and only way for the positive sciences to access its objects, though it is often deemed to be the most definitive. The privileging of mathematical access to *being* we owe, among many other things, to Descartes.[26] Qualitative human sciences are no less

25 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation" in *American Sociological Review,* 62, No. 3. (1997): 465-480, p 475.

26 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 128-129. In direct reference to Descartes and mathematics as *prima facie* access to objects through cognition Heidegger writes: "The only genuine access to them lies in knowing [Erkennen], *intellectio*, in the sense of the kind of knowledge [Erkenntnis] we get in mathematics and physics. Mathematical knowledge is regarded by Descartes as the one manner of apprehending entities which can always give assurance that their Being has been securely grasped. If anything measures up in its own kind of Being to the Being that is accessible in mathematical knowledge, then it is in the authentic sense. Such entities are those which always are what they are...That which enduringly remains, really is. This is the sort of thing which mathematics knows. That which is accessible in an entity through mathematics, makes up its Being. Thus the Being of the 'world' is, as it were, dictated to it in terms of a definite idea of Being which lies veiled in the concept of substantiality,...*The kind of Being which belongs to entities within-the-world is something which they themselves might have been permitted to present; but Descartes does not let them do* so[my emphasis]. Instead he prescribes for the world its 'real' Being, as it were, on the basis of an idea of Being whose source has not been unveiled and which has not been demonstrated in its own right-an idea in which Being is equated with constant presence-at-hand. Thus his ontology of the world is not primarily determined by his leaning towards mathematics, a science which he chances to esteem very

positivist than the quantitative sciences though qualitative sociologists smugly and erroneously comfort themselves with the view that they are not "positivists."[27] For Bonilla-Silva what he calls racial “phenomena” are in fact appearances in his ontology of social reality. This means that the hidden racial structure, which *in-itself* cannot be encountered in human experience, are ordering society through racial exclusion. Purportedly the sociologist gains access to the truth of social structures through its pre-delineated procedures which *a priori* determine its possible objects beforehand. For phenomenology the “beforehand” is none other than the pre-understanding of racial exclusion which anyone can encounter by peering into the many state prison yards in California like the one in San Quentin.

The sociologist's privileged access to social structures through the scientific reduction cannot only create a chasm between experience and theory but also reveals that racial facts are in actuality grounded upon phenomena which are first encountered in experience. The natural attitude taken up unquestioningly by the sociologist *inverts* the phenomenon by allowing concepts or social facts to determine meaning in a hierarchical top-down fashion. For the sociologist the primordial encounter with racial phenomena is taken for granted as self evident and requiring little explication. The concept of racial phenotype which I will discuss later on, demonstrates the passing over of the phenomena by positing physical characteristics as apodictic objectivities. Phenomenologically there is a critical difference between the categorical fact of race such as U.S. Census designation and the facticity of race such as the blackness of inmates on the yard in San Quentin.

The passing over of racial phenomena quickly transforms into common sense or folk sensibility of race, hence a natural attitude invades consciousness.[28] When racial phenomena are passed over as self evident this natural attitude invades both our everyday beliefs and opinions about race as well as the second order reflection performed by the sociologist. Can we say that in contradistinction to folk racial sensibilities are scientifically generated facts about race? The sociologist may dismiss folk categories of race as unscientific but by passing over the phenomenon and judging folk categories as “mere appearances” or specious it inherits the natural attitude just at the moment it purports to demonstrate that folk categories are erroneous.[29] This is indeed a surprising

highly, but rather by his ontological orientation in principle towards Being as constant presence-at-hand, which mathematical knowledge is exceptionally well suited to grasp."

27 It can be said that when one is a member of a cult, that is, at home inside it, one never sees oneself as being inside a cult at all but as a more truthful way of existing which those outside cannot grasp. In regards to science this means simply that when one is dogmatically invested in a method or discipline they will tend to lose sight of how they came to be clothed in their methodological garments or how they unwittingly walk about disrobed.

28 See chap. 5, sec. 3, no. 25.

29 Phenomenologically folk categories of race are dependent upon the natural attitude therefore to

conclusion but in order for there to be even a specious claim such as a folk racial category requires the disclosure of some primordial phenomenon. This primordial phenomenon is not neutral waiting to be given meaning but is already racially meaningful. The same holds true for the sociologist's racial facts which in order to begin to deploy the scientific reduction requires a prior disclosure. This prior disclosure is often not racial phenomenon as it shows-itself but the racial phenomena taken up into the natural attitude and then passed on to the second order reflection of the sociologist. Therefore when sociologists assert as does Bonilla-Silva and countless other positive scientists, that there are racial structures and facts, they can only do so because race has already been disclosed beforehand as some form of encounterable phenomena.

To be sure, racial facts are not wrong such as our example of the racial inequity seen in incarceration rates, but this type of access is only one mode of access to objects. For the sociologist, hidden racial structures *cause* social reality to appear to be ordered in a racially exclusionary way into what can be called *racial appearances.* As such, racial structures represent the real truth of the matter, *racial reality.* For example, racial structures such as job hiring disparities exacerbate income inequality which in turn impact the affordability of housing which in turn determine what neighborhoods one can afford to live in a given city. The end result of these structural inequities is a racially segregated city. Sociologically, racial structures pre-delineate a racially segregated city by determining the *appearance* of ghettoization. Racial appearances indicate the racial structures. The racial structures are the *thing-in-itself.* The thing-in-itself cannot be directly encountered but can be accessed through the abstracted truth procedures of the sociologist. The sociologist then reveals what is hidden by capturing it within the rubric of a model which is the essence of a racial fact. The sociologist makes unhidden what

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dismiss folk categories will miss how they emerge out of our natural attitude which in turn is grounded upon primordial perceptual phenomena. Husserl's transcendental phenomenological reduction (epoché) requires that the natural attitude be suspended or bracketed and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenological method of *formal indication* requires that taken-for-granted categories be destructed or worked through. Both the transcendental and hermeneutic approaches achieve similar goals; the genetic study of how encounter becomes naturalized and covers over the primordial phenomena. Therefore folk categories are a mode of access to the thing-in-itself. The problem is that one cannot jettison folk categories without losing the phenomena, however this is just what some sociologists advocate. Löic Wacquant writes, "by relying on the ethnoracial common sense that we share with other members of society-the 'big society' of our nation-state and the 'little society' of scholars, to recall a dyad dear to Tocqueville. For, with precious few exceptions, students of 'race' have accepted lay preconstructions of the phenomenon. They have been content to tackle 'race' in the manner in which it has been constituted as a 'social problem' in reality itself. Worse yet: they have taken over as tools of analysis the reified products of the ethnoracial struggles of the past. In short, they have failed to establish a clear demarcation between folk and analytic understandings of 'race'." Löic J.D. Wacquant, "For an Analytic of Racial Domination", in *Political Power and Social Theory*, 11 (1997), 222.

was previously hidden and converts it into a positivity, as a filled out social fact. However what the black inmate already knows from experience the sociologist claims epistemological authority over due to the position of science in the West. The black inmate's understanding of race would be, according to the sociologist, a folk understanding not grounded in science but experience which is already determined by science to be unreliable and specious by nature.[30]

The tendency to misconstrue phenomena as appearance seems to be part and parcel of taking race to be a collection of beliefs and objective social facts in the world, hence, naturally posited as discrete objects from within the natural attitude. As I've discussed, the ramifications of such a natural attitude for the natural and physical sciences (as these sciences must necessarily de-world their objects in order to posit them as discrete and dereferenced from other objects), in fact guarantees their incredible success. There is no such guarantee for the sociologist because her objects are first and foremost lived-through human phenomena which necessarily have imbricated horizons of significance. As such human phenomena cannot be deworlded like an atomic particle. Heidegger argues that *phenomena* ground the possibility to access objects as appearances.

> "Phenomenon", the showing-itself-in-itself, signifies a distinctive way in which something can be encountered. “Appearance”, on the other hand, means a reference-relationship which is in an entity itself, and which is such that what does the referring (or announcing) can fulfill its possible function only if it shows itself in itself and is thus a "phenomenon."[31]

The phenomenon of race, as the intelligibility human-being, is distinct from the appearance of race. The former is the condition of the possibility of the latter. As should be clear by now the fundamental delineation between phenomena and appearances is a central concern for phenomenology. The study of appearances of human identity is radically extended from the positivist approach of the sociologist who begins with a model she calls society to explain appearances to the study of *pure appearances* themselves which argues that there are no *things-in-themselves* but only appearances as pure positivities. The question of speech acts as pure appearances has been put forth by Judith Butler in her theory of performativity and will be discussed at length in chapter 7. In Butler's sense of human identity largely indebted to Foucault, such as sex and gender, there are only appearances as such and no hidden in-itself, in the Kantian sense, nor is there the concealment and unconcealment of the being of entities in the Heideggerian sense. In Butler's extreme constructivist position human identity can only be encountered as a discourse that is talked about, hence performed. In the Butlerian sense, in contradistinction to Husserl, objects have no *givenness* [*es gibt*] as such, meaning they

30 See chap. 4, sec. 12.
31 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 54.

cannot contribute immediately and manifestly to the constitution of meaning for a subject.

The phenomena of race, that is, the *how* of race, of showing-up as such and such a race, has not historically changed in its essence from its inception in the modern epoch. To be sure, the *what* of race, for example, the objective facts of what a race is as an object of inquiry for the positive sciences certainly shifts over time. Take for example the case of the Irish who immigrated to Northern U.S. Cities such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia in the 19th century. Arriving during the antebellum period the Irish were not believed to be fully white unlike the so called "native" Anglo-Saxons. The Irish would over time, after of the post-bellum period, transform from being categorically non-white to become fully white.[32] Was it simply the fact of being white had changed? Historical science charts the pivotal events, individuals, and practices that could cause such a shift in racial facts. The historian must elucidate a causal sequence that would explain such a radical transformation. This time sequence is hidden, much like the sociologist' racial structures, from direct experience. The historical logic that is uncovered by the bringing together of vast sums of archived information, again like the sociologist's racial structures, is not encountered in experience. Historical science reveals the hidden temporal structure of racial facts through its method. As such, these facts can only be accessed through the historiographical method. Like the sociologist the historian makes unhidden what remains inaccessible to the lay person and their folk attitudes toward race. The historian can with great detail tell us that the Irish were not white or white at a given time but can they tell us how they showed up as non-white and then white? Again like the sociologist, how something shows-itself and the description of encounter is outside the purview of positive methods.

The historian's contribution to the vicissitudes of racial facts is, I believe, critically important. Yet does this contribution get at the phenomena or the merely the appearance of race? The transformation of Irish into the category of white person charts the shift in the "what of race" as historical shifting facts but does not necessarily get to the essence of race. Such a distinction is perhaps not lost on the sociologist or historian but this indicates the more general inability to distinguish between phenomena and appearance which remains ungraspable from such a positivist stance on being. The positive human sciences today has almost unanimously reached the conclusion that race is real yet constantly shifts like Descartes' wax. Race and human identity are now infinitely malleable substances. Once determined in its "whatness," as malleable a substance, there will be invariable a tendency to pass over how race is encountered in its being.[33] Again whiteness like blackness needs to be understood as a style of disclosure rather than only

32 Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

33 See chap. 1, sec. 10. Troy Duster uses the metaphor of H_2O to describe the morphing and malleable properties of race.

an empirical fact.

4. Phenotype as an Exemplar of Appearance

It should be clear by now that the difference between phenomena and appearance is no mere semantic distinction. The distinction between phenomena and appearance in regards to racial perception is captured by the term “phenotype” or phenotypical variation. Phenotype connotes the collection of physical characteristics which distinguish one race from another. As a collection of physical biologically inheritable characteristics, phenotype is more often reduced to physical “color.” Sally Haslanger writes, "I use the term 'color' to refer to the (contextually variable) physical markers of race, just as the term 'sex' to refers to the (contextually variable) physical markers of gender. 'Color' is more than just skin tone: racial markers may include eye, nose, and lip shape, hair texture, physique, etc. Virtually any cluster of physical traits that are assumed to be inherited from those who occupy a specific geographical region or regions can count as 'color'."[34] On the face of it Haslanger's definition seems to indicate something of the phenomena of racial perception. Do physical traits capture the essence of racial perception? Is it is enough to let phenotype stand as just a fact of color or other set of physical differences? Much contemporary scholarship on race posits racial appearance under the biological term “phenotype.”

Phenomena → Racial Perception

Appearance → Phenotype

Yet phenotype and skin color are more often never fully worked out in an existential manner as "lived-through" but rather as only self evident “appearances.” In the human sciences, understanding racial perception as the appearance of phenotype is problematic for it in two ways. Firstly, phenotype invariably links race to a biological natural kind. Phenotype is borrowed from the biological sciences as the genetic expression of biologically determinate fixed traits. Because, for most contemporary scholars, race is now interpreted as socially constructed and not fixed, biologically vestigial terms such as phenotype are cast under the shadow of racial essentialism. Therefore reference to phenotype biases the phenomenon toward seeing race as having a fixed nature as a opposed to a constructed fiction.

Secondly, and with a similar result as the first, phenotype refers to physical color as sensation or sense impression, not color as lived.[35] Phenotype lends itself to a physicalist conception of race because one's race is reduced to a color or physical characteristics as

34 Sally Haslanger, "A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race", in *Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age,* ed. Barbara A. Koenig, Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, and Sarah S. Richardson (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 65.

35 See chap. 5, sec. 6.

totally constant, unchanging, and singular. The physicalist conception of race implicit with the narrow concept of phenotype will tend to be interpreted as biological essentialism which has been, since Boas, determined to be spurious. For example, in the phenomenology of perception we see the redness of the apple and not red as an abstract sense datum alone. For the physical sciences the physical color red is totally and constantly chemically and optically red. While red in perception is the experience of red in this particular light with that shading from this angle in this overall situation and mood. There is then in perception no pure physical red of the apple but the apple's redness. What's more, the red apple is a figure on a background and it is the exterior horizon of the apple and its background in which it is situated that makes it intelligible as a red apple. This means that the apple is only intelligible in its relation to a background, therefore we never see an absolute red apple, rather an apple on a table, in a tree, in a bowl etc.

Racial perception is never perception of discrete and abstracted physical traits but what can be called a *racial situation* in which a gestalt of referential relations make manifest one's racialness. One's whiteness is only whiteness in a situation. What's more, one can show-up as a different race in different situations. Phenotype is empty because it only refers to the abstracted racial facts about someone as discrete physical characteristics devoid of a background. Thinking of race in terms of phenotype cannot capture this richness of perceptual experience. One's blackness, such as the example of Barack Obama I will describe in the next section, is not reduced to a set of traits but is lived as a gestalt, a perceptual coherence, in which his blackness is manifest on the foreground upon a referential totality of the world, which is always the *a priori* of appearance. The concept of phenotype jettisons the transcendental nature of perceptual experience as facts without phenomena. Racial presence on the other hand is manifest only in a lived-through situation with its interior and exterior horizon and as such is both determinant and indeterminant, that is, transcendental.

5. Racial Facts

To place “racial phenotype” outside of the phenomenality of race seems counterintuitive but what phenotype indicates are physical characteristics as objective facts, not the existential holism of perception which we experience pre-reflectively and non-conceptually. For example someone who is phenotypically Phillipino can existentially appear as wholly black in certain situations such as catching a cab in New York City. How can someone be factually of one race but phenomenally another? Let us say that in seeing the Filipino man hailing a cab the cab driver decides not to pick him up. Does this mean that the cab driver discriminates against Filipinos? Perhaps this is the case but let us for the sake of this example conjecture that the cab driver does not pickup up the

Filipino man because he perceives him to be a danger as he is wearing a hooded sweatshirt, baggy jeans, work boots and is hailing the cab at dusk in the uptown neighborhood of Harlem in New York City. The being of the Filipino man is in this *situation* seen as a danger but his danger is manifest as not factually African American, but rather phenomenally as the presence of blackness. If we were to ask the cab driver: Why didn't you pick up that man on the corner? He may reply, "I didn't pick him up because I don't pickup black men— I don't want to get robbed." Is this simply an error in judgment, between appearance and reality? Classical psychology would see this as an error in judgment because the Filipino man was in actual fact not African American therefore the cab driver mistook the Filipino man for African American. We should also keep in mind that in the natural attitude African American and black would be posited as synonymous.

In light of the distinction made earlier between phenomena and appearance the traditional view can be stated in the following way: The man “appeared to be black” but was in reality, that is in the factual sense, Filipino. We have here a classic example of the distinction between appearance and reality as that between the false and the true as seen in our example of the curvature of the Earth. What occurs in characterizing perceptual experience as that between truth and false is the phenomenality of blackness is converted to “mere appearance” and as such deemed to be prone to error. If we recall thematically, appearances are not the *thing-in-itself* nor the real condition. Appearances as semblance or “mere appearances” can seem like such and such. In the traditional view, that which seems like the truth may not correspond to the actual truth of the matter. Appearances are then only "emanations" of some possible truth but not the truth in-itself. In short, appearances can be deceiving. Yet in our example the Fillipino man showed-up as black and the consequences were real by the fact that he was denied a service he should be entitled to.

What the cab driver attributes to a factual truth is what we can call an existential phenomenological truth. By this I mean that blackness is not a predicate but rather how the Filipino man shows-up for the cab driver in a situation. Racial blackness in our example is comprehensively the human situation which is always already interpreted racially as a background understanding of contemporary life. This racial understanding is a kind of *know-how,* the acquisition of which requires little formal training. In our example the phenomenality of race is the *showing-itself-in-itself* of blackness.

In order to explicate the phenomena we must suspend the prejudices of verisimilitude. Phenomenologically we cannot be prejudiced by the desire to have a correspondence between appearance and reality, between the true and the false or between the correct or not correct. What's critical in our example is that the phenomena of blackness is primordial to appearance. By this I mean, in order for the Filipino man to “appear” as a

black man or for the discovery of the actual facts the cab driver must first have encountered the blackness of the human situation. Again the annihilation of existential phenomena through the naturalistic interpretation of perception as "appearance" is subsumed by the notion of phenotype. To be clear, in our common sense understanding of race as something that designates something about individuals and groups, is often naturally taken as factual or an objective characteristic that can be represented discretely. The problem is racial facts are often forced to stand in for racial phenomena.

6. Pre-reflective Consciousness and Pre-objective Meaning

It should be clear at this stage that in order to get a better grip on the meaning of "race" it is not necessary to turn to the object history of the idea of race in its scientific development through the natural and human sciences. Though we must have that in mind as a significant constituting ontical factor in its *factual* or its scientific-objectivity and taken-for-granted understanding. The point here is not to dismiss the dominant epistemological account of race but rather to recover the pre-objective givenness of racial meaning which grounds any objective account. I am here most concerned with the *facticity* of race, its existential role (rather than what is factual about it), meaning how race is a part of our perceptual schema before we can reflect on beliefs, concepts, facts prior to scientific consciousness. It is in scientific consciousness where objects appear as wholly discrete and autonomous. Therefore the pre-reflective mode of straightforward experience is also pre-objective. For the most part, all of us in everyday life move about the world and engage in intersubjective relations in such a pre-reflective mode. Simply put the pre-reflective mode of perceptual experience *does not require* that we step-back and issue judgments or state beliefs. A pre-reflective perceptual experience already understands a state-of-affairs and it becomes critical for life in general that we already understand something about any given state-of-affairs. For example it would be intractable if we had to step back and reflect each time we went through a doorway. As I introduced in chapter 5, in our bodily comportment we have a corporeal reflexive intelligence, what Merleau-Ponty called the *tacit cogito,* that understands that doorways afford going through and our bodies possess the general know-how to do so. Some may regard such a phenomenon as the unconscious processing of information but this does not really do justice to the phenomena because we are conscious of the act of going through the doorway even though we have not given explicit attention to it.[36] Living in a culture with doorways we develop a sedimented skillful *motor intentionality* that already understands how to move through our particular world. We need not cognitively represent the door way to ourselves, we simply walk through it.

36 See Christof Koch, *The Quest for Consciousness: A Neurobiological Approach* (New York: Roberts and Company. 2004)

In light of such backgrounded know-how we also in our everyday dealings with others already beforehand understand others racially. The perceptual coherence of others as being of a race or racial exists in the background of experience. However this does not mean that race is a natural kind, as a biological determination. As well this understanding is not conceptual, meaning that judgments need not be is asserted, such as a racist statement. If we recall Kant's racist statement from chapter 2, "this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid."[37] Kant's statement is a propositional one, meaning that he reflects on the fact of blackness and then issues a judgment by reflecting upon some perceptual experience. Racist judgments expressed in speech, such as Kant's, certainly rely upon some prior experience no matter the proximity in time between the initial perception and the statement but, and this is decisive, the statement should not be allowed to stand in for the prior phenomena itself.

To reiterate, in everyday perceptual experience we do not step back and issue judgments about race, we already have beforehand an understanding of it perceptually. Again this is not what in the nominal sense is the “unconscious” or automated cognition of racial classification. In everyday perception we have a racial consciousness but we do not in every case make it explicit to ourselves. Arguing that racial phenomena takes place unconsciously does two things, it erases the intentional structure of consciousness and allows for an evasion of ethics or ownership of racist behavior by dismissing it as inaccessible to wakeful consciousness. Again like the predicative judgment, calling a racist statement irrational or against reason, places the phenomenon in the detached realm of the theoretical. I argue that the pre-reflective/pre-predicative racial understanding is a part of our cultural background, which delineates any possible intersubjective relations we may have and also their non-possibility. In the next section I will briefly discuss how pre-conceptual meaning found in everyday experience is often over-run by the traditional prejudices of intellectualism.

7. Intellectualism and the Critic

In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon takes up Sartre's analysis of racism in his text, *Anti-Semite and Jew,* by arguing that the phenomena of anti-black racism unfolds in a manner differently than Sartre's intellectualist view of antisemitism. In Sartre's view a Jewish person who shows-up in perception like that of his white Aryan oppressor, can conceal for at least a moment his Jewishness because his Jewishness is but a collection of objective historical facts about him... that he is from Warsaw, from the ghetto, that his name is Goldstein etc. If we recall Frege's racial dilemma; a Jew can be manifest to white

37 Immanuel Kant, "Of National Characteristics, so far as They Depend upon the Distinct Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime", in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 113.

others immediately as they are, another white person, in other words, a human.[38] This does not mean that Jewishness cannot be encountered phenomenally rather in the German Jewish case extreme measures were taken by the Third Reich to mark Jews off from so-called Aryans through identification systems base upon surnames, insignias, geographic segregation into ghettos etc. For a German Jew who comports himself like any other German his Jewishness can be kept, for perhaps a fleeting moment, as a private thought or idea. Fanon concludes that for a black person there is no such possibility in an anti-black world because a black person is immediately caught out there by white eyes in the visual field of human perception as either hypervisible or invisible, as Ralph Ellison writes in *Invisible Man.*[39] Therefore it's not simply the *idea* of race but the immediate pre-reflective presence of showing-up as such and such race. Fanon argues that ideas of race as abstracted representations of lived experience miss the gravity of the phenomena of showing-up as a *nègre* and the formation of the self-consciousness of person who appears to others this way. In *Black Skin, White Mask* Fanon's primary concern was the formation of psycho-pathologies for both blacks and whites in anti-black societies.

Fanon describes a point in his intellectual career where he maintained an objective view of racism but he found that it was not sufficient and in fact that turning point was not of his own volition.

> I have talked about the black problem with friends, or, more rarely with American Negroes...But I was satisfied with an intellectual understanding of these differences. It was not really dramatic...And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims.[40]

What Fanon reveals here is that even though he had an objective and critical view of racism, once he experienced racial discrimination in the *flesh* an intellectualist account of racism in no way prepared him for the subjective experience. Its seems that Fanon doesn't necessarily relinquish an objective account of racism but more importantly that the objective general account needs the subjective individual account in order to get a comprehensive interpretation of racism.

The problem is that the general linguistic turn in Anglo-American and Continental theory has conflated experience as a move towards identity essentialism where personal, ethnic, racial, gender, class identity becomes a rigid and bounded set of discursive categories

38 See chap. 1, sec. 7.

39 Ellison writes, "When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination– indeed, everything and anything except me." See Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: 20th Century Library, 1993), 3.

40 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 110.

with exclusive characteristics.[41] These rigid boundaries when policed include some but exclude others therefore reproducing racism that the groups' members were trying to avoid in the first place, such black nationalism, Zionism etc. However not all meaning is discursively produced, so to say that experience and personal identity are always already a discursive formation is problematic. This narrow view of experience as "condemned to language" inhibits the possibility for a comprehensive interpretation of human existence. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is critically important on this account because taken seriously the body as the locus of meaning rather than just language and mind, the lived body amongst other beings in the world offers radical perspective on experience. I would argue that dismissing of the body and experience has come to pervade even post-colonial studies, which ironically has the project of elucidating the violent experience of colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial racism. In the following passage from *Culture and Imperialism* Edward Said invokes Gramsci to describe the problems of essentialism in regards to ethnic identity.

> If one believes with Gramsci that an intellectual vocation is socially possible as well as desirable, then it is an inadmissible contradiction at the same time to build analyses of historical experience around exclusions, exclusions that stipulate, for instance, that only women can understand feminine experience, only Jews can understand Jewish suffering, only formerly colonial subjects can understand colonial experience.

Said goes on to write, "if at the outset we acknowledge the massively knotted and complex histories of special but nevertheless overlapping and interconnected experiences — of women, of Westerners, of Blacks, of national states and cultures— there is no particular intellectual reason for granting each and all of them an ideal and essentially separate status."[42] Said is correct in pointing out the pitfalls of any over-investment in essentialized identities but for Said essentialism seems to be an inevitable outcome of privileging a specific experience whether it being Jewish, a woman, black etc. What is striking is that Said invokes Gramsci's notion of an intellectual, one that Gramsci expands from the notion of the traditional intellectual to include the organic.[43] A close reading of Gramsci's section on intellectuals in *Prison Notebooks* reveals that in order for Gramsci to decenter the bourgeoisie's monopoly on intellectual life he needed first to dismantle the dominant Cartesian mind/body distinction. In Marxian terms the "mind" would refer to the bourgeoisie intellectual while the "body" refers to the proletarian factory wage worker. Gramsci does this by bringing the body and mind back together where the body and bodily skill were also part and parcel to mind and thinking. Once this dualism is shattered it becomes possible to see that the craftsman and worker have as

41 See Shari Stone-Mediatore, "Chandra Mohanty and the Revaluing of 'Experience'", in *Hypatia,* 3, 2 (1998): 116-113.

42 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. (New York: Vintage Books. 1993), 31-32.

43 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International, 1999).

much to bear on intellectual life as the professional philosopher. Said does not take Gramsci's expanded notion of intellectual to bear on experience and resigns himself to the Cartesian one. Said's schema of an “intellectual” is one made in his own image where only an intellectual understanding of bodily experience is sufficient in understanding what it means to be racialized, colonized, or oppressed. This I would argue is a one dimensional view of identity and experience as only discursively and psychological produced rather then co-dependent on identity as lived.

The essence of the problem for Said and post-hermeneutic skeptics is not only the privileging of different identities over others but the very notion of experience which all identities emerge from.[44] The phenomenological truth is that there is something specific about experience, that is, showing-up as Jewish in an anti-Semitic world or showing-up as black in an anti-black world. Experience is had by someone; meaning that experience has a "mineness." Therefore experience is always someone's experience; this does not need to deteriorate into identity essentialism. There is no question that one need not be Jewish to grasp the meaning of antisemitism nor black to understand anti-black racism but the distinctions cannot be leveled as Said's comments imply. The hidden basis of skepticism towards experience is that it holds onto the tradition's prejudice toward the body which as Husserl has argued is the zero point of experience. The body has traditionally been treated with deep suspicion. In the next section I would like to begin to look more closely at racial phenomena by drawing upon Fanon's phenomenology of self consciousness in light of anti-black racism.

8. The Lived Experience of Race

By now it should be clear that racial presence as the phenomenal perception of others precedes the establishment of racial facts. What's more this phenomenality of race is the condition of any possible fact that we establish about race. Because of the pre-reflective way we interpret others racially there is a problem of clarity. How do we get to “clear and distinct” descriptions of phenomena that we are not explicitly aware of in everyday life? In the next sections I will show that through existential phenomenological explication we can elucidate racial phenomena and come to discover that race is more deeply implicated in the modern self and world than merely in ideology, judgments, representations, opinions, and beliefs—epistemological accounts.

One can objectively hold anti-racist beliefs yet at the same time exhibit racist behaviors that one is not explicitly aware of. Racial intentionality becomes in this way embodied. This should not so easily be seen as a contradiction between belief and action but that psychological states, such as anti-racist or racist beliefs, are not wholly determinant of action.

44 Cf., Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", *Critical Inquiry*, 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-797.

In an oft quoted passage in *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon writes, "I am overdetermined from without. I am not the slave of the idea others have of me but my own appearance"[45]. As briefly discussed in the previous section, Fanon is here responding to Sartre's generalization of antisemitism onto other forms of racism premised upon an intellectual or conceptual account of racial consciousness, which does not take into account phenomenal presence. When looking particularly at anti-black racism, it is phenomenality rather than only private thoughts or ideas of race that are central to the phenomena of racism. Fanon's insistence on "appearance" in a radical way points to the perceptual holism of showing-up as such and such a race or what I have been calling the *phenomenality of race*.[46]

To be sure, the phenomenality of race is tightly coupled with conceptual racial facts or what David Theo Goldberg calls *racial knowledge*. However, as I have mentioned racial knowledge is derivative of racial phenomena which in the final analysis cannot be reduced to an epistemological account. The experiential and the theoretical aspects of race cannot be extricated from one another. It is my contention that much of the theorizing of race places emphasis on the detached and abstract sphere of scientific reflection and less with the phenomena itself. Robert Sokolowski alerts the beginning phenomenologist on the very same error in philosophy writing, "the cardinal philosophical mistake, phenomenologically speaking, is to force an abstractum into being a pseudo phenomenon, and so to base philosophy on the abstract meaning of words and not on things as they actually appear."[47] So it can be said that aside from the objective knowing of the positive sciences there is also a bodily knowing that founds the possibility of any knowing at all; certainly the objective and abstracted knowing of the positive sciences. Merleau-Ponty would say, we are existent in the world and we are already thrown into a shared world. For Merleau-Ponty these abstractions of race would be a sort of intellectualism that cannot account for the phenomena of racism in everyday perceptual experienced. Quotidian experience of racism from everyday people we share our world with is far distant from the racism exercised by the nation, state, and institutions yet this everyday intelligibility of race permeates these modern structures. Sociological data, such as statistics showing infant mortality, income distribution, joblessness rates or home ownership between white Americans and African Americans is extremely useful but really only show a part of the picture of how race is lived in the body that is already in the world.

How we live the process of racialization and showing-up such and such a racial way is

45 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press 1967), 116.

46 I interpret Fanon's use of the term "appearance" as a translation commensurable to phenomenon and not suspect to the conflation between "phenomenon and appearance" discussed in section 4 of this chapter.

47 Robert Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press. 1974), 14.

difficult to describe because as Linda Martín Alcoff argues the process of being raced appears to us as self evident; a sort of common sense which occurs for us without resorting to categories and classifications, in other words without calling to mind representations.[48] This does not simply mean that racial intelligibility is sublimated to unconscious and therefore unrecoverable. Merleau-Ponty writes, "I can experience more things than I represent to myself...there are feelings in me which I do not name, and also spurious states of well-being to which I am not fully given over."[49] We can say that the fund of perceptual experience is pregnant with meaning but meanings that are not always readily articulated in cognition or through language. To pass over the most mundane experiences such as the intelligibility of human's seems to implicate that its depths go far deeper than mere mental but are somehow sedimented layers of experience which can at times impinge on our ability to see others as who they really are, that is, as human. No doubt, race colonizes our interpretation of others but this colonization does not only occur in the mind but at the level of the body as embodied know-how.

If race and racism were simply ideas and ideologies it should stand that we could rationally rethink our way out of it.[50] Merleau-Ponty writes, "if consciousness were a collection of mental facts each disturbance should be elective."[51] So one may reflect and say: "No I am not a racist, I believe blacks are equal in every way to me as white." Yet this same person may display negrophobic behaviors towards blacks of which she is not explicitly aware, such as clutching her purse when a black child is present. One's negrophobic behavior cannot be explained away as “unconscious” fears, but as Husserl points out, consciousness or racial consciousness is always consciousness of something. Though this racial consciousness is often opaque, its interior and exterior horizon can be

48 Linda Martìn Alcoff writes about the difference between objective and subjective accounts of race and racism and calls for the combined approach in order to gain a richer understanding about how racial intelligibility functions in society and for the individual consciousness. Similar to Fanon's appropriation of phenomenology, Alcoff's focus is on self consciousness of race and can be described as a phenomenological psychology. "Toward a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment" in *Race* ed. Robert Bernasconi (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 267-283.

49 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception,* 402.

50 Representational racial politics in a sense assumes such a reality or rather ideality; meaning that once civic, state and corporate institutions are peopled with 'representative' minorities in all levels of these institutions racism, it will have the effect of making race cease to be an issue or at least significantly diminishing it. However taking a non- representational or non-conceptual approach to understanding the meaning of race and racism it is conceivable that an anti-black world is more than possible even when these institutions are replete with minorities at all levels of institutional authority. In other words simply having racial minorities in positions of authority doesn't mean that racism will go away. One could conceive of a white supremacist nation being run by an executive branch that was predominantly filled with racial minorities. The implication of this possibility is the pervasiveness and embeddedness of racism at a fundamental way in which we not only see the world but inhabit and dwell in the world.

51 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 136.

explicated. As well, one need not be white to exhibit anti-black behavior, which points to the pervasiveness of what I have called *racial understanding* which is a part of our *thrownness* in the world as something we cannot get behind with antiracist beliefs alone. Antiracist beliefs are conceptually derived through reflection and cannot bear a one-to-one relationship to straightforward experience which is not conceptual or rational. Therefore someone with antiracist beliefs can exhibit racist behavior.[52] Any dissonance between anti-racist attitudes and racist behavior does not imply a contradiction between belief and action nor is the former rational and the latter irrational. What's more, the ground concept of racial understanding and know-how deals a terminological blow to the traditional sense of "race" and "racism" because the latter is already part and parcel of the former. What I mean here is we can no longer hold onto a clear delineation between "race as fact" (biological or social construction) and "racism as belief" because to already see others racially, as I argue here, is to already take part in and be a part of a racist culture which the West historically has shown to be. Therefore, that we collectively already understand others racially means that we are also implicated in racism. Hence racism moves out of the explicit volitional space of issuing judgments to a pre-reflective consciousness of others. Racial understanding and backgrounded racial know-how does not mean we are condemned to all be racist. Because we inhabit and share the same human world we contribute to its intelligibility, not as private minds but as embodied intersubjective humans.

9. Merleau-Ponty's Pre-personal Phenomenal Body

In the following sections I will focus on specific aspects of what Merleau-Ponty called the phenomenal body [*corps phenomenal*]. The phenomenal body is in fact based upon what Husserl called the lived-body [*Leib*] mentioned in chapter 1.[53] Inherited from Husserl is the critical distinction between the objective body [*Körper*] which is primarily the object of natural science such as physiology and the pre-objective lived-body which is *our* body of everyday life through which we are absorbed in practical engagements with others and the world.[54] To be clear, Merleau-Ponty's focus was on perceptual consciousness while Husserl was interested in the phenomenology perception as well as pure ideation, imagination, mental imagery etc. As I introduced in chapter 5 in our

52 In an unpublished article entitled "Phenomenological Response to McDowell's Conceptuality in Perception" I began to work on the basic question; is human perception grounded and thereby permeated by a kind of rationality? The magical nature of human perception as Merleau-Ponty and John McDowell describe, is that the world hangs together in perceptual experience; what we can call manifest intelligibility. Gestalt psychology has shown us convincingly that we experience the world and objects in the world holistically and that there must be a logic to the holism however it is not clear in our everyday dealings with our world that we use concepts and rationality to get around.

53 See chap.1, sec. 2.

54 Edmund Husserl, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, §2-3, Appendix IX. 153-155.

discussion of bodily incorporation, the *body schema* in coordination with what Merleau-Ponty called the *tacit cogito* enables us to move in the world without the co-presence of the "I" or reflective consciousness.[55] Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception is in essence what Gurwitsch called a "non-egological" conception of consciousness.[56] The body schema and the tacit cogito are essential components of the pre-personal phenomenal body which have biological basis. Merleau-Ponty adapts the concept of the body schema from the French neurologist, Jean Lhermitte's study entitled *The Image of Our Body* (1929).[57] As I will discuss later through Fanon, racism impacts the normative formation of the body schema by forcing a constant *egological* relation to the self.

Merleau-Ponty sought in his *Phenomenology* to primarily describe the perceptual capabilities of the phenomenal body as a grounded pre-reflective awareness of our body-selves in space and time. As such, Merleau-Ponty did not make explicit theories about the physical body [*Körper*] but rather about perception as a foundational field of human meaning. It is the affective field of perception made possible by our human biology that his phenomenology sought to examine. Merleau-Ponty argues that this normative pre-personal (non-egological) body schema and tacit cogito is universally shared by humans. In this view the body is what all humans have in common. Such a view challenges the traditional notion that the body is often the source of deception and error.[58] Phenomenology's project, in particular Merleau-Ponty's, is to return to immediate experience. The privileging of experience represents an anathema to post-hermeneutic skeptical approaches to human identity as discursively produced such as that of Said. It is likely that all mammals have something like a body schema but other mammals are not humans. In Merleau-Ponty's words humans are "condemned to meaning."[59] Therefore, even for humans the body schema exists prior to society, culture, and language. The body schema is the structure in which the tacit cogito makes possible phenomenal self-awareness that is neither driven by voluntary movment nor involuntary reflexive movements of a physiological nature. Merleau-Ponty argues against a psycho-physical or mechanical perspective on how the phenomenal body forms its own space and has a tacit

55 The 1962 Colin Smith translation of *Phenomenology of Perception* at times uses "body image" and "body schema" interchangeably. The "body image", though related, is the objective representation of one's own body such as the psychic image of the body reflected in a mirror. The body schema is constitutive of the pre-objective body of lived-through experience. The former is psychologically rooted while the latter is phenomenological and the existential basis of the former. Smith translates the following: "Par exemple, pour que le schéma corporel nous fasse mieux comprendre l'allochirie..." as "For example, in order that the body image may elucidate allocheiria..." Cf., *Phenomenology of Perception,* 99; *Phénoménology de la perception*, (Paris, Gallimard, 1945), 115.

56 Aron Gurwitsch, "A Non-Egological Conception of Consciousness," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* 1, No. 3 (1941): 325-338.

57 Jean Lhermitte, *L'image de Notre Corps* (Paris, Editions de la Nouvelle revue critique, 1939).

58 See chap. 3, sec. 3.

59 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xix.

sense of self.

> its [body] spatiality is not, like that of external objects or like that of 'spatial sensations', a *spatiality of position,* but a *spatiality of situation*…If I stand holding my pipe in my closed hand, the position of my hand is not determined discursively by the angle which it makes with my forearm, and my forearm with my upper arm, and my upper arm with my trunk, and my trunk with the ground. I *know* [my emphasis] indubitably where my pipe is, and thereby I know where my hand and my body are.[60]

The knowledge of how to grasp, light and smoke my pipe is tacitly embodied in me as my body through actional living. Therefore I do not make an object out of my body as a representing subject through mental acts of calculation; as an objective measured distance to the pipe on the table, which has this dimension, and this angle to reach for the box of matches in this pocket etc.[61] The phenomenal body does not produce mere movement (involuntary) nor logical movement (voluntary) but primordial non-representational intelligence of where it is in space. Our bodies have an incredibly effective way of moving and grasping things with deftness and agility. The body schema should not be confused with something like a mental map we have in our brains or minds which plots points in space. The acts of smoking my pipe are accomplished through tacit bodily knowledge of the schematic structure of my self as my body and the world.

The phenomenal body is a *natural self* prior to an empirical egological self or a psychological self. In this sense the phenomenal body is not an "I", yet it is a *self* with motor intentionality. Motor intentionality is the kinesthetic bodily directedness towards objects such as opening a door which is done without logical analysis. Merleau-Ponty often referred to this natural self as the *third term* between subject and object.[62] This phenomenological discovery of the body as the third term and natural self, also observed by Husserl and Gurwitsch, decenters the modern notion that Man is a representing subject.[63] The perceiving body provides an important response to behavorist and intellectualist and ultimately cognitivist accounts of consciousness. For example, the intellectualist perspective on perception holds that our bodies are like any other object that we represent in our minds; we calculate the dimensions, distance, and movement our bodies have, and then act. For the intellectualist the act of smoking a pipe is purely a mental activity where mind determines, through calculation, what the body can and should do in an atomistic fashion— each movement functions like a rule in an algoritm. In the phenomenological view the body perceives the world and objects holistically as a unity rather than as discrete and atomic sensations that are compiled together by the mind then represented to the knowing subject. While in reflection it seems logical analysis

60 Ibid., 100.
61 See chap. 5, sec. 7.
62 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 101.
63 Aron Gurwitsch, *The Field of Consciousness* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978).

shows that there must be a series of discrete steps concatenated in some algorithmic procedure in the mind yet the inverse is in fact the case. Experience show that interactions and objects are first encountered as wholes not discrete parts. Our ability to decompose an action such as smoking a pipe or properties of an object comes from first experiencing them as holisitcally constituted for consciousness.

For Merleau-Ponty the perceiving body is not simply another object in the world of objects, even in the pre-personal sense of perception. Merleau-Ponty's notion of this pre-reflective consciousness of one's own body in space, its own space, is an important aspect of how Fanon experiences his own body but with additional *schemas*, what he calls the "historico-racial schema" and "racial-epidermal schema." As mentioned, in contrast to Fanon, Merleau-Ponty's body schema is for him a universal given of human being. For Merleau-Ponty human perception is foundational for human existence, that is, *being-in-the-world*, as the most primordial point where human being becomes possible at all. Merleau-Ponty never applied his theory of perception and primordial ontology to an interpretation of the colonial situation. Merleau-Ponty's project was to establish a universal ontology irrespective of society, culture, and institutions. From his 1945 work *Phenomenology of Perception* to his last working notes compiled together in *The Visible and the Invisible* published in 1964, Merleau-Ponty consistently placed the perceiving body as the center piece to his new ontology. It would be this primordial ontology that would then explain epistemology, culture, society etc.

10. Fanon's Body as Always for Others

Fanon argues that if we take Merleau-Ponty's normative body schema and subject it to a systematic history of anti-black racism, the body schema loses some of its universal givens. In short, Fanon implicitly argues that Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body schema is normatively based upon European man.[64] Merleau-Ponty does in fact argue that the universal body schema can be subtended by other schemas, such as a *sexual schema* yet, these derivative schema's only influence or impinge on the body schema and have a limited capacity to overtake the primordiality of perception.[65] Fanon argues that in an anti-black world a black person has other possible schemas; a "historico-racial schema" and a "racial epidermal schema." Historico is not intended to only indicate historiography in the sense of the historian's narrative. Still the historico-racial schema is clearly informed by discursive fields of meaning yet for Fanon racist discursive elements have psychopathological effects that are not simply shaping the *mind* but the lived-body and

64 Iris Marion Young and Don Ihde make similar critiques of Merleau-Ponty's normative body schema. See Iris Marion Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) and Don Ihde, *Bodies in Technology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

65 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 101.

biological body. Central to the historico-racial schema are the sedimented personal experiences of anti-black racism that a black person endures through his or her life. These are not memories imprinted on the brain but rather these racial schemas predelineate a non-conceptual exterior horizon(s) of possiblilities and anticipations in an anti-black world. The historico-racial schema informs a set of dispositions about how to accept the world and live in it when one shows-up as black. An analogy of such a schema would be if one were a seven foot tall person in a society where the majority of the people are four foot tall and the built world only took into account people of four foot stature. The seven foot tall person would experience certain limitations in getting around and the understanding of these limitations could become a set of embodied non-representational dispositions for such a tall person in a society of small people. For example each time a seven foot tall person were to encounter a doorway in his Lilliputian world he already have an embodied know-how to crouch in order to pass through.

The racial-epidermal schema is the interior horizon of self in immediate perceptual experience of the world. The racial epidermal schema impacts a black person's tacit sense of self through the gaze of the others. For Fanon the Western public worldly gaze is primarily a white gaze. Therefore the racial epidermal schema is immediatley in play in the phenomena of showing-up as black in an anti-black world. In regards to Fanon's critique of Sarte's etiology of antisemitism, the German Jew would certainly have something like a historico-racial schema but not a delineated racial-epidermal schema because as Fanon is keen to point out the phenomena of anti-black racism functions differently than antisemtism due to visual perception.

Fanon argues that together, the historico-racial schema and the racial epidermal schema tacitly inform a black person's sense of self and can impinge upon Merleau-Ponty's primordial body schema. The question of "who am I" or "what am I" is constantly echoed in racialized existence. Provactively, Fanon argues that because racism demands constant viligence upon the self where consciousness is conscious of itself this racialized consciousness comes to have a deleterious effect on the formation of a normal body image and its founding body schema. Even further, Fanon argues that in racist phenomenon not only is there the destabilizing condition of forcing a *consciousness that is conscious of itself* but this a *negating activity*. In worst case scenarios this can lead to neurosis of self hatred or what can be called internalized racism. As mentioned, Fanon as a clinician was interested in the psychopathologies generated from racism which is in large part the focus of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon's psycho-existential analysis conducted in chapter 5 of *Black Skin,* titled "L'experience vecue du Noir" can best be described as phenomenological psychology because of its explicit focus on the impact anti-black racism upon the formation of the self.

Let us look more closely at the problem of the negating self consciousness. Fanon

introduces us to these issues by way of his own experience in France as a black Caribbean immigrant in a white world. It's worth here quoting Fanon in full to reveal his position on the post-colonial situation in post-war France.

> In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty. I know that if I want to smoke, I shall have to reach out my right arm and take the pack of cigarettes lying at the other end of the table. The matches, however, are in the drawer on the left, and I shall have to lean back slightly. And all these movements are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge. A slow composition of myself as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and the world—definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world... Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema. The elements that I used had been provided for me not by "residual sensations and perceptions primarily of a tactile, vestibular, kinesthetic, and visual character", but by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.[66]

Fanon, like Merleau-Ponty, interprets Lhermitte's theory of body schema/body image similarly. Fanon describes phenomenologically the establishment of his body in space and time and the body's tacit sense of self when absorbed in everyday activity. At the same time the "historico-racial schema" is "imposed" by white others, therefore consciousness of himself is subtended in such a way that the pre-personal biological schema has no autonomous bearing on Fanon's consciousness of himself. Fanon is forced to only see himself through the white others eyes, through their stories about Negroes and savages in a third person perspective.

What's decisive is the third person perspective forces a consciousness that is conscious of itself as an abolute negativity. Phenomenology has shown in general that in most of our normal waking life humans do not exist egologically (consciousness that is consciousness of itself) as traditional Cartesian derived ontologies have presumed. Furthermore, deliberate reflection in the flow of practical activities results in failure of absorption often having diasterous effects. Think of a tight-rope walker who one day falls off his rope to the ground and survives within an inch of his life. His tight-rope walking attempts afterwards would be beset with the anxiety of falling to his death. A constant vigilance would set in, not necessarily canceling out the tight-rope walker's tacit cogito and its sense of the body schema but causing him to reflect on every movement and position, thereby making it very difficult for him to become absorbed in the skilled

66 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 111.

activity of walking a rope from a high and dangerous perch. At each step the tight-rope walker becomes more conscious of the possiblity of falling towards his death. For the tight-rope walker the possibility of his biological death signals the possibility of no longer being able to inhabit a meaningful practice in which he has trained his whole life for. The existential angst of tight-rope walking is the possibility of no longer being a tight-rope walker which signals the death of the practice and what it means to be a tight-rope walker.

If our example of the tight-rope walker refers only to an infrequent and specialized activity what does it mean to represent oneself to oneself as a general mode of existence? Radically this is precisely the problem that Fanon poses to us. Fanon implies that racism enacts *being-towards-death* not in the sense of biological mortality but in the sense of the possibility of not showing-up as human. Racism would then structure a situation in which there was a constant *possibility of impossibility* in which bodily comportment would not be presenced as human comportment (*Leib*) but perhaps only an objective mechanistic animal body [*Körper*] driven by passions without reason.[67]

Directly challenging Merleau-Ponty's theory of the general existence of the lived body, Fanon himself as a consciousness of himself places a historico-racial schema below that of the body schema. As mentioned the historico-racial schema is not discursively produced but are the sedimented experiences of racism that subtend one's body schema; which as Fanon writes is the affective field (Merleau-Ponty's phenomenal field) "the definitive structuring of self and of the world, one that is not "imposed" on Fanon but given by the body and *being-in-the-world*.

Merleau-Ponty would certainly agree with the possibility of the existence of the "historico-racial schema" however the assertion that it could nullify the pre-personal body schema would most likely be rejected. Still as I 've introduced already, the pre-personal body schema can be overrun and but not necessarily cancelled out. It could be argued that Fanon's pre-personal body schema was in fact subtended by this historico-racial schema in a similar way that Merleau-Ponty argues the *sexual schema* subtends our body schema.[68]

How can Fanon assert that what he calls the "body schema" be trumped by the "historico-racial schema" and then later a "racial-epidermal schema"? One could argue that what Fanon is describing are two separate phenomenal descriptions of consciousness. The first being the pre-reflective tacit knowledge of one's own body in the world, at least not fully a reflecting subject. The second being the "third person" consciousness of self that is imposed by the white other's gaze, where Fanon is conscious of himself towards

67 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 307.

68 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 207-232.

becoming a subject. So rather than a body schema, what Fanon may be describing is his own psychological *body image*, a reflection of himself as an object through white others eyes, that is, a specular image. Perhaps Fanon is conflating two types of consciousness; one that is a universal biological given and originates at the level of the perceiving body and the other reflective consciousness of himself— discursively produced by a racist culture out of "thousands of anecdotes and stories" of the Negro. The following question can be posed: is the latter so called reflective third person consciousness of the self really a reflective consciousness of the self or directly linked to the pre-reflective consciousness of body-schema? The racist phenomena has its root in the field of perception when the white other directs his/her gaze upon Fanon. Making a hard and fast distinction based upon state and content of consciousness seems problematic because for Fanon if the second phenomenon, generated by the white gaze is a pure reflective consciousness then this would require in a sense, a shut off subject, one who is removed from the world. This is not the case with the phenomenon that Fanon describes, which is an existential situation. Fanon argues adamantly that the body schema for the black man is obliterated and never able to establish itself as it can for whites.

> Then assailed at various points, the body schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in triple person. In the train I was given not one but two, three places. I had already stopped being amused. It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other ... and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea...I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors.[69]

Fanon describes here in this extreme case a progression from a third-person consciousness of his body, which he is generally subjected to, to what he calls a tripling of the self. The triple self describes the severity of this form of self-consciousness which sees its body-self as alien/Other, hence third-person, to the extreme of how white others see his *race* and his *ancestors* through him. Such a radically evicerating phenonomen of the self may seem far fetched but one can imagine for instance a neighborhood community meeting where fifty or so citizens are in attendance, including a police officer who arrives late to the meeting from his evening shift and in full uniform. Unbeknownst to the officer an extemporaneous discussion of a recent incident of police brutatlity erupts in heated debate in which swift justice is demanded by most all in the meeting. All eyes are on the police officer present even though he played no role in the incident; a shooting of an unarmed man. How does the police officer see himself in this situation? The police officer is now conscious of himself as a policeman and somehow feels implicated and

69 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 112.

perhaps responsible for what other members of his department had done. In short what it means to be himself, a man of law is under attack. Does the police officer's body schema crumble? Not likely, because the police officer can take on these criticisms and attacks directed at him or he can quickly escort himself out of the hall. While he is a police officer he is also many other things with other roles; husband, father, EMT etc. The vocation of policeman does not overdetermine him. Fanon argues that racism overdetermines the human from without. While Fanon has other roles these other roles are always interpolated with *being black.* In his role as father, he is a black father. In his role as psychiatrist he is a black psychiatrist. In his role as writer, he is a black writer. We can now imagine this triple consciousness bearing down on a self at the scale of race and historical ancestry. Fanon describes essentially how such a phenomenon was in that moment debilitating in which his body was frozen, unable to move. For Fanon in that moment his body-schema was overrun by the *severity of racialized personal existence*.

If recognition of human being or what a human being is were simply the phenomena of the body schema then Fanon is certainly that, because he possesses as every other human, a tacit knowledge of his body at some fundamental level. However these other other layers of significance (historic- racial schema to racial-epidermal schema) does not allow for possibility of complete human recognition and in fact negates the possibility of intersubjectivity or being with others in a direction towards reciprocity. Fanon shows-up for whites in postwar France not with human-being and not object but something quite outside of the subject/object relation. It is the one way street of the white's gaze that articulates the uncanny ontological status of Fanon. Fanon does not show-up as a subject as European man. Said's concept of the Other also cannot account for the phenomenon of showing-up as non-human.[70] Fanon is interpreted as a *thirdly thing*, that is, there as a living being but not there as one with human-being. In that racist moment Fanon's existence is interpreted by whites as that of an animal. Racism preserves animality of its victims and delinks their reason.

Fanon argues that intersubjective consciousness of the self with others is not simply posterior to pre-reflective consciousness of the body schema. Therefore biology is not always anterior to sociality. Referring back to the earlier hypothesis that Fanon, in describing the phenomena of self consciousness as two different types of consciousness; one pre-reflective consciousness or tacit perceptual knowledge of his body and the second, his consciousness of whites' consciousness of him, is incorrect. Rather anonymous biological existence and personal human existence are interwoven, one affecting the other in both directions.

Merleau-Ponty is for the most part clear about the distinction of the biological facticity of the body as comprehensively determinant of the pre-personal body schema, that for him

70 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

is universal to humans and is anterior to personal and cultural human existence. For Merleau-Ponty the pre-personal body schema would some how ground the historico-racial schema and racial epidermal schema that subtends Fanon's body. The crisis of modern rational existence for Merleau-Ponty is that personal human existence is thought to overrun or colonize the primordial perceiving body. Though Merleau-Ponty argues that our phenomenal body founds personal existence this does not mean that the lived body exists on incommunicable plane from that of the pscyhological self or the social and culture self. Therefore from Merleau-Ponty's perspective the lived body exists in synchronization with our human or social existence as a general way of existing. Merleau-Ponty does concede to the possibility of exceptions or aberrations of this order where the synchronization of the pre-personal to personal is not always seemingly given.

> so it can be said that my organism, as a pre-personal cleaving to the general form of the world, as an anonymous and general existence, plays, beneath my personal life, the part of an *inborn complex*. It is not some kind of inert thing; it too has a something of the momentum of existence. It may even happen when I am in danger that my human situation abolishes my biological one, that my body lends itself without reserve to action. But these moments can be no more than moments, and for most of the time personal existence represses the organism without being able either to go beyond it or to renounce itself; without, in other words, being able either to reduce the organism to its existential self, or itself to the organism.[71]

Here Merleau-Ponty is making reference to passages from *Pilote de guerre* (1942) written by the famous World War II fighter pilot, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. It seems that in "moments" of danger, such as mortal combat, the human situation can overrun the biological pre-personal existence of the body. His description of the phenomenon of mortal danger, of life and death in times of war are one of the few passages in the entire of *Phenomenology of Perception* where Merleau-Ponty concedes to the possible temporary overrunning of the pre-personal body schema. For realists who take seriously the thesis of lived bodily perception that Merleau-Ponty expounds, the possibility of domination of human existence over its synchronicity with biological existence will be seen as only an aberration. Merleau-Ponty is quite clear when he says "personal existence is intermittent and when this tide turns and recedes, decision can henceforth endow my life with only an artificially induced significance."[72] In Merleau-Ponty's view, as well as other prominent phenomenologists such as Heidegger, Gurwitsch and Dreyfus, personal existence in which the "I think" accompanies all my representations is not a constant mode of existence but rather temporary and fleeting.[73] Still in our natural attitude we will

71 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84.
72 Ibid., 84
73 Cf., chap. 3, no. 8.

likely posit personal existence as a constant.[74] In fact the sciences adopt the presupposition of absolute personal existence by making the "I think" the hidden correlate of all its objects.[75]

Is the phenomenon of racism that Fanon describes an exceptional moment in his everyday life or perhaps serialized exceptional moments? Perhaps rather than focus on the moment as anomalous we should look to the essence of that moment in which Fanon found himself. Unlike the being in a fire fight over the Mediterranean, in our mundane and everyday lives Saint-Exupéry says that "meaning is not at stake."[76] So perhaps its not death itself but the possibility of death of meaning which can be termed non-being. The essence of the moment of the death of meaning indicates the contingency of life. Is then meaning at stake for Fanon? Does racism impose non-being by closing off the horizon of possiblities to be? In that terrible moment of racism Fanon writes, "Look a Negro!....*Maman*, a Negro!, he's getting mad....Take no notice, sir, he does not know that you are as civilized as we...."[77] Fanon goes on to describe his consciousness of the self in a white world.

> The white world, the only honorable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man— or at least like a nigger. I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an *inborn complex* , to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known [my emphasis].[78]

Are these only temporary and fleeting moments much like what Merleau-Ponty says of personal existence? It is clear that the enduring effects of anti-black racism that Fanon describes calls in to question consistently the meaning of being human. If in personal existence the grounding question is the following: "Who am I?", it can be said that for Fanon the question is "What am I?"[79]

What is remarkable is that racism seems to present an onset of an extreme form of personal existence, what Fanon termed earlier, third-person and triple consciousness.[80] This forces an egological relation to the self one which one must constantly represent

74 See chap. 5, sec. 1.
75 See chap. 2, sec. 9.
76 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84, no. 2.
77 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* 112-114.
78 Ibid., 112-114.
79 See Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle", in *National Identity and Sociopolitical Change: Latin America Between Marginization and Integration*, ed. Mercedes Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
80 It is likely that Fanon's concept of triple consciousness is an adaption from W.E.B. Du Bois' famous theory of "double consciousness." See W.E.B. Dubois', *Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 45.

oneself to oneself. Fanon argues not only must the black step outside himself and represent himself to himself, he argues that he must be forced to represent himself through white eyes. And it is the representing oneself to oneself not through your own eyes, as perhaps is the case of the tight-rope walker, but through white eyes that indicates a radical self negating activity. What is surprising is that racism *simultaneously* denies the possibility that the racialized are capable of a personal existence, that is, an inner life of the mind and reason. Is this not a deep existential paradox? *The paradox of blackness then is to constantly exist personally yet at the same time to be denied the very basis of personal existence, that is, as one who is capable, exhibits, and renders reason*. Such an existence seems untenable. How can one endure non-being? What's more striking is the paradox of blackness is the antithesis of the paradox of whiteness. We can recall in chapter 4, the paradox of whiteness is the following: *being-white* is a pre-personal mode of showing-up as a complete person, that is, as rational, self-sufficient, and self-certain. As such it is the embodiment of the norm of that comports itself as if it securely and with certainty exists personally, that is, disembodied. The essence of whiteness is the comportment of *being-certain* which is embodiment of the norm of disembodied personal existence. Blackness on the other hand is to exist personally as a necessary mode of existence in an anti-black world, that is, disembodied but to be always interpreted as being in a state-of-nature in brute bodily existence.

11. The Problem of Intersubjectivity

The previous sections were focused on explicating the *static* phenomenology of the situated phenomena of being encountered as "such and such a race." What was at issue was, "how does one show-up as raced?" and "How does this affect the self?" What does this phenomena look like in individual consciousness, its intentionality? This was the first stage in descriptions of the lived experience of racial phenomena from the position of a single subject. Beginning with static phenomenology was necessary because it enables us to begin to elucidate the complexity of racial encounter and the taken-for-granted way in which we already find others intelligible through a racial perceptual schema in everyday life. In pre-reflective life, that we find others intelligible through racial schemas, necessitates not only how we share a world but how we interact with others. Therefore in order to further develop an existential phenomenology of the lived experience of race we must begin to describe the phenomena as it relates to intersubjectivity, sociality or more broadly *being-with-others*. In the following sections I would like to begin to sketch out the problems racial perception poses to the normative constitution of intersubjectivity through a genetic or generative phenomenology. Genetic or generative phenomenology is the explication of the temporal-longitudinal constitution of our intersubjective conscious life. Both static and genetic phenomenology are part and parcel of constitutive phenomenology proper, the system that Husserl spent his lifetime

rigorously defining. As mentioned Merleau-Ponty would later take up Husserl's system to work out the first person perspective of bodily perception including intersubjective relations. In the following sections I will briefly discuss Merleau-Ponty's genetic phenomenology of intersubjectivity. Merleau-Ponty's concepts discussed in previous sections, such as the body schema and tacit cogito, are of course foundational to his generative approach to sociality.

12. Merleau-Ponty's Normative Intersubjective Constitution

Merleau-Ponty argues the ego cannot be the starting point of the "thou." Therefore "intersubjectivity" as we take it from a Cartesian or Kantian perspective is a bit of a misnomer because in pre-reflective *being-with* there is no subject as such but a non-egological self in relation with others.[81] Our bodies in this flow of interaction as well lose their objectness because there is no explicit ego to make an object out of it.[82] Other selves are a part of a comprehensive system of behavior that points at the world. For Merleau-Ponty primordially we are pre-personal alien beings that find in others something familiar that we tacitly know about the intentionality of our own perceptual experience. We act on the world in a similar style in the most rudimentary ways. Though Merleau-Ponty critiques Husserl's transcendental ego and its constitution of others as object from the ego pole, he retains "my familiarity" with "my living body" not only as a similar object but more importantly that we display similar motor intentions that are directed toward the world of things and creatures in a unified fashion. For Merleau-Ponty intersubjectivity is a part of the basic system of behavior that is implied in object constitution in which an alien other is taking over and contributing to the phenomenon of presentation/appresentation of objects. By alien, Merleau-Ponty does not mean foreigner or stranger but pre-personal subject. Object constitution implicates others who aim at the world of objects with a similar intentionality and at once bring together my partial perspective on the world which is always partial and never neutral. Merleau-Ponty describes this intercorporeal phenomenon further.

> The perceived world is not only my world, but the one in which I see the behavior of other people take shape, for their behavior equally aims at this world, which is the correlative not only of my consciousness, but of any consciousness which I can possibly encounter. What I see with my eyes exhausts for me the possibilities of vision. It is true that I see what I do see only from a certain angle, and I concede that a spectator differently placed sees what I can only conjecture. But these other spectacles

81 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 101.

82 When I reach to across the table pick up a packet of cigarettes I do not measure the length of my arm and the distance to the cigarettes and make a calculation in my mind but rather I tacitly know how to move in space without ever making an object out of my body nor an calculable object out of the cigarettes. There is just a motor project of "getting-the-cigarettes."

> are implied in mine at this moment, just as the reverse or the underneath side of objects is perceived simultaneously with their visible aspect, or as the next room pre-exists in relation to the perception which I should actually have if I walked into it.[83]

The things in the world are aimed at by this other body and give this thing a new perspective which is thematically and stylistically like that of mine which I know only tacitly. Merleau-Ponty writes the these things "are no longer simply what I myself could make of them, they are what this other pattern of behavior is about to make of them."[84] When I come into perceptual relations with Paul he already stands out as gesturally a part of my system. I can communicate with him before speech. His mood is presently manifest. Paul is already someone I can be with in the sense that we both complete one another's system or body schema from our standpoint on the world. Though Paul is not an object among other objects we must keep in sight the significance to the referential totality of beings as a part of the horizon in which intersubjectivity must necessarily unfold as already *being-in-the-world*. What I mean here is intersubjectivity requires the holism of perceptual *being-in-the-world* because being-with-others does not occur in a vacuum of subjects only moving in a separate plane of existence. Intersubjectivity is not just about subjects *qua* subjects but the relationality of each to the existential whole.

The horizonal aspects of intersubjectivity is analogous to the sensed/non-sensed or presented/appresented aspects of an object in the sense the there is more to Paul then what is visible. This more is not some private hidden thought which I have no access to nor is it the appresented parts of his objective body. This "more" the not yet presented become the possible ways he can be which come into perception as interaction continues to unfold. What is appresented is not only his back as a part of his body [*Kōrper*] which I cannot see at this moment but comes into view upon his turning to wave to a friend across the street. What is appresented is a part of his living body [*Leib*]. Paul is not simply an object nor is he a privatized enigmatic closed off subject of which I have no access to. Paul is a living being who moves like me, talks like me, ultimately behaves like me. Paul directs himself toward the world as I do. His behavior towards things, his general motor intentionality, is like that of mine. It is these behaviors like those of mine which give significance to the things. Without the things we could not find communication between us.[85]

Intersubjectivity is possible through our interaction not simply with other minds and subjects, but through the necessity of sharing meaningful things with others in the world. To demonstrate how this type of intersubjectivity is present it is helpful to look at a simple and brief example. Take for example a gymnasium locker room in which there is a

83 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 338.

84 Ibid., 353.

85 Heidegger makes a similar argument about things that gather others in his essay, "The Thing" in *Poetry, Language, Thought",* trans. Albert Hofstader (New York: Harper Row, 1971), 171.

wall adjacent to the showers and bathing area whose midway has a series of hooks for towels. As I retrieve the only towel from the rack a man approaches still soaking wet, his wet bangs slightly obstructing his eyes, reaches his hand toward the rack—NOTHING! I look to him and ask: "Do you need a towel?.. I have an extra one in my locker." How is it that I understood that he was missing a towel, his towel? Even in an object's absence there is intended meaning which occurs because of the reference relationships in which the situation of gymnasium locker rooms holds for us. I could interpret his motor intention toward the empty rack with rich meaning and indubitably know that he was in need of a towel without ever peering into his mind or conducting a psychological survey. Therefore the referential totality of things plays an essential role in the possibility of intersubjectivity. The social determinism discussed in chapter 1 begins with a social ontology that cannot readily account for the being of objects which it keeps in a separate plane of being from the social. In the social determinist view humans and things are much like ships in the night.[86] The world coevally unfolds in harmony with the human subjects within it. In the last of Merleau-Ponty's lectures at the Sorbonne, before his death, he brought significant clarity to the problem of intersubjectivity as posed by the tradition before him. He continued to develop intersubjectivity not as epiphenomenal but as coeval with our individual perceptual relations with the world.

> My consciousness is turned primarily toward the world, turned toward things; it is above all a relation to the world. The other's consciousness as well is chiefly a certain way of comporting himself toward the world. Thus it is in his conduct, the manner in which the other deals with the world, that I will be able to discover his consciousness.[87]

As Merleau-Ponty argues co-behaviors between one another are in the world and not in the mind. Therefore once we understand that sociality is in the world rather than private we do not need to get bound up with the problem of other minds and the trap of solipsism. Returning to the earlier example, yet what is appresented in Paul are the behaviors like mine that have not yet taken on fulfillment. Like my friend Paul and the naked man without a towel, our behaviors have an intentional arc toward the world which exhibits a general style of *being-in-the-world.* What is appresented are behaviors that are anticipated but could just as well not come into fruition. In this case Paul who I haven't seen for many months he may approach me smiling and joyful in which case I already understand what possible ways to engage him without representing them in mental thought. I move toward him with anticipation with my arms outstretched to embrace him. I embrace him with faith in our understanding that we are friends. There is a faith in intersubjectivity like that of perceptual faith in the ground under our feet. As I

86 See chap. 1, sec. 6.

87 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Childs Relations With Others", in *The Primacy of Perception,* ed. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 117.

will discuss in the next sections race shakes this intersubjective faith in others disastrously.

13. The Problem Racial Perception Poses for Intersubjectivity

The problem of intersubjectivity is old as the problem of the existence of the ego and other minds since Descartes however it begins with the assumption of a form of equivalence, which presupposes that we have all been dealt the same hand in life. As Fanon has argued the *damned* or racialized of this world have no "ontological resistance" to the established structure of the being of Man that Europe has come to see as the archetype for the modern human.

As I have continually argued we already understand others racially (as well as sexually) but not only in an abstract manner but in a lived manner such as catching a cab in New York City. I am not arguing that this racial understanding excludes any possibility of intersubjectivity such that whites will never experience blacks as human but rather, racial perception seems to invade the ability for normal intersubjective relations with other so-called races. I will continue this line of argument further by showing that the phenomenality of race fundamentally impinges on normative intersubjective relations within a specific racial hierarchy. As I have made pains to establish, this hierarchy is not rule based nor simply discursive but a backgrounded racial know-how. In this case I am drawing on Fanon's work of explicating the racial Manichaeism, the bipolar ordering logic of Western racism in which whites are fully human and the blacks are below the threshold of this standard of measure. In the phenomenon which I will call “racial”; for "this white subject" that "black body-subject" does not show-up as another subject like itself (a white subjectivity with an inner life, one which *reasons* as my white subjectivity does). This horizon of racial anticipations becomes breached when a black’s behavior doesn't fall into the expected horizon structure of behavior. A good example of this is when whites say “this black man is very articulate and intelligent” which was a similar compliment, the then U.S. Senator, Joseph Biden gave Senator Barack Obama when he announced his bid for the 2008 U.S. Presidential election, before Biden was tapped to be Obama's running mate. This non-compliment is quite common and points to the breach in the expected horizon structure of behavior that whites embody for blacks in an anti-black world. Whites who respond this way find the recognition and expression of this breach that “this black is articulate like me and rational like me” a pleasing affirmation because for them blacks are understood to be the antithesis of this norm. So humorously the non-compliment is accompanied with a certain sense of patting oneself on the back for recognizing this difference. And in observing a racial exception which Obama seems to exhibit, Biden perhaps sees himself as the exceptional anti-racist white.

The phenomenality of race presents us with a certain horizon structure of possible

perceptual relations we can have with others. This predelineation is non-conceptual yet has a set of anticipations which may come into fulfillment or not and even breached all together. In an anti-black world though the black and the white direct themselves toward the world in a similar fashion the corporeal schematic development of the white cannot easily transfer her schema over to the black in order to share meaning in the world. The phenomena show that this does not occur at the level of the reflective cogito but as a part of the whites' style of behavior in the world. This style of behavior experiences blacks as non-being, as neither subject nor simply object. The famous event in *Black Skins White Masks* discussed earlier, "Look a Negro!", in which Fanon's body schema was obliterated articulates well the non-being of his humanity for whites. The non-being of Fanon's humanity was not *prima facie* in the speech "Look a Negro!" rather it was an *a priori* and pre-linguistic understanding of how blacks show-up in post war France for whites. The child's racial understanding was not simply learned through language or representations but more fundamentally by the transference of the racial schemas from the child's consociates—mother, fathers, adult care takers, and other whites. A racial schema is imposed upon the primordial body schema as pre-reflective yet reflexive tacit bodily knowledge which understands how to comport oneself around blacks in certain situations.[88] The body schemas of the whites now subtended by a racial schema place blacks outside of a certain set of intercorporeal/intersubjective anticipations. The horizon of intersubjectivity that they share with others who appear as white becomes truncated in their relations with blacks. The perceptual intersubjective horizon is exhausted with blacks while between whites it remains normatively, a set of inexhaustible perceptual relations.

An example of this phenomenon in it most mundane is the experience of being within the intersubjective horizon in one situation and being outside of this horizon in another. Simply put, being visible in one setting and then being invisible in another is a common phenomenon of racism in the West. In philosophical terms the essence of this phenomena is one of *identity.* The issue of identity and difference has of course been a central issue for philosophical anthropology. The problem of identity is couched in the following terms, how can in human cognition we account for the appearance of the same entity in one place and time and then with certainty in another? A rudimentary example would be how is it that I can identify my cat when he is cavorting around my living room in the morning as the same cat who is often seem courting female cats in the neighbor's backyard in the evening? A story which "clearly and distinctly" explains this phenomena

88 Introducing this example of the child in Fanon's work is not accidental. A more rigorous explication of intersubjectivity and racial perception would have to include a "genetic approach" like the one outlined by Merleau-Ponty in the chapter "Child's Relations with Others" in *Primacy of Perception.* However in this preliminary sketch I wanted to outline the problematic nature of racial perception and point to its deep colonization of our system of bodily perception.

comprehensively across the biochemical, perceptual, and social level is still lacking. Framing the problem of the identity of entities seems straightforward. Yet if we complicate the phenomena of identity by introducing intersubjective relations, it becomes clear that we are indeed in a bewildering “Heraclitean flux” of everyday perceptual experience.

More pertinent to the issue at hand is the common phenomena where people of color are not readily recognized by whites in post Brown vs. Board of Education integrated U.S. colleges and universities. An example of this is the experience of black students who are mistaken for other black students on a mostly white campus. The problem of identity when one is mistaken for another or not recognized at all is most often taken as a mundane error and easily shrugged off as non-serious. Though it is often accompanied by shame and embarrassment by those involved. Is this simply an example of misrecognition or misperception— a correctable cognitive error? Can this problem of human identity indicate something essential about the logic of racial perception or how race is lived by our bodies prior to beliefs? If we phenomenologically suspend the notion of correct or incorrect perception but take all perceptions as what they are in themselves how will the phenomena show-up for us? Another related and more common example for black student is being visible on campus but when off campus being invisible. Somehow these black college students are not recognizable outside of the classroom, dorm, or campus because they blend into the background of the city as objects, a part of the urban referential totality.[89] These black students exist in a way as a part of the objecthood of the world, as Fanon argues about blacks in post war France. Yet this objecthood is not the same objecthood of artifacts in our built and natural world. These same black students who white students socialize with and maintain basic intersubjective relations while on campus, all but disappear outside this context. The originary intersubjective relations white students made with these black students is established while in school within the campus and the micro-world of the college. For these white students intersubjective possibilities with these black students seem most possible within this campus background but of course not guaranteed. The disconcerting phenomena is that at times black students are intersubjectively unintelligible outside of the figure/ground relation of the campus. Therefore the whites' horizon of possible intersubjective relations is potentially truncated when perceiving these same black students within the horizon of a city, a very

89 Arguments have been made for 'own race bias' by social psychology in which most studies argue that people of the same race are more likely to only be able to recognize faces of their same race than faces of another race. So for example whites are more likely to recognize whites than they are to recognize Asians or blacks. The fascinating caveat of some of these studies is that while 'own race bias' is uniform across races whites have the greatest failure rate in recognizing faces of races other than their own. This statistical caveat is attributed to the studies sample and distribution. See R. K. Bothwell, J. C. Brigham, & R. S. Malpass, "Cross-racial identification", in *Personality and Social Psychology* 15:1 (1989): 19-25.

different background than the campus. Still it must be stated that the campus is still situated within wider world, the same world in which the city exists. The familiar-black-student who is there as a possible or actual interlocutor in the world of the college, but the same black-person-in-the-street is passed over and is presented outside the horizon of intersubjective relations as simply a black person to not interact with. Racial intending of the "black student" reaches an absolute limit of variation. Meaning that same person who is a "student" cannot be anticipated as that same (object) person in the street. One can recall Husserl's articulation of the different ways to intend the same object in his example of "the victor in Jena" and "the vanquished at Waterloo" as two ways of presenting the same person, being Napoleon.[90] A certain *noetic* diversity of possible subjects in plural contexts is severely limited within a racial horizon.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I argue that there is perhaps a *racial cogito* which exists between the *Cogito* (personal existence) and the pre-personal biological tacit cogito. In Merleau-Ponty's genetic phenomenology of the development of children's perceptual relations with others he radically turns over classical psychology and Husserl's approach of always starting from the ego pole of subjectivity.[91] Merleau-Ponty's theory, adapted from the French psychologist Henri Wallon, argues that infants originally begin life with *syncretic sociability* in which they do not differentiate themselves as wholly discrete bodies or subjects from that of other infants or from primary care takers.[92] What occurs is a mimetic development of a body schema which is readily transferable to others. Therefore, in early infancy, Merleau-Ponty argues the child has yet to develop its own individual body schema. For example the infants in a maternity ward do not readily distinguish themselves from the other infants in the same ward. The cry of other infants is felt as "my" infant cry. This innate empathy possessed by infants is an important example of syncretic sociability. Syncretic sociability challenges Husserl's argument in his Fifth Cartesian Meditation where intersubjectivity is a matter of seeing myself as having an analogous objective body as that of the other.[93] In Merleau-Ponty's and Wallon's view humans are born with a primordial intersubjectivity and generalized sociality. It is through others and interacting with the world that the child comes to see him or herself as an individual that is individuated amongst others and things. Merleau-Ponty argues that overtime there comes to be a development of a Cogito, the personal and individualized self which takes over and colonizes the tacit cogito. Social constructivists theories of racialization place much of the functioning of racial

90 Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*., trans. Kah Kyung Cho (New York:Humanity Books, 2000) § 12, 287.

91 Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations with Others", 107.

92 See Henri Wallon, *Les origines du Caractère Chez l'Enfant: les Préludes du Sentiment de Personnalité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949).

93 See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 89-157.

meaning as cognitive knowing which places racial intelligibility squarely within the development of the Cogito. If Fanon is correct, then both the historical and racial-epidermal schemas do not only impact the reflective sphere of personal existence (Cogito) but seem to colonize human being at the deeper level of the pre-personal body schema. Racial know-how and the racial cogito do not imply that we see something akin to racial difference and meaning at the biological level, hence race as a natural kind, but rather race and racism may in fact be functioning in a more deeply entrenched and embodied manner than a psychological or sociological explanation can provide.

Once human identity, specifically, racial identity, transforms into personal identity as a condition of psychology, belief, or ideology, it becomes a tight-rope walk—a near impossible balancing act. The condition of personal racial identity is, what Said and Joan Scott call, identity essentialism because there is an attempt to fix a rigid set of rules, characteristics and boundaries of what any such identity must be to be that identity.[94] As Merleau-Ponty argues personal existence is tenuous and fleeting and cannot be maintained, therefore attempts to represent to oneself what *self* or *other* should be as a race will not hold. Whiteness works well as a racial identity precisely because it rarely needs to be a represented to the self— whiteness need not be a predicate. Take for example in the U.S. context the phrase, "the first woman to be elected president." In this phrase, “woman” invariably means “white woman” but need not be mentioned, it is simply understood that white functions in the background. The background is key in racial understanding and racial know-how because in the West all racial categories are grounded by being-white. Any racial category is intelligible in reference to one another but all are grounded upon being-white. White is the hidden standard of measure for all other races. As I've discussed in chapter 1, racial categories such as black, Latino, Asian are *figures on a ground* of whiteness. While it is not difficult to identify racial essentialism it is very challenging to shed light on the everyday embodied background racial phenomena and practices which taken as a whole make any essentialist position possible.

94 Cf., Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience", 773-797.

Chapter 7. **Conclusion: Socio-Technological Construction of Race**

> Racist opinions, on the other hand, are necessarily linked to psychological rigidity, since they rest on a myth and can thus be explained only by a psychological mechanism...To appreciate thoroughly the nature of anti-Semitism or prejudice against Negroes, it is not enough merely to be a psychologist.[1] - Merleau-Ponty (1951)

In this chapter I will critically taking up the ontological status of the social construction of race which I argue is grounded upon idealism. Because race has been found to have no solid biological ground, social constructivist views have largely concluded that race is a continually shifting and flexible resource.[2] The almost unanimous conclusion of race as flexible resource is in fact the hallmark of constructivist positions which is in accord with the current modern technological interpretation of being. In contrast, I argue that *race as resource* is a socio-technological interpretation of human identity which requires some permutation of the mental, *i.e.*, intellectual acts, which construct mediating racial representations. In the final analysis the mind must do the work of mediating racial concepts.

In the previous chapter, I discussed racial identity as a hermeneutic phenomenological relation between the way one shows-up as racial and how showing-up contributes to the formation of a racial self. I argued that race must be understood as a dialectical relation between the formation of a racial self and a racial world. I called this racial dialectic of self and world the *phenomenality of race*. Fanon called this relation of showing-up, for example, as black in an anti-black world and the psychopathologies such experiences caused, "epidermalization."[3] In regards to treating self and world as mutually exclusive Fanon writes, "historically they influence each other, any unilateral liberation is incomplete, and the gravest mistake would be to believe in their automatic interdependence."[4] Therefore an explanation of one, such as the self , cannot assume to provide an explanation of the other. Neither a social or psychological account of human identity suffices.

Traditionally identity has been conceived of as an issue of personal identity which is often reduced to a question of psychology such as the following: “I am race X.” or “I

1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations with Others", trans. William Cobb in *The Primacy of Perception* ed. James M. Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 107.
2 See chap. 1, sec. 9.
3 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 11.
4 Ibid., 11.

believe they are race X or Y." As Merleau-Ponty writes, "[t]o appreciate thoroughly the nature of anti-Semitism or prejudice against Negroes, it is not enough merely to be a psychologist." Phenomenologically, the *self* is not an empirical ego as the previous statements demonstrate but there is a phenomenal self in which embodied racial know-how can function pre-reflectively. Phenomenology of perception then begins its inquiry as we exist— day in day out— as our bodies. The first-person perspective of phenomenology can on its face seem to be mere subjectivism or what Stuart Hall calls an "unmediated and transparent notion of the subject."[5] As I noted in chapter 1, the social construction of race in general has made strong attempts to circumvent psychological explanation and its inherent "problem of other minds" by applying one or both of the following primary components: social structures and language. While social constructivist positions attempt to avoid subjectivism they at times reify the subject by creating a chasm between embodied experience and shared meaning. Therefore socially shared meaning is forced onto a separate plane of existence than everyday encounter and being-with others. In order to suture the experience and shared meaning together something like mind must be implicitly recruited.

In chapter 6 I discussed, by way of Kant, the relationship between *phenomena* and *appearances* in relation to *reality.*[6] The "problem of access" that my discussion of phenomena and appearance introduced is important to understanding the distinction between phenomenology and social construction of race. For positive science there are truths about reality which remain hidden and incapable of being directly encountered in straightforward perceptual experience. It is incumbent upon positive science to reveal these hidden structures as positive facts etc. by a process of de-worlding social phenomena.[7] As I've discussed, phenomenologically perceptual experience is transcendental in that objects encountered show themselves in adumbrations in which an object's manifold of aspects are presented and appresented together forming a coherent gestalt.[8] Therefore the appresented (un-sensed) sides of an object are not *hidden* but rather they co-constitute experience. Phenomenologically what objectively appears to be hidden is actually withdrawn, hence transcendental.

Social constructivism broadly construed, displaces the subject as the center of meaning-making in favor of the collective practice of discourse which generates and reproduces *real* structures in society such as institutions that take the form of nations, universities, civil society etc. For Kant, the construction of meaning is accomplished by the subject deploying concepts through synthetic cognitive acts while in social constructivist views,

5 Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 2.

6 See chap. 6, sec. 3.

7 See chap. 4, sec. 11.

8 See chap. 5, sec. 4.

particularly discursive theories, concepts are largely contained within language through the system of discourse itself. Meaning making moves from the subject to society through shared language and in doing so can potentially insulate itself from the "problem of other minds."

I argue that this valiant move to de-center Man as the subject has one very serious consequence, *the marginalization of experience*, and in particular, perceptual experience. Once consciousness is placated by language as the locus of intelligibility, the opacity of immediate and manifest meaning is very difficult if not impossible to recover. This is why much of the scholarship on human identity in the form of race and gender can be understood to be an *economy of representations*. In fact the focus of much critical race theory is on "representations of race." The relationship between representations of race and the lived-experience of race becomes severed when the belief is such that racialization is primarily the production of linguistic signs. Does one escape idealism by removing Kant's sovereign enlightenment subject from the center of meaning making? Does language alone shape and make intelligible the human world?[9]

In the present chapter I will examine four forms constructivism associated with race theory which I argue, though very different in each case, are largely derivative of idealism. As I mentioned the most deleterious outcome of idealism is that it creates a chasm between immanence and transcendence which in the end reverts back to the mind as the final court of appeal for meaning-making. The argument is not to deny language but to put it in its proper place in human existence rather than presuming that it is the *sine qua non* of human-being. Though I delineate four distinct and prominent contemporary versions of constructivist race theory, this should not to be interpreted as exhaustive in any way. Also, it is not my intention as a part of my critique to dismiss these positions as wholly invalid but rather to point to their limits in their marginalization of embodied lived-experience. The goal of this chapter, then, is to begin to elucidate how our contemporary theories of race and racialization are themselves already technological in their interpretation by taking our current epoch's dominant form of world disclosure as *a priori.*

The four versions I wish to discuss are what I have termed *sociological-structural* (race as a social fact), *rational-propositional* (race as a proposition), *discursive formation* (race as a discourse), and *performative* (race as a speech act). Each type of idealist position grounds the concept of race in historical discourse as a necessary condition of being an absolute constructed category yet at the same time being objective and real in the *minds* of people. Distinct from the following discourse-language centric approaches to identity, sociological analysis of structures is also derivative of constructivism where the vehicle for concepts are not units or bodies of transmitted language but rather a rational scientific

9 See chap. 1, no. 82.

model of society is put forth through the collection and mapping of social facts. The sociological structural explanatory system of racial meaning relies upon objective "material" facts that give concrete evidence of racial organization of society such as income gaps, life chances, institutional exclusion, segregation in housing etc. The rational-propositional theory of race, most notably argued for by Kwame Anthony Appiah, is the traditional constructivist account because it presupposes a representing subject who holds spurious beliefs about race.[10] The discursive formation theories of race are grounded upon Foucault's genealogical method where discourse itself does the work of construction without a sovereign subject positing beliefs. The discursive approach argues that language mediates our encounter with entities without the necessity of positing an individual rational actor as the primary source of meaning. The application of speech act theory and the performative to identity construction has been largely developed by Judith Butler and represents an extension of Foucault's concept of discursive formation.[11] Butler's approach most notably contributes the repetition of non-serious speech as the basis of a larger discursive formation. Performativity is today perhaps the most prominent strain of post-hermeneutic skeptical critique of human identity as it relates to gender, sexuality, class and race. Therefore I will provide a more substantive analysis of performativity and a phenomenological response to it. Before we examine the first of the four spheres of idealism, the sociological-structural account of race, it will be critically important to introduce a phenomenological perspective on the role of language in the body-gestural constitution of meaning.

1. Phenomenality of Race and Demonstrative Speech

In this section I will briefly discuss the phenomenological perspective on perception and speech and apply this to understanding the constitution of racial meaning. It is necessary to introduce the issue of perception and speech at this stage in order to avoid any conclusion that they exist in two separate spheres of human reality. Also it is important to placate the assumption that phenomenology of perception deems language to be inconsequential to meaning; nothing could be further from the truth. Our brief discussion here will be particularly helpful for the following sections where I discuss the social-discursive construction of race and human identity which I argue tends to cordon off perception and language into separate realms thereby missing the phenomena of race as a type of perceptual encounter.

To be sure, in order to avoid the traditional metaphysical ontology, primarily subjectivism, social constructivist approaches to race often rely upon language and

10 K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann, *Color Consciousness* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Unv. Press, 1996).

11 Judith Butler, "Critically Queer", in *GLQ*, 1. (1993): 17-32.

discourse as the medium that allows entities to be intelligible as entities. However, as I will demonstrate more clearly in the next section, when one shows the *subjectum* the front door there is always a tendency for it to return through the back door. What sometimes occurs is a bit of a slight of hand, because the *subjectum* is traded in for the social but with much of the intellectualist conceptual apparatus still intact.

The privileging of language and discourse is in itself not fallacious but it belies the fundamental phenomenon of racialization, that is, perceptual experience, and more specifically, racial presence. As I discussed in chapter 1, race functions as a mode of disclosure of *human-being.* To repeat, racial presence should not be misconstrued by concluding that race is a natural kind. From the phenomenological perspective this disclosure must begin in actual experience of showing-up as such and such race. Essential to the phenomena of racial presencing in perception, as with most perceptual phenomena, is that it occurs through a pre-reflective consciousness where the subject is in fact ego-less and does not draw upon representations or concepts to make intelligible raw sensations of physical difference of *this* or *that* human entity. Demonstrative concepts are, I think, an effective way to introduce the interdependent relationship between language and perceptual experience. Sean Kelly describes demonstrative concepts as "those concepts that make use of a demonstrative expression to pick out the way the object or property now being experienced is given" and "unlike general concepts, have the advantage of being 'context-dependent'." Kelly adds, "demonstrative concepts, of course, are elements of thought— they figure in expressions that we entertain in propositional attitude contexts, they are constituents of propositions that stand in inferential relations to one another, and so on."[12] Demonstratives may seem to indicate, when uttered in a situated fashion, experience has some rudimentary conceptual content.[13] Demonstratives are indicative of Kant's conclusion discussed in chapter 1: concepts must somehow be constitutive of experience. I concluded that the phenomenology of perception demonstrates otherwise: concepts are derivative of perceptual experience. In reference to expressions of states-of-affairs such as demonstratives and perception J.N. Mohanty summarizes the problem well.

> if the content/meaning of my perceiving the (yonder) red bird is the same as the *meaning* of the sentence “the yonder bird is red” i.e., the proposition or thought expressed by it –then one would be identifying the content of thought and the content of perception...I want a theory of perceptual meaning that does not end up assimilating it to conceptual meaning.[14]

The issue that Mohanty raises here is significant because intellectualism can take on

12 Sean Dorrance. Kelly, "Demonstrative Concepts and Experience", *The Philosophical Review*, 110, 3 (July 2001): 401.

13 Cf., John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

14 J. N. Mohanty, "Perceptual Meaning", *Topoi* 5 (1986): 131-136.

many guises and it is not only a cause for concern for the philosopher of language. The presencing of racial meaning is immediately manifest as a gestalt and often occurs prior to speech acts and predicative thought. Racial presence is perceptually intuited as a transcendence of the *being* of modern humans which hides from objective sight (scientific consciousness) how racial meaning is constituted in the flesh. Our ability to intuit racial meaning is concealed in perception. As I remarked earlier, the concealment function of perception hides more than it reveals yet as opposed to the "problem of appearances," in perception the hidden is indeed encountered. One of the key phenomenological discoveries of Husserl, which would be reiterated by Heidegger and others, is the way phenomena, particularly the perceptual sort, *conceal* from "mere appearance" how meaning is constituted. Furthermore, that phenomena conceals its object-meaning function is a necessary component of how perception works at all for us. Merleau-Ponty citing Max Scheler, referred to this as the "*crypto-mechanism*" of perceptual experience.[15]

When we attempt to reflect on the act and meaning of a perception, the danger can be to remove the situated references in which the act exists and is lived through. This does not mean that one must enumerate the cultural and geographical facts present as does the anthropologist or the mental states of the subject as does the psychologist. In the constitution of objects the perceptual adumbrations appears as a fluid temporal movement in which the horizons of objects and their reference to other objects and the background in which they live remain concealed and withdrawn, though it is the system of referential relations that make the object what it is for us. To return to our house example, the hidden backside of the house though not in explicit awareness and not detectable as a part of sensuous data comprises the anticipatory horizon of the whole house as an abode, that is as something to walk into and inhabit. This does not mean that it must be a specific backside of a house that we have already experienced but a general anticipation of any house in which there is more to come.

The structure of race as conceptual representation leads to two primary causal outcomes for racial meaning; either race is an immanent construct or representation of a subject, such as a belief, or the immanent construct is *inverted*, where racial meaning is imposed on subjects by "society", which is a linguistic community where a sign system transports and assigns meanings to things beforehand and prior to the constitution of subjectivity. According to this view, meaning in each case is not only dependent on language but is primarily determined by language.

The determination of language as the prime carrier of meaning extracts language from its role in embodied experience. Once separated from embodied experience language will

15 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception,* trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge 1962), 58.

tend to appear as the carrier of conceptual meaning where meaning must be reducible to concepts. If this tendency remains unchecked then language as vehicle for concepts severed from bodily experience must somehow make that which it refers to intelligible. In the final analysis such a move will only leave the mind as the mechanism that can make intelligible conceptual language. Therefore the living sentient body plays little or no role in the constitution of meaning but is converted into a passive object upon which language imposes its own laws. Merleau-Ponty argues convincingly against such an intellectualist or idealist position.

> The denomination of objects does not follow upon recognition; it is itself recognition. When I fix my eyes on an object in the half-light, and say: 'It is a brush', there is not in my mind the concept of a brush, under which I subsume the object, and which moreover is linked by frequent association with the word 'brush', but the word bears the meaning, and, by imposing it on the object, I am conscious of reaching that object.[16]

Here Merleau-Ponty argues that the name “brush” inhabits the brush-thing that I am in this very moment reaching for. In our pre-reflective practical encounter with things the name and the thing are not abstracted from one another. The point is not to deny the power of human language to name and express meaning of the things we encounter in the world, but rather to caution us to not reduce all meaning purely to language or propositional content, a subject with predicates. There is no human world which is not already in language but at the same time there is a perceptual world that founds the possibility of naming that which we encounter. This primordial ground is not then prior to identity of beings. One does not come upon an object and then perform some calculation in which the output is a name that can be mechanically assigned to the object in question. Therefore to privilege naming through the elision of perceiving denies the relationship between the perceptual constitution of meaning and naming. Merleau-Ponty argues that the act of naming is a part of the continuum of thinking in which perception plays a founding role.

> As has often been said, for the child the thing is not known until it is named, the name is the essence of the thing and resides in it on the same footing as its colour and its form. If it is pointed out in reply that the child learns to know objects through the designations of language, that thus, given in the first place as linguistic entities, objects receive only secondarily their natural existence, and that finally the actual existence of a linguistic community accounts for childish beliefs, this explanation leaves the problem untouched, since, if the child can know himself as a member of a linguistic community before knowing himself as thinking about some Nature, it is conditional upon the subject's being able to overlook himself as universal thought and

16 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 177.

> apprehend himself as speech, and on the fact that the word, far from being the mere sign of objects and meanings, inhabits things and is the vehicle of meanings. Thus speech, in the speaker, does not translate ready-made thought, but accomplishes it.[17]

Speech is the fulfillment of an intention through a gestural expression of thought. Speech is an expression of a prior understanding of such and such, one that is non-conceptual, requiring no reflection by the subject. We can apply this concept of fulfillment of meaning in racist speech as well. If we take Fanon's well known example in *Black Skin, White Masks* where a white French child, upon noticing Fanon, screams out “Look a Negro!”; this speech act alone does not “construct” Fanon as a “nègre.”[18] The child is fulfilling the intention through the vehicle of expression of an already given understanding of blacks in his world. The speech act does not bring the concept of the “nègre” into the world but rather expresses a part of a whole that is an already racist world whose understanding of how humans show-up functions in the background. This is precisely why race as the intelligibility of humans is the necessary background of racist expressions. We tend to nominalize racist expressions as singular events or anomalies of an irrational subject divorced from any reference to society as a whole. Treating racist expressions as anomalous allows us to abdicate our responsibility and our role in a racist society. Speech opens up access to the "preconstituted" world with its preunderstanding. The speech act, “Look a Negro!” is not inserted into the world from immanence but from the body-subject's expression of *being-in-the-world*. It could be contested that an argument for race as embodied know-how functioning in the background somehow naturalizes race. If race talk, inscription or racist speech were no longer expressed or absent from discourse would that mean that race was no longer relevant? An attempt to suppress racial expression in speech cannot be evidence of race's irrelevance but only its shifting modality. I will revisit Fanon's example in regard to speech act theory in section 4.

2. Race as a Social Fact

The sociological-structural account of race is important because it attempts to distinguish the institutional structures that organize and impose values upon individuals in society in a historically contingent process.[19] Social facts are expressed in language but primarily in the specific scientific language of the sociologist. The expression of social facts in scientific language indicates that the sociological-structural account of race stands apart from practical speech discussed in my earlier phenomenal-gestural account, propositional

17 Ibid., 177-178.

18 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 113.

19 See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 66.

account, discursive formation (serious speech), or natural language (speech act). These social facts, and here we mean "race," that are imposed upon individuals and groups are abstract. Just as the physicist's model of atomic particles are abstract models of the natural thing, racial facts are similarly abstract models of the concrete social thing. When I say that these facts are abstract I mean that we do not encounter atomic particles as the facts in actual experience nor do we encounter racial facts as such. We do not encounter electrons spinning around our coffee mug in perceptual consciousness but scientific consciousness does. We do encounter objects which are comprised of atomic particles as we encounter other individuals, perhaps already determined in a racial way by social facts.

Lets take for example a racial fact such as income disparity between whites and blacks in the U.S. labor market. While income disparity is no doubt a racial fact it is not encountered as a fact in experience itself. One does not encounter income disparity but rather one works in an industry that is socially organized in a way in which one race is compensated on average higher than another. The racial distinction itself may not even be codified, such as a compensation manual stating employers must pay blacks 40% less than whites. Rather the race factor is implicit in hiring and compensation practices but these practices are circumscribed by social institutions such as the private corporation. Though a worker does not directly experience income disparity the lack of compensation for blacks has real material effects in the quality of life, life chances, career improvement etc.

What's critical about the sociological structural-account of race is that it makes an important attempt to account for race as central to organizing individual and group experience. Perhaps we can say that the structural account like the phenomenological account of race, is a way to elucidate the background. However there are at least two distinct differences between phenomenology and sociology, the first being that phenomenology begins from the first-person embodied perspective on phenomena while a sociology begins with its societal model in which social/racial facts are abstract from experience itself. The first-person perspective does not mean that these are simply psychological states expressed in private beliefs but rather consciousness of some phenomena or states-of-affairs. Phenomenology is concerned with how we encounter phenomena in straight-forward experience.

The second distinction is that a sociology of race takes a positivistic approach, meaning that it accounts for only the *appearances* it can verify determinately and objectively. Opaque phenomena then cannot count as evidence and would play little role in the construction of racial facts. Sociologically, race is not constituted in experience as in the phenomenological view but rather race is constructed out of real, though directly unencounterable, facts. As I discussed in chapter 1, sociology works from within a social

ontology where extra-social entities either don't count or must be subsumed into its region of social objects. Subsuming objects into a social ontology can result in mistakenly treating, for example, a dog or computer like a human agent or neglecting them completely. In this way sociology is positive as is any science founded upon the reduction. Therefore in the sociological view the transcendental nature of experience such as the opaque non-conceptual horizon of objects of experience cannot play a role in the formation of racial facts. Racial facts are positive totalities and as such are complete finished concept-objects.

For phenomenology, the focus is on phenomena and not facts. Phenomenology's openness to the opacity of human experience provides a way to access both determinate and indeterminate aspects of phenomena. A racial fact and racial phenomenon can be conflated which can arise if the distinction is not made. The relation between phenomena and model or system has a decidedly top-down structure in the sociological account of race according to Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, a prominent sociological theorist of racism, who writes, "racial phenomena are regarded as the 'normal' outcome of the racial structure of society...we can trace cultural, political, economic, social, and even psychological racial phenomena to the racial organization of that society."[20] It is clear that racial structures are indeed social facts, that are externalities which impose themselves on everyday life, though in everyday life we do not encounter the structures as things-in-themselves but only the effects of the organization of these racial structures.

Here racial facts are not the thing as it is experienced but a conceptual model of an aspect of social reality. The racial fact complex is the model of the sociologist not of the actual practical activity of individuals in everyday life. This is why if we return to our racial income disparity example, employers can impose racial inequity at the institutional level though the individual hiring manager may not be explicitly aware that he is enacting a racist practice. However in order for the individual hiring manager to assign a lower salary consistently to racial minorities he and all hiring managers would have to intuit racial difference in some manner. Racial know-how then cannot only be a matter of an institutional structure imposing racial inequity through circumscription of practices from above but racial know-how would also function at the individual level of embodied perceptual experience. Embodied racial know-how already understands racial meaning pre-reflectively and pre-predicatively. What's most difficult to grasp, particularly from within the scientific attitude of the sociologist, is just how racial intelligibility comes into being at all if no concepts imposed from without, as in a structural account, or imposed from within as a psychological account. Neither the external nor the internal ontology of meaning making seems to be satisfactory.

20 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation", in *American Sociological Review,* 62, no. 3. (1997): 475.

Bonilla-Silva's lament is similar to the phenomenological critique of psychologism. Bonilla-Silva states, "[m]y central argument is that racism, as defined by mainstream social scientists to consist only of ideas, does not provide adequate theoretical foundation for understanding racial phenomena. I suggest that until a structural framework is developed, analysts will be entangled in ungrounded ideological views of racism."[21] While I am in complete agreement that we should challenge the tendency to interpret both race and racism as only a misguided irrational belief, the structural account still creates an chasm between phenomenon and fact. Can we say that a structure, such as an institutional racial fact determines experience or is a racial fact the by-product of an already operative racial know-how? If a racial system of order is only a model as I have argued, the model itself cannot explicate racial phenomena but only provide a conceptual heuristic in which to conceive it within the reflective attitude. Unfortunately not only do conceptual racial models exist for scientific consciousness they may also prejudice us from understanding racial phenomena in our practical activities where race functions through straight-forward encounter of others. Unwittingly, Bonilla-Silva in his, I believe, important and needed attempt to critique psychologistic approaches to race exchanges it for a conceptualist account both of which in the end remain forms of idealism, though with a decidedly empiricist influence.

The phenomenologist is primarily interested in how humans comport themselves in situations towards entities or fellow humans. We as con-sociate humans are already engaged in practical activities in which models themselves play no explicit role. It is these pre-objective perceptual practical activities or lived-through phenomena which is the condition of the possibility objective facts. Therefore it is not entirely clear that the imposition of external conceptual structures are determinate of individual behavior in which racial intelligibility becomes possible. While social structural account indicates something very important about how race organizes social relations, its primary danger is that its racial model can be conflated for racial phenomena itself when it is only a scientific model and not the consciousness of racial intelligibility in experience.

3. Race as a Proposition

The race as a proposition or rational-propositional theory is concerned primarily with race thinking or racial beliefs that one or many hold. What is decisive about the rational-propositional theory of race is that it presupposes a subject that *represents* to itself racial representations, ideas, concepts or beliefs that the subject, through rational means can choose to verify, accept, or dismiss. The rational-propositional theory presupposes a rational subject who expresses beliefs through language.[22] David Theo Goldberg states

21 Ibid., 474.

22 This is perhaps the most extreme form of intellectualism or idealism, what Judith Butler calls radical

that "racist expressions, whether practices in the traditional sense or texts, are informed by beliefs."[23] Beliefs are distinct in the following way: beliefs are immanent constructs that emerge in deliberate reflective consciousness. Beliefs can be expressed in sentential form in which a subject is furnished with a predicate such as the following: "This cat is fat." Furthermore, beliefs can emerge as propositions such as "All blacks are inferior" or "Some blacks are inferior." Specific to racial or racist beliefs is that the statements formed as propositions are not only essentializing they are universalizing, such as the syllogism "All *X* are *Y*." No conditions need satisfying in a racist statement because the subject is determined by the predicate.

In terms of their modality, beliefs require deliberative detachment from straightforward experience of everyday life. What is distinctive is that in the detached stance a special subject emerges, what Sartre called the *reflective ego*. In detached deliberation the reflective ego co-present with the subject doing the reflection calls upon concepts, *i.e.,* subjects with predicates in order to construct a statement about something. Aspects of the propositional account of race that can be attractive to some could be the following: if one can demonstrate that a proposition holds a contradiction then one can prove it to be false hence not true. If statement *A* is not true then the only *rational* response is to not believe in statement *A*. From this it follows that if "All *X* are *Y*" is shown to be contradictory through a referential account of truth then a new more rational statement must be presented. Consider the following universal statement: “White men can't jump.” If we can demonstrate, for example, scientifically that there are some white men that can jump on average as high or higher than others then we can show that the previous statement is indeed false. The rational-propositional account of race must demonstrate at the level of reference or the correspondence theory of truth that a belief is false and to believe in a false proposition is irrational.

What I have been calling the rational-propositional theory of race has been termed by some philosophers as the eliminativist account of race, one endorsed by Kwame Anthony Appiah. Not only does Appiah urge us to see that propositional statements of the kind I've been demonstrating such as “All whites are superior” are irrational, he argues that the concept of race itself is spurious and needs to jettisoned once and for all. In his text *Color Consciousness* co-authored with Amy Gutmann, Appiah bases his argument against the validity of the concept of race on a rational-propositional approach to meaning through the philosophy of language and the philosophy of science. Appiah

constructivism because it presupposes a representing subject. Butler has attempted to circumvent the radical constructivist position through non-serious speech, similar to what Husserl called 'occasional expressions' but I am getting ahead of myself. I will discuss Butler's important challenge to the subject centered theory of race in section 4.

23 David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture* (Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1993), 42.

contends, "I ...deny that everybody has a race, because I think nobody has a race..."[24] Appiah's eliminativist account of race pivots upon the widespread consensus within the contemporary human sciences and the biological sciences, particularly genetics, which shows that biologically there is no such thing as innate empirical basis for any racial category.

> What most people in most cultures ordinarily believe about the significance of "racial" difference is quite remote, I think, from what the biologists are agreed on. Every reputable biologist will agree that human genetic variability between the populations of Africa or Europe or Asia is not much greater than that within those populations...Apart from the visible morphological characteristics of skin, hair, and bone, by which we are inclined to assign people to the broadest racial categories—black, white, yellow—there are few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire or in China; and few too (though more) which are found in Zaire but not in similar proportions in China or in England...But if biological difference between human beings is unimportant in these explanations—and it is—then racial difference, as a species of biological difference, will not matter either.[25]

If as Appiah argues race is not real in the inheritable biological sense, yet at the same time people believe race to be real then race can only exist as a belief, that is a representation or series of concatenated representations, that is, as some mental content. That people believe race to be real is an error in Appiah's view because race no longer has a scientific basis in two concrete conclusions, both the mid 20th century anthropologist Boas demonstrates this through anthropological science and more recent genetics research of scientists such as Richard Lewontin.[26]

Appiah provokes us to reflect that the propositional account of race demonstrates a contradiction in two ways. The first is that both physical difference and inheritable traits cannot correspond consistently to a given racial category. For example the *phenotype* of a child of a mixed couple may not be indicative of the race of either parent where for example the child may look white but have a black father.[27] Though juridically according to the “one drop rule” of Negro blood enforced during the U.S. Jim Crow era a mixed child would be considered by the state to be wholly Negro though such a child may nevertheless be phenotypically white. The necessary and sufficient conditions that allow a racial category like white Aryan European cannot hold. Another example is when some Western European Jews were mistaken for white Aryans by the National Socialist party

24 K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann, *Color Consciousness*, 37.

25 K. Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race", in *Critical Inquiry*, 12, no. 1 (Autumn, 1985): 21-22.

26 See chap. 1, no. 21.

27 See chap. 6, sec. 4.

because they possessed blond hair and blue eyes. The problem that Appiah demonstrates is that for any given racial category, even if loosely defined, it cannot correspond to reality in a consistent and rational way. From Appiah's perspective if it cannot sufficiently correspond to a scientific truth then it must be false and hence dismissed entirely as simply irrational to believe that race is a natural kind.

Race is not scientifically real but socially real only in the sense that beliefs are misinterpreted for the objective facts about some matter. In Appiah's view, this means that to believe that "race is real" contradicts the scientific facts which determine the *truth* of reality. Therefore for Appiah a thing is true if and only if it is scientifically valid. This point needs to be stressed because for Appiah the standard measure for truth is scientific truth of which there can be *corresponding statements*. Those corresponding statements can and, as with Appiah's contention about race, must be tested against the objective scientific truths. Of course not all science is good science and there is such a thing as spurious science as Stephen Jay Gould's rigorously points out in *The Mismeasure of Man*.[28]

Appiah's hope is that once society as a whole is able to see the scientific truth then race thinking as such should be rationally dismissed, hence post-racial. Kant's notion of the real as Newtonian physics is thematically similar to Appiah's because Kant's philosophy had to account for the subjective experience of the real world in its mathematical objective sense. Appiah's real and objective is based upon contemporary genetic science. For Kant the objective and real was Newtonian physics as an absolute invariant and it was up to philosophy to provide a grounded account of how we come to experience reality through our representations of it. Similarly Appiah sets up the problem of race much like Kant did with the theory of science by placing subjective belief as *appearance* in opposition to the objectivity of science which interacts with the *real*. Appiah's account of race owes much to Kant's attempt to reconcile appearances with reality yet in the final analysis meaning stands detached from that which is encountered and idealism must prevail.

Let us return to Appiah's rational-propositional theory. A statement can refer to something in the world but can be absolutely wrong headed because, for instance, maybe all the scientific facts have not yet been discovered about such an entity or new scientific facts about race have not superseded old facts in society. If not, as in the case of race, then it is simply a false belief. How could race persist as if it were a *belief* in a natural kind, and this cannot be denied, if the facts overwhelmingly contradict the beliefs? Appiah quickly concedes that even though a pure sentential account of race holds a clear contradiction, it is still not enough to change peoples "minds" on the existence of race.

In spite of his demonstration that racial propositions tend to contain contradictions, he

28 See chap. 1, no. 23.

must explain why race thinking still persists. To assist his language exercise Appiah draws upon the philosophy of science. Appiah argues that the persistence in the falsehood of racial thinking exists because early European sciences had founded the concept of race upon specious science. Though today race is not scientifically valid in Appiah's view, it was valid in earlier natural history and the onset of Herbert Spencer and eugenics movement. Therefore the falsehood of race persists because of a previous spurious science whose legacy exists in the misinformed public opinion consisting of a set of folk race categories. Appiah concedes that race concepts prove to be stubbornly durable. In this view it is concepts that determine behavior. Appiah writes, "what people can do depends on what concepts they have available to them; and among the concepts that may shape one's action is the concept of a certain kind of person and the behavior appropriate to that kind."[29] The problem with Appiah's assertion, especially in the case of race, is that we do not readily use concepts to categorize people, at least not in straightforward perception. There is a deep distinction between concepts in reflection and perceptions where pre-objective meaning is manifest and not synthetically processed. As I argued in chapter 6, one can hold anti-racist beliefs on the one hand yet on the other exhibit racist behavior. Therefore the line of causation between a belief and an action or a perception becomes troubled because a belief and a perception are fundamentally distinct types of human comportment. What is critical is that the distinction between the belief and the action cannot be construed as a contradiction but rather mistaking conceptuality inherent in belief as grounding everyday life. The error that philosophers make is to conflate the two in the following way: beliefs determine actions or the content of beliefs causally frame how humans interpret others. If race and racism were a matter of beliefs held by subjects a process of re-education should prove effective in changing negative attitudes, hence behavior. The propositional account is likely a popular view, yet in spite of the proliferation of multicultural and colorblind attitudes in Western discourse, race and racism seem to not have abated much at all.

If human existence functioned only in the registers of rational/irrational then Appiah's argument is a good one. Unfortunately in the end an eliminavist view of race cannot in and of itself account for race's continuing salience because it is clear that race is not only historical but actively functions as an essential way Western and modern democratic societies distinguish themselves from others, distribute resources, and provide explanatory models for human behavior etc. As we have seen in the previous section, sociologists such as Bonilla-Silva have strongly argued that race is an organizing structure for Western and modernized societies today. Therefore solely basing race on the rationality of subjects cannot assist us when causal reasons cannot be provided. Appiah is stuck with the perennial philosophical conundrum with a colonial twist, "*the problem of other racist minds"*. Still Bonilla-Silva's view of race as social facts also limit us from

29 K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann, *Color Consciousness,* 78.

seeing the comprehensive background of everyday practices by providing us only models and not descriptions of grounded phenomena. Appiah's and Bonilla-Silva's approaches respectively represent the chasm between immanent and transcendental explanations of human identity. An important response to the limits of the rational-propositional and sociological-structural view of race is the analysis of race as a discourse or a discursive practice. In the next two sections it will be important to look at perhaps the most influential contemporary academic paradigm for the analysis of race which approaches race as a discursive formation or a field where language regulates meaningful practices in which anything racial or racist can become intelligible at all.

4. Race as a Discourse

A possible response to the limitations of placing race within rational/irrational schema of meaning is Foucault's work on discourse as the primary locus of meaning making and power distribution in society which can account for race as both pervasive without recourse to a model in which rational subjects determine meaning. Foucault following Heidegger argues that the "sovereign subject" is a central prejudice of modernity and when treated as a natural given, blinds historical analysis from the variegated discursive practices which construct meaning. Foucault's critique of the subject is squarely targeted at Husserlian *transcendental phenomenology.*[30]

> If there is one approach that I do reject...it is that (one might call it, broadly speaking, the phenomenological approach) which gives absolute priority to the observing subject, which attributes a constituent role to an act, which places its own point of view at the origin of all historicity – which in short leads to transcendental consciousness.[31]

For Foucault the natural existence of a rational subject prior to the positing of meaning is a myth. To be brief, Foucault argues that the rational subject is posterior to discourse not anterior. I will return to the *a posteriori* subject later in this section. The important distinction between Appiah's philosophy of language critique of race and that of Foucault inspired approaches is the following: the referential relation between a statement such as "all whites are superior" and the empirical human entities upon which that racist statement is meant to refer to, is severed in the race as discourse approach. From this perspective discourse naturalizes entities but does not refer to already actual beings. This

30 As I discussed in chapter 1, there a several stages that Husserl had taken in his phenomenological method, transcendental phenomenology being the most extreme. I take both Gurwitsch's and Merleau-Ponty's constitutive and genetic phenomenological method, derived from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas II* , as basis of the methods I have employed throughout this dissertation. This is not the place to take up Foucault's criticism of phenomenology in general nor Heidegger's criticism of Husserl.

31 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xiv.

means that discourse itself functions at another region of life because to make a link to an empirical entity will invariably tend to naturalize the discourse as referring to the real, such as biology or consciousness which will emphasis the subject/object ontology. Once the referent is severed from the statement itself the correspondence theory of truth, central to Appiah's rational-propositional account, makes ambiguous its rational causal model of truth. Truth claims are irrelevant to discourse because what matters and what has *power effects* is the discourse about the matter not its scientific veracity. As I have shown in the previous section, Appiah needs the truth claims of science to demonstrate that race is an empty category. For Appiah, the statement "they are white" must correspond to a scientifically valid race category, if it does not then it is meaningless therefore we should somehow move on with our lives. Foucauldian approaches are not nearly as naïve. The power of discourse is its ability to create a facade of reality in which entities appear as natural spatio-temporally, that is, fixed through space and time. Therefore the power of a racial discourse is its ability to posit race as an essential property of specific human groups that is fixed and unchanging.

Constructivism is the essence of a general theory of racial discourse in which ideas of race are not defined in history by specific individuals but come to have meaning through general circulation by authoritative communities such as scientists, men of letters, or the state. Discourse has a logic about how subjects and bodies are defined yet functions in unpredictable ways because no one individual or group causally determines the effects. Therefore a general racial logic or logics should be discoverable through the rules that emerge about how to talk about an entity. It is discourse not the sovereign subject nor the thing-in-itself that produces meaning. Below Stuart Hall summarizes his theory of discourse as adapted from Foucault.

> This idea that physical things and actions exist, but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse, is at the heart of the *constructionist theory of meaning and representation***.** Foucault argues that since we can only have a knowledge of thing if they have meaning, it is discourse – not the *things-in-themselves* – which produce knowledge.[my emphasis][32]

The similarity between Hall's theory of discourse and that of Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic is quite uncanny. It would seem that according to Hall, a discursive practice always mediates our relation to objects because we can never directly access *things-in-themselves*. Hall preserves Foucault's critique of phenomenology. In fact according to the followers of Foucault who have adopted the approach to the problem of human identity such as Judith Butler, David Theo Goldberg, and Hall, discourse does more than mediate between self and world but organizes reality for us at the level of *appearances*. Therefore

32 Stuart Hall, "Foucault: Power Knowledge, and Discourse", in *Discourse Theory and Practice* ed. Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, Simeon Yates (London: Sage Press, 2001), 73.

the object itself cannot contribute meaning in a significant way if only perhaps provide a causal spark for the subject to interpret the object with language. Can it be concluded that in Hall's view if there is no determinable subject who posits meaning and no direct object in which the meaning terminates then is there experience? If the discursive limit of race is experience then can it account for *lived-through* phenomena of showing-up as such and such a race? Are all perceptions, such as racial perceptions, already predelineated by some sort of conceptual language?

As I've already mentioned discourse as an object of inquiry was for the most part innovated by the early work of Foucault under a combination of an early method he called “archeology” and a later one called “genealogy”, both of which were in part a critical response to Husserlian Transcendental Phenomenology and its derivatives such as that of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty in order to move away from the idea of an individual intentional consciousness positing meaning through what Husserl called *lived-experience*.[33] Heidegger's critique of what he believed to be the vicious subjectivism of Husserl's focus on lived-experience would find enormous traction with scholars who were responding and rejecting the existential humanism of Sartre and other key post-war phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty. In general it is quite clear Foucault's oeuvre is a direct response to existential phenomenology's theorization from the first-person perspective, whose essence is the phenomenology of lived experience. For my purposes here it is not important to conduct an exegesis on the various and important texts on Foucault's theory of discourse but rather to see how others have used it to study racial identity. It is likely a distinction can be drawn between Foucault and Foucauldians much like what Gurwitsch said about the difference between Kant and Kantians; simply that they should not be conflated.[34] In spite of this, it is important to very briefly introduce some essential facets about what I will term Foucault's “general theory of discourse” and the primacy of language in the production of meaning.

Foucault's work was an innovative outcome of the post-hermeneutic movement inspired by Heidegger and the re-visioning of Nietzsche in which it became the consensus within, at least, structuralist and post-structuralist Continental philosophy that language, talk, and discourse needed to be the focus of the inquiry into human meaning.[35] Paul Rabinow, an important American commentator on Foucault, writes, "[f]or the genealogist, there is no

33 In contemporary scholarship the term “lived-experience” is often take as a general stand-in for psychological states and beliefs about matters of individuals. However the psychological interpretation of experience is a mere conflation of its original theoretical thrust through its emergence in the work of Dilthey.

34 Aron Gurwitsch, "Kantian and Husserlian Conceptions of Consciousness", in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 89-90.

35 Foucault's theory of discourse should not be conflated with the 'scientific' study of language such as that of Chomskyian cognitive linguistics even though Foucault's early period in which he developed the method of 'archeology' was itself heavily influenced by Saussurian structuralist linguistics.

subject, either individual or collective, moving history."[36] The critique of subjectivism, also the hallmark of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, is central to Foucault's conception of meaning making in which meaning is bestowed not by subjects but by a coherent and regulative discourse about practices and entities. Therefore subjects and objects first become intelligible as what they are only within a discourse. The inculcation of this central tenant is already evident in Hall's adoption. A distinct discourse with a cohesive grammar and rules for naming is referred to as a discursive formation.

Foucault's later genealogical method is concerned not with subjects that fill out texts of historiography but rather what are called “discursive practices.” These micro practices then generate speech about their function which in turn become codified in rules and laws of behavior which can be imposed from without as in his famous example of Bentham's carceral Panopticon or even imposed upon the self. Foucault believed that these discursive practices functioned to "disassociate power from the body" through codification; making the body a passive and disciplined object that could be both subjugated and at the same time mechanically productive.[37] Foucault argues that it is these practices and its generative serious speech that *produces* subjects and not the other way around.

If it is the discourse and its constellation of discourse objects that account for the intelligibility of entities encountered in a particular world then the genealogist needs only to chart the network of high level serious speech about some matter and the way(s) one discursive formation intersects or overlaps with another. Commenting on the method of Heideggerian hermeneutics against his genealogical method Foucault writes, "[w]hereas the interpreter is obliged to go to the depths of things, like an excavator, the moment of interpretation [genealogy] is like an overview from higher and higher up, which allows the depth to be laid out in front of him in a more and more profound visibility; depth is resituated as an absolutely superficial secret."[38] A discursive formation then is the *field* of loosely inter-connected practices and their associated speech in which power operates in society and on bodies.

The notion of high-level texture of language is essential because if there is no pre-existing object then there is no transcendental or hidden aspect to objects such as the perception of co-apperceived side of objects central to Husserlian constitutional phenomenology. In this way Foucault's genealogy is what can be called a *radical positivist idealism* because an assertion about an object is all the object can meaningfully

36 Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 109.

37 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

38 As quoted in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* 106.

be and the only thing that remains hidden is what the discourse covers over from itself which cannot be given on the side of the object. If we recall for Husserl and Merleau-Ponty and for that matter Heidegger, objects have a *givenness* [*es gibt*] in which real parts of the object contribute to their meaning constitution in perception.[39] Therefore for Foucault there are no hidden meanings just incomplete or poorly analyzed discourses. The question is: if insistence on the hidden depth's of meaning is a metaphysical obfuscation and all that appears is discursively on the surface of objects then what role do objects have in the construction of meaning? This remains unclear because discourse does not, as could be wrongly assumed, mediate the relation between humans and the world. Discourse constructs the world of appearances in which humans are for the most part not explicitly conscious of because discourse has the effect of producing not only a seemingly tangible reality but a naturally existing reality for us.

There are two important points that Foucault delivers over to those who have extended his methods toward the inquiry of racial identity: *a*) function of serious speech and the *b*) ontological status of the body. The genealogist's role is to chart high level speech acts that count, that is, as acts of seriousness, toward inscription into codes and laws of behavior that subjugate docile bodies. To reiterate, it is the field of serious speech that constructs any subjects and objects that can be encountered in a field and there are no pure entities as such which pre-exists the discourse. This view leaves out not only non-serious speech (which Butler via Derrida will attempt account for) but more importantly *the background practices in which speech is not generated and whose rules cannot be codified into rules*. The body, as far as it becomes intelligible as an object through inscription of bodily rules and laws, is a *tabula rasa*. Therefore a body is something that techniques work upon. In this view a body is either a vital mechanical organism with no intentionality or a subjected body that is brought under coercive forces within a field of discourse.[40]

The body for Foucault and especially for the Foucauldians is similar to what Husserl called the objective body as opposed to the lived-body of perceptual life. To concede that the body as lived as what Merleau-Ponty called a sensible-sentient entity would seem to admit to the body being a body-subject prior to discourse, meaning that the body could account for a primordial ground for the constitution of meaning that is the condition of the possibility of any discourse. There would then be between the organic body and the social body a third term in which the human is active and responsible for its own comportment in the world. Merleau-Ponty's universal body-subject cannot theoretically coexist with Foucault's theories. There is then for Foucault no third term (perceiving body) between subject and object but rather, discourse as the first term and subjects and

39 See chap. 1, sec. 6.

40 It would be tempting to counter the passivity of the body here with “agency” or free will of the individual subject. However this would fall into the trap of mere subjectivism.

objects as the 2nd and 3rd terms. Discourse founds subjects and objects. The inability for social constructivists to understand the body-subject as lived and perceiving as a primordial way of inhabiting a field of discourse will limit any significant theory of racialization.[41] Because it will deny that a human body as a thing perceived and as the entity that perceives is equiprimordial to any assertions that can be made about it. Therefore racial perception can exist even when a high level discourse about race is suppressed or even not manifest in a given society. One can think of fields or communities where race talk is little or non existent yet race somehow functions as a critical organizing principle. For example, take the discursive field of theoretical mathematics where race talk may be little or non existent. If race speech is not empirically evident in the comprehensive discourse of a mathematical community of practice does this mean that the issue of race is not present?[42]

Foucault's theory of discourse found incredible traction in literary criticism and cultural studies as applied to human identity and race. It contributed greatly to the field called post-colonial studies established in the 1980s and 1990's in U.S. universities. Among the most prominent of these applications of Foucault's genealogical method was that of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. In *Orientalism* Said examines the network of discourse in high culture associated with constructing the idea of the "Oriental Other" set against the Occident and the European self. Said's conclusion was that it was the loose network of authoritative speech of historians and travel writers that constructed the inferior image of the Arab for Western high culture to consume.[43]

> Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it...so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of though or action. This is not to say that Orientialism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear (and therefore always involved in) on any occasion when that particular entity "the Orient" is in question.[44]

For Said "Orientalism" is a discursive formation which mediates thinking or acting on the entity "the Orient." Though Said designates it an as entity, the Orient itself is a

41 Perhaps Pierre Bourdieu attempts to correct for this lacunae in his phenomenology which he repackages to positive sciences as sociology. See *Pascalian Meditations*, (Stanford CA: Stanford UniversityPress, 1997), 138.

42 Such a prejudice hamstrings positive sciences because they annihilate the transcendental aspects of experience while on the other hand the film critic discovers racism in every frame of a movie.

43 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 3.

44 Ibid., 3.

geographical abstraction. While Said is careful to caveat that Orientialism does not "unilaterally" determine the Orient, it is clear one cannot access any Oriental entity, e.g. an Arab man, mosque etc, without some conceptual mediation of Orientalism. Said writes, "[e]ach time tent and tribe are solicited, the myth is being deployed...The hold these instruments have on the mind is increased by the institutions built around them."[45] Discourse usurps the work of a cognitive subject and its mental concepts. Orientalism is an economy of representations and concepts traded in by primarily intellectuals and the state. Because it is bourgeoisie high culture through the domains of fine arts, literature and historical sciences which generate the idea of the exotic Oriental Other, there is a decidedly top down dissemination of discourse. Said argues that the idea of the Arab Other in no way corresponded to reality thereby mirroring Foucault's view that there is no subject that solely determines meaning and no object that exists prior to appearances. David Theo Goldberg reinforces this point in reference to Said with an emphasis on authoritative speech of the human sciences.

> Power is exercised epistemologically in the dual practices of naming and evaluating. In naming or refusing to name things in the order of thought, existence is recognized or refused…..Naming the racial Other, for all intents and purposes, is the Other. There is, as Said makes clear in the case of the Oriental, no Other behind or beyond the invention of knowledge in the Other's name.[46]

In both Said and Goldberg's view the Oriental or racial *other* is a constructed appearance. In the Foucaultian view espoused by Said and Goldberg there are only appearances. Even the entity "the Orient" is itself an appearance. Does this mean that Said's concept of Orientalism holds no analytic value? I certainly agree with Said that anti-Arab racism pervades our *beliefs* about the Arab world. I am not disputing the existence of racist attitudes but rather the ontological status of discourse shaping our encounter with human-being of those who show-up as Arab. This is what I mean by the notion of a radical positivist idealism where appearances are determined by the conceptual content of a discourse on race in which the intuition of sensuous objects cannot play a fundamental role in meaning *construction* because this would entail falling into the naturalization of objects. I believe a chasm opens up between a discursive formation (comprised of a network of concepts) and lived experience. Ontologically discourse and embodied perceptual experience are forced into separate orthogonal spheres,

How then are appearances experienced if there are no Kantian subjects constructing immanent objects and no intelligible objects prior to the construction? In terms of racial identity of human beings, we are now dealing with a sphere of pure ideality. Goldberg elaborates further:

45 Ibid., 307.
46 Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 150.

> I have argued elsewhere that racism itself is a discourse; here I am widening that claim, taking the broader position that the field of discourse at issue is made up of all the racialized expressions. As a theoretical construct, the discursive field is sufficiently broad to incorporate the various expressions constitutive of racialized discourse.[47]

So while discursive formation critically challenges the subject as that which posits meaning, an assumption central to Appiah's eliminavist account, Foucaultians largely weaken any recourse to subjective experience of race. In the next section I will look at the notion of performativity as an extension of Foucault's general theory of discourse but with emendations that attempt to address the limits of serious speech and the problem of experience. Performativity does not however escape the charge of idealism because as long as language is deemed to be the primary carrier of meaning it will remain conceptual in the Kantian sense. In respect to the identity of humans and objects, once language is severed from its relation to bodily experience it cannot account for the open horizon of expression in which one could make an assertion about the identity of any human or object.

5. Race as a Performative

In this section I will critically take up the concept of speech act theory and the performative as it relates to identity, in particular, racial identity. I will provide a more in-depth analysis of performativity because it incorporates many key aspects of the previous discursive approach and extends them. The application of performativity has been widely applied to identity and represents today a dominant explanatory model for the social construction of race. Not only do you hear that race is a pure representation or construction but race is now performed. In this view race can no longer be interpreted as a noun but must be understood as a verb. Therefore “we do race” or any social identity in general. Perceptual acts are superseded by speech acts therefore the identity of objects is not constituted for consciousness but constructed by a discourse.

> Performative acts are forms of authoritative speech: most performatives, for instance, are statements which, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power. Implicated in a network of authorization and punishment, performatives tend to include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations of ownership, statements that not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed. The power of discourse to produce that which it names is thus essentially linked with the question of performativity. The performative is thus one domain in which power acts as discourse.[48]

According to Butler's view on gender/sexual identity, I take the position that a speech act

47 Ibid., 41.
48 Judith Butler, "Critically Queer", 17.

analytic of identity that is primarily determined by utterances, assertions, demonstratives, performatives etc. will miss the phenomenality of showing-up as such and such a race that functions as our Western world's background understanding of human-being. Specifically, I will elucidate the limits of performativity by showing how it erroneously casts out perceptual consciousness by dismissing intentionality, jettisoning the role of meaning constitution on the side of objects (givenness of objects), and in the final analysis locks itself within the natural attitude.[49]

If we recall in a discursive formation there are no distinct and special "I" subjects that impose meaning through subject/object ontology but rather all those in the field of discourse participate in or are engaged in practices which *positively* generate speech about the matter which can both affirm or even contest the normativity of a given discursive formation. As well any objects we encounter are only intelligible in virtue of a specific discursive formation which circumscribes ways to talk about objects beforehand, therefore no object exists as a thing-in-itself. Discourse functions to make subjects and objects and their identities appear as natural prexisting or having essence(s) before existence.

A tendency and limitation of a discursive formation and its network of discourse objects is that it will tend to privilege the serious speech of institutions such as the state or authorities of knowledge such as the sciences because its through these entities in which serious speech is both inscripted, codified, and enforced. In Foucault's early work such as *Discipline and Punish* he shows how penal and marshal institutions control and manage subjects through authoritative speech and its management of docile bodies. It can be argued that in this stratospheric view of discourse we can lose the sense of the utterances as situated acts themselves. Drawing upon both J.L. Austin's theory of performative or speech act theory and the Jacques Derrida's subsequent critique of Austin, Butler has provided a very influential analysis of gender identity which has been applied more broadly to other forms of human identity such as race.[50] Later in this section I will look specifically at how the performative has been used to conceptualized race and racism but first it will be helpful to examine some of the basic concepts of performativity.

Butler argues that gender identity is performed through speech acts alone. As Austin had argued the performative is a bit of speech that does not describe states-of-affairs but generates the thing that it announces such as the pronouncement of a felony conviction, e.g.,"The state of California finds you guilty of all counts." This bit of speech produces a felon where once stood a free citizen. The bit of speech brings into being that which it announces or calls out. Without the expression no felon can be produced. According to Butler gender is constructed through the act of performing or naming some entity as such

49 See chap. 1, no. 11; chap. 1. sec 6; chap 5. sec. 3.
50 Judith Butler, "Critically Queer", 18.

and such. Butler convincingly argues that the appeal to sexual difference as biological natural difference is already conditioned by the social construction of gender. Through the speech act the entity, *i.e.,* "this girl", is produced whose appeal to biology can only be an illusion but nonetheless the performative has the function of naturalizing that which it repeatedly names. Somewhat similarly to Appiah, Butler argues that language is used to naturalize beings. However two important differences remain between Butler's and Appiah's view of human identity. While Appiah appeals to truth and falsity of propositions: concluding that any content about belief in the existence of race is patently fallacious, Butler, like Foucault, cares little about the problem of veracity. Rather the act of proposing 'this *S* is *P*" as a performed act such as "this infant is a girl", provides the necessary force of constructing meaning whether science has shown it to be false or not. Therefore it is not only the content of the proposition but how the proposition is uttered in a situation that counts or gives it the force of authority no matter if this is serious or non-serious speech of an authority of an institution or the average person on the street. Furthermore, all the repeated speech acts, which delineate some coherent identity, must be taken as a whole— contributing to a larger discursive formation. Therefore, from the perspective of performativity the identity of subjects can only be acted out through language.

Butler clearly emends Foucault's idea of a discursive formation by attempting to account for everyday speech acts or utterances. Still Butlerian peformativity no more departs from Foucault's general theory of discourse (discursive objects and their law-like functioning and discursive practices that construct a discursive formation or field) than provides a means to capture the everyday repetition of speech that contribute to any normalizing discourse such as gender and sexuality. Therefore a critical advance of Butler's theory of performativity affords a general theory of discourse, following Derrida, not only the examination of institutional serious-speech but non-serious speech or what we can call practical speech.[51]

Another important advance Butler achieves with the performative is that while Foucault's discursive formations refers to the coherent body of systemic knowledge that mediates our encounter with entities; she argues that the speech act as an event is in each instance a bit of language that produces the entity it names by calling upon passed instances of similar speech about any such entity. The bit of speech gains its force from sheer precedence linked up to an authoritative discourse.

51 It is important to note that like Hall, Butler uses the terms 'constitution' and 'construction' interchangeably. As I argued in the previous section on the phenomenological distinction between Husserlian theory of meaning "constitution" and Kantian "construction" both terms should not be conflated. What's more Hall, Goldberg, and Butler's theory of identity discourse revolve around the construction of meaning through the deployment of conceptual language and as such are greatly indebted to Kantian idealism.

> gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence...gender proves to be performative, that is constituting the identity it is purported to be.[52]

Here again in accordance with Foucault, Butler argues that the performative is not a product of an individual representing subject but rather speech practiced within limits that the discursive formation delineates in advance. Again consistent with Foucault's general theory of discourse, the performative is not something deep and hidden nor enigmatic but a bit of speech that says what it means in its positivity as expressed. On this matter specific to his historical method Foucault writes, "what I am writing is not a history of the mind which follows...the density of its sedimented significations: I do not question discourses about their silently intended meanings, but about the fact and the conditions of their manifest appearance....It is a question of an analysis of the discourses in the dimension of their exteriority."[53] Similar to Foucault's critique of transcendental meaning and negative systems, Butler's argues that the performative is a positively expressed speech which contains no hidden meaning requiring hermeneutics to uncover its hidden truth.

To summarize the performative construction of identity, such as gender, is constructed over time through repetitive speech acts and not constructed through a value positing subject. As I have made abundantly clear, the critique of a naturalized subject is the essential thrust of Foucaultian discursive formation of meaning in which discursive practices, not subjects, generate meaning.[54] Foucault writes that his approach is "to relate the discourse not to a thought, mind, or subject which engendered it, but to the practical field in which it is deployed."[55] In a similar vein and in defense of identity construction Butler writes, "[a]nd here it would be no more right to claim that the term 'construction' belongs at the grammatical site of subject, for construction is neither a subject nor its act, but a process of reiteration by which both 'subjects' and 'acts' come to appear at all."[56] Butler's critique of the subject degrades into a form of radical anti-humanism: in order to demolish the metaphysical violence of subjectivity, everyday experience is reduced to language resulting in phenomenal impoverishment.

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52 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 16–25.

53 Michel Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse", in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. By Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 60.

54 Ibid., 58. Foucault writes, "[d]iscourse is not a place into which the subjectivity irrupts; it is a space of differentiated subject-positions and subject-functions."

55 Ibid., 61.

56 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9.

To be clear, perception is not some cognitive activity performed by internal mechanisms reconciling the external world but rather perception should be understood as a primordial way of *being-in-the-world* as our bodies. Merleau-Ponty writes, "[p]erception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them."[57] Is Butler's concept of construction interchangeable with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception? The premise of each approach, performativity and phenomenology, for the identity of beings is that "construction" and perception respectively are the condition of the possibility for any acts to appear at all and these acts then create the illusion of *a priori* subjects. However a construction and a perception can in no way be conflated as the latter is the condition of the possibility of the former. No matter what permutation, constructivism must always rely upon the build-up of concepts. As radical a departure performativity is from the traditional Kantian intellectualism, it is nonetheless a more recent variety of constructivism where language takes on the properties of the representing subject. Language supplants the subject but does not supplant the centrality of immanence.

Performativity would seem to limit perception's role in the constitution of meaning; allowing only perception's actualization and confirmation through a bit of speech. Perceptual phenomena, in the peformativity/discursive view of the construction of meaning, will be seen to posit an intelligible entity prior to discourse and as such must be considered a part of the ruse of traditional metaphysics. What's decisive for phenomenology is the perceiving body and in particular for Merleau-Ponty the centrality of the body-subject.

> we shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in so far as we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the *body is a natural self* [my emphasis] and, as it were, the subject of perception.[58]

Merleau-Ponty's assertion of a "natural self" rooted in the vital organism; we are as our bodies move in the world, would be interpreted from Butler's perspective as a type of naturalism in which sex must be seen as a biological given and not a category socially constructed through discursive practices such as performatives.[59] However for Merleau-Ponty the perceiving body as well as the body that is perceived operates at level that is at least equiprimordial to discourse but is still the condition of the possibility of any discourse. Perception and expressiveness are rooted in the natural body which we as

57 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, x-xi.

58 Ibid., 206.

59 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theatre Journal*, 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519-531.

humans have. Unfortunately a possible result of Butler's view, if we recall, is what Mohanty is at pains to avoid, that is, perceptual meaning becomes assimilated to conceptual meaning of the content of speech.[60]

If I am correct that the performative is a derivative form of Kantian intellectualism then all hopes to disconnect from subjectivism are dashed because it will return through the back door of discourse. Therefore by attempting to avoid the trap of subjectivism by placing all meaning activity in language, performativity invariably allows for the return of the subject through the necessity to hold fast to the conceptual content of a bit of speech as the primary vehicle of meaning. For performativity theory to assert identity is constructed without an immanent subject and that objects cannot contribute to the constitution of meaning; a field of ideality must be maintained between consciousness and others or things in the world. This is something akin to a virtual semiotic space much like the one between two internetworked computers in which text messages are exchanged. It's critically important to note the location where Merleau-Ponty places the perceiving body, as that between subject and object, is where Butler places discourse.

Let us return briefly to the problem of the naturalizsation of subject. In regards to the purported construction by subjects, existential phenomenology had reached a conclusion similar to Foucault and Butler most famously described by Sartre in his critical essay on Husserl entitled *Transcendence of the Ego* and then in *Being and Nothingness*. Gurwitsch captures this in the following passage.

> To naive, i.e., non-analytical observers' minds-and all of us are to some extent such observers-things appear in quite a different light. They think of the ego as much more than the all-embracing totality of dispositions, and they are not content to have a new disposition which has just risen to join the older ones and thus enter into the ego. To them the ego seems to produce its dispositions from which the conscious acts, e.g., feelings, are held to emanate as mentioned above. Phenomenology teaches us to take the dispositions as objectivated unities constituted by means of conscious facts, and to hold the ego to be the organized totality of the dispositions, that is to say to be constituted out of these dispositions. To the common observer, however, the order is *inverted* [my emphasis]. The ego becomes a source and an origin; and what in truth are first data, viz., the acts of consciousness, seem to be last products. If we allow for this naive view, we come to a "real production" in an order contrary to that of the constitution. Thus the ego becomes bestowed with characteristics which belong exclusively to consciousness, as, e.g., spontaneity. Hence the set of paradoxes which the ego involves. The procession of the dispositions from the ego becomes irrational, unintelligible, and in the end it may not be accounted for, Sartre thinks, except in

60 See no. 22.

"magic terms."[61]

Gurwitsch concludes that the ego-subject does not precede acts but is a result of these constitutional acts, specifically reflective acts which demand a detached objectivating stance.[62] In our natural attitude or naïve view we take our ego as the source of our "consciousness acts", such that, the ego constructs them out of itself for-itself. Gurwitsch lucidly notes that this natural attitude is an *inversion* of the phenomena as lived-through. The idea of an inversion of lived-experience is central to our prejudice of an objective world one which the sciences adopts without question. Gurwitsch is of course alluding to Kant's view of the *spontaneity* or an active self which engages in a production of meaning in which the world is constructed out of an immanence projecting concepts onto the sensuous world. Similar to Foucault and Butler, Gurwitsch argues that the subject does not pre-exist nor does a subject exist behind the world as an author behind a text. Still as I mentioned for Butler "perceptual acts" are superseded by "speech acts." While in straightforward perception where one is fully absorbed in an activity no such ego-subject emerges but only ourselves as our bodies in a situation as a pre-reflective self.[63] Our embodied activity has what Merleau-Ponty called an "intentional arc" towards the practical things in which we are engaged with in the world. Bodily or motor intentionality is not the body as receptor of so many atomic sensations but a bodily sentience directed toward things absent a cognitive relation. The identity of things and people (humans should not be confused with objects) does not necessarily require the normative force of naming in order to encounter them as intelligible as something. If we recall section 1 of this chapter, on the phenomena of racial demonstratives, calling something out in a situation is not the deployment of concepts but the gestural intentional fulfillment of embodied thought, of an already backgrounded understanding of how human should show-up. Charles Taylor captures well the idea of non-conceptual existence.

> [T]hings figure for us in their meaning or relevance for our purposes, desires, activities. As I navigate my way along the path up the hill, my mind totally absorbed anticipating the difficult conversation I'm going to have at my destination, I treat the different features of the terrain as obstacles, supports, openings, invitations to tread more warily, or run freely, etc. Even when I'm not thinking of them these things have

61 Aron Gurwitsch, "A Non-Egological Conception of Consciousness", in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Volume. 1, No. 3. (Mar., 1941): 325-338.

62 Cf., Sartre's explication of cigarette counting in *Being and Nothingness* which demonstrates that deliberation or reflection on the objective properties of the number of cigarettes in "this case" co-constitutes the ego-subject, as in "I have a dozen cigarettes in my case." A special "I" subject emerges through the act of counting and revealing an objective property of the objects, a dozen, which is a numerical mental representation. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1958), xxix.

63 See chap. 5, no. 23.

> those relevances for me; I know my way about among them. This is non-conceptual; or put another way, language isn't playing any direct role.[64]

Taylor translates in very lucid terms the fundamental phenomenological discovery of Gurwitsch and Merleau-Ponty, that is, pre-predicative life founds the basis for language and concepts. This is what Foucault called extra-discursive life but rather, as Taylor points out, the role of language is not manifest in the ability or skill of getting around in the world in the most mundane sense. Therefore discourse or language is not shunned in perceptual experience but rather its role is not explicitly performed. We are always in language but more fundamentally we are always our bodies first. We are in fact born with bodies not with language.

What then is the difference between the phenomenological critique of the subject and that of Butler? Though thematically similar to the phenomenological discovery of constitution of the ego-subject Butler jettisons consciousness and intentionality of the body in her theory of performativity. For phenomenology there is an important distinction between "I experience" and "my experience." Performativity, by its own definition of meaning construction through discourse for the most part must disavow a link to explicit ownership of speech (though the question of the *will* appears to be manifest by performativity's appeal to dramaturgy). To be clear, mineness cannot be conflated with I-ness because the experience of "this red bird" is actualized for my conscious experience though my ego has no immediate role in cognizing "this red bird." It is my consciousness that lives through the experience of such and such, and it is through its perceptual acts which taken together as a whole, constitute objects for my consciousness. It is as if all the acts of perceiving "this house", each glide one into the other in which I have before me a whole house though at any given moment I can only sense limited aspects of the house. The perceptual adumbrations form a system of coherence between any given perspective and its horizon of referential relations, what is called a gestalt. Objects then are actualized for consciousness not in consciousness. To be sure, consciousness is a terrifically loaded term that is easy to misconstrue as identical to the ego-subject and its naturalization. However the phenomena of lived-experience is experienced by someone with bodily presence in a situation. Let us return to performativity to situate how it bears upon experience.

The notion of *iteration* in Butler's theory of performativity is key because it weakens the appeal for intentionality (*i.e.,* consciousness is always consciousness of something) that is central to phenomenological descriptions of experience and I would argue even for Heidegger. Butler states, "[i]f a performative provisionally succeeds...then it is not because an intention successfully governs the action of speech, but only because that

64 As quoted by Hubert L. Dreyfus in "Taylor's (Anti-) Epistemology", in *Charles Taylor: Contemporary Philosophy in Focus* ed. Ruth Abbey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004), 55.

action echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices*."[my emphasis][65] By replacing *intentionality* with *iteration* of speech the structure of the phenomena of experience matters less than quantitative instances of bits of speech. Phenomenology is in this view begins with an appeal to the explication of a first person perspective opposed to the multiple. Perhaps an apt slogan for performativity can be "quantity not quality." Phenomenology is neither concerned with quantity nor quality but rather phenomenality. A singular instance of a speech act with no reference to a past series or an intelligible body of citations must be for the most part anomalous because any such performative must gain its force from past iterations not necessarily from past conscious experiences of past utterances.

> Consider the medical interpellation which shifts an infant from an "it" to a "she" or a "he" and in that naming, the girl is "girled", brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender. But that "girling" of the girl does not end there; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reinforce or contest this naturalized effect. The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm.[66]

What's decisive here is the assertion that the discursive practice of citation produces or constructs the meaning of the entity itself. Butler argues that the performative itself produces the thing that it names just as the speech act "I pronounce you both husband and wife" brings into being marriage, albeit heteronormatively. The speech act produces something definitive which *appears* as an entity or subject. Again, another advance is made to avoid the metaphysical trap; not only is there no subject behind acts but no object in front of the name. The subject only becomes a subject through calling it out as such. Therefore in Butler's view the "it" that is named as "the girl" is transformed into a girl but the "it" or the intuited unintelligible "real thing" bears no causal relation to the naming. In this sense this is marked departure from Kantian idealism which must account for the intuited sensible object.

Though the act of naming occurs as an instance by someone with authority, e.g. physician, still the physician acts within the confines of an institution in which the limits of the discourse are pre-delineated by medical discourse, the state, etc. So the physicians enacts the performative bit of speech but the script, if you will, has already been written in which only a given set of names are possible to be uttered and to be inscripted. For instance the physician could not call the infant a jabberwocky and write that down as the sex on the birth certificate. As we recall with Kant's doctrine the object in-itself is not

65 Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 226-227.
66 Ibid., 8-9.

intelligible but, in accordance with Lockean empiricism, is only a meaningless sensuous flux. The thing must be brought under concepts, whose essence is the conceptual content of the name; “it's a girl.” Merleau-Ponty's critique of Kant's intellectualism reveals the lacunae present in performativity especially as it relates to the phenomenal presence of other human bodies which is central to the phenomena of both race and gender.

> Kant saw clearly that the problem is not how determinate shapes and sizes make their appearance in my experience, since without them there would be no experience, and since any internal experience is possible only against the background of external experience. But Kant's conclusion from this was that I am a consciousness which embraces and constitutes the world, and this reflective action caused him to overlook the phenomenon of the body and that of the thing.[67]

Though performativity jettisons the subject, like Kant, it overlooks the body and the object-thing. What role do objects play in their naming? The *givenness* on the side of the object or the human that is central to Husserl's theory of constitution would seem to have little bearing on performative naming of objects because this would imply intelligibility prior to naming and its concepts. What is unsaid may be a *givenness* on the side of the object in the manifold of acts that constitute the object for consciousness.

How one asserts "this *S* is *P*" or “this infant is a girl” at least remains unclear because performative theory only interprets the quantifiable positive speech acts not as a description of a state-of-affairs but an absolute positing of a subject (or entity). Performativity is concerned with the act but not the act structure which is a central concern of phenomenology. Performativity limits us from understanding how an agent actually makes a situated assertion, that is the phenomena of speech in which something can be called out as something. Therefore recourse to perception in which perceiving and its fulfillment in naming cannot be given priority because the naming itself is considered to be the origin of the meaning of the act. The presencing of the infant for the physician in order to utter “it's a girl!” cannot be given because showing-up as girl is already predetermined by the categories, not in immanence but in language itself. Is the theory of performativity the transubstantiation of immanence into discourse where language assumes the ontological status of a subject or a being? While performativity disavows the prior existence of subjects, a conclusion already reached by phenomenology, in its dramaturgical aspect which is more than implied, it posits a will to speech in which a subject performs identity through naming, though always within limits. Therefore the will to speech, to engage in a performance of gender presupposes a subject that can do otherwise.

It is perhaps not necessary to argue that language is given the status of subject but it is important to show that Butler implies that speech acts seems to attain the being of

67 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 303.

substance as some form of determinant being. The iteration produces a fact about an entity; "it's a girl." Performativity produces facts about the identity of entities. The name holds the meaning and the meaning becomes the thing that is meant. Therefore meaning becomes the entity it is "purported to be." A performative through its past force of iteration transforms meaning into a substance which we take as real and determinate being. Therefore we can take gender to be natural with the force of a scientifically authoritative biological category even though no such thing exists as a pure natural kind. It is important to recognized that performativity disengages the direct authority of science in a way that Appiah's appeal to propositional language cannot because Appiah must reconcile why *doxa* continually affirms the category of race and at the same time does not correlate with the scientific facts that race does not exist.

What's decisive is that performativity is itself not the explication of a primordial perceptual phenomena but is rather an explanation of the natural attitude as it pertains to intersubjective identity. As I had introduced in chapter 1, Husserl's concept of the natural attitude is the unthematized belief in the objectivity of beings or the natural belief in beings. The goal of the phenomenology of perception is the explication of how embodied perceptual meaning, as the foundation of human existence, is colonized by the natural attitude. *The natural attitude is the sphere in which performativity is enacted*. Performativity is an attempt to explain the naturalization of the identity of subjects as objective facts about them that for the most part are totalizing by a belief in a fixed being. From the phenomenologist's perspective there is a realm of meaning constitution that exists prior to the performative actualization of determinant identity that occurs through the act of naming alone. This is the pre-objective level of perceptual meaning.

Recently, performativity has been deployed more and more to understand race, like gender, as a speech act. Each speech act about race refers to the body of discourse which is comprised of a varied constellation of past speech acts on race. As has been concluded by Hansen, Duster and Goldberg, race is pure social construction yet it functions in a way to naturalize difference as if it connoted human essences and types with the determinacy of a biological category. This has led scholars Louis Mirón and Jonathan Inda to conclude the following:

> that race, rather than being a biological truth, is a kind of speech act, a performative that in the act of uttering brings into being that which it names. It resolutely does not refer to a preconstituted subject. It is simply a name that retroactively constitutes and naturalizes the groupings to which it refers. Race, in other words, works performatively to constitute the racial subject itself, a subject that only procures a naturalized effect through repeated reference to that subject.[68]

68 Louis F. Miron and Jonathan Xavier Inda, "Race as a Kind of Speech Act", in *Cultural Studies: A Research Annual*, 5 (2000): 85-107.

Mirón and Inda have adapted Butler's theory of gender performativity to the analysis of race.[69] Their essay also adopts both Goldberg's and Hall's interpretation of Foucault's general theory of discourse in which speech acts are instances of racial discursive practices which in turn comprise an overarching racial discursive formation.[70] While Butler does look at the literary construction of race through performativity it is not clear that Butler would attempt such a direct translation of gender performativity to race.[71] Can gender and racial identity function within the identical modality of performativity? It seems that Mirón and Inda are arguing just that, writing further:

> From this perspective, much like the declaration "It's a girl!," the utterance "Look a Negro," which for Frantz Fanon calls the racial subject into a system of racialized meanings, is not so much a statement of fact, a constative utterance, as one in a long string of performatives through which the racial subject is a never-ending process, one that must be reiterated by various authorities in order to sustain the naturalized effect of race.[72]

Defining the phrase "Look, a Negro!" as a performative is, I believe, over-extending the bounds of what a speech can do for the imposition of identity. Mirón and Inda argue that "Look, a Negro!" is a performative in which the action of naming or calling out "Negro" produces the thing that it names as a natural kind. In Fanon's recounting of his own experience of racism it is not likely that the white child is an authority but there is no doubt that the child learned this from past experience thereby making it plausible that iteration or citationality is essential to the name "Negro."

I would argue that Fanon's blackness exists for the white child prior to his demonstrative speech. As I concluded in section 1, the demonstrative is none other than the completion of an embodied racist thought which originates in perception. If the white child had never uttered the demonstrative would not Fanon still be a "Negro" in the eyes of the whites? The demonstrative, "Look, a Negro!", is only possible upon a background of an already racist world in which race is already perceptually meaningful prior to speech. The perception of blackness grounds any possibility of the expression of the name "Negro." In that moment and situation Fanon's blackness signifies immediately and manifestly that

69 Ibid., 100. Mirón and Inda much like the thinkers who directly influence their approach, i.e. Hall, Goldberg and Butler, conflate 'constitution' with the appropriate term, 'construction', because as I have made clear the 'constitution' of meaning of objects includes an already immediate and manifest intelligibility on the side of the object while 'construction' refers to the either mental or linguistic representation. With performativity the object plays no role in its intelligibility because there are no intelligible entities prior to discourse only discourse itself.

70 Like Foucault, the performative construction of identity has no causal relation to the actual entity it refers to but instead constructs the meaning of the entity. There is no real correspondence between the bit of speech and the entity.

71 See Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 167-186.

72 Ibid., 100.

he exists outside of humanity proper. The speech act requires a prior understanding which is not necessarily grounded upon prior utterances. Therefore not only can the network of citations that refer to black bodies be racist, the general background must contain references that allow speech acts to be intelligible. Blackness here cannot be misconstrued as a sensible color quality or qualia of Fanon as object but an indication that his human-being is voided as non-being.

> I say that my fountain-pen is black, and I see it as black under the sun's rays. But this blackness is less the sensible quality of blackness than a sombre power which radiates from the object, even when it is overlaid with reflected light, and it is visible only in the sense in which moral blackness is visible. The real colour persists beneath appearances as the background persists beneath the figure, that is, not as a seen or thought-of quality, but through a non-sensory presence.[73]

In this rather difficult and enigmatic passage Merleau-Ponty stresses the *givenness* of the entity perceived which cannot be reduced to a sensation of pure physical color on the retina but the blackness of the pen in this moment, from this perspective, in this variation of shade and light, in this mood and social atmosphere. Blackness whether it is of the fountain-pen's blackness or that of Fanon's racial bodily blackness cannot be misconstrued as the empiricist does as physical color sensation or *qualia* nor as racial constructivists posit phenotype or skin color as do Mirón and Inda.

> physical features, namely skin color, are linked to attributes of intellect and behavior, establishing a hierarchy of quality between white and black. The essential character of these groups is fixed eternally in nature since physical difference is linked causally to behaviors by biological inheritance.[74]

The causal relation of racial meaning construction is discovered by the race critique in the reflective attitude and not an elucidation of the phemenomena. Therefore what Mirón and Inda provide is a critique of the scientific consciousness of race and not its lived through phenomena. What will tend to occur is that racial constructivism will provide an explanatory model of how race comes to have meaning for us when we reflect upon its meaning as detached object stripped of its place in existence. As discussed earlier the enumeration of characteristics is a result of what Gurwitsch called a naïve inversion in which not only does there seem to be a subject prior to acts but an objective characteristic of the things the subject represents to itself in reflective consciousness.[75]

To be fair, Mirón and Inda argue racial performativity is the positing of meaning delivered over by expressions, assertions, demonstratives, and I would add, in their situated and practical everyday usage. The distinction, and this is decisive for

73 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 305.
74 Ibid., 97.
75 See no. 61.

performativity, is that language be seen as central to our practical engagements in the world; not a formal linguistic arbitrary sign system with laws independent of context. I would argue that in order for the white boy to encounter Fanon as a “Negro” it would require some prior and more fundamental understanding of race that functions in the background. This is because an expression depends upon a field in order for it to be intelligible, but this field is not only made up of other racialized expressions as Goldberg argues. For example if the white child were to say "look mama a jabberwocky" this would be anomalous speech and as such not intelligible within a given field of shared meaning. Calling Fanon a jabberwocky would only have meaning within the closed off imagination of the child because such a creature does not connect up with the world. Therefore each prior expression or iteration of racist speech requires this background intelligibility in order to become expressible. What's key to performativity is according to Butler this *background* in which acts or subjects appear at all are previous authoritative speech acts. No doubt past speech acts contribute to the background but it cannot be simply comprised of linguistic expressions.

Phenomenology holds a different view with the concept of *figure on a ground*.[76] Husserl argued that an object for perceptual consciousness only exists as meaningful on a background. Never do we perceive only a discrete object as we in our natural attitude believe, but rather we perceive it in relation and reference to its outer horizon in which other things exist. In this way speech acts are in fact figures on a ground and as enumerated figures they require a background but this background cannot only be other figures of a similar type. Iterated speech acts are none other than discrete figures and in order to concatenate them only as a string of significations they must rely upon their conceptual content not a background.

The argument of foregrounded acts placed upon a background is a central tenant in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception as well as Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology. While Merleau-Ponty places primacy of meaning in perception, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology places focus on expression [*Aussage*]. According to Heidegger an assertion such as “its a girl!” or “Look, a Negro!” are derivative of a prior disclosure or understanding [*verstehen*]. Heidegger writes, "[w]hen an assertion is made, some foreconception is always implied; but it remains for the most part inconspicuous, because language already hides in itself a developed way of conceiving."[77] This foreconception, very much intertwined with the perceptual background, exists on a background interpretation which remains unthematized and hidden. Though focused on intentional language and discourse [*Rede*] for world disclosure, it remains distinct from the notion of performativity because of the view that a deeper more primordial meaning remains hidden in language. Performativity, following

76 See chap. 1, sec. 8.
77 Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 199.

Foucault, dispenses with the notion of transcendental meaning.

Performativity is concerned with the pure positivity of speech in its *appearance* not their deep and concealed meaning which might lead back to the background in which understanding functions.[78] Understanding should not be misconstrued with some thing cognitive or requiring mental representation but rather a practical know-how. Heidegger argues that in order for entities to be encountered as something is dependent upon their prior disclosure. Understanding as a basic component of human existence provides us the ability to encounter the world and things in a meaningful way without explicitly bring to attention each and every person and thing encountered. Therefore we have a primordial understanding on how to comport ourselves in certain situations without every being given rules of how to do so. Recalling Taylor, we need not provide names or concepts for that which we encounter in order to encounter them. Take for example the distance one should stand while having a casual conversation with a peer or a high ranking member of one's community. Most of us have a social competence in such situations and can comport ourselves in a way that conforms to the group without ever being told exactly how to do so. In terms of gender and race there is a competence as well; we comport ourselves in different ways depending on how we interpret the race or gender of others yet we do not have to represent to ourselves the gender or race of the persons we encounter because we perceptually grasp them as such and such whether this is true or false matters little in the moment. We can of course make corrections and readjust.

To be sure, this prior disclosure is intertwined with discourse but intelligibility cannot itself be dependent on assertions alone. Heidegger states, "[f]rom the facts that words are absent, it may not be concluded that interpretation is absent."[79] Here Heidegger states that in order to encounter entities those entities require a prior disclosure that does not necessarily rely upon assertions or in our case Butler's concept of iterative performatives. For the most part this prior disclosure is not even expressed in speech. Therefore a racist intention need not require an accumulation of racist expressions. It is conceivable that racial understanding function in an field where expressions themselves are minimal or suppressed. Therefore in communities where racial language maybe almost absent a racial understanding could be functioning in the background. The phenomenality of racial whiteness is in fact structured in this way as the ground upon which all other racial entities, black, Asian, Latino etc. become intelligible at all.[80] This may be surprising because in our natural attitude we consider each racial category as separate and distinct from each other thereby having little or no referential relation to the others. Whiteness is

78 See Ryan Streeter "Heidegger's Formal Indication: A question of method in Being and Time", in *Man and World* 30 (1997): 413-430. The method of uncovering the hidden background of an assertion is what Heidegger called *formal indication*.

79 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 200.

80 See chap. 1, sec. 8.

the invisible background understanding which make these other races what they are and as such inferior to whiteness. One can understand that one is white without it ever being brought to one's attention. When the white child called out “Look, a Negro!” this assertion not only brought a background understanding of blackness in a definite way, it is also expresses with it the white child's whiteness which remains unspoken but nevertheless expressed. The assertion has the function of giving a definite character to a racist intuition but it is derivative of an already given background understanding of race.

The theory of performativity asserts that the act of naming produces or constructs that which it names. Mirón and Inda succinctly define racial performativity as "the power of discourse to procure what it names..race is constituted performatively as a kind of speech act that, in the very act of uttering, retroactively constitutes and naturalizes the subjects to which it refers."[81] From Heidegger's perspective this positivist view on speech falls for the tendency to make assertions themselves the locus of objective truth and misses the fact that assertions, in this case performatives, indicate or point to our background understanding which remains essentially concealed from us. This backgrounded know-how of comportment must function in a concealed manner because existentially it would be stultifying to function in everyday life if we had to represent or express to ourselves every action we must perform in doing such and such. The reader will notice superficial terminological similarities between the following quote from Heidegger and Butler's description of performativity.[82]

> The pointing out which assertion does is performed on the basis of what has already been disclosed in understanding or discovered circumspectively. Assertion is not a free-floating kind of behaviour which, in its own right, might be capable of disclosing entities in general in a primary way...Any assertion requires a fore-having of whatever has been disclosed; and this is what it points out by way of giving something a definite character.[83]

There is then what can be called a background understanding of race already functioning in order for the white child to be able to call out "Look! A Negro." This background understanding is itself not *only* other similar racist speech acts. If we for instance take Butler's own very powerful example of the “girling of the girl” as a series of authoritative speech acts. In the case of a black child would this elucidate the production of “its” gender—of the construction of gender? In the fact the lived phenomena of showing-up a black child in the West seems to not produce a public gender transformation where the “it” becomes a “girl” through authoritative naming even when the practice of naming and inscription is clearly evident. Though the black child may in fact be gendered through

81 Miron and Inda, "Race as a Kind of Speech Act", 103.
82 See no. 48.
83 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 199.

authoritative speech acts, the anti-black background in which such a child is situated never allows for “it” to be gendered in the way Butler asserts for what must be a white child. The way in which black children are perceived and represented in the West would trouble the application of Butler's theory for gendering as a transformative process where an “it” becomes a girl and ostensibly a human-being. Take for example the filmic depiction of the “pickaninny” in early Hollywood films. The depiction of the pickaninny is an indication of how the dehumanization of blacks in America co-posits of kind of de-gendering. The film historian Donald Bogle has shown that early black child films characters Farina, Stymie Beard, and Buckwheat were often depicted as having no discernible sex or gender. Bogle writes, "[l]ike Farina...Buckwheat had pigtails and the gingham clothes of his predecessor. He also resembled Farina in that no one was sure whether he was a boy or a girl. The sexual ambiguity of the pair remains puzzling."[84] The filmic representation of the pickaninny is indicative of how black children are often interpreted in an anti-black world as beings who are no doubt named as “he” or “she” but phenomenally lacking gender as a required presence of human-being in the West. This distinction points to the ontological status of both race and gender in which the latter already assumes human-being while the former through the necessity of its modern function can posit the being or non-being of the human itself.

The problem in our natural attitude is that we attribute objectivity to the assertions themselves because they have something of a definite meaning character in which to pin our beliefs. Ryan Streeter distills this tendency to convert assertions into object facts through his commentary on Heidegger.[85]

> Although Dasein is always projecting, in its use of the assertion it can cover over the two basic aspects of projecting highlighted above: in "capturing" a subject matter by pointing it out, making it definite, and communicating it, that subject matter can be taken to mean something present-at-hand and can be passed along like a tangible object.[86]

Performativity falls into just this problem by arguing that the bit of speech not only determines identity but becomes tangible in the sense a naturalized as a real thing. In this sense performativity gives itself over to the belief that the thing asserted in fact achieves the effect of seeming natural. The performative is not an entity in the sense of a physical spatio-temporal body but a bit of language that normalizes by creating social boundaries on how a body should be objectively and normatively interpreted. Then the speech act is “interpolated” as an objective fact about the matter. In this sense the bit of speech

84 Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films* (New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2006),21.

85 Dasein is a German term Heidegger appropriated to refer to the ontico-ontological status of the human subject who exists without an ongoing cognitive relation to beings.

86 Streeter "Heidegger's Formal Indication: A question of method in Being and Time", 424.

achieves the status of a social fact. Then, as a social fact the speech act can, according to Butler, take on material qualities.[87] However the manner in which performativity figures or transfigures the material remains allusive. Is it perhaps akin to the traditional and old adage "mind over matter?" Performativity in the final analysis can only account for positively expressed "purported" objectivities and not the pre-objective constitution which grounds any possibility of expressing objective subjects or objects. Phenomenology has shown that this pre-objective constitution of meaning begins in perception. Speech acts are the objective instances of a discursive formation, that are early and concrete instances of social structure. Can a line be drawn from speech acts which seem to produce social facts to the sociological argument of racial social structure? It would seem unlikely but as with all idealisms they come full circle. Performativity does indeed produce social facts but these facts about identity only circulate within the reflective attitude of the positive sciences themselves.

The idealist positions on race and human identity critically taken up in this chapter result in a binary status of the human subject, meaning that subjects are either real (rational/irrational) as in Appiah's view or that no real subject as such exists, as in the view of Butler. The latter and more influential view held by Butler assumes that the concept of Man has indeed come to a close. Butler's view is by no means an unfounded claim. Yet if we are too quick to make this conclusion we may in fact miss how the concept of Man remains relevant, particularly for the idea of race and computation.

6. The Death of Man?

As I introduced in chapter 2, race had emerged in the modern epoch as a primary way to disclose secular humanity. This modern mode of disclosing humanity was distinct from the prior theocentric mode because in the Christian epoch all beings, including humans, were only intelligible in relation to the divine as the final standard of measure. A new standard of measure emerged in modernity, that of Man [homo humanus], whose by-product was science and technology. In the modern epoch European man makes a concerted attempt to preserve the previous metaphysical ordering of entities that made all beings fixed and immovable within a Divine cosmology. Free to his own devices Man initially attempted to order his secular world with a similar level of rigidity in which all beings were placed within a fixed place. This was seen with taxonomic schemes of the natural historians. Initially then, race functioned as a method to place humans onto a fixed grid of classification. The *grid of race* would not hold and this was understood as early as Kant until its final death blow with Boas. Kant observed that determining racial classifications through inheritance and geography could not account for the appearances of race in experience. Kant took racial appearance and phenomena to be one and the same and as such he concluded that race must somehow be transcendental in character in

87 Butler, *Bodies That Matter,* 5.

which the natural ordering of human identity functioned in a *hidden* manner and as such could not be encountered in direct experience. Surprisingly for Kant "race" functioned like a transcendental category, hence a natural kind.[88] Today this view has been traded in for a social kind. Is there a difference? The contemporary sciences have certainly come to the conclusion that race as a natural or social kind are fundamentally different with the latter providing their last best explanation of race's meaning. Yet this may miss race's essence as that which shows itself in everyday embodied existence. For example the experience of racial blackness for Kant may not be so different than the experience of racial blackness for a taxi cab driver in New York City. What may differ between Kant and a taxi cab driver is their causal explanation of race but not its lived through phenomena. The lived through phenomena points to race's essence and not simply race's causal explanatory meaning. The essence of race, indicates the phenomenality of a normative human-being one that is not natural nor simply reduced to a social kind as that which is manifest in a set of private or shared beliefs.

In a critical response to lacunae of race as phenomena seen in the social constructivist account of race I have advocated a broadening out of the meaning of race in direct relation to the epochal understanding of humanity as a key defining factor in the general shape of Western modernity. To be clear, the epoch is not a historiographical object but indicates a prevailing style of disclosure of being. In spite of the role of the sciences in formalizing the concept of race I added that the invention of race by modern European man predates its emergence as a discrete scientific object. Therefore the origin of race's essence is prior to its existence in factual science. I argued that a prior disclosure of human-being needed to exist, seen in the articulation of philosophical anthropology, inaugurated by Descartes, which provided the basis for defining the new modern human as *animal rationale*. This prior disclosure or understanding [*verstehen*] was the condition of possibility of any objective sense of race as an object of inquiry for natural history and subsequent positive sciences. The problem for understanding race as phenomena is that the meaning of race functions in the background, not only as acts of the will or as a functional instrument of institutional domination. It is not simply an individual or group who puts race in motion but rather it has become an integral part of how we co-constitute our world. Therefore we are somehow all implicated in the function of race as we are all implicated in the constitution of one human world. Race colonizes our everyday way of *being-in-the-world* with others and it does so without the need to represent it to ourselves.

Race indicates something about the cognitive capacity of humans in relation to European man, what, appropriating the phrase from Brentano, I called the "mark of the mental." If in modernity the ideal human was a wholly rational being, then race indicates one's

88 See chap. 2., sec. 4., on Kant and the concept of race.

proximity to reason. I have argued that race, in the most pernicious way, is the phenomenal measure of reason. According to this spurious logic the darker one's complexion the greater the distance one is from rational existence.[89]

The West has historically oriented *human-being* around the “I think”, personal existence, the individual, and autonomy. Personal existence was normalized into the concept of Man which in turn came to stand in for human-being. Race is not a curious scientific aberration nor an epiphenomena, it is the mode of disclosure in which European man is set off against all other humans by determining that rational personal existence must define what it means to be human and so truncating their human-being. To be human as Man was and still is to be wholly rational. Somehow this determination of cognition and reason cannot be gotten around. In fact the very idea would shake the very ground of Western existence and result in an inevitable descent in to nihilism. Have we not already come to this point? As Heidegger had argued consistently, Western civilization had come progressively to only see "reason as ground."[90] To be sure, linking human-being to rational comportment could be construed as naturalizing race thereby inferring that race is a natural kind. What we take, still to this day, as natural is individuated personal existence in which each “normal” person should be a discrete rational actor. Neither personal existence nor race are natural in any way but rather they are intertwined historical ideas rooted in the concept of Man.[91]

The distinct feature of this peculiar cognitive definition of the human as Man, as a necessity of its dialectical structure, requires its negation. Analogous to the Christian epoch, those that were capable of salvation were set off against those that were incapable of salvation, the damned (indigenous inhabitants of the New World and enslaved black Africans).There were still those in the Christian world who could be saved, though damnation was perhaps imminent, such as the apostate or the heretic. The modern equivalent of the dyad—saved/damned is not the dyad—rational/irrational as might be conjectured but rather those capable of reason/incapable of reason. Fanon argued that European reason “played cat and mouse” with him, meaning just when he thought he could show whites that he was rational, the target of reason moved. Fanon concluded that the “cat and mouse” game of reason was a set up for failure for people of color. The conclusion is that as long as the Manichean logic of race functions there will always need to be a negative correlate to reason.

Today a new standard of measure has emerged, Machine. Man as the model of cognition has shifted to Machine. Does this indicate the death of Man?[92] Yet, as I have argued, each

89 See fig. 1.
90 See chap. 3, sec. 4.
91 See chap. 1, 3.
92 See chap. 1, sec. 1.

successive Western epoch carries over something essential from the previous which faithfully continues the teleological development of European reason. This is clearly seen from the shift from God to Man where the theme of infinitude is carried over and transformed from that which is unthinkable to that which is possible, hence thinkable.[93] The shift is a pronounced radical inversion of the previous order where Man was the model upon which the theory thinking machines were based. Now it is the Machine's mechanized reason in which we measure not only human-being but reality as such. The interpretation of reality is now computational in which every process and interaction is computable from the human genome to social networks.

In spite of the fact that *reason* has undergone a shift or mutation in which Man is displaced by Machines as the normative model of human cognition, race in our current modern technological epoch preserves its function as the "mark of the mental." Furthermore, while the scientific object of race has transformed from a fixed rigid taxonomy, seen in the modern epoch, to a now flexible objectless resource (the most extreme being genetic information), the phenomena of race as the intelligibility of human-being remains consistent across epochs. Initially such a claim which argues on the one hand the ontological status of science's object has shifted but on the other hand the phenomena of race has remained durable and true to its origin could seem problematic. The advantage of looking at the interpretation of the human in the West through epochs is that it affords a perspective on race which relativizes the factual historical moments of race, the first being biological or race as a natural kind and our current dominant view, race as cultural or race as a social kind, as the ontic modes of race. Such an error leads to an inescapable tautology, often a language game, in which the epistemic status of race is re-hashed over and over. The biological and the cultural remain the ontic modes, not the ontological status of race, and in and of themselves cannot get to the essence of race. The conclusion of the social constructivist is the circular claim: *race is real but not real.* The philosopher Sally Haslanger concludes in her thoughtful appraisal of social constructivism that, "I do not argue that my account of race captures the meaning of 'race' (or what we should mean by 'race') for all time and in all contexts; it would be foolhardy for anyone to attempt that."[94] My claim is just that: I do argue "that my account of race captures the meaning of 'race' for all time and in all contexts" because I have attempted to go below representation and discourse, to the grounding phenomena of race in its essence. If race has no essence with its origin in European modernity then this project is certainly a fool's errand. While Haslanger and so many other social constructivists choose to make an epistemological retreat, phenomenology can forge ahead and thematize that

93 See chap. 1, sec. 1; chap. 3, sec. 9.

94 Sally Haslanger, "A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race", in *Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age,* ed. Barbara A. Koenig, Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, and Sarah S. Richardson. (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 67.

which remains ungraspable to representational thought. Race's essence can always be reawakened by its most fundamental question: How does human-being show-itself?

As I discussed in chapter 3, modern technology, particularly digital computation, plays an essential role in organizing human experience to mimic the ideal of the "I think." Therefore an *a priori* human as cognitive already grounds the very basis of computational machinery but as a necessity remains "black-boxed." If we recall Turing asked: if humans are essentially languaging beings [*zōon logon echon*] who use their "minds" as language processors to represent and make sense of the world through calculative ordering then why couldn't a digital computer emulate human intelligence as well? To be sure, Turing's thesis represents an important challenge to the concept Man but does it represents its overthrow? We can say that Turing's thesis on the one hand has radically destabilized the notion that Man as the sole subject and center of reason while on the other hand it embeds Man as the model of human-being within yet another model, Machine. I would argue that Turing's thesis does not so much de-center the concept of Man but rather conceals more deeply its essential normative logic of what a proper human-being is and what a human should be measured against. As I argued as the end of chapter 3, Turing's thesis demonstrates not that Man is dead but rather its rational essence is still viable in providing the basic principles for the deployment of what Heidegger referred to as calculative reason that dominates our present epoch. Therefore Turing's thesis represents quite clearly a critical leap forward in the teleological development of European reason but not the overthrow of Man. It is no doubt that Man is a historical concept but it is also a key ground concept of modernity in which the traditional subject/object ontology of being dominated. Today, as Heidegger has convincingly argued, the subject/object ontology has given way to a new interpretation of being, modern technology in which reality shows-itself as a infinitely flexible resource. In my sustained critic of social constructivism I have argued that not only do the human sciences and humanistic criticism fall into idealism but, in accord with the dominant mode of modern technological world disclosure, they also now interpret their objects as flexible and plastic.[95] This is most clearly seen with racial and sexual identity which are no longer seen by scholars as fixed and discrete categories of human identity but are now flexible and fluid resources. On the one hand we can take the theme of flexible human identity as major advance in theory but on the other hand this conclusion reflects how we now more generally interpret being in the West.

It is no coincidence that with this shift from modern (Man) to modern technology (Machine) some have argued that we are now also post-human, and as such Man as the human is dead mirroring Nietzsche slogan, "God is dead" – signaling the end of the Christian epoch. If the concept of Man and race are co-constitutive as I've argued, it

95 See chap. 1, sec. 9.

should follow that if we are indeed post-human then we must also be post-racial too. Yet we know that race and racism are as prevalent today as in the time when biological racism was dominant. Even religious identity is now captured within the rubric of race as we see with the idea of the Muslim in a post 9/11 neo-liberal world. There are scholars who have made arguments for either form of the post-human or the post-racial thesis but have not necessarily connected both together as I do here.[96] Some have argued that the racialized or those have been systematically denied their humanity should simply accept that we are all now posthuman. The literary critic Cary Wolfe writes,"it is understandable that traditionally marginalized groups and peoples would be loath to surrender the idea of full humanist subjectivity, with all of its privileges, at just that historical moment that they seem poised to "graduate" into it...it is not as if we have a choice about the coming of posthumanism; it is already upon us most unmistakably in the sciences, technology, and medicine."[97] The desire by some to posit that we are posthuman seems convenient for those that have historically been afforded the status of human all along. Wolfe's comment reveals that he is not able to make a distinction between Man and the *sui generis* human. What about those who continue to live a racialized and dehumanized existence who have never been granted access into the family of Man? Perhaps the desire to be posthuman reveals not that Man is dead but rather the “cat and mouse” game has yet again moved the target of reason. Therefore can we be so quick to print the obituary of Man?

96 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Paul Gilroy, *Against Race*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2000).

97 Cary Wolfe, "In Search of a Posthuman Theory", in Observing Complexity : Systems Theory and Postmodernity, ed. William Rasch and Carey Wolfe (Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 174-5.