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3 BEFORE *MAN*

Sylvia Wynter's Rewriting of the Modern Episteme

> This world divided into compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality, and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human reality. When we examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem.
>
> FRANTZ FANON, *THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH*

> Indeed I wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it. Because what troubles me with these analyses which prioritize ideology is that there is always presupposed a human subject on the lines of the model provided by classical philosophy, endowed with a consciousness which power then thought to seize on.
>
> MICHEL FOUCAULT, "BODY/POWER"

When describing how European (Spanish and Portuguese) colonial projects participate in the institution of racial difference as a human signifier, Sylvia Wynter adds a crucial dimension to Latin American and Caribbean framings of coloniality. Much like Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Anibal Qui-

jano, and Enrique Dussel—to name a few—she reads coloniality as the juridical-economic referent of racial difference, thus suggesting the latter as a political signifier. Wynter is interested in exposing the ethical implications of the European colonial project by locating the Iberian colonial venture as the edging of two distinct "descriptive statements of the human" and their corresponding ethics: the religious ethics of Scholastic thought; and, the civic ethics of early programmatic and philosophical accounts of the modern juridical-political region, namely, the register of the state and law. My task here is to read Sylvia Wynter's description of the conditions that accompanied the emergence of the "space of Otherness"—"the order of race" or racial difference. I read her thinking as an excavation of the modern onto-ethical field, one that corrects Michel Foucault's description of the post-Enlightenment onto-epistemological ascension of man, as an empirico-transcendental figure.

In reading Wynter's project against Foucault's argument that the modern episteme (here renamed post-Enlightenment thought) always already resolves difference as a moment of the (transcendental, pure, or teleological) Same, I track how Wynter recuperates what remains illegible in Foucault's critique of Man: "the idea of race." What she offers to the critique of modern thought, I argue, is an analysis of how in the Renaissance and post-Enlightenment epochs, two moves of naturalization—the secularization of rationality and the representation of the human through the workings of natural selection, respectively—would position Man in such a way as to disavow other, coexisting modes of being human. I therefore illuminate the ways in which racial difference performs its role as an ethico-political signifier. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section briefly summarizes Wynter's arguments, specifically her deployment of the colonial to rewrite the classical order as a political grid, in which rationality guides the writing of the human difference; and the Darwinian rearticulation of the rational/irrational pair (which was recast as the naturally "selected"/naturally "dysselected" by evolution) as representations of difference that inform colonial juridical-economic architectures. In the second section, I draw attention to her ontological argument regarding post-Renaissance and post-Enlightenment knowledge. I use this to guide a reading of Foucault's description of the modern episteme (in which Man rules as the transcendental-empirical king). Because it fissures Foucault's account of the modern episteme, Wynter's critique allows us to appreciate the ethico-political significance of Man's being as an empirical thing and how it would

become the signifier of European difference. The chapter closes with a comment on the ways in which Wynter's destabilization of the two central modern ethical themes, the transcendental and the human, demands a discussion of the notion of *humanity* itself.

Sylvia Wynter's analysis of modern thought, then, is precisely the delineation of that critical juncture engulfed by the concept of the racial, when read as a refiguring of the colonial.[1] This refiguring, anchored by "the idea of race," uncovers a shift of registers from the juridical to the symbolic, thus making possible a post-Enlightenment writing of Man that produces the "natural man" *as the effect of the productive tools of transcendental reason*. If this reading of her work can contribute to the formulation of critical projects that address the pressing political matters of the global present, I hope this discussion encourages analyses centered on the notion of humanity and the colonial project to engage Wynter's subtle but profound writing of the colonial at the center of the Kingdom of Man.

The Naturalization of Man

In "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Toward the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," Sylvia Wynter outlines the potential retrieval of the human (us, all of us, the "human species") from the bowels of the oversized figure of the human subject produced by modern philosophical and scientific projects, namely, Man. In doing so, she centers the colonial in the examination of the modalities of subjugation at work in the global present. What Wynter brings to the table is a version of the epistemological transformations that constituted modern thought—in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, respectively—which follows very closely Michel Foucault's chronology. She adds to this the critical question of how, as Anibal Quijano states, "the idea of race" does the work of the "naturalization of colonial relations between Europeans and non-Europeans."[2] Importantly, Wynter does not seek an answer to the question of how "the idea of race" has served as an ideological excuse for colonial domination. Rather, she proposes an account of the relationship between juridical, economic, and symbolic moments of power that is very faithful to the early tenets of historical materialism. Both the Renaissance and Enlightenment epistemological transformations, she argues, were "made possible only on the basis of the dynamics of a colonizer/colonized relation that the West was to discursively constitute and empirically institutionalize on the islands of the Caribbean and, later, on the mainlands of the Americas."[3]

For Wynter, as for Marx and Engels, the dominant ideas of a *civitas* reflect the conditions of economic production. Hence her path differs radically from the conventional liberal critique, which sees "the idea of race" as a mistaken, false scientific apprehension of the human body. Similarly, her thinking differs from the conventional historical-materialist critique, which sees "the idea of race" as an ascriptive sign without direct correspondence to economic production. What is her radical move here? She begins with the ontological question—that which ponders human existence and who/what we are—*alongside* "the idea of race." Specifically, she focuses on the ways in which the architectures of colonial juridical-economic power are encoded, and thus sustain, what it means to be human while also offering a *refiguring* of humanness that is produced *in relation to* the monumental history of race itself. "Race," she states, "was therefore to be, in effect, the nonsupernatural but no less extrahuman ground (in the reoccupied place of the traditional ancestors/gods, God, ground) of the answer that the secularizing West would now give to the Heideggerian question as to the who, and the what we are."[4]

How does Wynter articulate her version of the secular ontological argument? In the first description of Man (referred to as Manı), she links the epistemological transformation of the Renaissance to the reconfiguring of *civitas*—a reconfiguring that was underwritten by conquest and the architectures and procedures of colonial power it engendered. How did conquest perform this feat? Citing Jacques Le Goff, Wynter reminds us that the medieval, Spirit/Flesh pair established two distinctions, a nonhomogeneity between "the spiritual perfection of the heavens . . . as opposed to the sublunar realm of Earth."[5] With this, "the geography of the earth" is also "being divided up between . . . its temperate regions centered on Jerusalem . . . and those realms that, because outside this Grace, had to be uninhabitable."[6] This spatial and ideological narrative would be disproved by the Portuguese travels to the Americas, as those geographies "outside Grace" were, in fact, inhabited. The emergence of a *new* framework of political (juridical-economic) power set in place in the Americas and the Caribbean yielded an "epochal rupture." Wynter argues, then, that this rupture "was to lead to the gradual development of physical sciences . . . made possible only by the no less epochal reinvention of Western Europe's matrix Judeo-Christian genre of the human, in its first secularizing if still hybrid religio-secular terms as Man as the Rational self and political subject of the state, in the reoccupied place of the True Christian Self."[7] This is to say that travels of colonial con-

quest were entwined with the ideological shift away from medieval Christian man and the shift toward secularized rational man as the inhabitants of the Americas, those residing in what was formerly considered to be "outside Grace," were rendered irrational. From then on, the rational/irrational pair would then remap the "space of otherness" and, significantly, be represented by the bodies and territories subjected to colonial power.[8] As such this distinction—irrational/rational—is always already written *as* political, "civic-humanist," and the theory of sovereignty.[9]

In linking the emergence of a secular ontological account of Man to the "voyages of discovery" that instituted the colonial modality of power, Wynter fractures the glassy depiction of the classical thought Foucault has offered. She does so in two moves. On the one hand, she recalls the link between Hobbes's and Locke's accounts of the *civitas* as the Empire of Reason (even if still in a conception of nature as the domain of the divine, and a conception of the "natural man" as both effects and tools of secular universal reason). On the other hand, she argues that Man, posited as a *natural* thing, would also be elevated in such a way that all other modes of being human would be symbolically disavowed. This naturalization of Man, positioning one mode of human as *naturally* rational and good (a purely *natural*-biological thing), negates the ability to distinguish the human from other natural things. The production of the human, Man, and nature draws attention to Wynter's reconceptualization of the classical order. Specifically, her thinking recasts the formal table/ruler and the tools for classification and measurement Foucault describes as being introduced in the colonial juridical-economic context. That is, in Wynter's description of the mode of thought governed by the "table of identities and difference," she shows us how Necessity ("laws of nature") would serve Freedom ("the laws of society"). In this context, emancipated reason (Wynter calls it "degodded") is both subjected to the demands of European-colonial *societates* and to its economic needs and also put forward and calcified as the sovereign, final determinant—the final cause—of everything social. With this, she deploys the colonial to fissure Foucault's glassy classical order, reproducing at the level of the symbolic, the colonial juridical-economic grid, thereby inviting a return to the kind of critique of ideology Foucault dismisses.

The postmedieval secularization of Man is followed by a second descriptive statement of man (Man2), framed with the evolution paradigm and put forth in Charles Darwin's insights on natural selection and science. This ideological shift revised humanness, according to Wynter, to *differentially*

categorize "all the colonized darker-skinned natives of the world and the darker-skinned poorer European peoples themselves."[10] The "new master code," a purely scientific one, divided the world into the "selected" and "dysselected." Within this Darwinian context, the figure of Man is overrepresented as human according to a "principle of nonhomogenity," which is "embodied in the new line W. E. B. DuBois was to identify as the color line: that is, as a line drawn between the lighter and the darker peoples of the earth, and enforced at the level of social reality by the law-likely instituted relations of socioeconomic dominance/subordination between them."[11] The color line would replace the previous codes (medieval and classical) "in order to enable the selected/dysselected, and thus deserving/undeserving status organizing principle that it encoded to function for the nation-state as well as the imperial orders of the Western bourgeoisie."[12] She adds that the paradox of the Darwinian descriptive statement that "defines the human as a purely biological being on the model of a natural organism" derives from the fact that it must sustain "strategic mechanisms that can repress all knowledge of the fact that its biocentric descriptive statement is a descriptive statement."[13] That is, the biocentric descriptive statement, which casts some as naturally selected and most of the world as naturally dysselected, reflects a particular collective *self-representation* and *not* an eternal (extrahuman) truth determined by the immutable, objective, and necessary "laws" and "forms" of nature. For Wynter, the distinctions found in the global space—the Negro, the native, the colonial, or Third/Fourth World question—result not from our present mode of economic production but rather from the ongoing production and reproduction of "the bourgeois answer to the question of what is human and the present techno-industrial, capitalist mode of production [that] is an indispensable and irreplaceable, but only proximate function of it."[14]

What is important in this argument, then, are the ways in which the relationship between the economic and the symbolic, between material production and ideological production, are inverted, with the latter (symbolic/ideological production) rendered determinant. More crucially, and through an anti-Foucauldian move, Wynter couches her analysis of modern thought on the promise of an answer to the ontological question that does not represent a particular version of the human as the Human as such. For her, the shifts in episteme described above—medieval, classical, biocentric—"were not only shifts with respect to each episteme specific order of knowledge/truth, but were also shifts in what can now be identified as the 'politics of be-

ing'; that is, as a politics that is everywhere fought over what is to be the descriptive statement, the governing sociogenic principles, instituting of each genre of the human."[15] What her formulation of the ontological question also does is to unearth a struggle (rewriting Marx's class struggle) between *different* "descriptive statements of the human . . . about whose master code of symbolic life and death each human order organizes itself."[16]

While Wynter and Foucault agree on the selection of the markers of the epistemological transformations that constituted modern thought, what accounts for the fact that Wynter finds Man emerging much earlier than Foucault? Elsewhere I describe how Foucault's Man, the self-determined (interior/temporal) thing, would only emerge when transcendentality was manufactured to describe Europe's particularity, to distinguish the mode of being human found in Europe from those encountered in other regions of the globe.[17] For Wynter, however, Man, as the selected ontological signifier for Europeans and the Human in general, makes its appearance before Formal Transcendental (universal/pure) reason became the Living Transcendental (universal/teleological) subject, and also before Hegel's correction of Kant's soulless mapping of the modern onto-epistemological grounds. Now Wynter's critical move is to conceive of the classical order, and the rational grids (measurement and taxonomy) organizing it, as a transmutation (juridical-economic → symbolic) of colonial power. Such a move unsettles modern onto-epistemological assumptions precisely because she subsumes formalization, the distinguishing feature of classical order, to desire. When doing so, she troubles, deeply, Foucault's separation between the order of knowledge and the rules of power.

The A Priori Rule of Domination

> The Classical episteme can be defined in its most general arrangement in terms of the articulated system of mathesis, a taxinomia, and a genetic analysis. The sciences always carry within themselves the project . . . of an exhaustive ordering of the world; they are always directed, too, towards the discovery of simple elements and their progressive combination; and at their centre they form a table on which knowledge is displayed in a system contemporary with itself.
>
> **—Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things***

Wynter's attention to the links between the "voyages of discovery," the colonial formation, and the formal re-presentation of Man allows her to read the lines of Foucault's classical table as a political grid that refigures Euro-

pean colonial mapping of the global. Why does Foucault's description of the same transformations, and his "theory of domination" as understood in relation to modern thought, miss the connection?[18] Wynter uncovers that a "theory of domination" can engender the critical project (ideological or otherwise) as one that locates the conditions of possibility for modern representation (its onto-epistemological grounds) outside, exterior to, the self-determined mind and thus contingent upon the relationships of power that organize global-historical moments. Wynter calls into question Foucault's thesis on modern thought precisely because her critique of modern ontology is interested in the tracing of the effects of colonial power beyond its juridical-economic architectures. That is, in her privileging of *exteriority* at the ontological level, her insistence in highlighting the material conditions of possibility for onto-epistemological transformation enables a feat, specifically the unsettling of freedom, that Foucault has never quite successfully performed because of, I suggest, his own investment in Kantian interiority. Nevertheless, even a lack of interest in ideological critique does not fully explain a portrait of modern thought that does not even contemplate the question of whether or not colonial power may have played a role in setting up the epistemological arrangements that compose modern representation. In what follows, I think about Wynter and Foucault together in order to demonstrate that the latter's glassy depiction of classical order is related to how he formulated a view of power as a "theory of domination" without systematically considering colonial domination.

Thinking this through will require the same kind of misreading of Western self-narratives Spivak performs in her delineation of the figure of the "native informant"—with the only difference here being the fact that, in this case, the "native informant" is the Western intellectual himself, Foucault.[19] In Foucault's description of the classical order and the discourse on race, despite the brief reference to "European colonialism," I locate a double dismissal of the colonial context. First, his portrait of the classical order does not ask the question of whether or not the colonial context, which necessarily situates Europe as the subject of juridical-economic subjugation of other peoples and places, played any role in a writing of difference that precludes any external reference. Here is where Wynter's reading of the first "degodded" secularized version of Man, overrepresented as *the* Human in/and Nature, cracks open Foucault's classical order. She shows that, *beyond* providing the grounds for the abstract mode of comparison (measurement or classification that resolves difference in a glassy text as taxonomy or

mathesis), *universal reason*, precisely because it is the ground for the rational/irrational pair, refigures the medieval Spirit/Flesh divide and *sustains* the writing of European particularity.

"The projected 'space of otherness,'" she argues, "was now to be mapped on phenotypical and religio-cultural differences between human variations and/or population groups, while the new idea of order was now to be defined in terms of degrees of rational perfection/imperfection, as . . . that of the 'law of nature,' 'natural law': as a 'law' that allegedly functioned to order human societies in the same way as the newly discovered laws of nature served to regulate the processes of functioning of physical and organic levels of reality."[20]

Second, Foucault's reading of the "discourse on race," even if not explicitly and systematically, operates within the European space (though subjugated by the hegemonic "theory of sovereignty" and its "principle of right"). This further forecloses an investigation of the relationships of force that marks the colonial context. This is evident because Foucault introduces a critique of the dialectic (the Hegelian version) as a philosophical resolution of the discourse on race that empties its historical import because it takes it over and displaces it "into the old form of philosophical juridical discourse."[21] The dialectic finally, he continues, "ensures the historical constitution of a universal subject, a reconciled truth, and a right in which all particularities have their ordained place. The Hegelian dialectic . . . must be understood as philosophy and right's colonization and authoritarian colonization of a historico-political discourse that was both a statement of fact, a proclamation, and a practice of social warfare."[22] Had Foucault asked the question of whether there were other determinants, extra-European processes enabling the Hegelian resolution, he might have had to consider that *the articulation of the Transcendental performed in the Hegelian dialectic resolves the discourse on race only because it writes the universal subject as a particular world-historical figuring of reason, one that is exclusive to post-Enlightenment Europe*.[23] Consequently, he would not have been able to write the deployment of the discourse on race in "European colonization" as an after the (historical) event, the result of its comprehension by philosophy, which lead to the two "transcriptions of race" he identifies. Instead, he would have to trace the parallel unfolding of the discourse of race in the regional (European) context and the rationality/irrationality code Wynter identifies in the global (colonial) context.

This epistemological and theoretical pathway would have led him to

ask *why* the classical order could describe itself without any reference to either the colonial or the European context and, finally, whether or not the table/ruler of mathesis might have played any role in the writing of Man *as the* empirico-transcendental figure he finds emerging in the post-Enlightenment period. To engage this pathway, as Wynter's framework shows, Foucault would have had to conceive of Man as *one version* of the broader ethico-political figure at stake, namely, the Human. This would have meant a different tracing of "subjugated knowledges"; it would have meant taking up a critique of ideology that targets the symbolic itself and returning to a serious consideration of the juridical-economic dimensions of the political existence, but one which, as in Wynter's critique, poses the latter as a consequence and not as the ultimate determinant of the ideological production of subject.

To be sure, Wynter demonstrates that the Foucauldian framework can aid in a critique of the symbolic moment of power, of representation, without reducing it to an epiphenomenon. Yet, her unsettling of Man fissures Foucault's classical order when it unveils how the "first encounter" shook the basis of medieval thinking and in the process rescued Man from the entrails of the Fallen Flesh (the dregs of the Spirit/Flesh pairing) while also apprehending the world through a disavowal that casts alternative/non-European modes of being human (the newly dysselected inhabitants of the Americas) as the Other of the secularized rational mind. What Wynter uncovers is that the conditions of possibility—the context of emergence of the refiguring of the "discourse of race" Foucault locates in the nineteenth century—in fact resides in the division of the Human into the rational European and its irrational (American, African, Asian, Australian, etc.) Others.[24]

From opposite but parallel directions the critical projects of Wynter and Foucault meet; both recognize the productivity intrinsic to modern (post-Renaissance and post-Enlightenment) representation, and both presuppose and announce a different modality of representation, which will release the subject, the political thing, from the armatures of disciplinary power/knowledge and, to use Wynter's vocabulary, refigure the "biocentric" master code.[25] They part ways, however, in two moments. First, each locates the place of disassemblage at distinct levels: in Foucault's technology of self (and theory of domination), the task is to be performed at the level of the *singular* human being's self-refashioning; in Wynter's project, the critical task requires the refashioning at the *collective* level, one that necessitates an acknowledgment of human beings' ability to "auto-institute

ourselves as human through symbolic, representational processes that have, hitherto, included those mechanisms of occultation by means of which we have been able to make opaque to ourselves the fact that we so do."[26] Second, while Foucault hopes that, along with the theory of sovereignty, the grip of disciplinary power would also be dissolved—and the refashioning of the singular being would be possible—Wynter invests in and recasts scientific knowledge. Following Aimé Césaire, and as Katherine McKittrick also argues in this volume, Wynter enmeshes science, *scientia*, and logos in order to shatter the mechanisms of occultation. She thus writes that the "natural sciences . . . are, in spite of all their dazzling triumphs with respect to knowledge of the natural world, half-starved. They are half-starved because they remain incapable of giving us any knowledge of our uniquely human domain."[27] What would this new science do, then? Wynter continues:

> Only the elaboration of a new science, beyond the limits of the natural sciences . . . will offer us our last chance to avoid the large-scale dilemmas that we must now confront as a species. This would be a science in which the "study of the Word" . . . [a study] of the neurophysiological circuits/mechanisms of the brain that, when activated by the semantic system of each such principle/statement, lead to the specific order of consciousness or modes of mind in whose terms we then come to experience ourselves as this or that genre/mode of being human. Yet, with this process taking place hitherto outside our conscious awareness, and thereby leading us to be governed by the "imagined ends" or postulates of being, truth, freedom that we law-likely put and keep in place, without realizing that it is we ourselves, and not extrahuman entities, who prescribe them.[28]

Instead of remaining within the limits of modern representation, by setting up one answer (*universal poesis* or *universal nomos*) to the truth of the Human, Wynter, along with Césaire, places her bets on the *universal nomos*'s (in the guise of scientific reason) unveiling powers. In that, she remains faithful to the trust of classic historical materialism and thus the view that material conditions of existence, in this case the body (brain) itself, respond to the ideological representations governing our collective existence. I will not engage in an assessment of Wynter's particular choice—again, see McKittrick's essay in this volume—and elsewhere I have made it clear that I consider that neither the field of history (the domain of *universal poesis*) nor the field of science (the domain *of universal nomos*) provides helpful sites or

useful analytical tools for the production of critiques of modern representation that would aid in the disassembling of disciplinary and biopolitical mechanisms of subjection and raciality.[29] I am more interested in whether and how the fissures Wynter identifies might, for the time being, help the critique of the Human—overrepresented as Man—that is now ruling the global symbolic reservoir and humanity.

Of-the-World

> Knowing is a mode of being of Dasein as being-in-the-world, and has its ontic foundation in this constitution of being. But if, as we suggest, we thus find phenomenally that knowing is a kind of being-in-the-world, one might object that with such an interpretation of knowing the problem of knowledge is annihilated.
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> —**Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time***

Two ethico-political questions can be posed vis-à-vis Sylvia Wynter's account of the Human as always already an effect of coloniality, particularly for those invested in the project of displacing the Transcendental, in its Kantian or Hegelian rendering, as the privileged basis for ethical accounts. More successfully than Hegel's first formulation, perhaps, is Heidegger's version of phenomenology—the writing of the being of Man as the Human in the world—that resolves exteriority into interiority, space into time, by enveloping the whole domain of existence as the moment of Dasein, or the being whose particularity resides in the fact that it asks the question of being that is concerned with what and who we are.[30] This resolution is indicated in the always already there, in the world, of Dasein. To be sure, it is almost impossible not to read twentieth-century versions of phenomenology as a response to the Darwinian "descriptive statement of the human." Explicitly and implicitly, Heidegger, for instance, casts the field of science as the proper site for the production of the truth of Man when he recuperates existence—and all things external to existence—within the confines of anthropological and sociological investigations of human conditions. Nevertheless, as with other writers who posit and think through Man as the subject of *universal poesis* and a self-representing being, Heidegger only attributes to the human being a particular, protected kind of contingency, that is, the interior determination of temporality. He writes that the "articulated structural totality of the being of Dasein as care first becomes existentially intelligible in terms of temporality," which constitutes "the pri-

mordial meaning of being of Dasein,"[31] and thus puts forth a being whose meaning lies in the horizon of time.[32] In Wynter's reformulation of the ontological argument, her framing of the question of being—in particular the argument concerning the political nature of the modern universal answers, that is, the descriptive statements that overrepresent Man as *the* sole/full Human—emerges out of the possibility that any answer to the question of who and what we are, especially but not only scientific ones, may be unable to avoid recolonizing, via naturalization, all and any other possible modes of being Human.

This point raises the two aforementioned ethico-political questions. First, Heidegger's reversal of the Kantian statement on the possibility of knowledge, that is, the submission of the pure intuitions of time and space to metaphysics itself, promises an account of the Human that leaves open space for a difference that is not resolved in the glassy table/ruler social categories refigure. Significantly, the thinking of difference this formulation opens up was already being explored by other modern thinkers (in particular Herder, in what was also a rejection of the Kantian transcendental reason). It is precisely this thinking of difference that would be recuperated—even if resolved through a scientific arsenal—by twentieth-century anthropology and Lévi-Strauss's rejection of the scientific writing of the human, which celebrated human diversity. Nevertheless, even these celebrations of human diversity, as a testimony to the rule of *universal poesis, could not but engulf other modes of being human*, now *objects* of anthropological knowledge, into categories of human beings with their own foundational dichotomies.[33] That is, the tools of raciality, racial and cultural difference, have been, as Wynter intimates and I argue, an effect of the second secular descriptive statement, the Darwinian biocentric version of Man. However, that does not render them less effective and productive political/symbolic weapons: they are inscribed in the global political landscape, constituting the ontological referent to the juridical architectures, such as the human rights framework, humanitarian (military) occupation, and the International Criminal Tribunal, to name a few. Hence, the ethico-political question becomes whether or not critical projects toward global justice, and the images of justice they carry, should work toward dissembling the subjects of raciality to institute a Human universal, but one which, as Wynter hopes, will not be just a refiguring of one particular "descriptive statement of the human" as the global norm and thus a replication of the present role played by the notion of humanity, as overrepresented by Man, in the global present.

Second, if knowing—either as a precondition for representing or as the effect of representation—is so fundamental to the defining of the Human as a political subject (as Foucault, Wynter, and many other have argued), the ethico-political question becomes whether or not justice can be imagined from within the available modalities of knowledge, which includes Foucault's archaeological and genealogical tools along with the already known historical and scientific tools, with all the necessary erasures and engulfments they presuppose and entail. As we saw earlier, for Wynter, scientific knowledge, specifically the natural sciences, may play an important role by unveiling the nonhistorical or extrahuman (natural/biological) structurings of cultural or ideological mechanisms. Foucault, however, conceives of knowledge, the modern versions of it, as sites of exercise of domination, which produce the very subjects it subjugates.

As far as the documents orienting the "global contract" are concerned (specifically the texts that guide the framing and working of the current political juridical-economic figures such as nation-states, multinational corporations, international nongovernmental organizations, multilateral bodies, and so forth), the products of the "biocentric code" (the social categories that are aligned with racial, gender, and sexual difference) have been integrated into the political text, as proper political signifiers whose inclusion would/will fulfill modern democratic claims.[34] That is, these power/knowledge effects are here to stay insofar as they are encoded in juridical texts. The problem is that these very global juridical architectures also deploy a particular thread of humanity as a moral signifier that is also *the* ethical gauge for the members of the global polity. Curiously, the conception of humanity circulating—privileging dignity and diversity as descriptors of the Human, tags that are added to the already operating attributes of freedom and equality—remains the same one articulated in post-Enlightenment knowledge. That is, and as the issue of female genital cutting most dramatically shows, this thread of humanity cannot comprehend—in fact, it actually disallows—the contemplation of difference in the establishment of the proper principles guiding political decisions.[35] Certainly, the critique of deployments of such conception of humanity consistently recalls the social categories, the political context of their emergence and the ones they have produced, and demands the recognition of their effects in political decisions. Nevertheless, as Foucault has suggested, disciplinary power and biopower have not displaced and will not displace the principle of right; that is, the critique of humanity based on arguments that disciplinary power

is productive, and that the very deployment of humanity functions as a juridical-political device, precisely because it ignores the effects of the category. If knowledge will provide us with any way into advancing a critique of the political effects of humanity in the global present, it will take more than merely bringing scientific knowledge to speak truth to power, as Wynter hopes; and it will take more than individual self-fashioning and the disrobing of the clothing of disciplinary power, as Foucault suggests. Furthermore, it will most certainly not be accomplished through a recitation of the very philosophical texts that produced this figure to begin with. What will help us to open up the path? I think it should begin with asking different questions, methodological rather than ontological ones: instead of the question of who and what we are, we need to go deeper into the investigation of how we come up with answers to the questions. That is, our approach to humanness and social justice will take systematic investigations of knowing—along the lines that Wynter and Foucault have undertaken, but without the substitutes they provide—but extricate knowing from the constitution of Dasein, to indicate how it is possible to avoid continuously rewriting it in self-determination, thus hiding the very violence that delineates its place.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the notion of engulfment, as a political-symbolic strategy, and of how the concept of the racial functions as such, see Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.
2. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America," 534–535.
3. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 264.
4. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 264
5. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 278.
6. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 278–279.
7. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 281.
8. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 281.
9. In fact, others have pointed to how the rewriting of these bodies and territories—under the dominant discourse of sovereignty—would operate as a justification for colonial domination. Fitzpatrick shows how rationality is also deployed in writings of modern law and how it is contingent upon constructions of non-Europeans as savage. See Fitzpatrick, *The Mythology of Modern Law*.
10. Fitzpatrick, *The Mythology of Modern Law*, 310.
11. Fitzpatrick, *The Mythology of Modern Law*, 310.
12. Fitzpatrick, *The Mythology of Modern Law*, 322.
13. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 326.

14. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 317.
15. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 319.
16. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 317.
17. Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.
18. Foucault, *The Order of Things*.
19. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.
20. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 296–297.
21. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 58.
22. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 58.
23. For the full development of this argument, see Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.
24. That division would haunt the European space and culminate in the Nazi project of obliteration makes sense because of the ways in which—as Giorgio Agamben shows—those killed in Hitler's concentration camps had to first be dehumanized, disavowed, or, to use Agamben's vocabulary, banned, transformed into a life without law and morality (i.e., into bare life). See Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.
25. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 313.
26. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 328.
27. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 328.
28. Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being," 328–329.
29. Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.
30. Heidegger, *Being and Time*.
31. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 216–217.
32. The disavowal of spatiality (exteriority), which usually accompanies this kind of statement, is performed earlier in the book when Heidegger rejects the idea of insidedness as defining Dasein's mode of being in the world. He does so precisely because it necessarily institutes the possibility that exterior things may have any role in the determination of being. To prevent this effect—which has haunted modern representation since the Cartesian inaugural statement—he moves on to describe the "kind of spatiality which is constitutive to Dasein," which begins with the acknowledgment that the world itself is not "objectively present in space" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 94). "The spatiality of Dasein," he states, "is essentially not objective presence" but, rather, "in the sense of a familiar and heedful association with the beings encountered within the world" (95). It is therefore defined in terms of *already* being-in the world, *as* "de-distancing" and "directionality" (97). That is, it is the fundamental *distinguishing intentionality* of Dasein, which renders the world its playing ground; *it never exists as the other beings/things that are found there*.
33. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*.
34. Silva, "No-Bodies," 212–236.
35. Silva, "Mapping Territories of Legality," 203–222.