Race and class distinctions within black communities in the United States and United Kingdom: a reading in phenomenological structuralism

Paul C. Mocombe*, Carol Tomlinb and Cecile Wrightc

aDepartment of Philosophy and Sociology, West Virginia State University, West Virginia, USA; bContinuing Education, Oxford University, Oxford, UK; cDepartment of Sociology, Nottingham University, Nottingham, UK

This article examines the constitution of black consciousness within the United States and Great Britain via structuration theory and phenomenological structuralism. Against the postmodern and poststructural logic of intersectionality and Du Boisian double consciousness as articulated contemporarily in the discourses of postsegregation black scholars in the likes of Cornel West and Paul Gilroy to explain the constitution of black consciousness, we argue that the aforementioned are postindustrial bourgeois identity constructions or discourses. Concluding that where they exist, the majority of the divergences of black practical consciousnesses from the social class language game of the upper-class of white owners and high-level executives, in the two societies are, for the most part, class, and not racially or culturally, based.

Keywords: ideological domination; black British Caribbeans; African Americans; capitalism, underclass, phenomenological structuralism

Introduction

Since the 1960s, with the advent of postmodern and poststructural theories into the theoretical discourses of social science academics, a struggle regarding the origins and nature of identity and consciousness has dominated social science and philosophical theories. The issue centers on several factors raised by postmodern and poststructural thinkers in the likes of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan against the structuralism of the sciences, (1) they question the validity regarding the Cartesian rational individual, which Foucault and Derrida deny in favor of their attempt to dissolve the subject altogether; (2) they question the interdependency of the constitution of a stable structure and a distinct subject with agency, in denying the latter they undermine the former; (3) they question the status of science; (4) finally, they question the possibility of the objectivity of any language of description or analysis (Mocombe, Tomlin, and Wright 2014; Sarup 1993). Although these factors raised in the writings of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault are theoretically legitimate and have posed tremendous problems for the social sciences and their constitution as a science based on the notion of a stable structure constituted by stable rational subjects with agency. These problems have not adequately been addressed by neo-Marxist social theorists in the likes of Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, and Marshall
Sahlins working to resolve these issues by attempting to synthesize the phenomenological discourses of the former theorists with Marxist and structural Marxist philosophy. In this work, in building on the structurationist responses of Althusser, Bourdieu, Habermas, Giddens, etc., we offer an alternative reading in phenomenological ontology, which holds on to the rational individual, structure, and the notion of the indeterminacy of meaning or decentered subject of postmodernism and poststructuralism. To do so, we attempt to synthesize phenomenology, with structuralism in general, i.e., phenomenological structuralism, and structural Marxism in particular, via physics, and the Wittgensteinian notion of ‘language games’. In the end, the Mocombeian phenomenological structural (material) ontology we proffer seeks to resolve the structure/agency debate of the social sciences by highlighting the origins and nature of consciousness and identity through a synthesis of quantum mechanics, phenomenology, structural Marxism, and Wittgenstein’s notion of language games. We subsequently apply the theoretical framework to understanding the constitution of black practical consciousnesses in the United States and United Kingdom.

**Background of the problem**

The structurationist or praxis school in the social sciences is commonly associated with Jürgen Habermas (1987 [1981], 1984 [1981]), Pierre Bourdieu (1990 [1980], 1984), and Anthony Giddens (1984) in sociology and Marshall Sahlins (1976, 1995 [1981]) in anthropology (Crothers 2003; Ortner 1984). Elaborated in a series of theoretical works and empirical studies, structurationists or praxis theorists account for agency and consciousness in social structure or system, ‘by clamping action and structure together in a notion of “practice” or “practises”’ (Crothers 2003, 3). That is, structures are not only external to social actors, as in the classic structural functional view but also internal rules and resources produced and reproduced by actors ‘unconsciously’ (intuitively) in their practices. That is to say, in structurationist or praxis theory, as Marx one-hundred years before suggested, the structure is ‘not a substantially separable order of reality’, but ‘simply the “ideal” form in which the totality of “material” relations … are manifested to consciousness’ (Sayer 1987, 84). From this perspective, accordingly, structure or, sociological speaking, social structure, ‘may set [(ideological)] conditions to the historical process, but it is dissolved and reformulated in material practice [through mode of production and ideological apparatuses)], so that history becomes the realization, in the form of society, of the actual [(embodied rules)] resources people put into play’ (Sahlins 1995 [1981], 7): consciousness, as a result, refers to ‘practical consciousness’ or the dissolution and reformulation of a social structure’s terms (norms, values, prescriptions, and proscriptions) in material practice.

Although this neo-Marxist ‘clamping together’ of structure, praxis, and consciousness descriptively accounts for ‘the individual moment of phenomenology’ by explaining the unanimity, closure, and ‘intentionality’ of a form of human action or sociation, the capitalist social (material) relations of production and its class division, which constitutes the integrative actions of modern society, it fails, however, as pointed out in the epistemological postmodern/poststructural positions of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Bell Hooks, and Patricia Hill-Collins, to account for the origins and nature of fully visible alternative forms of practices (i.e., ‘the variability of the individual moments of phenomenology’) within the dominant order that are not class based but are the product of the deferment of meaning in ego-centered communicative discourse. Structurationists fail to see that society and its dominant institutionalized identity is not
solely ‘one-dimensional’ and differentiated by the dialectic of capitalist social relations of production but is constituted, through power relations, as transition, relation, and difference. This difference, akin to Jacques Derrida’s *différance*, is not biologically (racially) hardwired in the social actor. It is a result of self-reflective and nonimpulsive social actors, upon internalizing the arbitrary structural terms or signifiers of their society via their consciousness, bodies, language, and linguistic communication, conceiving of and exercising other forms of being-in-the-world from that of the dominant symbolic order and its structural differentiation or relational logic through the deferment of meaning in ego-centered communicative discourse (Habermas 1987 [1981], 1984 [1981]; Giddens 1984).

By ‘clamping’ action, structure, and consciousness together, i.e., part/whole totality, however, structurationists do not account for, nor demonstrate, the nature and relation of this nonbiologically and nonimpulsive determined difference (*différance*) to that of the dominant practices of the social structure as highlighted in the theorizing of postmodern and poststructural scholars. Instead, they reintroduce the problem in a new form: How do we know or *exercise* anything at odds with an embodied received view grounded in, and differentiated by, capitalist social relations of production? Paul C. Mocombe’s (2014) phenomenological structural ontology seeks to fix structurationism to account for this problematic by synthesizing the materialism of physics, with the agential initiatives highlighted in the phenomenological discourses of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, the neo-Marxist structuralism of structurationism, and Wittgenstein’s notion of language game.

To this end of fixing structurationism to account for the nature and origins of alternative practical consciousnesses outside the structural reproduction and differentiation of capitalist relations of production in modernity, Paul C. Mocombe’s (2014) phenomenological structuralism builds on the material relationship highlighted in physics between the identity and indeterminate behavior of subatomic particles highlighted in quantum mechanics and the determinate behavior of atomic particles in their aggregation as highlighted in general relativity to understand the material constitution of consciousness at the subatomic/neuronal level in, and as, the brain and its manifestation as human practical consciousness at the atomic level as revealed by language, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, communicative discourse, and the actions of the body. We subsequently apply Mocombe’s theoretical framework to understand the constitution of black consciousness in the United States and United Kingdom.

**Theory**

In quantum mechanics subatomic particles of energy constitute all the matter of the universe via the Higgs Boson Field, i.e., the god particle, which objectifies and materializes the matter that we are, see, hear, taste, feel, and touch. Subatomic particles constitute our material bodies and consciousness as neuronal energies, which constitute and operate the brain and the body. However, subatomic matter, which are strings at the subatomic particle level, operate differently from observable objectified energy and matter, in that their behavior are indeterminate and can exist in multiple places, dimensions, or parallel universes, simultaneously prior to being observed or even during observation as aggregated matter. In fact, the subatomic particles that constitute our material bodies and consciousness as neuronal energies are the same subatomic particles that constitute everything that we consider to be the world, universe, other species, etc. At
the subatomic particle level we are not subjects contemplating an object, i.e., the world, multiverse, etc., we are the world, an undifferentiating energy. Hence, the implication suggested by the Standard Model of physics is that the observable and nonobservable matter that constitutes our universe exists elsewhere in other unseen dimensions and parallel universes simultaneously with our own dispensation of space–time. Contrary to the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, we do not occupy a universe. We are part of a multiverse with a plethora of I(s) and other sentient beings existing in them indistinguishable from one another at the subatomic level as energy. They become distinguishable at the atomic level through subatomic particle aggregation, i.e., matter. Subatomic particles aggregate to form objectified matter, universes, worlds, species, and sentient beings with consciousness, etc. The plethora of I(s) and other sentient beings are constituted and connected via subatomic particles that are recycled throughout and as the multiverse to constitute and operate consciousness as subatomic neuronal energies of the body and the brain, which encounters objectified matter as objectified matter via the actions and senses of the brain, body, language, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse. In essence, consciousness is recycled subatomic energies of the multiverse objectified and embodied, similar to Hegel’s conceptualization of Geist. Whereas for Hegel, Geist is distinct from the material world and unfolds dialectically in it, via embodiment of certain individuals, toward an ever-increasing rationalization of the world toward freedom, for Mocombe the historical manifestation, Being-in-SpaceTime, of the objectification of subatomic particles of the universe as consciousnesses and bodies has no definitive end-goal and is indeterminate, but constrained in materialized space–time by our material bodies and power relations or the social class language games of those whose objectification or historicity precedes our own embodied individual consciousnesses and control the economic conditions of a material resource framework. Like the laws of physics, which attempts to regulate and determine subatomic particle activity as general law (Theory of general relativity) once they are aggregated, the social class language game of those who control the economic conditions of a material resource framework attempts to regulate and determine the indeterminacy of meaning unfolding in the consciousnesses of social actors via bodies, mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse. Unlike, postmodern and post-structural theorizing, which utilize the indeterminacy of meaning as highlighted by the unconscious in the psychoanalytic works of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to capture the indeterminacy of subatomic particle constitution. Mocombe’s phenomenological structuralism analogously builds on the material relationship in physics between the identity and indeterminate behavior of subatomic particles highlighted in quantum mechanics and the determinate behavior of atomic particles in their aggregation as highlighted in general relativity to understand the material constitution of consciousnesses at the subatomic/neuronal level in, and as, the brain and their manifestation as human practical consciousnesses, via the body, at the atomic level. He does not, unlike psychoanalysts like Lacan and Freud or phenomenologists like Edmund Husserl, claim to know how the embodiment of recycled subatomic neuronal energies come to constitute consciousnesses in the brain and their subsequent revelation as the practical consciousnesses of bodies. That is, the transcendental ego or I of a differentiated individual subject, which we do not have access to, could just as much be the past I of a sentient being from an alternative universe and not necessarily the product of repression and the rule of the father, i.e., social construction. Psychoanalysis and the indeterminacy of the processes of the unconscious and the universal mapping of consciousnesses, i.e., its form of
understanding, by Edmund Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology and contemporary neuroscientists, in other words, neither adequately captures the indeterminate behavior of embodied recycled subatomic particles as neuronal energies of the brain and the myriad of practical consciousnesses they may produce as revealed by diverse practices of bodies nor can they adequately account for the origins of the transcendental ego or I. Husserl, Freud, and contemporary neuroscientists attempt to highlight and capture the form of the understanding and sensibilities of the aggregated body and brain, which is unable to explain how aggregated subatomic particles give rise to the transcendental ego of consciousness, which produces the I that leads to praxis. Mocombe does not claim that his phenomenological structural ontology captures this process. The only thing of consciousness or the transcendental ego he is claiming to be ontogenetically universal is the stance of the transcendental ego, what Heidegger calls the analytic of Dasein, vis-à-vis the drives of the aggregated body, recycled past consciousnesses of subatomic particle energies, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, structural reproduction, and differentiation, once it becomes constituted by subatomic particles.

In other words, Mocombe holds on to the phenomenological logic of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre here to capture, in a behavioral sense, the how, via Heidegger’s three stances ready-to-hand, unready-to-hand, present-at-hand, of identity constitution amidst indeterminacy of consciousnesses, and actions produced by recycled subatomic neuronal energies. The aforementioned produce the structure of actions, practical consciousnesses, revealed by bodies as and in the material resource framework of the earth, which is already structured by those whose historicity precedes individual consciousnesses.

Put succinctly, what Mocombe is suggesting in his phenomenological structuralism, which seeks to highlight the phenomenology of being-in-the-structure-of-those-who-control-a-material-resource-framework and the origins of our practical consciousness, is that embodiment is the objectification of the transcendental ego, which is a part of an universal élan vital (Henri Bergson’s term) that has ontological status in dimensions existing at the subatomic particle level and gets embodied via, and as, the body and connectum of Being’s brains. Hence, the transcendental ego is the universal élan vital, which is the neuronal energies of past, present, and future Beings-of-the-multiverse, embodied, and encounters a material world via and as the body and brain in mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse. Once embodied in and as human individual consciousnesses in a particular universe, world, and historical social formation, the transcendental ego becomes an embodied hermeneutic structure that never encounters the world and the things of the world in themselves via the aggregated built in genetic ontology of the body and the neuronal energies of recycled subatomic particles. Instead embodied hermeneutic individual consciousness is constituted via the recycled subatomic neuronal particle energies which are aggregated as a transcendental ego and the body in their encounter and interpretation of past recycled neuronal memories and things enframed in and by the language, bodies, ideology, ideological apparatuses, practices, and communicative discourse of those who control the economic conditions of a material resource framework and its social relations of production. In consciousness, as phenomenology posits, it (individual subjective consciousness of embodied beings) can either choose to accept the structural knowledge, differentiation, and practices of the body, the recycled past consciousnesses of subatomic neuronal particles, those who control, via their bodies, mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, the economic conditions
of the material resource framework and recursively reorganize and reproduce them in their practices or reject them for an indeterminate amount of action-theoretic ways-of-being-in-the-world-with-others, which they may assume at the threat to their ontological security. It is Being’s stance, ready-to-hand, unready-to-hand, and present-at-hand vis-à-vis (1) the drives of the aggregated body, (2) residual actions/memories of embodied recycled past consciousnesses, (3) the phenomenological meditation/deferment that occurs on the latter actions via linguistic communication, and (4) ideologies of a social system along with its differentiating logic, which produces the variability of actions and practices in cultures, social structures, or social systems that enframe the material world.

As such, as in Heidegger’s phenomenology, phenomenology in phenomenological structuralism is not just transcendental, it is also hermeneutical. The act of interpretation or an embodied hermeneutic structure via the body, language, ideology, and communicative discourse is a universal precondition of being-in-the-world-with-other-human-beings. However, whereas Heidegger is interested in the question of the meaning of Being-as-such, i.e., the phenomenology of Being, phenomenological structuralism is concerned with the question of the meaning or constitutive nature of embodied Being-as-such’s-being-in-the-world-with-others who attempt to constrain practical consciousnesses via their bodies, language, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse derived from social relations of production. That is, as in Martin Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology, phenomenological structuralism is interested in the necessary societal relationship and practical consciousnesses that emerge out of the phenomenology of Being-in-the-world-within-structures-of-signification-of-others, who control the economic conditions of the material resource framework we find ourselves existing in, that presuppose our historicity, and Being’s perceptions, responses, and practices, i.e., relations, to these structures-of-signification in order to be in the world. Unlike Heidegger, however, the concern is not with the phenomenology of being-in-the-world. For Being never encounters the world and its transcendental ego as the-thing-in-itself. Instead being encounters the world via its body/brain, recycled past consciousnesses of subatomic particles, and structures of signification, which derive from class division and social relations of production reified in the bodies (as agential initiative), language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse in institutions or ideological apparatuses, i.e., the social class language game, of those who control the resources of a material resource framework.

Be that as it may, whereas phenomenological structuralism accepts the Husserlian phenomenological understanding that the facts of the world and their conditions of possibility are present in consciousness, i.e., the notion of intentionality, consciousness is always consciousness of something as we experience being-in-the-world-with-other-beings via our consciousness, i.e., transcendental ego, bodies, language, ideologies, and communicative discourse. The logic in phenomenological structuralism, however, is that as an embodied hermeneutic structured being we never experience the facts of the world and their conditions of possibility as the ‘the things in themselves’. We experience them not culturally and historically, which is a present-at-hand viewpoint, but structurally and relationally, via the bodies, language, ideology, and communicative discourse in institutions or ideological apparatuses, i.e., the social class language game, of those who control the economic conditions of the material resource framework we find ourselves thrown-in, via our bodies, language, and communicative discourse.

As such, phenomenological structuralism, synthesizes Merleau-Ponty’s and Heidegger’s phenomenology with Karl Marx’s materialism and Ludwig Wittgenstein’s language game to suggest that being-in-the-world with others, our practical consciousness, is a
product of our interpretation, acceptance, or rejection of the symbols of signification, social class language game, of those bodies in institutional/ideological power positions who control via their bodies, language, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse the economic conditions of a material resource framework as we encounter them and their symbols/signifiers in institutions or ideological apparatuses via our own transcendental ego, bodies, language, and communicative discourse. Hence, we never experience the things-in-themselves of the world culturally and historically in consciousness. We experience them structurally or relationally, and our stances, ready-to-hand, unready-to-hand, present-at-hand, vis-à-vis these things of consciousness determine our practical consciousness or behaviors. We initially know, experience, and utilize the things of the world in the preontological ready-to-hand mode, which is structural and relational. That is, our bodies encounter, know, experience, and utilize the things of the world in consciousness, intersubjectively, via their representation as objects of knowledge, truth, usage, and experience enframed and defined in the relational logic and practices or language game (Wittgenstein’s term) of the institutions or ideological apparatuses of the other beings-of-the-material resource framework whose historicity comes before our own and gets reified in and as the actions of their bodies, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse. This is the predefined phenomenal structural, i.e., ontological, world we and our bodies are thrown-in in coming to be-in-the-world. How an embodied-hermeneutically structured Being as such solipsistically view, experience, understand, and utilize the predefined objects of knowledge, truth, and experienced defined by others and their conditions of possibilities in consciousness in order to formulate their practical consciousness is albeit indeterminate. Heidegger is accurate, however, in suggesting that three stances or modes of encounter (Analytic of Dasein), ‘presence-at-hand’, ‘readiness-to-hand’, and ‘un-readiness-to-hand’, characterizes our views of the things of consciousness represented intersubjectively via bodies, language, ideology, and communicative discourse and subsequently determine our practical consciousness or social agency. In ‘ready-to-hand’, which is the preontological mode of human existence thrown in the world, we accept and use the things in consciousness with no conscious experience of them, i.e., without thinking about them or giving them any meaning or signification outside of their intended usage. Heidegger’s example is that of using a hammer in hammering. We use a hammer without thinking about it or giving it any other condition of possibility outside of its intended usage as defined by those whose historicity presupposes our own. In ‘present-at-hand’, which, according to Heidegger, is the stance of science, we objectify the things of consciousness and attempt to determine and reify their meanings, usage, and conditions of possibilities. Hence, the hammer is intended for hammering by those who created it as a thing solely meant as such. The ‘unready-to-hand’ outlook is assumed when something goes wrong in our usage of a thing of consciousness as defined and determined by those who adopt a ‘present-at-hand’ view. As in the case of the hammer, the unready-to-hand view is assumed when the hammer breaks and we have to objectify it, by then assuming a present-at-hand position and think about it in order to either reconstitute it as a hammer, or give it another condition of possibility. Any other condition of possibility that we give the hammer outside of its initial condition of possibility which presupposed our historicity becomes relational, defined in relation to any of its other conditions of possibilities it may have been given by others we exist in the world with. Hence, for Heidegger, the ontological status of being-in-the-world-with-others, via these three stances or modes of encountering the objects of consciousness hermeneutically reveal, through our action, view, experience, understanding, and usage of the predefined objects of knowledge,
truth, and experience. Whereas Heidegger in his phenomenological work goes on to deal with the existential themes of anxiety, alienation, death, despair, etc., in Mocombe’s phenomenological stance regarding societal constitution or Beings-as-such’s-being-in-the-world-with-others via our stances to the body, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, communicative discourse, and social relations of production the concern is not with the phenomenological preoccupation of individual solipsistic existence as defined in Jean-Paul Sartre’s work who claims to take off from Heidegger. Instead, the interest is in the universal ontological structure, i.e., social structure or societal constitution and practical consciousness, which arise out of Heidegger’s three stances vis-à-vis embodiment, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, communicative discourse, and social relations of production. That is, the concern is not with Sartre’s phenomenologization of the Cartesian res cogitans/transcendental ego, i.e., the present-at-hand transcendental ego, which he gives ontological status in the world as a solipsistic individual seeking to define themselves for themselves lest they be declared living in bad faith. That particular aspect of Dasein or Being is a product of a specific historical and relational mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatus, and communicative discourse, and only account for one of its analytics as highlighted by Heidegger. The transcendental ego, which is a part of a universal élan vital existing in another dimension at the subatomic particle level, does not originate out of the historical material world, but several variations of it becomes objectified via embodiment and the aforementioned stances in a universe, galaxy, and historical material world structured by other embodied Beings and their stances. Upon death, its historicity via subatomic neuronal particles gets reabsorbed into the élan vital to be recycled to produce future beings. As such, consciousness, i.e., practical consciousness, is a product of the stances of Dasein vis-à-vis its embodied recycled past consciousnesses, language and ideology, which can be deferred in ego-centered communicative discourse, and structural reproduction and differentiation. Be that as it may, as with Heidegger, who refutes Sartre’s existential rendering of his phenomenological ontology, we are interested in the objectified societal constitution and practical consciousnesses of the transcendental egos and their relations that emerge within a dominant constitution of Being that controls a material resource framework of the world via bodies, mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse vis-à-vis the stances of the transcendental ego.

Hence, the understanding here is that the transcendental ego of Being becomes embodied and objectified in a material resource framework enframed by bodies, the mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse of those who control a material resource framework. As embodied consciousness, the transcendental ego initially encounters itself and the world in the ready-to-hand preontological mode. This means as an aggregated recycled subatomic particle, Being is, initially, unconsciously, ready-to-hand, driven by the drives of its body and the agential initiatives of recycled past subatomic neuronal particles as limited by their embodiment. If its drives are uninhibited by the bodies, mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, i.e., social class language game, of those who control the material resource framework, Being may spend all of their existence in this stance. However, should they encounter resistance vis-à-vis their drives and the social class language game of those who control the material resource framework, Being moves to the unready-to-hand stance where they think about and question their own drives and/or those of the material resource framework. At which point, they may become
present-at-hand and may opt for either the practices associated with their internal drive, which they reify as culture, or that of the social class language game in power. If they choose the latter, being simply seeks the structural practices and differentiation of power at the expense of their internal drive. In the former case, choosing to reproduce their internal drives, Being attempts to recursively reproduce what was the unconscious drives of recycled past consciousnesses in the conscious present-at-hand stance at the threat to their ontological security in the material resource framework. At which point they may seek other Beings who share their drives or seek to change the ideology of power to accept what has become a decentered subject who has deferred the meaning of power. The latter position is the basis for postmodern and poststructural thought and alternative practices outside of structural reproduction and differentiation.

Phenomenological structuralism, therefore, seeks to highlight the ontological universal modes of embodied human existence with others, which relationally has emerged out of the phenomenological processes (Heidegger’s three stances) of the transcendental ego experiencing, interpreting, and using the representational facts of its embodiment vis-à-vis the world as defined by and in the language game of others who control objects of a material resource framework, and how these modes of human existence come to (re)shape practical consciousness and constitute social structure or societal constitution.

Generally speaking, consciousnesses then are the embodiment of recycled subatomic neuronal energies of the multiverse objectified in the space–time of multiverses. Once objectified and embodied, the neuronal energies encounter the space–time of physical worlds via a transcendental subject of consciousnesses and the sensibilities and form of the understanding of the body and brain in reified structures of signification, language, ideology, and ideological apparatuses, defined and determined by other beings that control the resources (economics) of the material world required for physical survival in space–time. The stances, ready-to-hand, unready-to-hand, and present-at-hand, of the transcendental ego vis-à-vis, (1) the sensibilities or drives of the body and brain, (2) embodied residual memories of past recycled subatomic particles, (3) the actions produced via the body in relation to the indeterminacy/deferment of meaning of signifiers as they appear to individuated consciousnesses in ego-centered communicative discourse, (4) and the differentiating effects of the structures of signification, social class language game, of those who control the economic materials of a world is the origins of practical consciousnesses. All four types of actions, the drives or sensibilities of the body, embodied recycled past consciousnesses, structural reproduction/differentiation, and deferential actions arising via the present-at-hand stance, exist in the material world with the physical, mental, emotional, ideological, etc., powers of those who control the material resource framework as the causative agent for individual behaviors. In other words, our stances in consciousness vis-à-vis the drives of the body, structural reproduction and differentiation, embodied past consciousnesses of recycled subatomic particles, and deferential actions determine the practical consciousness we want to recursively reorganize and reproduce in the material world. Those who control, through their bodies, language, mode of production, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, the material resource framework, however, determine what actions they will allow to manifest. It is within this phenomenological structural logic that we attempt to understand the constitution of black consciousnesses in the United States and United Kingdom.
Discussion

Since the 1960s, there have been four similar schools of thought on understanding the origins and nature of black practical consciousnesses in the United States and the United Kingdom: the adaptive-vitality and the pathological-pathogenic school in the United States and the anti-essentialist and anti–anti-essentialist schools in the United Kingdom. In the United States, the pathological-pathogenic position suggests that in its divergences from white American norms and values, black American practical consciousness is nothing more than a pathological form of, and reaction to, American consciousness rather than a dual (both African and American) hegemonic opposing ‘identity-in-differential’ (the term is Gayatri Spivak’s) to the American one (Elkins 1959; Frazier 1939, 1957; Genovese 1974; Murray 1984; Moynihan 1965; Myrdal 1944; Wilson 1978, 1987; Sowell 1975, 1981; Stampp 1967, 1971). Proponents of the adaptive-vitality school suggest that the divergences are not pathologies but African ‘institutional transformations’ preserved on the American landscape (Allen 2001; Asante 1988, 1990; Billingsley 1968, 1970, 1993; Blassingame 1972; Early 1993; Gilroy 1993; Gutman 1976; Herskovits 1958 [1941]; Holloway 1990a; Karenga 1993; Levine 1977; Lewis 1993; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Nobles 1987; Staples 1978; Stack 1974; West and Gates 1997; West 1993). Just as in the United Kingdom, the two main opposing schools of thought are the anti-essentialist and the anti–anti-essentialist. Anti-essentialists as in the case of the US pathological-pathogenic school argue against any ideas of a black innate cultural phenomenon that unites all black people and contends that diasporic identities and cultures cannot place African origin at the center of any attempt to understand the nature of black practical consciousnesses in the United Kingdom. The anti–anti-essentialist position, in keeping with the logic of the adaptive-vitality school, posits, on the contrary, the idea that African memory retentions exist in diasporic cultures to some degree. Contemporarily, all four positions have been criticized for either their structural determinism as in the case of the pathological-pathogenic and anti-essentialist approaches or racial/cultural determinism as in the case of the adaptive-vitality and anti–anti-essentialist positions (Karenga 1993).

In directly or indirectly refuting these four positions for their structural and racial/cultural determinism, contemporary post-sixties and postsegregation era black scholars in the United Kingdom and United States attempt to understand black consciousnesses and communities by using poststructural and postmodern theories to either reinterpret W. E. B. Du Bois’s (1903) double-consciousness construct as an epistemological mode of critical inquiry that characterizes the nature or essence of black consciousness, for example, Cornel West (1993) and Paul Gilroy (1993), or offer an intersectional approach to the constitution of black consciousnesses and communities, which emphasizes the diverse and different levels of alienation, marginalization, and domination, class, race, gender, global location, age, and sexual identity, by which black consciousnesses and communities get constituted, Bell Hooks (1993) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990). In spite of their efforts, these two dominant contemporary responses to the pathological-pathogenic, adaptive-vitality, anti-essentialist, and anti–anti-essentialist positions inadequately resolve the structural and racial determinism of the aforementioned approaches by neglecting the fact that their theoretical frameworks derive from the class division and social relations of production of global capitalism or the contemporary capitalist world-system.
Like Derrida and Foucault, who neglect the fact that the indeterminacy of meaning and the decentered subject operate relationally within structures of domination, since the seventeenth century within the modern form of the state and class division, which derives from capitalist relations of production, West, Gilroy, Hooks, and Collins overlook the fact that their theories and the different levels of domination they point to as constituting black communities and consciousnesses derive from the contemporary organization of the modern state and class division in postindustrial capitalist societies. That is, the social phenomenon of Du Boisian double consciousness (adopted by West and Gilroy) and the indeterminacy of meaning and the decentered subject articulated by Derrida and Foucault and the intersectionality language of Hooks and Collins occur in relation to the state and class division of postindustrial capitalist societies. They both have their basis in the relations of production and exploitation and in the organization of the state following the failed diverse student revolutions of the 1960s. The latter gave rise to local formations and heterogeneity as the theoretical theme for the new philosophers and social scientists of the late twentieth century who sought equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution for the diverse groups of the student movements within the class division and global social relations of capitalist production and organization. That is, to say, the double-consciousness and intersectionality discourses of Du Bois, West, Gilroy, Hooks, and Collins have their basis in globalization and the postindustrial relations of production and exploitation as organized under the hegemony of the American nation-state following the Civil Rights and radical white student movements of the 1960s, which diversified and fragmentized subjectivities and social movements for the philosophy of the person and individual human rights and freedoms. Gilroy and West articulate their intellectual arguments within this framework. As such, like Du Bois, they juxtapose the bodies, language, and material conditions of an emerging black underclass, which moved to Northern urban ghettos from the agricultural South during the process of deindustrialization and suburbanization that saw industrial work transferred overseas, vis-à-vis the material conditions of a black bourgeois professional class working in professional high-end service occupations and the entertainment industry clamoring for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution for the former via education and redistribution of wealth by the state. Similarly, both Hooks and Collins, articulate their theories within a postindustrial capitalism that fosters identity politics for capital accumulation. Hence, Du Bois, West, Gilroy, Hooks, and Collins do not see that their identities and theories derive from the state and class division within the processes of industrialism, globalization, and postindustrial capitalist relations of production. Their positions represent ‘unready-to-hand’ and present-at-hand stances vis-à-vis the marginalization of blacks within capitalist relations of production. The latter stance because they attempt to reify double consciousness and intersectionality as the nature of black consciousness as such, and the former because it is a stance they acquire because of marginalization due to their race, gender, etc.

Double consciousness, intersectionality, postmodern, and poststructural rhetoric are the academic and political discourses of globalization and postindustrial capitalist relations of production of the contemporary age (Bell 1976, 1985; Kellner 2002; Sklair 1995, 2001; Sarup 1993). As a result of the emergence of a postindustrial capitalism intent on allowing divergent meanings and individual experiences to emerge around their class positions for capital accumulation in a service economy focused on entertainment and financial service, nonclass subjectivities and individual experiences, homosexuality, black feminism, etc., which were, and to some extent continue to be, discriminated against by both the black underclass and bourgeoisie of earlier capitalist relations of
production are fostered and allowed to emerge within the dialectic of the global (postindustrial) capitalist social class structure or relations of production. These nonclass subjectivities, homosexuality, black feminism, Pan-Africanism, etc., are the product of the deferment of meaning in ego-centered communicative discourse. Contemporarily, they are seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within the dialectic of a postindustrial capitalist social structure that stratifies and commodifies these nonclass identities, meanings, and subjective/individual experiences around their class positions or social relations to production for capital accumulation in the service economies of core, postindustrial nations, such as the United States and United Kingdom. This sentence is far too long…)

What has emerged, as a result, is the theory of double consciousness and intersectionality among bourgeois academics highlighting the discourse by which these variant subjective positions have been alienated, marginalized, and prevented from achieving equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within the global (postindustrial) capitalist social structure of class inequality and differentiation of the United States and United Kingdom. Their theories are universalized and extrapolated globally under the ideological umbrella of the fight for social justice, truth, and love. Yet, by no means should double consciousness and intersectionality be viewed, against the discourse of the pathological-pathogenic, adaptive-vitality, anti-essentialist, and anti–anti-essentialist positions, as the universal mechanism by which black consciousnesses and communities were constituted. Their rhetoric, like black consciousnesses and black communities in the United States and United Kingdom, are the by-product of the global (industrial and postindustrial) capitalist social structure of class inequality and differentiation. This enframing ontology attempts to structure the practices of subjective experiences within class differentiation and thereby control the practices of diversity and meaning constitution, which contemporarily juxtaposes the bodies, language, ideology, and material conditions of a transnational, multiracial, multicultural, multisexual, etc., upper-class of owners and high-level executives against the bodies, language, ideology, and material conditions of a transnational, multiracial, multicultural, multisexual underclass in poverty the world-over, seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with the former. From this phenomenological structural understanding of consciousness, constitution as the product of the indeterminacy of meaning unfolding within structures of signification structured and determined by the dialectic of class division and the social relations of production of those who control, through mode of production and their social class language games, i.e., language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, a material resource framework, we conclude that the majority of individual black Americans and black communities were not initially constituted by their intersectionality or doubleness, which are the contemporary bourgeois perspectives of members of a black bourgeois class operating in a postindustrial capitalist social structure of inequality interested in the commodification of subjective experiences for capital accumulation. Instead, the indeterminacy of black American and British practical life, community, and consciousness as constituted in the brain and revealed as black practical consciousnesses via their bodies and languages were initially (forcefully) constituted within and by the structure and processes of the dialectic of a Protestant global mercantile, agricultural, and industrial capitalist social structure of racial-class inequality and differentiation, which dates back to the seventeenth century.

Black American and British life and communities were initially constituted and differentiated along racial-class lines, as a racial-caste-in-class, differentiated by the mode
of production or organization of labor between a black bourgeoisie and a black underclass. Both communities became dual and pathological in relation to the power elites of these two particular interpretive communities, the social class language games of the upper-class of white and black owners and high-level corporate executives, i.e., the bourgeoisie, of the two societies as their bodies, language, and material conditions stood in relation to the bodies, language, and material conditions of the poor black underclasses. Sentence is too long and needs editing and revision.] As such, the majority of the divergences of black life where they existed during the mercantile, agricultural, and industrial capitalism of seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries were for the most part class-based practices developed relationally in segregated racial-caste-class communities in the United States and United Kingdom that marginalized and discriminated against practices, homosexuality, transgender, etc., that were arrived at through the deferment of meaning in ego-centered communicative discourse.

The double-consciousness discourse of W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Gilroy, and Cornel West was, and is, the unready-to-hand and present-at-hand rhetoric of the black bourgeoisie seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution for themselves and the black underclasses within the class differentiation of agricultural, industrial, and postindustrial capitalism. Contemporarily, as previously mentioned, as a result of the emergence of a postindustrial capitalism intent on allowing divergent meanings and subjective experiences to emerge around their class positions for capital accumulation in a service economy focused on entertainment and service, nonclass meanings and subjective experiences, homosexuality, black femininity that were, and to some extent continue to be, discriminated against by the power elites of both the black underclass and bourgeoisie of earlier capitalist relations of production are fostered and allowed to emerge within the dialectic of the global (postindustrial) capitalist social class structure. These nonclass meanings and subjective experiences, homosexuality, black feminism, Pan-Africanism, etc., practical consciousnesses, which are the product of the deferment of meaning in ego-centered communicative discourse, contemporarily, are seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within the dialectic of a postindustrial capitalist social structure that stratifies and commodifies these nonclass identities, meanings, and subjective experiences around their class positions or social relations to production for capital accumulation in the service economies of core, postindustrial nations, such as the United States and United Kingdom.

As a result, Marxist dialectic must once again, in twenty-first century social science discourse become a heuristic tool and hermeneutical framework for framing and understanding social phenomenon such as race, class, gender, and other identity categories.

References


