

Addendum

Unsettling the Bush Pump: Towards a Picture of Sylvia Wynter's Human

Zachary Thompson// Lisa Cartwright's Fall 2024 Science Studies Seminar

This paper invites deeper engagement with Sylvia Wynter in STS. My primary focus will be Sylvia Wynter's "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation- An Argument." This essay advances a concern that she engaged throughout her career from the 1980s through the early 2000s: theorization of and work toward a break from the overrepresented ethnoclass "Man." I put this essay in conversation with Marianne de Laet and Annemarie Mol's "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology" (2000), work that is helpfully contextualized by Wynter's work on the human insofar as it also performs a discursive breakage from some foundational STS texts by moving toward a decisive break from the overrepresented ethnoclass "Man" theorized by Wynter. This move is bolstered by the specific performativity developed by de Laet and Mol, an approach that unhinges itself from the orthodoxies of scholarly approaches in texts, including many in science studies, emerging from the intellectual paradigm that Wynter aimed to elucidate and unsettle. I will be arguing that when tested against Wynter's rigorous categories of "Man" and "Human", the performance fails to wholly unsettle the paradigm. The success of the actual Bush Pump is evidenced by the proliferation of its material effects. Despite this, and despite the success of de Laet and Mol's performance in shifting science studies discourse away from human-centered claims to agency, the essay does not stand up to Wynter's critique of "Man" and "Human." This failure, which is not altogether total or negative, is inevitable because de Laet and Mol did not initially set out to unsettle the coloniality of Being, and certainly not in terms resembling those used by Wynter. However, my additional claim will be this: as de Laet and Mol's text continues to perform within a field now urgently troubled by Wynter's text, the trails left behind the "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" may serve as vantage points from which to picture the furthest reaches of Wynter's thinking. The off-centeredness of this picturing is necessarily abstract and therefore removes itself from a clearly defined instrumentality, and in doing so attempts to "open onto a nonadaptive mode of human self cognition" (Wynter 331).

Such an attempt is not an exercise in comparison, but instead uses "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump", as given by de Laet and Mol, to nonfrontally touch upon the efforts on Wynter's part to gesture towards a mode of being human emancipated from the hegemony of "Man". Because neither of the texts I am considering is reducible to the other, and because I am assuming that "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" plays figure to the ground of "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom", both texts resist each other in ways that can be at least partially mapped without calcifying a set relation between them or else generalizing a relation in which they speak to each other on equal footing.

As readers within science studies will know, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" is a classic text that abruptly shifted its discursive field both through its performative stylistic maneuvering and in its object of focus: a water pumping device in the Zimbabwe bush. My description of this pump is necessarily mediated by de Laet and Mol's own effusive description of it as it elucidates their theoretical agenda. Their own account of the Bush Pump is based upon Marianne de Laet's field study which included conversations with the engineer-director of the manufacturing plant of the Pump, Erwin Von Elling, inventor of the B-type iteration of the Pump, Dr Peter Morgan, and UNICEF workers. The text also provides a photograph of a row of Bush Pumps in the manufacturing plant in Harare taken by de Laet as well as a table of bacteriological information and various diagrams of the Pump and its related equipment taken from Dr Morgan's manual (see figure 1).

The purpose of the Pump is to provide clean drinking water from underground to villages. The current 'B' type Pump designed by Dr Morgan, an iteration based upon an older one from

1933, is distinguished by its capacity, durability, and the depth of groundwater it is able to reach. Its above-ground elements consist of a water discharge unit, base, and lever. Notably, they bring to attention its “cheerfully blue” color (de Laet & Mol 228). I will return to its blueness later, when the Pump emerges more fully as a *medium*. Under the ground and out of sight are the hydraulics that draw water from wells up to 100 meters below the surface. In addition, the Pump requires concrete headworks to prevent contamination of the water source and “a water run-off channel at least six metres long that runs down, possibly to a vegetable garden” (de Laet & Mol 232). This description of how fluid may extend itself informs the title of the text; the above-ground and below-ground portions of the Pump, the Pump’s status as both machine and provider of health, the selection of the well site by a local *nganga*, the participatory boring of the water hole, the maintenance of the well at the hands of the villagers and its potential for failure all become part of the “mechanics of a fluid technology”.

After describing the above-ground components of the Bush Pump, de Laet and Mol ask in their exaggeratedly conversational tone “These words don’t really describe it properly, do they? Perhaps, then, a drawing will help” (de Laet & Mol 229). They then show a line drawing titled “Pump Head as Pictured in Instruction Manual”. In doing so, they engage in a rhetorical ploy analogous to the one used by Robert Boyle in the 17th century to confer legitimacy and persuasiveness to his air pump experiments through the means of what Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer term “virtual witnessing” (Shapin & Schaffer 61). In order to grasp the strength of de Laet and Mol’s performance, “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” must be considered as a humorous and critical response to science studies scholarship stemming from Boyle’s air pump as it is given by Shapin and Schaffer in their seminal study. The Bush Pump is a send-up of the air pump. Whereas the air pump was a cutting-edge invention central to heated debates between Boyle and Thomas Hobbes around issues of fact production and its bearing on civic life in 17th century England, the Bush Pump is a utilitarian water pump currently being used in the rural Zimbabwe bush.

Shapin and Schaffer’s study of the air pump debate was taken up by Bruno Latour in *We Have Never Been Modern* in order to develop the argument that Boyle’s air pump and Hobbes’ opposition to it was instrumental in instating a “Great Divide” between the natural world and the social world, between nonhumans on one side and humans on the other (Latour 31). Latour argues that this divide was and is central to the constitution of modernity. Latour shares with Sylvia Wynter a preoccupation with the constructed nature of such divides, and, like Wynter, doubts the ability of humanistic approaches to dismantle them. But for Wynter, the division between nature and the social world is only one aspect of a more fundamental mechanism whereby social divisions function to narrate and enforce a dominant genre of what it means to be human. Wynter describes three such genres that have been produced historically, the last of which, termed “Man”, continues to be produced as an overrepresentation today (see figure 2). Building upon the work of Jacob Pandian, Wynter presents these epochal genres of the human as being produced by and producing epistemes that are not totally discontinuous, but iteratively re-inscribed. So that, for example, the current biocentric definition of the human, Man, is maintained by racial categories which stigmatize and materially deprive Black people as an extension and rearticulation of the “Postulate of Significant Ill” which in medieval Latin-Christian Europe functioned to enforce a hierarchical order between the celibate clergy and laypeople and to demonize Non-Christian people. The successive implementation of these descriptions of the human has not been characterized by epistemological breaks, which Latour argues as being integral to the conceptualization of modern temporality (Latour 68). Rather, the reinscriptions described by Wynter are akin to the “grafts” made by new media forms upon existing infrastructure in that each reinscription conserves the power structures of its predecessor (Hu 7).

That “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” is able to be used as a promising device with which to engage the thinking of Sylvia Wynter seems to be a function apparently endorsed by de Laet and Mol. Much of de Laet and Mol’s text consists of demonstrating the fluidity of boundaries encompassing the Zimbabwe Bush Pump when it is considered at different scales and metrics of value. This fluid notion of boundary motivates the performative gesture that de Laet and Mol manifest in their selection of object. To the reader, the Zimbabwe Bush Pump ‘B’ type is inseparable from de Laet and Mol’s performative praise of it; while de Laet and Mol themselves perform in their writing of the text, the more primary performer is the Zimbabwe Bush Pump itself which is made to perform in “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” the text. Given this fluidity of boundaries as well as the congruence of “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” with its object, “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” as a discursive “fluid” extends its boundaries into contexts of reception of which I am part. These contexts of reception have been elaborated upon and contested extensively throughout the discourses of science studies, but it is Sylvia Wynter who has most incisively pointed to the constitutive roles that the humanities and social sciences have in the inscription and perpetuation of the currently hegemonic descriptive statement of what it means to be human, “Man”. To the extent that I use “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” as a picturing device trained upon Wynter’s effort to unsettle “Man” and its catastrophic claim to universality, I use it for ends that could be understood as propositional insofar as the ideal context of reception for my picturing does not yet exist. However, this is a proposition that is not my own, but one that can be traced throughout Wynter’s argument. “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” will do the tracing.

In selecting a water pumping device primarily used in Zimbabwe as the object for an article published in *Social Studies of Science*, de Laet and Mol seek to engage with a larger imperative in STS and other fields to shift ideas around agency. This act of selection is the key performative moment of “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” and signals both a departure from and implicit criticism of other STS texts dealing with agency. De Laet and Mol posit that the Bush Pump “may help the current move in science and technology studies, to transform what it means to be an *actor*. For, as has been argued by many, the ‘actor’ that sociology has inherited from philosophy, *Rational Man*- well-bounded, sane and centered human figure- is in urgent need of an update” (de Laet & Mol 226). In this way, “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” is not totally discontinuous with works written in an Actor Network Theory vein which also assert the agency of nonhuman objects such as technology and architecture in producing interactions. Yet even as many such works include nonhuman elements as actors set within networks, they tend to underestimate the agency of media operating *between* actors. Criticisms of Actor Network Theory tend to focus on the political implications of “heuristic flattening of the differences between people and machines” (Star 267) and claim that this type of flattening may also serve to downplay differences of power and access among humans¹. While “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” retains the analytical benefits of heuristic flattening, its critical edge consists of its shift from the typical Actor Network Theory approach, one that emphasizes the ways power comes to be produced as an effect of networks by turning its gaze to powerful actors and organizations (Law 2). By looking instead to a water pump in Zimbabwe, de Laet and Mol enable an understanding of machine agency and its media function. “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” does not provide a supposedly birds-eye view of a network, but uses the language of praise and wonder as a means of analyzing the boundaries of the pump. The closeness that de Laet and Mol establish with their object allows them to put forward their notion of fluidity as an update to the network, in that the network retains an assumption of the boundedness of its constitutive objects even while emphasizing the relations produced among them. What remains to be seen is whether or not this update indeed enacts an update to “Rational Man”.

Sylvia Wynter’s “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom” complicates the ambition of “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” because it further problematizes the “Rational Man” that de Laet and Mol present as the foil to their beloved pump and its attendant model of

dispersed authorship. So if their performance succeeds in updating the "Rational Man" very briefly sketched out at the beginning of their text, it is questionable as to whether it unsettles the paradigm of Wynter's "Man". Even if the field-wide efforts to understand agency in different ways acknowledged by de Laet and Mol were prompted by a similar malaise with the subject of liberal humanism that Wynter engages, "Rational Man" is not the same as Wynter's "Man". The force of Wynter's critique of the category of ethnoclass "Man" and its non-isomorphism with the more speculative category of "Human" necessitates a going back to the performative impetus of "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump", which can retroactively be seen to be in reaction against a category still lacking the theoretical understanding with which Wynter was to grasp it two years later. This necessity is compounded by the fact that the status of the reception of "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" is not static. That is, even if "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" managed to represent a moment of properly "Human" cognition unencumbered by the adaptive truth-for terms which Wynter demonstrates as having denied the human species the possibility of full self-definition, the legibility of this moment would not be a given. Wynter holds that while there have been major movements to secure the wellbeing of the "Human" over and above the hegemony of "Man" including liberation movements of the 1960s and instances of provocative trans-cultural thinking, these movements have been liable to reterritorialization and cooptation (Wynter 262). Furthermore, as concerns with moving toward a "Human" have been co-opted into the central overrepresentation enacted by "Man", those involved in the production of discourse have been historically complicit: "We are, as intellectuals, the agents of its formal elaboration" (Wynter 307).

"The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" as a performance succeeds in the terms of its self-stated goal of conceiving the Bush Pump as an actor. The well-boundedness that de Laet and Mol locate as a problem in the traditional vision of the actor is thoroughly dismantled through shifts in scale ranging from the mechanism of the Pump to the nation it purportedly builds, as well as shifts in value ranging from aesthetics, to health indicators, to ability to serve different types of communities. That the Bush Pump as an actor diverges from the rationality of "Rational Man" is less convincing, due to the fact that the Pump essentially remains an apparatus with instrumental aims, even if these aims can be considered non-normatively. However, de Laet and Mol's argument centers on the non-sentience of the Pump; in addition, the guiding principle of "love" throughout their essay indicates a non-rationality embedded within the performance itself. Finally, the Pump is indeed not a human, and de Laet and Mol do effect a perceptible shift in the notion of agency on this basis. It is on this last point that "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" produces two frictions with Wynter's categories. First, Wynter does not unsettle the hegemony of "Man" by calling for a shift to the nonhuman- she moves *towards* the human. Second, Wynter places a totally different set of qualifications on the idea of agency. I will examine these two interrelated frictions in turn.

"The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" essentially shifts the discourse it operates within to a new point of view. What is unclear is whether shifting from a human-centered view of interactions and networks to a view of fluidity on the basis of nonhuman agency breaks from the paradigm of "Man". Put differently, it is unclear whether a shift towards the nonhuman could also represent a movement towards "Human". While the shift performed by "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" is destabilizing and changes what is seen, "Man" as theorized by Wynter is tightly, if not totally, sealed. Any attempt to consider the discursive function of de Laet and Mol's performance as withdrawing from the collective production of the overrepresentation of the genre of "Man" is up against the paradoxes of this production that Wynter shines fluorescent light upon. Wynter demonstrates that deeply paradoxical dynamics have been at work when new genres delimiting the definition of the human have been invented. On the one hand, new modes of the definition of human have involved forms of human emancipation, even, according to Wynter, allowing humans a nonadaptive claim to truth with the rise of the natural sciences in the 18th century. But

paradoxically, the rise of the natural sciences also allowed a definition of a purely biological human being, “Man”, to become universalized, thereby giving rise to and justifying systemically produced poverty, immiseration, and internment on a massive scale. This paradox is compounded by the fact that the inscription and auto inscription of the definition “Man” “must ensure the functioning of strategic mechanisms that can repress all knowledge of the fact that its biocentric descriptive statement is a descriptive statement” (Wynter 326).

By discursively installing nonhuman agency, de Laet and Mol do not thereby fully bypass these mechanisms concealing the ongoing production of “Man”, but they do arguably begin to unsettle. “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” projects itself from a human viewpoint into a viewpoint that speculatively addresses the nonhuman- but this still happens within a field in which the human remains “Man”. De Laet and Mol’s effort to shift agency to a nonhuman “fluid” implicitly suggests a different definition of the human, even if within the text it overshoots the mark and actively drains agency from the human. This is difficult to reconcile with Wynter’s view of human agency, which is driven by a desire for full autonomy and conscious self-description of the human outside of “Man”. However, certain parallels emerge. Wynter argues that while descriptive statements of the human are collectively formed and inscribed through learning, they are made to appear ordained by extra-human authorities such as natural causality or the Darwinian paradigm of Evolution. De Laet and Mol show that the Zimbabwe Bush Pump is also collectively formed, and itself forms different levels of collectivity. That these collectivities may consist of units incompatible with the standard of the village observed by the government would perhaps speak to a mode of autonomy if not for the deferral of the agency of the community members to the Pump; although the failure of the Pump is described as “the failure of the community to materialize as a responsible and proprietary body”, it is around the Pump that the community must “affirm itself *as* a community” (de Laet & Mol 246). Here, the Bush Pump may seemingly become another kind of authority that establishes and naturalizes particular social relations.

However, such an interpretation is not altogether warranted, given that the function of “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” is discursive, and it is the particularities of its performative project that enable it to withdraw from realism in a way that Wynter’s text seems to demand. To assume that the nonadaptive terms into which Wynter seeks to realize the human necessitate normative value systems would be to mistake the unsettling of the current overrepresentation of “Man” for the search for a new overrepresentation or universal definition, one somehow better than “Man”. For Wynter, the question of realism is always in relation to the coloniality of truth established by the overrepresentation of “Man”: realism is established and learnt under the current definition of the human in ways which further this definition. Somewhat uncomfortably, the end of de Laet and Mol’s essay deals with this issue by calling into question the normative values which could be applied to their study. In the end, they advocate for a “neutralizing distance” (de Laet & Mol 253). In the science studies seminar in which I encountered “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump”, this distance raised problems having to do with the essay’s failure to account for potentially colonial dynamics traversing its material. Although these dynamics should not be overlooked, a further discussion of them lies beyond the scope of this paper.

I hold that the suspension of normative values enacted by de Laet and Mol remains provocative, and finds resonance with some of the openings left by Wynter in “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom”. The bulk of Wynter’s text lies in a thorough and critical rehistoricization of “Man” as it has evolved from its previous hybridly religio-secular form, which in turn was re-inscribed by the descriptive statement of the human of Latin Christian Europe. Drawing upon a wide range of sources, Wynter examines how these descriptive statements have shaped how the meaning of human has been defined as well as how the paradoxes concealing their collective human construction have made them so difficult to unsettle. But this critique is not grounded in a pure negativity- Wynter develops her method in

such a way that she is able to directly move towards a break from “Man” and move towards a differently conceived “Human”. Wynter draws upon Frantz Fanon's idea of sociogeny in order to do this. According to Wynter, Fanon “was to put forward the concept of modes of sociogeny as a new object of knowledge... as a space from which to define the human outside the terms of any one member of the class of such principles, statements, and codes” (Wynter 328). To the extent that “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” withdraws itself from normativity, de Laet and Mol also touch upon a space in which a redefinition of the human is possible.

De Laet and Mol's theorization of fluidity allows them to consider nonnormative effects of the Bush Pump including, for example, its ability to provide healthy drinking water despite the fact that this water may contain levels of *E. coli* deemed unsafe by supposedly universal standards depending on the familiarity of the users (de Laet & Mol 243). This suspension of normativity is different from the one enacted by Wynter, who seeks to dislodge “Man” as the sole measure of humanness. I do not claim to be able to definitively bridge the incommensurability of these intellectual projects, nor do I posit a non-relationality. Instead, as an artist working with abstraction, it occurs to me that the intersubjective gap between these projects can be variously pictured by considering “The Zimbabwe Bush Pump” (as both a text and as a pump in the world) as a medium.

The clearest function of the Pump is as a mediator of underground water, which is itself a form of “elemental media” (Peters). But the Pump also mediates the primary theoretical agenda of de Laet and Mol in their argument that Dr Peter Morgan's decentered role proposes a model of dispersed authorship. They claim that the Pump “is not the product of the eyes, the hands and the brain of a single man, but a result of collective action over time” (de Laet & Mol 249). This claim may be true, but in itself the dispersion of Dr Morgan's agency does not challenge “Man”, for as I have already noted, Wynter emphasizes that the processes that reinscript the current biocentric descriptive statement of the human are also collective. Armond Towns builds upon the insights of Wynter in order to suggest that Western media theory is predicated upon this biocentric descriptive statement and has continued its central overrepresentation of “Man” (Towns 8). Furthermore, he argues that “Darwin lived in a world in which the Negro was a medium toward extending his presumed monopolization of civilized humanness, and his overall bioevolutionary theory reflected such a view... Indeed, I argue Darwin's artificial selection is a media philosophy itself, well before a thing called media philosophy ever existed” (Towns 31). Wynter does not suggest total rupture from the biology made available by Darwin's theories, but she does suggest a break from the biocentrism of the Darwinian paradigm insofar as it requires a racial logic of domination in order to produce its genre of being human on a global scale. Wynter utilizes biological understandings of the human to move toward its elaboration outside of “Man”, pairing biology with Fanon's sociogeny as well as Aimé Césaire's proposed “science of the word” to articulate a hybrid definition of the human (Wynter & McKittrick 16). The hybrid being Wynter puts forward combines the biological component of the human with a consciousness that each genre of the human “can only be brought into existence through the chartering storytelling mediation of their respective versions of their *representations of origins*” (Wynter & McKittrick 58).

The possibility for this mediation to be enacted in nonadaptive, autonomous terms outside of the hegemony of “Man” is elaborated upon by Katherine McKittrick in her consideration of the music of Jimi Hendrix, specifically the album *Axis: Bold as Love*. McKittrick posits that the “bold love” embodied by Hendrix's music “draws attention to a different system of knowledge that cannot function through self-referencing biocentric modes of humanness” (McKittrick 160). McKittrick's proposal implies that the centering of the machine in de Laet and Mol's text need not be viewed as a total deferral of agency from the human to the machine, as the machine instead emerges as a mediator of human agency. Though it is questionable whether the love that de Laet and Mol express for the Zimbabwe Bush Pump is quite as bold as Jimi Hendrix's *Axis*,

McKittrick's analysis of Hendrix's music and the "technological relationality" (McKittrick 159) it invokes calls for a deeper look into the aesthetics of "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump". But first, I must further clarify the aesthetics of Wynter.

In McKittrick's 2007 dialogue with Wynter, Wynter looks to the Blombos Cave in South Africa in order to trace back the origins of Aimé Césaire's proposed "science of the word". In the excavation of this cave, archaeologists discovered a 77,000 year-old piece of red ochre engraved with a cross hatched geometric design traversed by a middle line and contained by lines on the top and bottom (see figure 3). Wynter argues that "Blombos Cave reveals the ritual-initiatory transformation of the biologically born individual subject *into* that of a now fictively chartered and encoded, thereby hybrid, *bios/mythoi* autopoietic form of symbolic life" (Wynter & McKittrick 68). I find it notable that, given Wynter's preoccupation with the "science of the word" and the way in which genres of the human are mediated through storytelling, her inquiry leads her to the earliest known example of *abstract visual production*. Furthermore, Wynter describes this abstract visual production and its reception as being "performatively enacted" (Wynter & McKittrick 73). To the extent that "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" is able to unsettle the overrepresentation of "Man" as the sole definition of humanness, it must be looked at within this context.

De Laet and Mol insist on the aesthetic dimension of the Zimbabwe Bush Pump, praising its "parsimony, its beautiful blue color, its ingenious hydraulics" (de Laet & Mol 253). In doing so, they appeal to our faculty of "primate color" (Haraway 582). The blueness of the Pump is brought up throughout the text². However, perhaps imagining an audience of staunch empiricists, they feel the need to defend their fixation on the Pump's beauty by deferring it to its use value. They write: "This message is not frivolous fantasy on our part. The pump is meant to convey messages of this kind. The pump's manufacturer in Harare, V&W Engineering, has found that the tools it makes are most likely to be used if they are brightly coloured" (de Laet & Mol 228). Luckily, there are other agents within "The Zimbabwe Pump" that disrupt the Pump's instrumentality. Against the wishes of those who have taught them better, there are children who sometimes throw stones down the well (de Laet & Mol 238). I wonder: Are these children representatives of the not yet arrived "Human"? Are they aligned with the children who would throw stones at Cezanne as he walked to his studio every day?

But perhaps "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" ventures even further from "Man" earlier, before the Pump is fully installed. In what may be their most speculative moment, de Laet and Mol state: "At this point, it needs to collaborate with another technology: a tubewell drilling device" (de Laet & Mol 233). In order to drill a hole in the ground, several villagers working together must operate a bright yellow drilling device called the Vonder Rig. Only after the hole has been drilled can the Pump be installed. Considering this "collaboration", "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump" can be understood as a potential partial response to Frantz Fanon's statement from *Black Skin, White Masks* that Wynter uses to close her essay "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being" : "the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence" (Fanon, quoted in Wynter 331). Might we see this play of machines as a dialogue between yellow and blue (see figure 4)?



Figure 1. Morgan, P. (2011) *The Zimbabwe Bush Pump (B Type)*. Installation Manual with notes on maintenance, Aquamor Pvt Ltd, Harare, Zimbabwe.
<https://www.rural-water-supply.net/en/resources/385>

GENRES/MODES OF BEING HUMAN IN SYLVIA WYNTER'S UNSETTLING THE COLONIALITY OF BEING/ POWER/TRUTH/FREEDOM: TOWARDS THE HUMAN, AFTER MAN, ITS OVERREPRESENTATION-AN ARGUMENT				
CHRISTIAN	INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION OF RENAISSANCE HUMANISTS / FIRST WAVE OF IMPERIAL EXPANSION	MAN ₁	RISE OF NATURAL SCIENCES / "OBJECTIVE FACT" / SECOND WAVE OF IMPERIAL EXPANSION	MAN ₂
MEDIEVAL-RENAISSANCE		RENAISSANCE-18 th CENTURY		18 th CENTURY - TODAY
CHRISTIAN		RATIONAL		NATURAL
RELIGIOUS		HYBRIDLY RELIGIO-SECULAR		SECULAR
GOD		NATURE AS AGENT OF GOD		NATURE
THEOCENTRIC		RATIOCENTRIC		BIOCENTRIC
HUMAN AS RELIGIOUS SUBJECT OF THE CHURCH		HUMAN AS POLITICAL SUBJECT OF THE STATE UNIFIED ON THE BASIS OF RELIGION		HUMAN AS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SUBJECT
SOUGHT REDEMPTION FROM ORIGINAL SIN BY ADHERING TO PROHIBITIONS OF THE CHURCH		DISPLAYED REASON BY ADHERING TO THE LAWS OF THE STATE		"CURABLE" ONLY IN ECONOMIC TERMS
LOCAL CHRISTIAN SCALE OF BEING		ENLIGHTENMENT'S NATURE		DARWINIAN PARADIGM OF EVOLUTION
UNTRUE CHRISTIAN OTHER VS TRUE CHRISTIAN SELF		(SUB) HUMAN OTHER		→ VS NORMAL HUMAN, MAN
OTHERS: HERETICS, INFIDELS, PAGANS, JEWS		PEOPLES OF MILITARILY EXPROPRI- ATED NEW WORLD TERRITORIES AND ENSLAVED PEOPLES OF BLACK AFRICA		THE COLOR LINE
CELIBATE CLERGY VS LAYMEN AND WOMEN		RATIONAL, POLITICAL MAN VS IRRATIONAL HUMAN OTHERS		"CAUCASOID" PHYSIOGAMY VS "NEGROID" PHYSIOGAMY
MOVING HEAVENS NON- HOMOGENOUS WITH THE STATIC "FALLEN" EARTH		RATIONAL HUMAN NONHOMOGENOUS WITH IRRATIONAL ANIMALS ON CHAIN OF BEING		NONHOMOGENEITY OF GENETIC SUBSTANCE BETWEEN THOSE SELECTED- BY-EVOLUTION AND THOSE DYSELECTED-BY-EVOLUTION
"POSTULATE OF SIGNIFICANT ILL":		POLITICALLY CONDEMNED:		ECONOMICALLY CONDEMNED:
SINNERS, NONCHRISTIANS		INTERNEED MAD, INTERNEED "INDIAN", ENSLAVED "NEGRO"		JOBLESS, HOMELESS, POOR, SYSTEMICALLY CRIMINALIZED, "UNDERDEVELOPED", BLACK DIASPORA PEOPLES

Figure 2. Drawing by Zachary Thompson (2024). It is perhaps instructive to look at the lines rather than the words.



Figure 3. Engraved piece of red ochre found in Blombos Cave

Photo credit: Chris Henshilwood

<https://www.donsmaps.com/blombos.html>

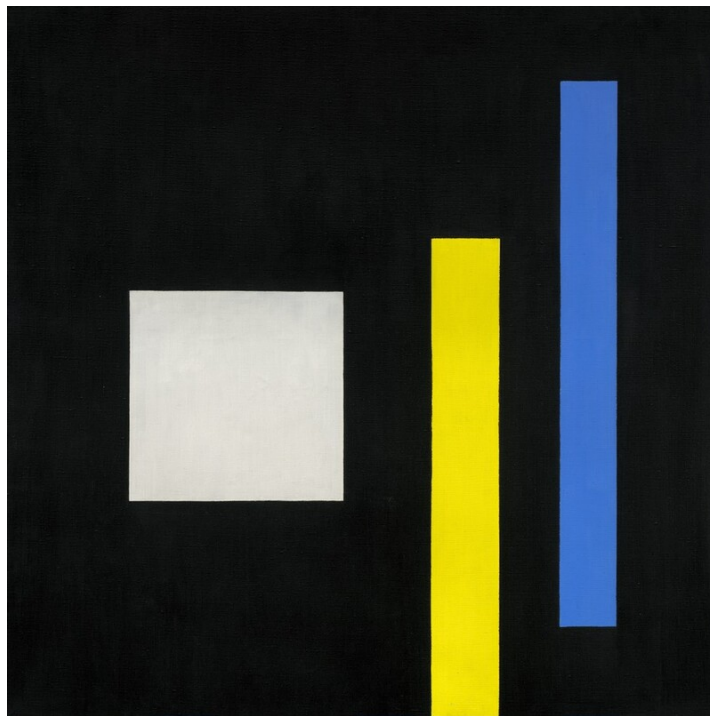


Figure 4. Burgoyne Diller, *First Theme*, 1964. Oil on canvas 42"x 42"

<https://www.nga.gov/artworks/86463-first-theme>

Notes

1. Susan Leigh Star reiterates a point from Bruno Latour: “heuristic flattening does not mean the same thing as empirical ignoring of differences in access or experience. Rather, it is a way of breaking down reified boundaries that prevent us from seeing the ways in which humans and machines are intermingled (Star 277).”

2. Following Katherine McKittrick, I am reminded of Jimi Hendrix’s lyrics from the song “Bold As Love: “Blue are the life-giving waters taken for granted/ They quietly understand.”

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