



Chapter 2

Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be “Black”

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Reacting against the constitutionalist tendency of the late nineteenth century, Freud insisted that the individual factor be taken into account through psychoanalysis. He substituted for a phylogenetic theory the ontogenetic perspective. It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny . . . (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 1967)

Conscious experience is a widespread phenomenon. It occurs at many levels of animal life, though we cannot be sure of its presence in the simpler organisms, . . . (Some extremists have been prepared to deny it even of mammals other than man) . . . But no matter how the form may vary, the fact that an organism has conscious experience *at all* means, basically, that there is something it is like *to be* that organism . . . (F)undamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like *to be* that organism—something it is like *for* the organism. We may call this the subjective character of experience. (Thomas Nagel, “What it is like to be a bat,” 1974, 1979)

Against reductionism, I will argue that consciousness might be explained by a new kind of theory. The full details of such a theory are still out of reach, but careful reasoning and some

educated inferences can reveal something of its general nature. For example, it will probably involve new fundamental laws, and the concept of information may play a central role. These faint glimmerings suggest that a theory of consciousness may have startling consequences for our view of the universe and of ourselves. (David Chalmers, *The Puzzle of Conscious Experience*, 1995)

This chapter proposes that Frantz Fanon's dually third person and first person exploration of the "lived experience of being black" in his book *Black Skins/White Masks* was both to develop the earlier insights of Black American thinkers such as W. B. Dubois with respect to the conflicted "double consciousness" of the "Negro" in western civilization (Dubois, 1986: 364-65) and to put forward, as the explanatory cause of this "double consciousness" a new theoretical object of knowledge, which enabled the calling in question of our present culture's purely biological definition of what it is to *be*, and therefore of what it is *like to be*, human¹ While Fanon gave to this new object of knowledge the name *sociogeny* (Fanon, BS: 11), I have adapted the term *the sociogenetic principle*² on the basis of this concept in order to both relate it to, and contrast it with, the genomic principle defining of the species-identity of purely organic life. I shall further propose that Fanon's new conception of the human, one generated from the ground of his own, as well as that of his fellow French Caribbean subjects' lived experience of what *it is like to be* black (Epigraph 2), also opens a frontier onto the solution to the problem defined by David Chalmers as that of the "puzzle of conscious experience." The puzzle, both as to how "a subjective experience could possibly arise from the neural processes in the brain" (Chalmers, 1995: 80), as well as to why all this processing has to be" accompanied by an experienced inner life." (Chalmers, 1996: vii) Why, in effect, is there the imperative of *experience*, or the necessity of consciousness? Against the reductionism of the physicalistic thesis which proposes that mind or consciousness *is*, simply, *what* the brain does, Chalmers puts forward the hypothesis (cited in Epigraph 3) of the existence of as yet uncovered "fundamental laws" that are specific to the phenomenon of conscious experience. Because, he further argues, such laws, as ones that may "centrally involve the concept of information," would have to be based on the proposition that "conscious experience be considered a . . . feature, *irreducible to any thing more basic*," they should also be ones that are able to cross the explanatory gap in order to specify *how* conscious experience-as-a-feature-in-itself, can nevertheless depend "on underlying physical processes" (Chalmers, 1995: 83).

In this context, because the question on the issue of consciousness specific to New World black thinkers from W. B. Dubois to Fanon himself, has been, rather than the purely third person question of the

why of conscious experience as posed by Chalmers, a socially situated and first person one based directly on the painful, conflicted nature of their own consciousness, and, therefore, of their identity as “Negroes” or “Blacks,” this chapter will propose the following: Fanon’s explanatory concept of *sociogeny* put forward as a third person response to his own first person questioning, serves, when linked to the insights of Thomas Nagel’s 1974 essay “What it is like to be a bat” (Epigraph 2), to verify Chalmers’ postulate with respect to the empirical functioning of psychophysical laws, as these laws function at the level of *human* experience. Further, that such laws are not only redefinable at this level as sociogenetic or nature-culture laws, but also as ones whose processes of functioning, while inseparable from the physical (that is, neurobiological) processes which implement them, would, at the same time, be non-reducible, as the indispensable condition of what it is like to *be* human, to these processes alone and, therefore, to the laws of nature by which those processes are governed. Further, if, as Nagel proposes, an organism can have “conscious mental states” only if “there is something it is like to be that organism,” something it is like *for* that organism, for, therefore, its identity as such an organism, then Fanon’s exploration of the “lived experience of the black,” and thereby, of the processes of functioning of these psychophysical laws within the terms of our present hegemonic modes of identity, (as itself, but *one* variant of the hybrid *nature/culture* modes of being unique to us as humans), can at the same time also provide insights into the functioning of these laws as they function at the level of purely organic forms of life. That is, insights into the laws which govern the realm of lived subjective experience, human and non-human, which govern, therefore, the interrelated phenomena of identity, mind and/or consciousness.

“Stop Acting Like a Nigger!” On the Qualitative Aspects of the Mental States of the Caribbean Negro before He Goes to France

But I too am guilty, here I am talking of Apollo! There is no help for it. I am a white man. For unconsciously I distrust what is black in me, that is *the whole of my being* . . . When I am at home my mother sings me French love songs in which there is never a word about Negroes. When I disobey, when I make too much noise, I am told to ‘stop acting like a nigger.’ (Fanon, BS: 191)

We’ll see that the third-person approach seems not sufficient to explain all first-person phenomenon. Let’s start with qualia. Qualia are the qualitative aspects of our mental states, such as color sensations, the taste of chocolate, pleasure and pain. Looking at a red patch triggers a pattern of nerve firings. Why is there such a rich subjective sensation? Why this sensation

and not green? And how personal that sensation is. (Stan Franklin, *Artificial Minds*, 1995: 32)

In his first chapter the *Negro and Language*, Fanon analyses the situation of the French Caribbean Black or Negro before he goes to France, before he encounters “white eyes” as the only “real eyes.” In the Caribbean, the pervasive cultural imposition of France and Europe, together with their systemic denigration of all things of African origin, led to a situation that when he and his peers, as children, behaved badly—either made too much noise, disobeyed, or spoke Creole (the Afro-French vernacular common to the Francophone Caribbean)—they were sharply admonished by their mothers to “stop acting like a Nigger!” (BS: 191).³ However, while still in the Caribbean, they had an option. Although Negroes, they could opt not to *behave like one*, thereby not falling entirely into non-being, the negation of being human. A useful parallel arises here, one that enables us to make use of the idea of the transcultural space or perspective on human identity that was put forward recently by Mikhail Epstein. Epstein had argued that, because “culture . . . is what a human being creates and what creates a human being at the same time, the human being should be seen as being (simultaneously) creator and creation.” While “in the supernatural we have the world of the creator, and in nature we have the world of creations,” it is however of “the coincidence of these two roles in a human being that makes him a cultural being.” The problem here, nevertheless, is that while culture freed us from nature it was able to do so only on the condition of subordinating us to its own categories, since it is through all such culture specific categories that we can alone realize ourselves, as, in Fanonian terms, always already socialized beings. Epstein’s proposal here is therefore that it is only *transculture*, the space opened between different cultures, that can free us from our subordination to the categories of the single culture: through the mediation of transculture we come to realize experience ourselves as human beings.

The transcultural parallel here is that the injunction “stop acting like a nigger” functioned for Fanon and his middle class French Caribbean peers in the same way as for the Vodunists of Haiti. In the terms of Haiti’s originally African-derived and now Afro-Catholic syncretic religion, the imperative of refraining from what were proscribed as antisocial behaviors was sanctioned by its subjects’ fear of being transformed into a zombie as punishment by the secret society of Bizango, whose members were and are entrusted with the role of punishing such behaviors. For if “normal” being, or identity, was/is, for the Vodunist, to be anchored in one’s *ti bon ange* (i.e. “that component of the Vodun soul that creates character, will-power, personality”), to be made into a zombie—by means of the administration of the powerful toxin tetrodotoxin, which induces a physical state enabling the victim to be misdiagnosed as dead (Davis, 1988: 9)—was/is made to become cataleptic, a state believed *to be*

caused by the loss of one's "*ti bon ange*," of one's soul. Since, once robbed of one's soul, the body is but an empty vessel subject to the commands of an alien force who would maintain "control of the *ti bon ange*" (Davis, 1988: 9), for the Vodunist, the threat of experiencing zombification is the threat of a death more real than physical death itself.⁴

If in the case of the symbolic belief system structuring of the Vodunist's sense of self, it "is the notion of external forces taking control of the individual that is so terrifying to the Vodunist," what Fanon enables us to see by analysis is not only the way in which the culturally imposed symbolic belief system of the French bourgeois *sense of self* also structures the *sense of self* of the colonized French Caribbean middle class Negro, but also that it is a *sense of self* for which the notion of "acting like a nigger," and thereby lapsing into non-being, that—like the threat of zombification for the Vodunist—serves as the internalized sanction system which motivates his/her behaviors, thereby functioning in the same way as a "garrison controls a conquered system." In this context, a transcultural perspective on two quite different injunctions related to two quite different *senses of the self*, yet functioning to the same end, enables us to recognize that the qualitative mental states which correlate with aversive sensations, or fear of behaving, in the one case, in such an antisocial way as to make the threat of zombification real, and, in the other as to make the threat of "negrification"⁵ real, are of the same objectively instituted and subjectively experienced modality, even where the cultural conception of identity, or of what it is like to be human, is different.

However, as Fanon's exploration enables us to see, as long as the Caribbean Negro remains in Martinique or Guadeloupe, he does not experience himself as a *nigger*. Rather, his sense of self, one which impels him to void "acting like a nigger," is, as Fanon shows, produced as normal and thereby as a "*white self*"; in effect, produced as the French bourgeois mode of the self, in whose terms he has been socialized through the mediation of the formal as well as familial educational processes. His "black skin" therefore literally wears a "white mask," but it is a contradiction that, while in the Caribbean, he is not compelled to confront. It is therefore only after his arrival in France, that the shouted cry "Dirty Nigger" will compel him to experience himself as being concretely, that *Nigger Other* which had functioned only as a threat in the social sanction system of his Caribbean colonial society. Nevertheless, in order to fully understand the major features of the "lived experience" of the Caribbean Negro even before going to France, we need to recognize the crucial role of the language, of the imposed system of meaning, in whose terms the Negro is induced to see himself as the direct result of his "colonialist subjugation." Central to this language there had been a specific conception of what it is to be human, and therefore of his prescribed role in this concept. "No one," Fanon writes,

would dream of doubting that its major artery (i.e. of the Negro's self-division) is fed from the heart of "those various theories that have tried to prove that the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man." (BS: 17)

What Fanon alerts us to here is that the ascribed role of the Negro in these theories is an indispensable function of our present culture's purely ontogenetic conception of the human, one that represents the species as existing in a purely continuist relation with organic life, defining it on the model of a natural organism (Foucault, 1973: 310). In consequence, given the far-reaching nature of this conception of human identity, it is not enough to have merely understood the causes of the Negro's self-division. The imperative is instead to end it. To do this, one must recognize that "to speak" does not mean only "to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language." It means, above all, "to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (BS: 17-18). The situation which the Negro confronts in the Caribbean, therefore, is that within the logic of the specific civilization in which he finds himself, within the language which it speaks and which speaks it, one, as a "Negro," will find oneself being "proportionately whiter" and thereby proportionately "closer to being a real human being," in "direct ratio" to one's mastery of the French language; or as in the U. S. A. and the Anglophone Caribbean, in direct ratio to his/her mastery of the English language in its standard middle class (or "good English") form.⁶ In consequence, the Negro of the Caribbean, because he also speaks an Afro-French (or Afro-English) Creole vernacular language, "has always to face the problem of language." This, as part of a vaster matrix, determines his/her lived experiences both as "Negro" and as "colonized" native. This is so in that "every colonized people," that is, "every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality," must now find itself "face to face with the language of the civilizing nation," that is, with the culture of the mother country. In this situation, the colonized Negro is not only elevated "above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards," in addition, he "becomes whiter" to the extent that he "renounces his blackness, his jungle" (BS: 18). While, given that the logic of these new cultural standards has "totemized" being fully human (i.e. the ostensibly farthest from the primates and thereby most highly evolved), in the European physiognomy and culture-complex, it is to the extent that the Caribbean Negro "renounces his blackness, his jungle" that he experiences himself as *more human*. As a result, formally educated to be both a member of the French bourgeois elite and white, for the Caribbean Negro the dream of going to France had logically been the Holy Grail. Indeed any one of this group who had gone to France and, through rigorous practice, come to speak the "French of France," finds that this is one of the

things “that marks him when he returns, as one who has lived in the mother-country, as a demi-god.” The phenomenology of the one-who-has-gone-to-France, thereby undergoes a definitive restructuring—that is, he experiences himself in quite different terms:

The black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed. To express it in genetic terms, his phenotype undergoes a definitive, an absolute mutation. Even before he had gone away, one could tell from the almost aerial manner of his carriage that new forces had been set in motion. (BS: 19)

Fanon further explains, here in a note, that by this, he means that “Negroes who return to their original environments convey the impression that they have completed a cycle, that they have added something to themselves, literally returning *full of themselves*.” At the same time he also goes on to propose in the body of the text that this transformation of the subjectively experienced identity of the Caribbean Negro is one that arises directly from a specific *socio-cultural situation*, which serves to activate a specific biochemical and therefore physicalistic correlate; in Bohm’s terms, transformed *meanings* have led to transformed *matter*, to a transformed mode of experiencing the *self*. What Fanon makes clear here is that it is *for* the French Caribbean Negro, imprisoned on a poverty stricken colonial island, and lost “in an atmosphere that offers not the slightest outlet,” that the appeal of Europe is like “pure air which he breathes in.” It is *for* him that the world will only seem to “open up” once he leaves his island and arrives in France. Hence, at the news that he is indeed getting to France, getting, thereby “a start in life,” he is jubilant. He makes up his mind to change. We see, however, Fanon writes, that with the change of his cultural situation from a closed and blocked situation to one of relatively more open possibilities, his “structure” before any reflective process on his part, “changes independently.” To support this thesis Fanon cites an example given by two U. S. scholars who had found through a series of research studies that they had undertaken that in married couples, at some stage in their marriage, “a biochemical alteration takes place in the partners.”⁷ It would therefore be “equally” interesting to “investigate the body fluids that occur in Negroes when they arrive in France.” Or simply “to study through tests the psychic changes that take place” (BS: 22).

What Fanon is revealing here, in the terms of the issues posed by Chalmers and Nagel, is that there are subjectively experienced processes taking place, whose functioning cannot be explained in the terms of *only* the natural sciences, of only physical laws. As the case of the Caribbean Negro going to France demonstrates, the transformation of subjective experience is, in the case of humans, culturally and thereby socio-situationally determined, with these

determinations in turn, serving to activate their physicalistic correlates. In consequence, if the mind is what the brain *does*, what the brain *does*, is itself culturally determined through the mediation of the socialized *sense of self*, as well as of the “social” situation in which this *self* is placed. Fanon is here again, therefore, centrally challenging the purely biocentric premise of our present culture’s conception of the human, as this conception is elaborated not only by psychology, but by all the disciplines that comprise the human sciences. For, as he argues here, these disciplines “have their own drama,” and it is a drama based on a central question. Should the inquirer postulate, as in the standard approach, a “type for human reality and describe its psychic modalities only through deviations from it”? Or should the imperative of the inquirer be rather that of striving “unremittingly for a concrete and ever new understanding of man”? (BS: 22).

In the terms of the answer given by the standard approach of the human sciences, one is able to read, for example, “that after the age of twenty-nine, a man can no longer love and that he must wait until he is forty-nine before his capacity for affect revives.” Reading this, “one feels the ground give way beneath one.” It is therefore imperative, if one is to recover one’s balance, to recognize that there is a central purpose to this standard approach, to understand that “all these discoveries, all these inquiries lead only in one direction,” have “only one goal”; that the specific aim of this goal is to “make man admit that he is nothing, absolutely nothing—and that he must put an end to the narcissism on which he relies in order to *imagine* that he is different from other ‘animals’” (BS: 22). Yet, to admit this, to admit that the human is a purely biologically determined mode of being⁸ “amounts to nothing more nor less than *man’s surrender*.” Refusing to accept “man’s surrender,” Fanon therefore puts forward a counter-manifesto with respect to human identity. Having reflected on the possibility put forward by the standard approach, he declares, “I grasp my narcissism with both hands and I turn my back on the degradation of those who would make man a mere mechanism. Further, even if “there can be no discussion *on a philosophical level*—that is, the plane of the *basic needs of human reality*—I am willing to work on the psychoanalytical level—in other words, the level of the ‘failures,’ in the sense in which one speaks of engine failures” (BS: 23).

For it is at this level that certain discoveries can be made. Such as the fact that when a specific (biochemical) change occurs in the Caribbean Negro who arrives in France, the change occurs *only* “because *to him*, the country *represents* the Tabernacle.” This is not an arbitrary or contingent representation. Not only has everything in his earlier schooling and everyday life in Martinique culturally indoctrinated him in the terms that enabled him to experience such a representation as gospel truth (pun intended), but it has also led to “the amputated sense of self” for which the experience of full being could only be enabled through the mediation of France and its

cultural artifacts. The change in the phenomenal properties of the Caribbean Negro's *sense of self* (together with its biochemical correlates) can therefore occur only because of a specific process of socialization that had been effected and verified at every level of his existence in his French colonial island. His socialization as a subject, therefore, is at one and the same time as both French and colonial "native," and/or Negro—in effect, both Man and Man's Other.

It is therefore only *to* this French colonial "native" subject, to his *sense of self* together with the particular point of view to which it gives rise, that power and full being can *necessarily* emanate only from the colonizer centre, France. Culturally amputated in his psyche by the everyday structures of Martinique, the "man who is leaving next week for France creates round himself a magic circle in which the words Paris, Marseilles, Sorbonne, Pigalle become the keys to the vault." As he leaves for the pier to set sail, "the amputation of his being diminishes as the silhouette of his ship grows clearer." At the same time, in "the eyes of those who have come to see him off he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power. 'Good-by bandanna, good-by straw hat . . .'" He has been chosen; he has become one of the few selected ones allowed to escape the stereotype of exotic non-being imposed upon those non-chosen who must remain at home. The implication here is that the biochemical events taking place in his being as he reads the "evidence of his own mutation, his power" in the others' eyes (and thereby the evidence of his own recognition in the terms of the dominant culture and its bearers) are determined by the change in his cultural situation: the shift from an amputated experience of being to the experience of almost "full" (that is, almost white), almost French bourgeois, being. Meaning, in Bohm's sense, positively marked, has here affected matter-positively.

Then he arrives in France. The cry "Dirty Nigger" startles him into the shocked awareness that in the eyes of those who now surround him—white eyes as, Fanon notes, the "only real eyes"—he no longer has the option to behave or not to behave *like* a nigger! In those eyes, he *is* a nigger. And the cry fixes him in that subhuman status as a "chemical solution fixes a dye" (BS: 109). The glances of those eyes and the cry have activated the phenomenal properties of the new qualitative mental states that Fanon explores in his fifth chapter as "the lived experience of the black." Meaning, negatively marked, has likely affected matter (that is, physiology) negatively.

"Dirty Nigger!" "Look, a Negro" "Mama, the Nigger's Going to Eat Me Up!": My Body Was Given Back to Me as an Object . . . Sprawled out, Distorted

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning on that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the

Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up! (Fanon, *BS*: 113-14)

(A)lthough the concepts themselves are connected with a *particular point of view* and a *particular visual phenomenology*, the things apprehended from that point of view are not. (Nagel, "What it is like to be a bat," 1974)

Fanon begins chapter 5, "The lived experience of the black," with an account of his subjectively experienced response to the hurled epithet, for instance, "Dirty nigger" or simply "Look, a Negro"! At this moment, his idea of himself as one who had come into the world infused "with the will to find a meaning in things," one whose spirit had been "filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world" is shattered. With that hurled epithet, that exclamation, "I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects" (*BS*: 10). All attempts to escape that "crushing objecthood" eventually fail. The "glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye" (*BS*: 109).

I was indignant; I demanded an explanation. Nothing happened. I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self.

This "put together" other self then analyzes his experience, seeing it as one common to all black men. The quality of this experience, he recognizes, was new in kind. They had not known it when they had been among themselves, still at home in the French island colony of Martinique. Then, "he would have had no occasion . . . to experience his being through others." Here he must directly confront a reality that had not revealed itself in all its starkness before his arrival—the reality of the "being of the black man."

For not only must the black man be black; he *must be black in relation to the white man*. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place himself. His metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were

wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know *and that imposed itself* on him.” (BS: 110)

Fanon has here defined the central prescription of what he had earlier identified as the mode of sociogeny, in whose terms, both black and white are socialized. While the black man must experience himself as the *defect* of the white man—as must the black woman vis a vis the white woman—neither the white man or woman can experience himself/herself *in relation to the* black man/black woman in any way but as that fullness and genericity of being human, yet a genericity that must be verified by the clear evidence of the latter’s *lack* of this fullness, of this genericity. The qualitative aspects of the two group’s mental states with respect to their respective experiences of their *sense of self* are not only opposed, but dialectically so; each quality of subjective experience, the one positive, the other negative, depends upon the other. Because in Martinique, among his own group, the recognition of this dialectic had been muted, the black man arrives in France unprepared for that moment “when his inferiority comes into being through the other.”

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. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. (BS: 110)

A vast distinction now separates the way he experiences his body “in the middle of a spatial and temporal world” from the way he is made to experience it through the “glances of the white Others.” In the first case, the spatio-temporal, if he wants to smoke, he knows that certain movements will be called for. In order to get the cigarettes which are at the other end of the table, he will have to extend his right arm across the end of the table, to get to the matches which “are in the drawer to the left” he will have to “lean back slightly.” The movements that he will make “are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge.” This implicit knowledge is that of certain pre-given schema—one as specific to what it is like *physically* to be human (that is, the human in its purely phylogenetic/ontogenetic dimension) as is the unique pre-given schema specific to the bat. One can therefore speak here of a world governed by biologically determined assumptions—assumptions verified by the objective facts of what it is like to be a member of the human species. This is not the way, however, that he will experience this self, this body, in the specific culture-historical world in which he must necessarily realize himself as human, through his interaction with “normal” others, who are here, necessarily white. In this interaction, he is no longer in control of the process of the effecting of “a composition of the self” based on

implicit knowledge of the biological schema that is his body. Here, another mode of conscious experience takes over. This mode is one that compels him to know his body *through* the terms of an always already imposed “historico-racial schema”; a schema that predefines his body as an impurity to be cured, a lack, a defect, to be amended into the “true” being of whiteness.

For several years,” he writes, “certain laboratories have been trying to produce a serum for ‘denegritification’; with all the earnestness in the world, laboratories have sterilized their test tubes, checked their scales, and embarked on researches that might make it possible for the miserable *Negro to whiten himself and thus to throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction*. Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema.” (BS: 111)

The central questions posed by Stan Franklin (in the context of his summary of Chalmers’ 1991 discussion of the hard problems “of consciousness”), arise here. Why, Franklin had asked, with respect to sensory qualia, does red look like red, or like any thing at all? Further, why with respect to mental content, if things are about something, say white elephants, and if “by our physicalistic assumptions thoughts arise from neural firings,” why should “neural firings *have to do with white elephants*” (Franklin, 1995: 31) or, in our own case, with “Dirty Nigger!”? Why, in addition, should the neural firings which underlie the glances of the “White Others” that Fanon is made to experience have to do with the “corporeal malediction” placed upon the black body, in the terms of a specific “historico-racial schema” in which both the bearers of this body and the white glancers at this body find themselves entrapped? Why further should the specific mental state and its specific phenomenal properties of the glancers, (i.e. of those who are in the process of living the experience of being “white”), as well as the mental state and its phenomenal properties of those who are glanced at and who must experience the negative effects of these glances as part of living the experience of being black, *have to be those specific states at all?*

Fanon gives an answer. Unlike the image of his body as it functioned in a purely spatio-temporal world devoid of White Others, this other *self* that he is being called upon to experience, is one that has been constructed for him “by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.” In consequence, the “mental contents” of his new qualitative view of his body, and the “neural firings” with which they correlate, are non-arbitrarily linked through the mediation of those “anecdotes,” those “stories” out of which he had been woven; stories which elaborate the very historico-racial schema and “corporeal malediction,” whose negative meanings imposed upon his being. There is an imperative dialectic at work here. In that it is precisely by means of the same

anecdotes and stories, (if in the binarily opposed terms, of “corporeal *benediction*,” rather than of “*malediction*”), that the *sense of self* of the white subject, from whose point of view the color and physiognomy of the Negro must be seen negatively and reacted to aversively, is also woven as “normal”; at the same time, it is this always already woven normal sense of self which in turn “weaves” the negro, as its negation, its other, out of a “thousand anecdotes.” Anecdotes and stories that are therefore, as constituting of the normal subject as “White” as they are of its abnormal Other as “Black.”

Hence the logic by which Fanon, confronted by eyes which see him through the mediation of these woven networks, finds that where he had thought that he merely had to “construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations,” he was now called upon to do more. That is, to construct himself in the terms of those pre-determined elements, in order to “verify” the “truth” of the others’ glances, the “truth” of their order of consciousness, and to do so in order to confirm both the purely biological identity of being human in its bourgeois conception, as well as its normative definition in “white” terms. In effect, to make himself into a fact of negation, which alone enables the experience of being “white.” And for this to be done, within the plotlines of the narratives which alone make it possible, he must experience the corporeal reality of his body, as one that has always already been transformed by the negative stereotypes placed upon it into a subhuman reality. In several encounters he experiences the effects of this substitution. Traveling on a train, for example, he feels himself “assaulted at various points,” his “corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema.” As he seats himself he finds that now, “it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person.” He is given not one but three places.

I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other . . . and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea . . . (BS: 112)

His body had been reified into a type which triggers the reflexly aversive behaviors that are inseparable from the aversive sensations of qualitative mental states felt collectively by all those who avoid him; these mental states are likely activated by the pervasive sequence of negative associations, which predefine him, making him “responsible at the same time for his body, his race, his ancestors who are all necessarily cannibals.” So total is this that he is compelled to see himself as he is seen by those “white” eyes, which are the only “real” eyes because they are the only “normal eyes.”

I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency,

fetichism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: 'Sho' good eatin.' (BS: 112)

He now begins to experience himself through the mediation of stereotyped concepts *specific to a particular point of view and visual phenomenology*; in other words, *not* as he is, but as *he must be for* a particular viewpoint. Yet what had been the origin of that particular viewpoint, that visual phenomenology? The culture-specific source of the "anecdotes, the stories," by which both had been and still continue to be constructed? Here, if as Michel Foucault pointed out in his *The Order of Things*, *Man* as a new (and ostensibly universal because supracultural) conception of the human had in fact been invented by a specific culture, that of western Europe, during the sixteenth century (Foucault, 1973: 386), the anthropologist Jacob Pandian notes that this invention had been made possible only on the basis of a parallel invention (Pandian, 1985: 3-9). This had been so, he explains, because while western Europe was to effect the transformation of its medieval religious identity of the *True Christian Self* into the now secularizing identity of *Man*, it was confronted with the task of inventing 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 of the religio-cultural conception of the human, *Christian*. In consequence, where the Other to the *True Christian Self* of medieval Europe had been the *Untrue Christian Self* (with the external Others being *Idolaters* and/or *Infidels*), with the invention of *Man* in two forms (one during the 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 Caribbean and the Americas, who, classified as "Indians," were to be discursively constructed as the physical referent of the "savage" and thereby *Irrational* Human Others 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*,⁹ 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 divinely created) rational human species and the (equally divinely created) animal species. As such, it had to be governed and mastered for its own good. However, with the reinvention of *Man* in new terms, in the wake of the Darwinian Revolution (which replaced the cosmogony or Origin Narrative of Genesis, and its model of Divine Creation or Design with that of the hybridly scientific and cosmogonic Narrative of Evolution

together with its model of Natural Selection), a shift was to occur. It was now to be the category of the Negroes, defined as comprising all peoples of African hereditary descent, whether unmixed or mixed, together with their origin continent of Africa, that were to be discursively constructed as the physical referent of the conception of *Man's* Human Other. It was therefore to be in the terms of this specific historico-cultural schema and constellation, that a "corporeal malediction" was to be placed upon all peoples of African hereditary descent, as the ostensibly non-evolved dysselected and therefore "racially inferior" Other (Pandian, 1988) to the true human, *Man*, and made to reoccupy the now purely secularized form of the matrix *Untrue Christian Self* (Pandian, 1985: 3-9).

As with Du Bois earlier, Fanon, socialized through his bourgeois education to be *Man* and, therefore, to be "normal," must experience himself in doubly conscious terms, as being both norm and Other. Had he been "white," he would have experienced no disjuncture: indeed he would have been unable even to conceive of what it is like to be not *Man*, to be "a black man" and as such the negative other to the human, the bearer of a "corporeal malediction." It is only therefore out of his own lived experience of being both *Man* (in its middle class definition) and its liminally deviant Other (in its race definition), that Fanon will be enabled to carry out his dually first and third person exploration of what it is like to be at one and the same time, both *Man* in the terms of our present ethno-class conception of the human, and the embodiment of its anti-Negro, anti-human criterion. "Look, a nigger!" "My body," Fanon writes, "was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day." He experiences a disjuncture between himself and his body; he sees it as the normative "white" consciousness sees it, and finds himself shattered by the terms in which he is seen by that consciousness. He begins here a series of associations which his own doubly conscious perspective will enable him to predict in its pre-determined and inevitable progression. It is at this moment that, although he is the target of the sensations activated by this series of associations, he is enabled to see himself as he must, and objectively *be* for a "particular point of view and visual phenomenology"; even more, for a point of view and phenomenology that is now globally hegemonic—as is its *sense of self* in whose terms he too has been socialized into normative subjectivity. He becomes aware of his skin of his body, his physiognomy, as if it were indeed a uniform, a livery—"I had not seen it. It is indeed ugly. I stop there, for who can tell me what beauty is." Since from that "particular point of view," within the terms of the qualitative aspects of the mental states specific to the sense of self, or mode of sociogeny of our present ethno-class conception of what it is like to be human, how can the black skin color and Negroid physiognomy *not* be experienced as aesthetically *ugly*? Indeed, how can the state of being a Negro not be that of experiencing oneself as being of a different *genus* to the "True"

human, within the terms of a specific conception of the human which represents itself, by means of a founding rhetorical strategy¹⁰ as if it were isomorphic with the human itself? "(A)lready," Fanon writes,

I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes, I am fixed . . . (T)hey objectively cut away slices of my reality I am laid bare. I feel, I see in those white faces that it is not a new man who has come in, but a new kind of man, a new genus. Why it's a Negro. (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 1967: 116)

On the Why of Subjective Experience, the Artificial and Relative Nature of Being Human, Identity and the Fundamental Laws of Consciousness

Why should subjective states exist in the first place? (Stan Franklin, *Artificial Minds*, 1995: 31)

Continuing to take stock of reality, endeavoring to ascertain the instant of symbolic crystallization, I very naturally found myself on the threshold of Jungian psychology. European civilization is characterized by the presence, at the heart of what Jung calls the collective unconscious, *of an archetype*: an expression of the bad instincts, of the darkness inherent in every ego, *of the uncivilized savage*, the Negro who slumbers in every white man. (BS: 187)

The indigenous peoples of the Congo are all black in color, some more so, some less so. Many are to be seen who are the color of chestnut and some tend to be more olive-colored. *But the one who is of the deepest black* in color is held by them to be the most beautiful . . . There are some children who although their parents are black, are born white-skinned . . . And these are regarded by the Congolese as monsters . . . Given the fact that a black skin is so highly regarded among them, we Europeans appear ugly in their eyes . . . As a result, children in those areas, where a white has never been seen before, would become terrified, fleeing in horror from us, no less than our children here are terrified by the sight of a black also fleeing in horror from them. [Antonio de Teruel, *Narrative Description of . . . the Kingdom of the Congo* (1663-1664) Ms. 3533: 3574 National Library, Madrid, Spain]

Since this world of nations has been made by men, let us see in what institutions all men agree, and have always agreed. For these institutions will be able to give us the universal and

eternal principles, such as every science must have, on which all nations were founded and must preserve themselves. (Giambattista Vico, 1744/1970: 53)

We do not need to explain away the subjective experience. *We are what we experience ourselves to be.* Our self-experience of intentions and ‘will’ are not epiphenomenal illusions. (Terence W. Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain*, 1995: 458)

Why indeed should subjective states exist? Why should *experience* be, as Chalmers proposes, a fundamental feature in its own right? The proposal here is that Fanon’s thesis, that besides phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny, reveals that the cultural construction of specific “qualitative mental states” (such as the aversive reaction of white Europeans and of blacks ourselves to our skin color and physiognomy), are states specific to the modes of subjective experience defining what it is like to be human within the terms of our present culture’s conception of what it is to be human; and, in the terms of its sociogenic principle, like the bat’s subjective experience of what it is like to be a bat, they are states defining what it is to *be* the lived expression of a species-specific genomic principle. How did this come to be? In his book *Rhetoric and Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*, Ernesto Grassi points out that our human mode of being was to come into existence only by means of the rupture that the species was evolutionarily pre-programmed to effect by means of its unique capacity for language, with the genetically ordered governing “directive signs” that motivate the behaviors of purely organic forms of life, by the replacement of the hegemony of these signs by the new directive signs of a governing human code inscribed in the Word, or Sacred Logos of religious discourse. This discourse, by ritually prescribing what *had* to be said, and what *had* to be done, was now to no less compulsorily *necessitate* the behaviors of its subjects than the genetically programmed “directive signs” compel and necessitate the species-specific behaviors of purely organic forms of life (Grassi, 1980: 106). Arguing further that the new directive signs of the Logos could only have emerged in the life of the planet at a time when for a single species the genetic “directive signs” had come to be experienced as “*insufficient*,” Grassi proposes that it was this initial insufficiency that led to the rise of the Word and thereby to that of a new governing *human code*, through whose verbal mediation “life was now to receive a completely different meaning compared to that of biological life” (Grassi, 1980: 110).

Two scholars, one a sociologist, Donald Campbell, the other a linguist, Philip Lieberman, have defined this insufficiency in parallel terms. Campbell proposed that although as humans we live in societies that are even more complex and more large-scale than those of the social insects, we, unlike the latter, are not integrated on the basis of

the high degrees of genetic similarity which makes social cohesion possible for the insects. For while the social insects are able to display altruistic behaviors towards the members of their group (with some categories such as the sterile castes giving up their own possibilities of reproduction so as to carry out tasks that enable the overall reproduction of, in the case of bees, the hive), their high degrees of genetic similarity ensure that their own genetic information will be transmitted by their siblings. This is not so in the case of humans. Humans, like all members of the mammalian primate family, followed a different evolutionary pathway, one which led to high degrees of genetic individuation, and, therefore, of reproductive competitiveness. At the same time, the runaway evolution of the human brain correlated with its option for bipedalism; the upright stance made it necessary for their infants to be born early, and the protracted stage of helplessness of their young now called for a mode of cooperative rearing and therefore for a mode of eusociality which went beyond the limits of the modes of genetically determined kinship characteristic of the primate family (Campbell; 1972: 21-23, 1988: 31-32). The genetically programmed modes of an eusociality characteristic of all other forms of organic life proved insufficient for the human species.

In the same context, the linguist Philip Lieberman was also to propose that the evolution of the human capacity for language was to provide the answer to the need for the kind of more inclusive selfless behaviors indispensable to human modes of eusociality. For, while at the genetic-instinctual level, humans are able to respond altruistically only to those within the narrow limits of the circle of their genetic kin, at the level of language, they can be induced through the mediation of words and meanings, to display a more generalized and inclusive mode of altruism (Lieberman, 1991: 166-72). Induced, that is, to display it to those made *artificially* similar to them, through the institutional processes of socialization, by means of which, as now cloned subjects, all participating in the same order of symbolically coded consciousness instituted about each culture's governing sociogenic principle and its code of "fake" similarity, they could now subjectively experience themselves as culturally co-defined conspecifics, or symbolic kin. As Campbell also argued, it is with respect to the indispensable nature of the conditioning processes needed to override the narrow limits of genetic kinship, and to artificially induce the modes of more inclusive altruism needed for the cohesion of human orders, that we need to understand the pervasive presence of the schemas of "sin and temptation in the folk morality of our religious traditions" (Campbell, 1975: 22). Schemas, whether in their religious or in their now secular forms, can be recognized as the "artificial" behavior motivating "narratives" whose "vernacular languages of belief and desire" (Miller, 1992: 182) structure our culture-specific orders of consciousness, modes of mind, and thereby of being. It is these schemas and the coercive nature of their systems

of meaning that make it possible for each mode of sociogeny and its artificially imprinted *sense of self* to be created as one able to override, where necessary, the genetic-instinctual sense of self, at the same time as it itself comes to be subjectively *experienced as if it were instinctual*; it is thereby enabled not only to reoccupy the formerly hegemonic place, of the genetic self, but also to harness its drives to its now culturally defined sociogenetic own.¹¹

If we see, therefore, that the experience of *what it is like* to be human is only made possible by means of the, at first, sacred religio-cultural and, now in our contemporary case, objective secular-cultural discourses and their coercive semantic technologies by means of which the genetic-instinctual self of the individual is transformed through processes of social conditioning into that of each order's culturally prescribed *sense of the self* or sociogenic principle, then it is this principle, and the institutions by means of which it is imprinted that gives the constant able to provide a transculturally applicable "common reality": the constant that Vico, in the context of his call for a New Science specific to human societies, predicted as the institutional complex that would be found to be common to all societies (Vico, 1970: 53). While because, in this context, it can now be also proposed that the phenomenon of "mind," as the mode of consciousness unique to the human, is the emergent property of these programmed and thereby "artificial" or socialized *senses of self*, a corollary logically follows. This is that the laws or rules which govern the nature-culture processes inscribing our modes of socio-genetic being, and thereby of "mind," can be identified as the human form of the psychophysical laws whose existence has been postulated by Chalmers. In consequence, the identification of such laws, as they function at the hybrid level of our modes of being human, should not only be able to solve the puzzle of conscious experience at the level of human forms of life, doing so by revealing its role as the indispensable concomitant of our culturally relative modes of being or *senses of self*, but it should also be able to provide an answer to the related question as to the *why* of subjective experience in general, as well as the *why* of the centrality of the experience of identity to our experience of what it is to be human.

The thesis put forward by the neuroscientist Gerald Edelman is illuminating. Edelman points out that each organism, as it confronts its environment, must necessarily know and classify the world in terms that are of *adaptive* advantage to the organism, terms that can orient the behaviors needed for its own survival, realization, and reproduction. In other words, it must know and classify its world *adaptively*, in spite of the fact that the way it knows the world is not necessarily concordant with what that world veridically *is*, outside the terms of its own viewpoint (Edelman, 1987: 26). What becomes clear here is that while the organism knows and classifies the world in these adaptively advantageous terms, it does so, as proposed by the biologist Richard Dawkins, for the long term good and stable reproduction of

the genes which comprise its genome, genes for whose reproductive imperative the organism is merely a vehicle (Dawkins, cited by Eldridge, 1995: 180). That long-term goal can, nevertheless, *only be secured* through the mediation of what the “vehicle,” that is, the individual organism, *feels* to be to its own advantage as a mode of being in the world. Through the mediation, therefore, of what it subjectively experiences as “good” or “bad” *for itself*, it interacts with its environment, displaying the behaviors that are of adaptive advantage to its realization, survival, and reproduction.

If, therefore, we postulate by analogy, that the “socialized” normal subject of each order must, like the organism, also know and classify the world in terms that are of adaptive advantage to its “artificial” or culturally constructed “sense of self,” rather than in terms of the veridical truth of what that world empirically *is* outside its own viewpoint, the same corollary follows. This is that while its mode of viewpoint-knowing is adaptively advantageous, in the long term, to the stable reproduction of the sociogenic principle instituting of its culture-specific mode of being human, it can continue to be so *only* through the mediation of what the individual human subject *feels* to be to its own adaptive advantage (i.e. to be “good” and bad for itself), as it interacts with both its physical and its sociohuman environments or “worlds.” This is to say, the individual must filter the external through the mediation of what he/she is socialized to experience with reference to his/her culture-specific identity as “good” or “bad.” Fanon makes evident that the middle class educated black is socialized to experience his/our own physiognomic being, as well as his/our African cultures of origin, as “bad,” as archetypally Evil, in Aimé Césaire terms, as “le part maudite,” from which one must separate oneself if one is to be fully human¹² to “feel good” in the terms of our present ethno-class conception of the human.

Here, Franklin’s question “why are there subjective states?” can be answered by the posing of another question. How, exactly, at the level of organic life, does each organism come to *experience* objects in the world, in the specific terms of its nervous system’s order of perception and categorization, as being to its adaptive advantage (good) or not to its adaptive advantage (bad)? Further, at the level of human forms of life, how *exactly* is a “normal subject” made to experience objects in the world, in the terms of its specific culture’s system of perception and categorization, as being to its own adaptive advantage (good) or not (bad)? Here the findings of biochemists, made in the wake of the remarkable discoveries during the seventies and eighties of the existence of indigenous morphine-like molecules or opioid peptides in the brain, the nervous system, and indeed throughout the body of all species, suggest an answer. And this answer not only explains why, as Chalmers proposed, *subjective experience* should be seen as a fundamental feature, irreducible to anything more basic; it also answers Nagel’s question with respect to how “objective

processes can give rise to subjective states,” as well as validates Fanon’s identification of the socio-cultural objective processes that leads to the “aberrations of affect” of both White, non-White/non-Black, anti-Black racism, and Black autophobia. These aberrations become common to all subjects culturally westernized in the ethno-class terms of *Man*.

In his book, *Addiction: From Biology to Drug Policy*, the neurobiologist Avram Goldstein, in the course of his discussion of the neurochemistry of pleasure and pain, put forward the hypothesis that in all living species “a natural opioid system exists for signaling both reward (probably by beta-endorphin) and punishment (by dynorphins).” Further, “the balance of these opposing opioid peptides may regulate many aspects” of what is experienced is a “normal *state of mind*.” He then speculates that it is these reward systems, “that drive adaptive behaviors.” For these systems “signal ‘good’ when food is found and eaten by a hungry animal, when water is found and drunk by a thirsty animal, when sexual activity is promised and consummated, when a threatening situation is averted.” When “harmful behavior is engaged in or when pain is experienced,” on the other hand, “they signal bad.” So that as “these signals become associated with the situations in which they are generated, and they are remembered,” their functioning “seems to represent the necessary process by which an animal learns to seek what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful . . .” (Goldstein, 1994: 60).

What Goldstein suggests here is that the phenomenology of subjective experience (what *feels good* and what *feels bad* to each organism) is neurochemically determined in species-specific behavior motivating terms. It is therefore this *objectively* structured biochemical system that determines the way in which each organism will perceive, classify, and categorize the world in the adaptive terms needed for its own survival and reproductive realization as such an organism. Yet, it is only through the mediation of the organism’s *experience* of what *feels good to* the organism and what *feels bad to* it, and thereby of what it feels like to *be* that organism (*the only entity for which these specific feelings exist*), that the specific repertoire of behaviors that are of adaptive advantage both *for* that organism and for the reproductive transmission of its genetic information, will be stably motivated and displayed. This, at the same time as those that are disadvantageous for both the organism and its genome, will be demotivated, because they are made to be subjectively experienced as “bad” by the organism. So that, if the genes that comprise each species-specific genome are to be reproduced by means of behaviors adaptively suited to deal with the specific challenges of the environment in which the vehicle-organism (to use Dawkin’s formulation)¹³ finds itself, such behaviors can be ensured *only* through the mediation of the subjective experiencing *by* the organism of what is biochemically made to *feel good* and *feel bad to* it as it interacts with its ecosystem: only through the experience, therefore, of what it is like to *be* that organism. The

why of subjective experience, as found in the fact that Nagel's bat, for example, classifies the world in terms of what *feels good* and what *feels bad* for it, is as objectively determinant of the stable reproduction of that organism's mode of species being, or genomic principle, as is its physiological architecture, by means of whose species-specific natural opioid system, such a mode of subjective experiencing by the individual organism is made possible.

But what of ourselves as human subjects? As subjects of our contemporary order? As Fanon points out, for us it is "normal" to be anti-Negro, within the case of Negroes socialized in the terms of *Man*, a central contradiction being set up between the natural opioid system (in whose genetically determined terms our physiognomic being should be experienced as "good"), and the reality of a cultural mode of identity and therefore of sociogeny, in whose terms this physiognomic being must be experienced as "bad." Goldstein is of no help in this respect. Given that because his hypothesis, as it relates to humans, is put forward on the basis of the purely ontogenetic, and thereby biocentric, conception of the human, which functions as the non-questioned premise of our present epistemological order, his conclusion logically presupposes that these opioid reward and punishment behavior-motivational systems function in exactly the same way for us as they do for all forms of purely organic life. He puts forward this conclusion in the course of his argument against the legalization of addictive drugs. The widespread contemporary use of addictive drugs, he argues, can only be understood in an evolutionary context, given that when seen from this perspective, the "feel good" quality of these drugs can be recognized as being due to the fact that they are "not even foreign to the body," since what they do is to "merely mimic or block the neurotransmitters that function normally to signal reward." What is thereby being disturbed by widespread drug addiction is "the delicately regulated system" that "was perfected by evolution over millions of years to serve the survival of all species," as a system whose undisturbed natural functioning allows humans to "experience pleasure and satisfaction from the biologically appropriate behaviors and situations of daily life" (Goldstein: 1994: 60).

But do we, as humans, experience pleasure and satisfaction only from *biologically* appropriate behaviors? Does the opioid system in our case function only *naturally*? If, as Goldstein would propose, the answer to both of these is a *yes*, then how do we account for the fact, that, as the description of the early seventeenth century Congolese reveals, what was subjectively experienced as being aesthetically "correct" and appropriate by the Congolese (their qualitative mental states of dynorphin-activated aversion on the one hand, and their beta-endorphin activated "pleasure and satisfaction" states on the other) was entirely the reverse of what is subjectively experienced by western and westernized subjects as being aesthetically correct and appropriate? How can the same objects, that is, the white skin color

and Caucasoid physiognomy of the Indo-European human hereditary variation and the black skin color and Negroid physiognomy of the African/Congolese human hereditary variation, give rise, in purely biological terms, to subjective experiences that are the direct opposite of each other? Stan Franklin points out that *qualia* is the term used for the qualitative aspects of our mental states such as color sensations, the taste of chocolate, pleasure and pain (Franklin, 1995: 32) and, therefore, the aversive sensations of horror. Then, why did the still culturally autocentric Congolese experience their own black skin color and the white skin color of the Europeans in binarily opposed terms to the way in which these skin colors are subjectively experienced by the Europeans who shout “Dirty Nigger”? By Blacks who experience their/our own physiognomic and skin-color aversively? Could the aversive sensation of horror (that is, the specific qualitative mental states) experienced by the Congolese at the sight of the white skin and Caucasoid physiognomy be attributed *only* to a genetic-instinctual revulsion to a people whose physiognomic appearance differs so markedly from their own, and vice versa? If this is so, how do we explain the central symbolic role of sacred and liminally deviant monstrosity mapped onto the white-skinned albino Congolese, within the terms of their then still autocentric traditional culture,¹⁴ whose cultural category of abnormal deviance—a category whose members, as Teruel also tells us, “are regarded by the Congolese as monsters”—the equally white-skinned Europeans were assimilated? Are we not here confronted with the fact that it is because, as ethnographic studies now make clear, the figure of the *albino* played a parallel archetypal role in the cultural constellation of the traditional Congolese, in Agrarian polytheistic religious terms, to the one that, as Fanon notes (Epigraph 2), is played, in our now purely secular “cultural constellation” by the figure of the “Negro”? The “Negro” is now the analogue of the “boundary marker” of normal being, and as such, in our biocentric conception, the “expression of the bad instincts,” of the “uncivilized savage” who threatens to overwhelm the “normal,” “white,” and middle class subjects of our contemporary order.

Are we not in both cases dealing here with the processes of functioning of two differently culturally programmed opioid systems, two different *senses of the self* of which they are a function? How else explain, in the case of the sensory *qualia* correlated with the shouted cry “Dirty Nigger!,” that the same aversive response is subjectively experienced not just by western peoples, but also by, as Fanon explores, black peoples who have, ourselves, been westernized? Indeed, the descendants of the once “normal” Congolese subjects are now classified, in the terms of the culture imposed upon them, as “Negroes,” and, as such, as abnormal? Does this not make it clear that the proposal that subjectively experiencing “Black” and “White” as merely the expression of two different genetic-instinctual narcissistic somatic norms, one White, one Black, will not hold up?

Seeing that were it a purely somatic issue, we should then be compelled to inquire as to what has happened to the somatic narcissism, not only of Blacks who wear white masks (that is, desire a white appearance), but also to that of the millions of non-Europeans who now increasingly make use of plastic surgery to secure for themselves a physiognomic appearance nearer to that of the Indo-European in its bourgeois configuration. Why should there be such widespread anxiety for Semitic noses to be clipped and shortened, Mexican-Indian noses to be heightened, the folds of Asian eyelids removed, the shape of the eyes rounded? Why, even more ominously in the brave new world of our bio-tech century, is the term “genetic enhancement” (a euphemism for eugenics) used to refer to the biogenetic engineering processes designed to ensure the birth of babies with blue eyes, European type noses, and European type eyes; to ensure only the “production” of those physiognomies sculpted in the terms of the hegemonic aesthetic of the western-bourgeois conception and criterion of being human?¹⁵

The comparison of, in Nagel’s terms, two differing viewpoints and psychoaffective responses, on the basis of the perspective of a “common reality” outside the terms of both, here enables us to propose, after Fanon, that it is the culturally constructed sociogenic principle that, in both cases, by mapping or totemizing negative/positive meanings (as part of a cultural series) on the non-humanly instituted difference (as a natural series),¹⁶ that activates, by their semantic reprogramming, the opioid system in culture-specific terms? Does this thereby enable the radically opposed qualitative subjective responses to what is, in effect, the same *objects*? Fanon’s hypothesis that, in the case of our own culture, *Black skins wear white masks*, being but a special case of the fact that all humans wear cultural masks (“besides phylogeny and ontogeny there stands sociogeny”), results in that, although born as biological humans (as human *skins*), we can *experience ourselves as human* only through the mediation of the processes of socialization effected by the invented *tekhne* or cultural technology to which we give the name *culture*. If this is so then the recognition that, as Terence Deacon points out, (Epigraph 2) we are, as humans, *what we experience ourselves to be* (in effect, what we are culturally-verbally socialized to experience ourselves to be), not only provides the answer to Franklin’s question, but at the same time, enables Chalmers’ puzzle of conscious experience to cease being one. Seeing that because all modes of human conscious experience, and thereby, of *consciousness*, can now be seen to be, in all cases, the expression of the culturally constructed mode of subjective experience specific to the functioning of each culture’s sociogenic *sense of self*, the same recognition can now be analogically extrapolated to the species-specific *sense of self* expressing the genomic principle defining of all forms of organic life. In both cases, therefore, specific information states can be seen as being inseparable from each form of life’s (whether purely organic or

hybridly human) subjective experiencing of what it is like to *be like/to be* each such mode of being, and, to thereby behave appropriately (biologically or culturally) in the modalities necessary to the realization, survival, and reproduction of each such mode of being.

In this context, we can invert the analogical process in order to propose that if it is the information-encoding genomic organizational principle of the bat (including centrally the neurochemistry of its species-specific opioid reward and punishment) that serves to induce its appropriate behaviors, through the mediation of each bat's subjective experience of what *feels* good and what *feels* bad to and for it. It is, then, in the case of the human species, the sociogenic principle, as the information-encoding organizational principle of each culture's criterion of being/non-being, that functions to *artificially* activate the neurochemistry of the reward and punishment pathway, doing so in the terms needed to institute the human subjects as a culture-specific and thereby verbally defined, if physiologically implemented, mode of being and *sense of self*. One, therefore, whose phenomenology (that is, the parameters of its qualitative mental states, order of consciousness and mode of subjective experience) is as objectively, constructed as its physiology, like the bat, is objectively, because biologically, structured.

The Natural-scientific Language of Neurobiology, or the Hybrid Nature-culture Language of Fanon's Sociodiagnostics and Césaire's Science of the Word? To Reinvent Nagel's "Objective Phenomenology"

I grasp my narcissism with both hands and I turn my back on the degradation of those who would make man a mere mechanism. (BS: 23)

Contrary to common opinion, the prime metaphysical significance of artificial intelligence is that it can counteract the subtly dehumanizing influence of natural science, of which so many cultural critics have complained. It does this by showing, in a scientifically acceptable manner, how it is possible for psychological beings to be grounded in a material world and yet be properly distinguished from 'mere matter'. Far from showing that human beings are 'nothing but machines', it confirms our insistence that we are essentially subjective creatures living through our own mental constructions of reality. (Margaret Boden, 1977: 473)

The above hypothesis takes us back both to Fanon's proposal for a *sociodiagnostic* as the only possible "cure" for the aberration of affect induced in the black by the massive "psychoexistential complex" in which he/she finds him/herself entrapped, as well as to

the challenge of Nagel to which it is related. This is the challenge with respect to the possibility of elaborating an objective phenomenology on the basis of a methodology analogous to that of the natural sciences, yet different from it. As such, one that would be able to take its departure from the “particularity of the point of view” of the subjectively experiencing subject, yet be able to postulate a “common reality” outside the terms of that point of view. Here it seems to me that both Nagel’s call for an objective phenomenology and Chalmers’ call for the identification of fundamental laws specific to consciousness, when linked to Fanon’s hypothesis, with respect to the hybrid nature of human identity, enables the positing, in the case of the human species, of laws beyond those of natural laws. Ones that, nevertheless, function in tandem with the latter, so as to bring into being the hybrid nature-culture modes of being or forms of life specific to being human. With the result that, if, as Jonathan Miller pointed out in a 1992 essay, while consciousness “is implemented by neurobiological processes,” “the language of neurobiology” still remains unable to convey what it’s *like to be* conscious, then the proposal here is that the finding of a new “language” able to do this could be made possible only on the basis of the new postulate: that of the existence of autonomously functioning laws of culture, as laws which “in their accustomed course” (*cursus solitus culturae*) give rise to our adaptive orders of consciousness, modes of subjective experience, of sensory qualia, or “qualitative mental states.” It did this in the same way as the “language of neurobiology” was made possible only in the wake of the intellectual revolution of the Renaissance of humanism and of its then new poetics, in whose terms alone, as Ferdinand Halryn has identified in his study on Copernicus and Kepler, the postulate of the non-arbitrarily and autonomously functioning (rather than divinely and arbitrarily regulated) laws of nature (i.e. *cursus solitus naturae*), indispensable to the emergence of the natural sciences, was to be conceptualizable.¹⁷ At the same time as it was to be the new postulate, in the reoccupied place of the millennial belief in Divine Supernatural Causation, of autonomously functioning laws of nature as the “cause” of the functioning of physical processes and, in the wake of Darwin, of biological processes, that was to emancipate the levels of physical and purely organic reality from having to continue to be known adaptively, rather than veridically, thereby enabling the emergence of a new natural scientific mode of human cognition.

Parallely, a new language able to convey what *it is like* to be conscious outside the terms of each culture-specific order of consciousness, would also have to be one only findable within the term of the postulate of autonomously functioning laws of culture, as laws specific to the third (beyond the physical and the purely biological) and hybrid level of ontogenetic/sociogenetic existence-at the level that would be the specific domain of inquiry of this new language. Given that if the parameters of what it is like to be human,

to be *us*-in other words, the parameters of our orders of consciousness and modes of subjective experience-are instituted in consistent ways specific to each culture's *sense of self* or sociogenic principle (with the aversive mental states and shout of "Dirty Nigger!" by "normal" white subjects, and of those of autophobia by "normal" black subjects, being as determined by our present *sense of self* and its conception of what it is like to be human as those of the Congolese, to the white skin color and physiognomy of the Europeans had been determined by that of the Congolese culture's *sense of self* or sociogenic principle), it is only such a new "language," that would provide the answer in both to Nagel's call for an objective phenomenology, as well as in response to Fanon's call for a sociodiagnosics.

For if the processes of motivation that are determinant of the behaviors, not only of human subjects, but also of the species-specific behaviors of purely organic life, *can only function through the mediation of subjective mental states*, with such states thereby being the indispensable condition of each organism or each human subject's realization as such an organism, or subject, at the same time as they are the condition of the replication of, on the one hand, the sociogenic principle and, on the other, the genomic principle, of which each the organism and the human subject is the lived expression, then the paradox we inescapably confront is: how, in the case of humans, is the *particularity* of the viewpoint of each such mode of conscious experience, and therefore of each such culture-specific mode of the subject, to be *recognized* by each such subject *outside* the terms of the sociogenic principle which institutes him/her as such subject or specific mode of being and outside, therefore, the terms of the order of consciousness which institutes it as such a subject? Here a point made by Jonathan Miller in his essay reveals the dimensions of this paradox. In the course of his argument against the possibility of the "language of neurobiology" and its purely physicalistic assumption ever being able to come to grips with the phenomenon of consciousness, Miller pointed out that although neuroscientists have illuminated the ways in which consciousness is neurophysiologically implemented by the brain, and while consciousness is self-evident to anyone who has it, it, nevertheless, cannot be found or identified as a *property of the brain*; (Miller, 1992: 182) and thereby a property identifiable, in Nagel's terms, as that of a "common reality."

The key issue to be noted here is that of what Miller rightly identifies as the *self-evidence* of consciousness to those who have it. Yet it is precisely this self-evident consciousness that Fanon has found himself not only compelled to call in question, but also to indict, as it itself is the cause of the black's autophobia as well as the white's anti-black "aberration of affect." So that if, as Miller further argues, the language of neurobiology cannot "convey what it is like to be conscious," then the self-evident consciousness can clearly convey

what it is like to be conscious *only* in the terms of its own consciousness as the culture-specific “normal subject” *for* and to whom such a specific, and necessarily adaptive, order of consciousness can be experienced as being self-evident. Seeing such self-evidence can be recognized as a property in itself of the terms in which each subject has been socialized into a specific mode of being human; these terms then prescribe the adaptively advantageous parameters in which each such subject must necessarily know, as well as psycho-affectively respond to, Self, Other, and World as the conditions of the adaptively advantageous reproduction of each such mode of being human. The logical consequence is then that, in the case of our contemporary order of consciousness, modes of subjective experience expressed on the one hand by anti-black and anti-non-white racism, and on the other, by black autophobia, are, like all the other correlated *isms*, the expressions of a self-evident order of consciousness to its subjects. Yet it is simultaneously an order of consciousness that is indispensable to the dynamic institution and stable reproduction of our present ethno-class conception/criterion of the human, as well as to that of the/our contemporary global order as the specific socio-global field in which it is alone realizable as such a mode of being and genre of human identity. So that if this is indeed so, if the black/white psycho-existential complex, as well as the respective “aberrations of affect”—that is, that of anti-black racism, as well as that of black autophobia—are not only of “normal” adaptive advantage to our present mode of being human, to its governing sociogenic principle, how do we extricate ourselves? How, as centrally, was it possible for Fanon himself to set afoot the possibility of our emancipation by means of his redefined conception of what it is to be human?

In his 1973 study of Borana peoples of Ethiopia and their traditional cultural order, the anthropologist Asmarom Legesse provided us with a transcultural perspective with respect to the self-evidence of consciousness. On the basis of data from his research, Legesse proposed that the intellectuals of the Borana order, like those of all human orders, including our contemporary own, must necessarily function as the guardians, elaborators and disseminators of the instituting prescriptive categories on which their societies are founded. As the condition of the dynamic realization and stable reproduction of their specific social orders, therefore, Borana intellectuals, like all such intellectuals, including ourselves, remain normally imprisoned in the very structural models that they/we elaborate—that is, in the adaptive “native model” of reality that we ourselves construct as the condition of the production and reproduction of our culture-specific modes of being human, as well as of the specific social orders that is the condition of their enacted expression. As a result, he further argues, it is only from the ground of the lived experience of the liminally deviant category of each order, through the mediation of whose negated mode of “abnormal” difference the “normal” society is enabled to experience itself both

as “normal,” and as, a socially cohesive community (Legesse, 1973: 114-15), that the normative order of consciousness generated on the basis of their own ontological negation can come to be critically questioned and have its self-evidence called in question (Legesse, 1973: 269-71). In effect, while there can be, for the mainstream intellectuals as the grammarians of their/our respective orders, no “outside” to the “native model” on whose basis what makes the “normal” normal, the real *real*¹⁸ and the self-evident, self-evident, for their societies and their societies’ mode of *being human*, it is the liminal category from which the experience of its necessarily conflicted order of consciousness and inside/outside relation to the “native models” point of view, that, in seeking to emancipate itself from its systemically imposed role, can alone “remind us that we need not forever remain prisoners of our prescriptions” (Legesse, 1973: 271). Prisoners, that is, of the self-evidence of the order of consciousness that is everywhere the property of each culture’s sociogenic principle, and of the mode of nature-culture symbiosis to which each such principle gives rise.

Fanon’s exploration of the ground of the lived experience of the black can therefore be recognized here as one carried out from the liminal perspective of what it is like to be both *Man* (as an educated middle class and westernized subject) and its Nigger Other; to be both the embodiment of the western bourgeois criterion of what it is to be a good man and woman of its kind (and, as such the positively inscribed bearer of its self-evident normative consciousness), and its anti-criterion, and as such the negatively marked symbolic death of its “bad” genetic-instinctual self. It is from this conflicted perspective that he is therefore able to alert us to the possibility of our attaining to the full dimensions of our human autonomy, one inseparable from the possibility not merely of, in Nagel’s still acultural terms, an objective phenomenology but, more comprehensively, of, in Vico’s terms, a new science, specific to the human, or in the terms put forward by Fanon’s fellow Martinican poet thinker Aimé Césaire, in 1946, that of a new science of the Word. If we compare Fanon’s thesis (made on the basis of his analysis of both the educational material and everyday literature in whose terms both the French Caribbean middle class black and the French middle class themselves are educated and socialized)¹⁹ that it was and is *normal* for the first to be as anti-Negro as the second with the no less culturally normal reflex aversive reaction of horror experienced by the normal traditional Congolese subject of the sight of what was, to them, the albino-type deviant monstrosity of the white skin of the European, we are able to identify the Fanonian concept of sociogeny as that of a transcultural constant that can constitute a “common reality” separate from the particularistic *points of view* of both cultures. The natural scientific description of the human experience of *sound* as a “wave phenomenon” provides an extra-human viewpoint description which does not, in any way, negate the reality of the human’s *subjective*

experiencing of the phenomenon as *sound*, is also able to provide the possibility of an objective description of these two opposed yet parallel qualitative mental states or modes of subjective experience; our description, in the same way, does not call for their respective culture-specific subjective experiences of what it is like to be human, and therefore of what it is like to be self-evidently conscious, in the terms of each of their culture's adaptive order of consciousness—the phenomenon identified by Marx as that of ideology or “false consciousness”—to be reduced.

Unlike the “common reality” of a wave phenomenon, however, the sociogenic principle is not a natural scientific object of knowledge. In that if, in the case of humans, this transcultural constant is that of the sociogenic principle as a culturally programmed rather than genetically articulated *sense of self* with the “property” of the mind or human consciousness being located only in the dynamic processes of symbiotic interaction between the opioid reward and punishment system of the brain and the culture-specific governing code or sociogenic principle (as the semantic activating agent) specific to each of our hybrid nature-culture modes of being, and thereby, of experiencing ourselves *as human*, then the identification of the hybrid property of consciousness, which such a principle makes possible, would call for another form of scientific knowledge beyond the limits of the natural sciences—including neurobiology, whose natural-scientific approach to the phenomenon of consciousness is paradoxically based on our present culture's purely biocentric and adaptive conception of what it is to be human.

If, in the above context, it is this purely biocentric conception of the human, one that reduces him/her to the purely organic status of an animal, against which, Fanon, “grasping his narcissism in both hands,” posited his counter-manifesto of what it is to be human (“besides ontogeny there stands sociogeny”), then his call for a sociodiagnostic itself suggests the need for a new scientific order of knowledge, able to confront and deal with the hybridity of our modes of being human. Specifically, it must be able to deal with the fact that, as Nagel pointed out, the methodology called for, in the case of an objective phenomenology, would no longer be the natural-scientific methodology based on the setting aside of the way things subjectively appear to us. Instead, we need a methodology that would take both the way things appear regularly and consistently to us as normal subjects of our order, and are therefore *self-evidently* evident to our consciousness, and as well, as in the case of Fanon's French Caribbean anti-Negro Negro, our reflex qualitative mental states and/or *sensory qualia*, as the objects of our inquiry. It is these subjective experiences that alone would provide us with objective data of the processes of the culture-specific governing code or sociogenic principle in whose terms we have been socialized as subjects, and which is, thereby, determinant of all such states, as well as of the behaviors to which they lead.

Such a new science would therefore have to be (as already suggested by Fanon's exploration of the lived experience of the black) one able to harness the findings of the natural sciences (including the neurosciences) to its purposes, yet able to transcend them in the terms of a new synthesis able to make our uniquely hybrid nature/culture modes of being human, of human identity, subject to "scientific description in a new way" (Pagels, 1988: 330-39). It is such a new science that Fanon's fellow Martinican, the Negritude poet, essayist, and political activist, Aimé Césaire, coming from the same lived experience of being both *Man* and its liminal Other, had called for in 1946. In a conference paper, delivered that year entitled *Poetry and Knowledge*, Césaire, after pointing out that the natural sciences, for all their triumphs with respect to the kind of knowledge able to make the natural worlds predictable, had nevertheless remained "half-starved" because of their inability to make our human worlds intelligible, then proposed that, in the same way as the "new Cartesian algebra had permitted the construction of theoretical physics," so too "the word promises to be an algebraic equation that makes the world intelligible," one able to provide us with the basis of a new "theoretical and heedless science that poetry could already give an approximate notion of." A science, therefore, in which the "study of words" would come to condition "the study of nature" (Césaire, 1946/1990: xxix).

My own conclusion here is that it is only in the terms of such a new science, one in which the "study of words" (in effect, the study of the *rhetoricity* of our human identity)²⁰ will link the study of the sociogenic principle, as a transculturally applicable constant able to serve as the "common reality" of our varied cultural modes of being/experiencing ourselves as human, to that of the biochemical/neurophysiological correlates that its positive/negative meanings activates (the study of nature) that the realization of Fanon's call for a sociodiagnostic, Nagel's for an objective phenomenology, Chalmers' for the identification of the fundamental psychophysical laws specific to conscious experience, will all be made possible; we shall be able to, in Fanon's terms, "set man free." Given that within the viewpoint specific to our present culture's biocentric conception of the human, not only must the phenomenon of mind and conscious experience remain a puzzle, but the processes by means of which we objectively construct ourselves as, as Margaret Boden points out, "subjective creatures living through our own mental constructions of reality"²¹ must as necessarily continue to remain opaque to us. The result becomes that we are left unable to move beyond the limits both of our present adaptive order of objective knowledge, as well as of the no less adaptive psychoexistential complex of qualitative mental states (in which the *Dirty Nigger!* cum autophobic aversive response is only one, if the most extreme, of a series of interchangeable such responses to a series of also reified Others),²² to which our present culture's biologically absolute notion

of human identity, as expressed in the “normal” Self of *Man*, gives rise.²³ “I should remind myself,” Fanon wrote in the conclusion of his *Black Skin/White Masks*, “that the real *leap* consists in introducing invention into existence.” . . . I am a part of Being to the extent that I go beyond it” (BS: 229).

Notes

1. Editors Note: due to the volume’s size constraints, this chapter had to be heavily edited. In order to preserve the integrity of Sylvia Wynter’s argument, however, we have limited the cuts to the introductory sections, which dealt with the historical background of the chapter.

2. I first used this concept in an essay entitled, “After Man, Its Last Word: Towards The Sociogenic Principle.” This essay was published in a Spanish translation by Ignacio Corona-Gutierrez, as “Tras ‘El Hombre’, Su Última Palabra: Sobre El Posmodernismo, *Les Damnes Y El Principio Sociogenico*” in *Nuevo Texto Crítico*, Vol. IV., no. 7, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, Stanford, California, 43-83.

3. Fanon reveals here the role played by both school and family, as agents reinforcing each of the Other, in socializing the colonial Caribbean subject of African descent to be anti-Negro, by introducing him/her to despise all things African. The subjective experience of black autophobia as of anti-black racism is therefore shown by Fanon, to be objectively constructed. See specifically the two chapters cited in the note above.

4. In his book, *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), Wade Davis, in spite of the unfortunate implications of the first part of his title, nevertheless, de-stereotypes the process of *zombification*, both by showing its institutional role as a deterrent sanction system, as well as by revealing the properties of the toxin used by the members of the Bizango Secret Society to induce the “death-in-life” state of being a zombie.

5. What Fanon enables us to see here is that the threat of “negrification” also functions as a threat of non-being within the terms of our present cultural (and class) conception of human identity; within the terms, therefore, of its governing sociogenic principle. It is in this context that the desire for “lactification,” which he also explores, can be seen as a desire for being fully human within the terms of our present conception of being human. See for this BS.111, and 47.

6. The recent visceral reaction to, and furore over, the proposal in the U. S. by the Oakland School Board of California, that the rules governing the Afro-English Creole (which they unfortunately labeled as *Ebonics*) needed to be understood by the teachers of standard English whose largely inner city students spoke it as their everyday vernacular, should be understood in a parallel context. The suggestion, further, by the School Board that the African linguistic origin of many of the grammatical usages of Afro- or *Black English* be explained, met with the same negative response that is reflexly showed to all things African, not only by the white middle class, but also by several prominent members of the Black middle class intelligentsia. What might be defined as a pervasive Afrophobia can here be recognized as an attribute that is indispensable to the realization of “normal” identity in the terms of our present option of the human “Man,” as a phobia directed towards the signifier of non-being within the terms of its criterion of being fully human.

7. Fanon referred to these scholars as Pearce and Williamson. He gives the name of their Research Center as Peckham, but without further details [BS: 22].

8. It is within the terms of the conception of the human as a purely biological being that both peoples of African hereditary descent, (*Negroes*) as well as those of all non-whites and formerly colonized “*naive*” peoples, (including, centrally, the “*native*” peoples of the Americas classified as *Indians*), must be seen as a Lack of the generic or normal human status of the Indo-European peoples; that, in addition, peoples of African hereditary descent must be seen as the missing link between primates and the truly human.

9. This classification had a meaning specific to the Judeo-Christian cultural and cosmogonic identity field of the West. The report given by the Spanish Capuchin Antonio de Teruel, (as cited in Epigraph 33), enables us to recognize the cultural specificity of the European usage of the term. The Congolese, Antonio de Teruel recounts, told the Portuguese slave traders that they were not to call them *negros*, but blacks (*prietos*). *Negros* for them were *slaves*. And within the terms of the traditional Congolese culture, the name *negros* referred only to a specific social category who were considered to be legitimately enslavable. This was the category of those who had fallen out of the protection of their lineage, and who, rather than continuing to belong to the normative status category of the order (i.e. to the status of being free-born men and women who were as such full members of their lineages), were instead *lineageless men and women*. For the monotheistic Judeo-Christian Portuguese, however, *all* peoples of African hereditary descent, because classified as the descendants of the cursed figure of the Biblical Ham, were *negros*, that is, were all potentially enslavable, buyable, and sellable. See in this respect also Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the kingdom of the Kongo from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Trans. Helen Weaver, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

10. Paolo Valesio defines this strategy as the topos of iconicity. He demonstrates the functioning of this figure in his analysis of a fragment from Heraclitus in which a specific mode of life, related to the bow, is made synonymous with the process of life itself. This strategy should be linked to the formulation made by Whitehead and Russell with respect to the difference that exists between a class of classes (or “*machinery*”) and a mere member of the class (i.e., tractors, cranes, etc.). The topos of iconicity absolutizes a mode of life, a member of the class of classes, human life in general, thereby enabling, in Todorov’s terms, the conflation of species with genus, genus with species. See Paolo Valesio, *Nova Antiqua: Rhetorics as Contemporary Theory* (Bloomington Indian, 1980); and Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, trans. C. Porter (Ithaca, New York, 1982).

11. In his *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche made the illuminating point that human life came into existence as the unique form of life that it is only due to the “*tremendous labor*” that the species was to effect upon itself, through the mediation of the “*morality of mores*.” As he further noted, “*the labor performed by man upon himself during the greater part of the existence of the human race, his entire prehistoric labor finds in this its meaning, its great justification notwithstanding the severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy involved in it: with the aid of morality of the mores and the social straitjacket, man was actually made calculable.*” See Walter Kaufmann, ed. and translator, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 1968, 495).

12. See Roger Toumson and Simone Henry-Vallmore, *Aimé Césaire, Le Nègre Inconsolé* (Paris, Syros, 1993, where they report an interview with Césaire, 212).

13. Although Dawkins argued in his book *The Selfish Gene* that organisms are the “*survival machines of genes*,” he also proposes that the human and human consciousness, can be seen “*as the culmination of an evolutionary trend towards the emancipation of survival machines as executive decision takers from their ultimate*

masters, the genes.” He argues that this has been made possible by the “new soup of human culture in which *memes* as units of cultural transmission take over.” See the extract on “The Evolution of Consciousness” from *The Selfish Gene* which is republished in Connie Barlow ed. *From Gaia to Selfish Genes: Selected Writings in the Life Sciences* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 216-22). My suggestion here, is that, once in place, the sociogenic principle is no less “selfish.”

14. See Georges Balandier, *o cit.*, 217-19.

15. In his book *Towards The Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), George Mosse shows the inter-relationships between the new bourgeois aesthetics and modern racism, with the eighteenth century postulate of the Greek Ideal type coming to be represented from the Enlightenment as a biologically determined and “normal” ideal of beauty: and therefore with the Negroid and Jewish physiognomies coming to be stigmatized as its negation. 2-3, 12-35.

16. In his classic essay, *Totemism*, Claude Lévi-Strauss pointed out that the animal totems of traditional cultures, were not “good to eat” as earlier anthropologists had thought, but were rather “good to think” with. In that, in a case where each clan, for example, had as its totem say, an eagle, a bear, a seal, the *natural series* of species difference was then mapped onto the series of invented *socio cultural differences*. If we see this further as the way in which the latter as a humanly *invented* system of difference is absolutized by being mapped onto the differences of the natural series, then the belief system of *race*, can be seen as a form of totemism. Seeing that the constant of human hereditary variations (a natural series) is used to absolutize the differential social hierarchies and identities which are invented by our contemporary order. The White/Black opposition, for example, enables the status organizing principle of genetic difference represented as an evolutionarily determined mode of value-difference, to be mapped onto, and thereby, to legitimate, the invented social hierarchy of class.

17. See Fernand Halryn, *The Poetic Structure of The World: Copernicus and Kepler*, Trans. Donald M. Leslie (New York: Zone Books, 1990).

18. This very important point with respect to the ways in which different cultures make “the normal normal” and the “real real,” doing so in different terms, is made by Michael Taussig in his book *Shamanism, colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*.

19. Fanon makes the point clear when he shows how the mythic origin narrative central to French history in its bourgeois or class conceptualization—i.e. “our ancestors the Gauls,” (as opposed to that of the nobility who claimed aristocratic descent from the Franks), was solemnly repeated by black students in Martinique as part of the standard curriculum in which they too were taught. The black schoolboy in the Antilles,” he writes: “who in his lessons is forever talking about ‘*our ancestors, the Gauls,*’ identifies himself with the explorer, the bringer of civilization, the white man who carries truth to savages—an all—white truth. There is identification—that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white man’s attitude. He invests the hero, who is white, with all his own aggression . . . Little by little, one can observe in the young Antillean the formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white. When in school he has to read stories of savages told by white men, he always thinks of the Senegalese . . . Because the Antillean does not think of himself as a black man, he thinks of himself as an Antillean. The Negro lives in Africa. Subjectively, intellectually, the Antillean conducts himself like a white man. But he is a Negro. That he will learn once he goes to Europe; and when he hears Negroes mentioned he will recognize that the word includes himself as well as the Senegalese” (147-48). Then, in a footnote, referring to the “our ancestors, the Gauls” origin myth that had been transposed from France to

her black colonized subjects, he writes: "One always sees a smile when one reports this aspect of education in Martinique. The smile comes because the comicality of the thing is obvious, but no one pursues it to its later consequences. Yet these are the important aspects, because three or four such phrases are the basis on which the young Antillean works out his view of the world" (147).

20. This is the central point made by Ernesto Grassi in his book *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980). Here his concept of the verbal and culturally relative modes of human identity coincide with Fanon's hypothesis that "in the case of the human besides phylogeny and ontogeny there stands sociogeny." See especially Chapters, "Language as The Presupposition of Religion: A Problem of Rhetoric as Philosophy," 103-14.

21. See Margaret Boden, *Artificial Intelligence and Natural Man* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 473.

22. Aime Cesaire brilliantly captured the interrelated nature of this series when he wrote in his poem, *Notebook of a Return to a Native Land*: As there are hyena-men and panther-men, / so I shall be a Jew man / a Kaffir man / a Hindu-from-Calcutta man / a man-from-Harlem-who-hasn't-got-the-vote. / Famine man, curse man, torture man, you may seize / him at any moment, beat him, kill him—yes perfectly / well kill him—accounting to no one, having to offer an / excuse to no one / a Jew man / a pogrom man / a whelp / a beggar. See his *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal/Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*. In *Aime Cesaire: The Collected Poetry*. Ed. and trans. Clayton Eshelman and Annette Smith. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California P, 1983. 32-85.

23. Our "imprisonment" in our present biocentric conception of identity, and therefore, in its adaptive modes of knowing and feeling, leads logically to the kind of "normal" behaviors, whose collective consequences can range, on the negative side, from the small humiliations of everyday life, to vast deprivations of hunger and poverty as well as to the large-scale genocide that has now become characteristic of the twentieth century. In his book already cited (see Note 27), George Mosse makes this clear with respect to the Holocaust whose major target was the Jews of Europe, (together with other groups also classified in biological terms as "life unworthy of life"). It is apposite here to note that one of the central stigmas placed upon Jews by the Nazis was that of their being an "Afro-Asian mongrel breed." See also Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill, 1995), where he makes the central point that "Nazi genocide did not take place in a vacuum." Rather, it took place in the context of an ideology of genetically determined human inequality put forward by the biological sciences that had a reason in the nineteenth century in the wake of Darwin. This ideology was to be inseparable from the purely biological description of the human and the genetic/racial ideology to which it gave rise. Within the frame of this ideology, all population groups classified as genetically inferior (i.e., "as life unworthy of life"), whether the handicapped, the mentally ill, the aged, the homosexual, or the "racially inferior" (i.e., Gypsies and, most totally, the Jews), were slated for extermination.

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HISPANIC ISSUES
VOLUME 23

**NATIONAL IDENTITIES
AND SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGES
IN LATIN AMERICA**

MERCEDES F. DURÁN-COGAN
AND
ANTONIO GÓMEZ-MORIANA



EDITORS

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First published 2001 by Routledge

Published 2013 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY, 10017, USA

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The editors gratefully acknowledge assistance from the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Minnesota.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

National identities and sociopolitical changes in Latin America / edited by Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana.

p. cm. — (Hispanic issues; v. 23)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Latin America—Social conditions. 2. National characteristics, Latin American. 3. Latin America—Politics and government. I. Durán-Cogan, Mercedes F. II. Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. III. Hispanic issues; v. 23.

HN110.5.N38 2001

306'.098—dc21

00-065298

ISBN 13: 978-0-815-33061-5 (hbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-815-33908-3 (pbk)

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