

Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); and Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History* (WA: University of Washington Press, 1994).

6. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (NY: Random House Inc., 1979), p.1-2.

The Meaning of the Visible Differences of the Body

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Introduction

In the discussion of race and sex, what remains persistently elusive is the function of the physical features of the body. Yet I must stubbornly speak on race and sex by emphasizing the physical specificities of the body. Racism and sexism hinge on the visible features of the body. As theorists including Carol Bigwood, Linda Martín Alcoff, Taunya Lovell Banks, Patricia Williams and Jayne Chong-Soon Lee write, the visible features of the body serve as the pivot for sexism and racism.¹

In focusing on the visible features of the body I am led to examine the role of perception in the dynamics of racism and sexism. During the moment of perception, one recognizes that the visible features of the body possess meaning about the invisible features of the person. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work explores precisely this interstice between seeing and meaning, functioning within the moment of perception. His philosophical system serves as the springboard for an exploration of the meaning of the body's visible features. I utilize Merleau-Ponty's work even though feminist theorists have criticized him for failing to perform an analysis of different body features. Feminist theorists have voiced that Merleau-Ponty's generalized body is a male body. Nevertheless, I believe that Merleau-Ponty's work can be fruitfully mined.²

À L'état Naissant

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's aim, particularly in his later works is to locate the birth of meaning, the moment of creation. Merleau-Ponty rightly argues that philosophy until his time cannot explain the creation of meaning. Within traditional philosophy, all meaning is either inherent within the invisible features of the world, or all that exists is simply the visible. Within such a framework, all meaning has existed already throughout time. Human beings are confined to simply discovering the meaning hidden beneath the surface. Against such a system, Merleau-Ponty searches for the original conceiving moments of meaning. Merleau-Ponty searches for the possibility of human beings creatively becoming.

Merleau-Ponty's work makes several controversial maneuvers. First, Merleau-Ponty conceptualizes the ontological as embodied. Such conceptualization requires that Merleau-Ponty relinquish the idea of universal knowledge, aligning him with many feminist conclusions. Merleau-Ponty argues that all knowledge is situated knowledge.³ Second, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the importance of the experiences that bodies undergo. He writes, "[i]t is to experience ... that the ultimate ontological power belongs."⁴ Merleau-Ponty takes experience seriously.⁵ Third, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological framework is a philosophy of becoming. Merleau-Ponty's system separates away from a philosophy of

being, towards a philosophy of becoming.⁶ Merleau-Ponty's search for creativity is a search for the possibility of movement, of change, of human development. Fourth, Merleau-Ponty's search for meaning is a search for the very forms that Plato inaugurated.⁷ Of course, Merleau-Ponty does not exactly search for the Platonic forms. For Merleau-Ponty rejects the idea that these forms are pre-existing, universal, and infinite. But to the extent that these forms reflect an attempt to conceptualize beyond the space of the actual to the space of the possible, Merleau-Ponty argues that human beings are involved in conceiving and creating these forms. Fifth and finally, Merleau-Ponty locates the moment of creation within the moment of perception. Merleau-Ponty argues against the traditional understanding of consciousness as a completely constituting, pure power of signification and representation. It is not through reason alone that man discovers meaning. For Merleau-Ponty creation occurs in the moment of the awakening of attention.⁸

The Flesh...Visibility

To understand how these five steps lead to the possibility of human beings creating meaning, let us more closely examine the process of perception, particularly the perception of something new. Only in his last unfinished work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, does Merleau-Ponty offer an analysis of perception radically different from the traditional understanding of perception. Understanding perception within a gestaltian system is itself only reluctantly gaining acceptance. Yet Merleau-Ponty moves away from this gestaltian understanding of perception upon which he had so strongly relied in his earlier works.⁹ First note that a vertical structure of the invisible and the visible replaces the horizontal structure of the gestalt, organized as the figure and the ground. The invisible plays a pivotal role in the presentation of the visible. In the words of Merleau-Ponty, the "thin pellicle of the quale, the surface of the visible, is doubled up over its whole extension with an invisible reserve." "[T]he visible is pregnant with the invisible."¹⁰ This is not to argue that the value of the visible is in the invisible. The most commonly understood and perhaps the simplest way of understanding the structure of the visible and the invisible is as the body and the mind, the object and the subject. As the subject, the invisible is oneself, "that which we forget because we are part of the ground."¹¹ As the subject, James Phillips associates the invisible with the unconscious.¹² The mind and all that are ineffable and ungraspable are usually associated with the invisible, whereas the body and all that are sensuous and concrete are traditionally relegated to the world of matter, the visible. But the invisible is much more than simply mind or subject. The invisible is, as Phillips indicates, the "nucleus of meaning-structures," the "nuclei of signification."¹³ Or, the invisible is, as Henri Maldiney writes, "the depth of the world ... the unexpected of the world."¹⁴

The medium of the relation between the visible and the invisible Merleau-Ponty names as the *flesh*. "The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance, to designate it, we should need the old term 'element,' ... in the sense of a general thing, a midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea."¹⁵ Visibility is the incredible moment when body and mind; subject and object, internal and external, signification and signified, overlap. The flesh accomplishes this feat Merleau-Ponty writes, by folding back on itself. As Shannon Sullivan elaborates, "the 'folding' of which gives birth to both subject and object and their interpenetration. Thus the notion of flesh speaks to us of the intertwining of an exchange ('chiasm') between the subject and the object which results in a fundamental ambiguity and possible reciprocity between

them."¹⁶ Chiasm refers to reversibility. Chiasm refers to the reversibility between me and the other, intersubjectivity. Chiasm refers to the reversibility between the subject and the world. Merleau-Ponty posits reversibility between all the prevalent and famous dichotomies.¹⁷ With the notion of the flesh and chiasm, Merleau-Ponty collapses traditional, sacred dualities. Alphonso Lingis beautifully states, "this intertwining, this chiasm effected across the substance of the flesh is the inaugural event of visibility."¹⁸

Within the shimmering between the visible and the invisible, through the chiasmic medium of the flesh, perception occurs. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor eloquently describe this shimmering in terms of a dialogue:

According to 'objective thought' ... perception either mirrors a fully determinate object (empiricism) or constitutes an object in light of a fully determinate idea (intellectualism). In contrast ... like a dialogue, perception leads the subject to draw together the sense diffused throughout the object while, simultaneously, the object solicits and unifies the intentions of the subject.¹⁹

Consonant with the numerous manifestations of the visible and the invisible, the dialogue occurs through a variety of mediums or relationships. The dialogue occurs between the intentionality of the subject and the transcendence of the object.²⁰ The dialogue occurs also within the function of time. Hence, Gail Weiss depicts the dialogue as, "[t]ranscendence as a sense of openness to future projects as an existence-for-itself and immanence as a sense of rootedness to the past stemming from one's objectification as a being-for-others."²¹ The dialogue occurs not simply within the vacillation of movement between the subject and the object, but within a vacillation inherent in the subject herself living within time and facing oneself and the world. Perception occurs, amazingly enough, through this heavy thickness of time and space, a thickness in which time and the objects of the world do not sit unobtrusively aside, but impinge, melt, and spill over into the intricacies of flesh. Perception occurs through a haze of ambiguity.

The Creation of Meaning

Because perception occurs through this ambiguity, the possibility of creativity exists within perception. Merleau-Ponty's ultimate goal of searching for meaning is a search for creativity. Evans and Lawlor show the possibility of creativity within the vacillation of perception. They write, the dialogue "provides a direction for the becoming of both subjects and objects and yet retains the degree of indeterminacy or ambiguity required for the creative contributions of subjects and for the surprises that the world harbors."²² It is because the flesh is so dense, so rich, so indeterminate that Merleau-Ponty ultimately locates creation here. Merleau-Ponty is not simply speaking of the creation of a few anomalies, Merleau-Ponty addresses the birth of the very forms that Plato made famous, the norms of society, and the significations for understanding. Merleau-Ponty searches for "the very appearance of the world and not the condition of its possibility; it is the birth of a norm and is not realized according to a norm."²³

Merleau-Ponty provides a very possible account of how creation might occur, and a generous reading of Merleau-Ponty would argue that he succeeds. Merleau-Ponty provides a likely account of the circumstances of how creativity might occur, but yet is there explicit guidance for creating in his account aside from the establishment of this novel framework of perception and embellishments in nomenclature?

Merleau-Ponty's work does not answer the questions: how does meaning arise, when one is solely a sum of one's experiences? How does one create when one is a product of the given world? Merleau-Ponty's analysis plants the seeds for the search for meaning, yet ultimately he does not succeed in showing exactly how the moment of creation happens. Merleau-Ponty simply writes that "if, through all these experiences, some unique function finds its expression, it is the momentum of existence."²⁴

The Symbols on the Body; the Meanings about the Person

It is precisely these questions that haunt the analysis of race and sex. Racism and sexism hinge on the visible features of the body, even though the visible features of the body are completely arbitrary.²⁵ The features of the body are the symbols for racism and sexism without which racist or sexist occurrences cannot be understood as racist or sexist.²⁶ Through the visible differences of the body, one conjectures about the invisible differences of the person.²⁷

Yet human bodies have visibly similar features as well as visibly different features. Racism and sexism utilize certain visibly different features. Is it that visibly same features are not so meaningful, while visibly different features indicating skin color and sex are so meaningful? Of course, one answer, much familiar after the works of Nietzsche and Foucault, is the institutionalization of the discrimination.²⁸

Institutionalization does not explain all of racism and sexism, particularly the lived, every day experience of racism and sexism. For as Merleau-Ponty recognizes even with the institutionalization of discrimination, every individual is responsible for every act of discrimination. As Merleau-Ponty writes, an institutionalized knowledge "is not an inert mass in the depths of our consciousness ... what is acquired is truly acquired only if it is taken up again in a fresh momentum of thought."²⁹ To understand the lived level of the discrimination one must understand the meaning that the visibly different body features have attained. Consequently one prominently recalls, beckons, and focuses on such body features. It is to such a phenomenon that Omi and Winant, Alcoff, Williams and others refer when speaking of the *naturalized* status of the visibly different body features.³⁰ The prominent visibility of body features indicating race and sex is a function of the signification these features have taken on.

The Asian American Woman's Body

Although I am frustrated with Merleau-Ponty for failing to provide a definitive answer, I believe his phenomenological framework is especially useful for addressing two particular endemic qualities of racism and sexism. The first, as indicated above his analysis helps reach the lived sense of living in a society with racist and sexist significations embedded in the invisible. And second, his work facilitates understanding the particular situation of women of color. For women of color continually disappear in the current predominant analyses of race and sex. As Elizabeth Spelman elucidated almost twenty years ago, it is the ampersand problem; the current analyses of sexism and racism leave the impression that there cannot be an experience of both sexism and racism simultaneously—for all people of color are men and all women are white. To illustrate the usefulness of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological system, I apply the framework of the visible and the invisible to a reading of Chandra Talpade Mohanty's article, "Defining Genealogies: Feminist Reflections of Being South Asian in North America."

On a TWA flight on my way back to the U.S. ... the professional white man sitting next to me asks: (a) which school do I go to? and (b) when do I plan to go home? ... I put on my most professional demeanor (somewhat hard in crumpled blue jeans and cotton t-shirt—this uniform only works for white male professors, who of course could command authority even in swimwear!) and inform him that I teach at a small liberal arts college in upstate New York and that I have lived in the U.S. for fifteen years... Being mistaken for a graduate student seems endemic to my existence in this country. Few Third World women are granted professional (i.e., adult) and/or permanent (one is always a student!) status in the U.S. ... He ventures a further question: what do you teach? On hearing "Women's Studies" he becomes quiet and we spend the next eight hours in polite silence. He has decided that I do not fit into any of his categories.³¹

To understand why Mohanty takes such offense in this seemingly innocuous interaction, is to understand the lived sense of racism and/or sexism precisely in these innocent, banal, and what the 'professional white male' probably considers a friendly interrogation. To understand this interaction, we must recognize that Mohanty's body spurs the particular questions from the "professional white male." It is unclear if either the female or the racial features motivate the questions. One can make arguments for either characteristic; for women of color it may be that the conglomeration of both features hurries the association. The extent of the difficulty in delineating precisely which "ism" beckons the connection is endemic to women of color.

Mohanty's body as a female and as a person with Asian features motivates the first question and the meaning, student; her body reads as still growing. Perhaps the assumed national origin of the body, the third world, an undeveloped or a developing nation, associates the individual with the not yet developed, the not yet professional status.

Perhaps her body features going to the United States only occurs if she is a student; her body features read as a temporary resident of the United States. This connection explains the "professional white male's" second question. The curiosity in regards to her return home illustrates a lack of connection with Asian female bodies and the United States. Moreover, that he the "professional white male" independently seizes the privileged position in posing such a question implies that his white male body has some closer association with the United States. Although generations of Asian Americans have inhabited the United States for over a century, including South Asians, the "professional white male" regards his own body as having a closer affinity to the United States.

Perhaps her body's class association inspires the "professional white male's" questions. Dark Asian female bodies—read "poor," and unable to afford the flight from the Netherlands unless it is a momentous life event en route from another country. Pointedly, Mohanty provides us with a depiction of the clothes she was wearing, assuring us that such a uniform does not command authority on her body. Mohanty insinuates that white male bodies mean middle class, hence white male bodies in jeans and t-shirt can still be recognized as simply in casual, comfortable clothes and not that such clothes are the only clothes "professional white male" bodies possess. Whereas dark Asian female bodies mean poverty; to defy the meaning of her body as poor and as not professional, the jeans and t-shirt do not suffice.

I do not present this reading to argue that the "professional white male" is racist or sexist, but rather to investigate the incredible informative content of the two bodies. To the "professional white male," Mohanty's body conveys information about her stage of educational and professional development, her country of residence, her class level, and finally her area of specialization—witness the silence upon being informed that she is a professor of Women's Studies. Her body apparently does not read as a feminist. The immediacy of so much meaning the "professional white male" instantly reads on the body of this Asian female elucidates the invisible significations with which he perceives. Mohanty's exasperation, with which I can readily empathize, is precisely with the presumption of the "professional white male" to know so much about her, to categorize her, to *essentialize* her. But that Mohanty sees so much meaning about this "professional white male" also clearly illustrates the embedded, endemic quality of seeing through the denseness of flesh.

Conclusion

Merleau-Ponty's work implies that every racist and sexist perception is a missed opportunity for creativity. If racism and sexism are a result of the signification of the visible features of the body, to break out of the framework of racism and sexism requires an act of creation, an act in which the subject perceiving must see new meaning in the body features. Yet, creativity occurs within and because of the shimmering of the visible and the invisible; and Merleau-Ponty does not show us how to actually create the invisible itself. But perhaps a systematic attempt to reach creativity belies the nature of creativity.

Endnotes

1. See the works of Linda Alcoff, "Merleau-Ponty and Feminist Theory on Experience," *Chiasm, Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000). Taunya Lovell Banks, "Two Life Stories: Reflections of One Black Woman Law Professor," *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, eds. Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995). Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, "Navigating the Topology of Race," *Critical Race Theory: the Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, eds. Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995). Carol Bigwood, "Renaturalizing the Body (with the Help of Merleau-Ponty)," *Hypatia*, v. 6, no. 3 (Fall 1991). Feminists have argued that binding female experience to the body is essentializing. Nevertheless, Bigwood aims "to affirm to some extent a loose and non-causal linkage between the female body and women's ways of being, between the body and gender [because] ... unless we recognize and investigate a link between gender and the body, the theoretical position of gender specificity is left, as it were, without a leg to stand on." (56).

2. On this ongoing debate, see the works of Judith Butler, "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description: A Feminist Critique of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception," *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy*, eds. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989: 85-100). Elizabeth Grosz, "Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray in the Flesh," *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley (Albany, SUNY Press: 1999: 145-166). Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984). Susan Kozel, "The Diabolical Strategy of Mimesis: Luce Irigaray's Reading of Maurice Merleau-Ponty," *Hypatia* v. 11, no. 3 (Summer 1996: 114-129). Silvia Stoller, "Reflections on Feminist Merleau-Ponty Skepticism," *Hypatia*, v. 15, no. 1 (Winter 2000: 175-182). Shannon Sullivan, "Domination and Dialogue in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*," *Hypatia*, v. 12, no.1 (Winter 1997: 1-19).

3. See Richard Wolin, "Merleau-Ponty and the Birth of Weberian Marxism," *Praxis International*, v. 5, no. 2 (July 1985: 117).
4. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968, 110).
5. See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, 94-95).
6. Renaud Barbarus, "Perception and Movement: The End of the Metaphysical Approach," *Chiasm, Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000: 80).
7. Gaile Weiss, "Body Image Intercourse: A Corporeal Dialogue between Merleau-Ponty and Schilder," *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999: 123).
8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1962, 28-29).
9. See James Phillips, "From the Unseen to the Invisible: Merleau-Ponty's Sorbonne Lectures as Preparation for His Later Thought," *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley (Albany, SUNY Press: 1999: 83).
10. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 152, 216.
11. Dorothea Olkowski, "The Continuum of Interiority and Exteriority in the Thought of Merleau-Ponty," *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999: 11).
12. Phillips, 80.
13. Phillips, 80.
14. Henri Maldiney, "Flesh and Verb in the Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty," *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000: 56). See also Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 152.
15. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 144.
16. Shannon Sullivan, "Domination and Dialogue in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*," *Hypatia*, v. 12, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 9. See also Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 139, 140, 146.
17. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 215.
18. Alphonso Lingis, "Translator's Preface," *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968: lvi).
19. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor, "Introduction: The Value of Flesh: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy and the Modernism/Postmodernism Debate," *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh* eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000: 3-4).
20. Barbarus 82.
21. Gail Weiss, *body images: embodiment as intercorporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1990, 10).
22. Evans and Lawlor 4.
23. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 61.
24. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 138. See also Hubert Dreyfus, "The Current Relevance of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment," *Filozofska Istrazivanga*, v. 15, no. 3 (1995).
25. See Geraldine Finn, "The Politics of Contingency: The Contingency of Politics—On the Political Implications of Merleau-Ponty's Ontology of the Flesh," *Merleau-Ponty: Hermeneutics and Postmodernism*, eds. Thomas W. Busch and Shaun Gallagher (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992: 176).
26. I can cite extensively in this regard. Consider Patricia Williams, who recounts her experiences publishing an article explicating her now quite famous case of being denied entrance to a Benetton store. Williams writes that the editors erased all references to the fact that she is a black woman, effectively erasing all means for understanding that she was denied entrance because of racism. Williams writes that "[w]hat was most interesting to me in this experience was how the blind application of principles of neutrality, through the device of omission, acted either to make me look crazy or to make the reader participate in old habits of cultural bias." (*The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991, 48.)
27. See Linda Alcoff, "Toward a Phenomenology of Racial Embodiment," *Journal of Radical Philosophy* 95 (May/June 1999): 23-24.

28. See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994, 67-71).
29. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 130.
30. Omi and Winant, 60.
31. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Defining Genealogies: Feminist Reflections on Being South Asian in North America," *Making More Waves: New Writing by Asian American Women*, eds. Elaine H. Kim, Lilia V. Villanueva, and Asian Women United of California (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997, 119).

The Role of the Body in Asian-Pacific-American Panethnic Identity

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Anyone who teaches college in California knows the importance of including groups other than blacks and whites in discussions of the social and political implications of race. In a larger project, I attempt to do this by considering certain parallels, as well as some important discontinuities, between Asian-Pacific-American panethnic identity and the panethnic identities of other minority groups in America, in particular, Latinos, Native Americans and African Americans.¹ I aim to draw attention to a social dynamic underlying the social identities of racial groups, more noticeable from a panethnic standpoint, that operates under the guise of a biological concept of race, and thereby reiterates the legitimacy of that notion. Here I can only present a brief sketch of how I propose to apply a panethnic model, as a general account of racial identity in America, to Asian-Pacific-Americans. Certain sociopolitical aspects of Asian-Pacific-American panethnicity seem to destabilize the biological concept. What is of special interest is the manner in which panethnic identity incorporates a biological notion of race despite these destabilizing factors. In what follows I focus on the situation of Asian-Pacific-Americans (APAs) to provide a brief sketch of my general account of how a destabilized biological concept of race can be reconstructed to provide a politicized *racial* (rather than cultural) ground for panethnic identity.

Panethnicity seems to be an internally and externally driven social formation, nurtured by a largely mass-media-based discourse on race, that posits a *racial* identity across diverse cultural groups in accordance with a time-honored three-race ideology—specifically, yellow, black and white. The unspoken assumption underlying the idea of panethnic identity is that within each biological racial group there are ethnic subdivisions. When necessary, as in the case of Latinos, this assumption is sometimes amended to accommodate "mixtures" of the three major racial groups. On this view of race, Asian-Pacific-Americans, like blacks and whites, can be identified by reference to certain group-specific physical characteristics that serve as biological criteria. What is rarely acknowledged by subscribers to this view is the extent to which racial identification based on physical characteristics, and hence, its use as a ground for social practices that grant privileges and deny rights, is *phenomenological*. Instead, we are led to believe that the science of anthropology has, in some *objective* manner, established that there are these three races.² In many parts of the world, especially Latin America, racial identification by a third party is based primarily on how a person "looks," but, in the United States, it matters also whether a person is *known* to be related to someone who "looks" black. Naomi Zack and other mixed-race black people