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What Should we Do with the Social Construct of Race?

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Philosophy Senior Thesis

What should we do with the Social Construct of Race?

A Senior Thesis Written by: Jason Gordon

2013

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Introduction

Even though the concept of race is something that has been proven to be biologically unsound, there are still many people living in this society and the world at large that view it as being an essential component of an individual's identity. In this day and age, it is still by no means uncommon for us as a society to take racial factors into consideration when making a distinction between what about a person's identity is important and what isn't. For instance, the fact that we are asked to fill out bubbles designating the racial group to which we belong, often encouraged to give descriptions of people that refer to their race, and constantly shown racial demographic statistics every time there is a presidential election serves to show just how much the concept of race still is a part of our national consciousness. Of course, this did not emerge abruptly or without a cause. On the contrary, the concept of race has a history that dates back to hundreds of years ago. In this thesis, a very close look will be given to the origins of the race concept and how it has developed over time. Close attention will be paid to how the race concept was formed and how it was used as a means to perpetuate inequality among the peoples of Earth. It will be shown that many influential thinkers and scientists embraced hierarchical notions of race and fervently argued for the biological superiority of the White race, especially after the emergence of Charles Darwin's theory of Natural Selection. History will be followed up until the point that the American Anthropological Association officially rejected racial classifications as a legitimate means of classifying the peoples of the human species which in turn was a critical factor in opening the way to viewing the concept of race to be viewed as a social construct. From this point, a debate between thinkers who are social constructionists on the issue of race will be thoroughly explained and the question of whether the race concept is something worth preserving will be addressed.

The issue of whether or not the concept of race is worth preserving is very important because this concept has had (and continues to have) a profound effect on people's lives. Indeed, people often look to race to help them identify other people, help them define what values are important to them, and to even help them form a solid conception of their own identities. Without question, many of the choices that people make today still have a lot to do with race. Often times, people's decisions of where they choose to live, who they choose to interact with, and who they choose to marry are very much influenced by their beliefs/assumptions about race. Now that we know that race is indeed a social construction, it is very important for us to evaluate race's contribution to our society as a whole. The concept of race, and all of its implications, must be thought about critically and not simply accepted by the masses of society. In this way, we will be able to see more of the actual realities surrounding race and we will be better enabled to judge whether these realities have a place existing within our society to begin with.

Chapter 1: The Beginnings

For the first chapter of this thesis, the works of Carl von Linne and Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon will be summarized and analyzed. It will be shown that in many regards, these men set a precedent for viewing human beings as falling into distinct racial classifications. Through categorizing human beings into separate groups using their physical appearances, both Linne and Buffon made the statement that there were indeed natural schisms within the human species that could be objectively recognized. These schisms did not only have physical implications, but they had evaluative implications as well. In both the works of Linne and Buffon, it is clear that White Europeans are viewed as being humanity's ideal while non-Whites are portrayed, whether overtly or implicitly, as being somehow inferior to their White counterparts.

In his work titled “The System of Nature” (which was written in 1735) Carl von Linne made several observations about the natural world as he saw it; he argued “that an underlying hierarchical order in nature was established by God, or providence by itself, and that it is the duty of humans to discover this order and to classify everything that exists”.¹ According to Linne, “man, when he enters the world, is naturally led to enquire who he is; whence he comes; whither he is going; for what purpose he is created; and by whose benevolence he is preserved”.² Human beings, according to Linne are naturally inquiring and are consistently led by their “endowments to a contemplation of the works of nature”.³ As Linne saw it, [human beings are] noble in [their] nature, in as much as, by the powers of [their minds], [they are] able to reason justly upon whatever discovers itself to [their] senses; and to look, with reverence and wonder,

¹ Carl von Linne, “Homo in the System of Nature”, in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 10.

² Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 10.

³ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 10.

upon the works of Him who created all things”.⁴ Because of this, Linne felt that “it is the exclusive property of man, to contemplate and to reason on the great book of nature”; nature, as Linne put it, “gradually unfolds herself to him who, with patience and perseverance, will search into her mysteries”.⁵ In Linne’s scheme, nature could only reveal itself to human beings because “man, the last and best of the created works, formed after the image of his Maker, endowed with a portion of intellectual divinity...[is]...able to form just conclusions from such things as present themselves to his senses, which can only consist of bodies merely natural”.⁶ As Linne saw it, “the first step of wisdom is to know these bodies; and be able, by those marks imprinted on them by nature, to distinguish them from each other, and to affix to every object its proper name”.⁷ It certainly would be safe to say that the bodies Linne wrote about in his piece included human bodies. According to him, there were different kinds of human beings that could actually be defined. In his piece he referred to the American natives as being “obstinate, content, [and] free”.⁸ In regards to Black people, Linne said that they were “crafty, indolent, negligent” and “governed by caprice” yet when describing Europeans he said that they were “gentle, acute, inventive” and “governed by laws” (pg. 13).⁹ This serves to show a clear bias in Linne’s thinking; without directly saying it, he had managed to create and promote a scheme in which Europeans were viewed as being superior to other varieties of human beings.

In a selection from his piece titled “A Natural History, General and Particular” Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon asserted “that there is one origin for [the] human species”;¹⁰ he

⁴ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 11.

⁵ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 11.

⁶ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 13.

⁷ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 13.

⁸ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 13.

⁹ Line, “Homo in the System of Nature”, 13.

¹⁰ Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution of Mankind”, in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 15.

“[provided] a geographical and cultural distribution of the races, and [ascribed] to climatic and biological causes differences in intelligence, customs, and habits”.¹¹ In regards to the American (natives), he said that they were unruly and completely uncivilized. As Buffon put it, even though “each [American] nation had peculiar customs and manners, though some were more savage, cruel, and dastardly than others; yet they were all equally stupid, ignorant, and destitute of arts and of industry”.¹² When referring to certain American natives, Buffon called them “savages” and made the claim that even “though they never think, [they] have a pensive melancholy aspect”.¹³ In order to civilize these natives, Buffon thought it was proper for Europeans to make an active effort to help them. About this, he made the statement that “it is not by force and by slavery that savages are civilized; the missionaries have polished more men in these savage nations than the arms of those princes who subdued them”;¹⁴ Buffon firmly believed that “the natural ferocity and stubbornness of these savages [could be] overcome by the gentleness, humanity, and venerable example of...missionaries”.¹⁵ As he saw it, “nothing [could] reflect great honour on religion than the civilizing of these nations of barbarians, and laying the foundations of an empire, without employing any other arms but those of virtue and humanity”.¹⁶

In regards to Africa, Buffon said that it “is remarkable for the variety of men it contains”.¹⁷ He made the observation that in Africa “the climate is extremely hot; and yet the temperature of the air differs widely in different nations”.¹⁸ For Buffon, there was an obvious connection between the temperature of a particular region and how dark the people who lived in

¹¹ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 15.

¹² Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 18.

¹³ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 19.

¹⁴ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 20.

¹⁵ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 20.

¹⁶ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 20.

¹⁷ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 20.

¹⁸ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 20.

that region were. He touched upon this where he made the observation that “all the natives...from Egypt to the Canary islands are only more or less tawny [yet]...on the other side of Mount Atlas, the heat becomes greater, and the inhabitants are very brown, but not entirely black”.¹⁹ Buffon also noticed that “to the 17th or 18th degree of north latitude, under which Senegal and Nubia are situated, the heat is excessive, and the natives are perfectly black”.²⁰ Thus, Buffon noticed that the hotter a particular region was, the darker the region’s inhabitants were. For Buffon, “nothing [could] prove more clearly that the climate is the principal cause of the varieties of mankind, than [the color] of the Hottentots, whose blackness could not be diminished but by the temperature of the climate”.²¹ In regards to this, Buffon said that “it appears that the existence of Negroes is confined to those parts of the earth where all the necessary circumstances concur in producing a constant and an excessive heat”.²² As he saw it, “the air is necessary to produce the blackness of Negroes” in that “their children are born white”, “but two or three days after birth their colour changes to a yellowish tawny, which grows gradually darker till the seventh or eighth day, when they are totally black”.²³ For Buffon, something that rang true is that “the blood of the Negroes is black, and that their blackness originates entirely from their blood”.²⁴

Despite all of the differences that Buffon noticed between different kinds of human beings, he held the position that there was indeed only one human species.²⁵ As he saw it, “there was originally but one species, who, after multiplying and spreading over the whole surface of earth, have undergone various changes by the influence of climate, food, mode of living, epidemic

¹⁹ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 21.

²⁰ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 21.

²¹ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 22.

²² Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 23.

²³ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 23.

²⁴ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 23.

²⁵ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 27.

diseases, and the mixture of dissimilar individuals”.²⁶ Buffon believed that since these changes “were originally produced by a train of external and accidental causes, and have only been perpetuated by time and the constant operation of these causes, it is probable that they will gradually disappear...if the causes which produced them should cease or if their operation should be varied by other circumstances and combinations”.²⁷ Thus, Buffon viewed the physical distinctions between men as something that was accidental in that a simple change in external factors (like climate or region) could serve to change/diminish them. Despite this Buffon did have certain preferences in regards to how he thought human beings were supposed to look. As he saw it, “the most temperate climate lies between the 40th and the 50th degree of latitude, and it produces the most handsome and beautiful men”; Buffon thought that “it is from this climate that the ideas of the genuine colour of mankind, and of the various degrees of beauty, ought to be derived”.²⁸ As he saw it, “the civilized countries situated under this zone, are Georgia, Circassia, the Ukraine, Turkey in Europe, Hungary, the south of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, and the northern part of Spain”, all European countries. To him, “the natives of these territories are the most handsome and most beautiful people in the world”.²⁹

Considering all of this, it is clear that the works of Linne and Buffon were written for the purpose of giving Europeans a means of identifying and classifying “different kinds” of human beings. Both Linne and Buffon were very interested in pinpointing the attributes that made non-European peoples different from Europeans. From both of these men’s perspectives, the racial differences between human beings were differences that could be fit within a rigid paradigm of classification; in fact, these men spoke about human beings as if they were *supposed* to be

²⁶ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 27.

²⁷ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 27, 28.

²⁸ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 26.

²⁹ Buffon, “The Geographical and Cultural Distribution”, 26.

classified racially. They took it for granted that there were considerable “natural” differences between people who were supposedly of different races and they portrayed these differences as being deeper than mere physical attributes. Linne, for example, described the European as being intelligent and “inventive” but described the Negro and American native as having less mental capacities than their European counterparts. Similarly, Buffon subtly argued for European superiority by making the claim that Europe was the origin of the most beautiful people on Earth. Thus, while these men presented their works as if they were objective analyses, they were very biased in how they chose to write about the “facts”. Indeed, the initial perception that Europeans had about people from other parts of the world was heavily influenced by this kind of thinking. The classification of human beings was encouraged and of course, Europeans would always be viewed in a positive light.

Chapter 2: Early Cultivation

In this chapter, a look will be taken at Winthrop D. Jordan's piece titled "First Impressions", an essay that describes the first interactions that the English had with Black Africans. It will be shown that even though the English did not initially view the Black peoples who they were encountering as being hopelessly inferior, certain cultural, religious, and circumstantial factors caused this to change over time. Eventually, the English came to view the Africans who they were encountering as people who were very different from them in both a physical and a moral sense. Black Africans came to be seen as a race of people who were peculiar, ungodly, and animalistic and these traits were seen as being characteristics that were somehow innate to them. Of course, the English came to view themselves as being superior to the people of the "Negro" race and this served to fuel a type of racial paradigm that much of the world would eventually come to adopt. This is important to note because it gives further insight into how racist thought was initially cultivated and how this kind of thought was eventually used to create and perpetuate a racial hierarchy.

As Winthrop D. Jordan explained in his piece titled "First Impressions", English travelers did not encounter West Africa until after the year 1550.³⁰ As he explained, the English would initially come to Africa in order to trade goods with Africans.³¹ Because of this, "the earliest English descriptions of West Africa were written by adventurous traders, men who had no special interest in converting the natives or...in otherwise laying hands on them".³² According to Jordan, "English contact with Africans did not take place primarily in a context which prejudiced

³⁰ Winthrop D. Jordan, "First Impressions," in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader* ed. Les Black and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2000), 33.

³¹ Jordan, "First Impressions", 33.

³² Jordan, "First Impressions", 33.

the Negro as slave, at least not as a slave of Englishmen”.³³ On the contrary, “Englishmen met Negroes merely as another sort of men”.³⁴ Even though the English did recognize Africans as being human, they did consider them to be very different from themselves.³⁵ As they saw it, “Negroes looked different; their religion was un-Christian [and] their manner of living was anything but English”.³⁶ Despite all of these differences, the main thing that made the English view the Africans as being different was the Africans’ skin color.³⁷ As Jordan put it, “travelers rarely failed to comment upon it; indeed when describing Negroes they frequently began with complexion and then moved on to dress (or rather lack of it) and manners”.³⁸ Evidently, color was a huge factor in how and why the English drew a distinction between themselves and the Africans that they were encountering.

According to Jordan, “Englishmen actually described Negroes as *black*- an exaggerated term which in itself suggests that the Negroes complexion had powerful impact on their perceptions”.³⁹ In fact, “blackness became so generally associated with Africa that every African seemed a black man”.⁴⁰ As Jordan put it, “In England...the firmest fact about the Negro was that he was ‘black’”.⁴¹ According to him, the Africans’ color had such a pronounced effect on the perceptions of the English partly because of the abruptness with which the English had come to encounter the Africans. Indeed, “England’s immediate acquaintance with black-skinned peoples came with relative rapidity” and “in this respect the English experience was markedly different from that of the Spanish and Portuguese who for centuries had been in close contact with North

³³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 33.

³⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 33.

³⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 33.

³⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 33.

³⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 34.

³⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 34.

³⁹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 34.

⁴⁰ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 34.

⁴¹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 34.

Africa and had actually been invaded and subjected by people both darker and more highly civilized than themselves”.⁴² Something else that Jordan pointed out is that “the impact of the Negro’s color was the more powerful upon the Englishmen, moreover, because England’s principal contact with Africans came in West Africa and the Congo where men were not merely dark but almost literally black”.⁴³ Thus encountering Africans for the first time caused such a strong reaction with the English in that suddenly “one of the fairest-skinned nations suddenly came face to face with one of the darkest people’s on earth”.⁴⁴

Jordan made the point that in English culture the idea of blackness had many connotations.⁴⁵ According to him, “long before they found that some men were black, Englishmen found in the idea of blackness a way of expressing some of their most ingrained values”.⁴⁶ For instance the Oxford English Dictionary that was used “before the sixteenth century” defined black as being “deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul [and also as] Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly” along with a host of other negative descriptions.⁴⁷ In English culture, “black was an emotionally partisan color, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion”.⁴⁸ In the mist of this, the color white was always juxtaposed with the color black; white of course, was viewed as being the opposite of everything that the color black was. As Jordan put it, “white and black [in English culture] connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil”.⁴⁹ Because of this, “Black human beings were

⁴² Jordan, “First Impressions”, 34, 35.

⁴³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

⁴⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

⁴⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

⁴⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

⁴⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

⁴⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

⁴⁹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 35.

not only startling but extremely puzzling” to the English.⁵⁰ Because of the strong cultural connotations of the colors black and white, “the complexion of Negroes posed problems about [the complexion’s] nature, especially its permanence and utility, its cause and origin, and its significance”.⁵¹ To many English, “if the cause of human blackness could be explained, then its nature and significance would follow”.⁵²

As Jordan saw it, “the opening of West Africa and the development of Negro slavery, which for the first time brought Englishmen frequently into firsthand contact with really black Negroes, made the question [of the Negroes’ color] far more urgent and provided an irresistible playground for awakening scientific curiosity”.⁵³ In English society, the heat of the sun was sometimes seen as a curse that was the cause for the Negro’s blackness.⁵⁴ According to Jordan, the “association of the Negro’s color with the sun” became so popular that it “became a commonplace in Elizabethan Literature”.⁵⁵ Despite this, there was something about this initial impression that did not correlate with realities of the natural world; people began asking the question: “if the equatorial inhabitants of Africa were blackened by the sun, why not the people living on the same line in America?”.⁵⁶ As Jordan put it, “logic required them to be the same color”.⁵⁷ But these people by no means resembled each other and “by the middle of the sixteenth century it was becoming perfectly apparent that the Indians living in the hottest regions of the New World could by no stretch of the imagination be described as black”.⁵⁸ In regards to “the Indians”, many English people began to realize that they in fact were different from the

⁵⁰ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 36.

⁵¹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 36.

⁵² Jordan, “First Impressions”, 36.

⁵³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 36.

⁵⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 36.

⁵⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

⁵⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

⁵⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

⁵⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

Negroes.⁵⁹ Thus, “the method of accounting for human complexion by latitude just did not work”.⁶⁰ As Jordan put it, “the worst of it was that the formula did not seem altogether wrong, since it was apparent that in general men in hot climates tended to be darker than in cold ones”.⁶¹ Because of this, many Englishmen accepted the notion that if Negroes were moved to a cooler climate, their skin (or the skin of their descendants) would inevitably get lighter because it was the sun’s great heat that caused their darkness in the first place.⁶² But by the middle of the 17th century it was becoming quite clear to the English that this was not the case.⁶³ Blacks were not losing the color of their skin and people began to take notice of this.

Something else that served to complicate the relationship between Negroes and the English was that many Negroes did not have Christian beliefs or values. As Jordan put it, “for Englishmen...the heathenism of Negroes was at once a counter-image of their own religion and a summons to eradicate an important distinction between the two peoples”;⁶⁴ “on the one hand, to act upon the felt necessity of converting Negroes would have been to eradicate the point of distinction which Englishmen found most familiar and most readily comprehensible” but “if they did not act upon this necessity, continued heathenism among Negroes would remain an unwelcome reminder to Englishmen that they were not meeting their obligations to their own faith- nor the benighted Negroes”.⁶⁵ According to Jordan, “Englishmen resolved this implicit dilemma by doing nothing”.⁶⁶ They did not adopt this sort of attitudes towards Negroes though; as Jordan put it, “fully as much as with skin color, though less consciously, Englishmen

⁵⁹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

⁶⁰ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

⁶¹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 37.

⁶² Jordan, “First Impressions”, 38.

⁶³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 38.

⁶⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 38.

⁶⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 38.

⁶⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 38.

distinguished between the heathenisms of Indians and of Negroes”.⁶⁷ The English made a considerable effort to convert the natives that they encountered in the Americas but they did not expel the same amount of energy trying to do the same thing for the Negroes. About this, Jordan stated that “it is hard to escape the conclusion that the distinction which Englishmen made as to conversion was at least in some small measure modeled after the difference they saw in skin color”.⁶⁸ In this way, “Christianity militated against the unity of man”.⁶⁹ Since “Englishmen were Christians, heathenism in Negroes was a fundamental defect which set them distinctly apart”.⁷⁰ Thus, “judged by Christian cosmology, Negroes stood in a separate category of men”.⁷¹

Jordan made the point that “despite the fascination and self-instruction Englishmen derived from expatiating upon the savage behavior of Africans, they never felt that savagery was as important a quality in Africans as it was in the American Indians”.⁷² This did not change “until the slave trade came to require justification in the eighteenth century” and “some Englishmen found special reason to lay emphasis on the Negro’s savagery”.⁷³ As Jordan put it, “If Negroes were likened to beasts, there was in Africa a beast which was likened to men”.⁷⁴ Despite the fact that knew about primates like monkeys and baboons, they did not much about apes that had a very striking resemblance to human beings.⁷⁵ According to Jordan “the startlingly human appearance and movements of the ‘ape’ - a generic term though often used as a synonym for the ‘orang-outang’ - aroused some curious speculations”.⁷⁶ Many Englishmen began to

⁶⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 39.

⁶⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 39.

⁶⁹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 40.

⁷⁰ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 40.

⁷¹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 40.

⁷² Jordan, “First Impressions”, 41.

⁷³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁷⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁷⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁷⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

entertain the notion that there was a connection between the Negroes they were encountering and apes. For example, Jordan mentioned how a man named Edward Topsell wrote a book titled “Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes” in which he “was careful to distinguish between tailless apes from monkeys”.⁷⁷ Something that Topsell stressed in his work is that apes were very lustful creatures that were prone to “ravishing” the female members of their species.⁷⁸ In Topsell’s work, it was stated that “Men that have low and flat nostrils [...] are Libidinous as Apes that attempt women, and having thicke lips the upper hanging over the neather, they are deemed fooles, like the lips of asses and Apes”.⁷⁹ According to Jordan, “this rather explicit association was the persistent connection made between apes and devils”.⁸⁰ Topsell made this connection quite obvious where he made the claim that “there are many things common to the Satyre-apes and devilish Satyres”.⁸¹ As Jordan stated, the “association of apes and/or satyrs with devils was common in England” and “the inner logic of this association derived from uneasiness concerning the ape’s ‘indecent likenesse and imitation of man’; it revolved around evil and sexual sin; and, rather, tenuously, it connected apes with blackness”.⁸²

It was Jordan’s position that “given this tradition and the coincidence of contact, it was virtually inevitable that Englishmen should discern similarity between the man-like beasts and the beast-like men of Africa”.⁸³ Some people even made the suggestion that Negroes were somehow the descendants of apes or that apes themselves were the progenies of the Negroes and another unknown African creature.⁸⁴ As Jordan mentioned, “Jean Bodin, the famous sixteenth-

⁷⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁷⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁷⁹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁸⁰ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 42.

⁸¹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 43.

⁸² Jordan, “First Impressions”, 43.

⁸³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 43.

⁸⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 43.

century French political theorist” made the claim “that ‘promiscuous coition of men and animals took place, wherefore the regions of Africa produce for us so many monsters’”.⁸⁵ From Jordan’s point of view, “it was no accident that this affinity between Negroes and apes was so frequently regarded as sexual, for undertones of sexuality run throughout many English accounts of West Africa”.⁸⁶ In English society, “sexuality was what one expected of savages” but Jordan stated that “long before first English contact with West Africa, the inhabitants of virtually the entire continent [of Africa] stood confirmed in European literature as lustful and venerous”.⁸⁷ For example, “in a highly eclectic work first published in 1566, Jean Bodin sifted the writings of ancient authorities and concluded that heat and lust went hand in hand and that ‘in Ethiopia. . . the race of men is very keen and lustful’”.⁸⁸ Also, “in 1623 Richard Jobson, a sympathetic observer, reported that Mandingo men were ‘furnisht with such members as are after a sort burthensome unto them’”.⁸⁹ According to him, Mandingo men had such large sexual organs that they had to avoid having intercourse during their partners’ pregnancies in order to avoid hurting the growing fetuses. For Jobson, “this was not to be considered ‘overstrange’ since in the twenty-third chapter of Ezekiel two incontinent sisters were ‘said to dote upon those people whose members were as the members of asses’”.⁹⁰ According to Jordan, “Jobson’s explanation for the unusual size of these men was incorporated neatly into the context of scriptural anthropology”; as Richard Jobson saw it, the people of the Negro race “‘originally sprung from

⁸⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 43.

⁸⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 43.

⁸⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 44.

⁸⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 44.

⁸⁹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 44.

⁹⁰ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 45.

the race of Canaan, the sonne of *Ham*, who discovered his father *Noahs* secrets, for which *Noah* awakening cursed *Canaan* as [the] holy Scripture testifieth”⁹¹

As many English people saw it, the cause of the Hamitic Curse was that Ham “had ‘looked upon the nakedness of his father’”⁹² As Jordan stated, “to the post- Freudian ear this suggests castration” and “to early Jewish commentators it suggested not merely castration but other sexual offenses as well”⁹³ According to Jordan, “the Hebraic literature of *ca.* 200-600 A.D. which saw the posterity of Ham and Canaan as smitten in the skin speculated as to whether Ham’s offense was [...] castrating his father Noah, [copulating “in the Ark”], and also copulating ‘ with a dog...therefore Ham came forth black-skinned while the dog publicly exposes its copulation”⁹⁴ Something that Jordan pointed out is that “Ham always represented for the ancient Jews the southward peoples *including* the Canaanites, whom the Jews drove from the promised land and upon whom they fastened the millstone of sexual offenses which are repeatedly and so adamantly condemned and guarded against in the Pentateuch”⁹⁵ Considering this, the Hamitic Curse “ took on for Christian Englishmen a potential immediacy and relevance which it could never have had if Englishmen had not as a people been undergoing and experience which they half sense was in some measure analogous to that of the ancient special people of God’s word”⁹⁶ It was Jordan’s contemplation of all this that led him to the conclusion that “from the first, Englishmen tended to set Negroes over against themselves, to stress what they conceived to be radically contrasting qualities of color, religion, and style of life, as well as animality and a

⁹¹ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 45.

⁹² Jordan, “First Impressions”, 45.

⁹³ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 45.

⁹⁴ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 45.

⁹⁵ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 46.

⁹⁶ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 46.

peculiarly potent sexuality”.⁹⁷ As he saw it, it is clear that the English who had come to live in the New World had not forgotten all of the beliefs that they had acquired in regards to Negroes before Negroes came to be viewed as slaves .⁹⁸

Winthrop Jordan certainly was right in making this assertion; the English had many preconceived notions about the world that caused them to view the Africans that they were encountering in a certain light. In regards to the Africans’ dark skin, the English were somewhat predisposed towards viewing it negatively since in their culture, the color black had such a bad connotation. As Jordan alluded to in his piece, black was seen by the English as a color that was the representation of evil, dirtiness, and ungodliness. Also, from a religious standpoint, the English viewed themselves as being superior to both the Negroes and the American Indians; the fact that they felt they lived by the true God’s standards gave them the impression that they had a better way of life than the darker peoples that they were encountering. Furthermore, the link that had been drawn between Ham and the people of the supposed Negro race served to propel the notion that blackness was in fact a curse from the Most High God. All of this, including the connection that had been made between Black people and apes, painted people of the “Negro race” in a very negative light. The English, who had considerable influence in the world, held on to and accepted many of these ideas and this of course had very negative implications for how Black people would be viewed by Europeans in general. In many respects, Blacks had begun to be regarded as the antithesis of Europeans; Blacks and Whites were coming to be viewed as being on two opposite sides of a racial spectrum in which Whites were seen as being completely superior and Blacks were seen as being about the farthest away from White that one could get.

⁹⁷ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 46.

⁹⁸ Jordan, “First Impressions”, 46.

Chapter 3: Establishing of a Racial Hierarchy

In this chapter, close attention will be given to philosophers and writers whose arguments were very much aligned with the sentiment that there were indeed separate races and that these races constituted a natural hierarchy. According to their views, the superiority of the White race and the inferiority of all other races was something that could be empirically proven. In this section of the thesis, it will be shown that many widely respected thinkers subscribed to the notion that race was something that was biologically real and was something that determined the inherent character of the individual. More than one of these thinkers expressed the opinion that the forces of nature endowed the people of the White race with more physical beauty, intelligence, and overall worth than any other race of people on Earth. As was suggested earlier, these thinkers were quite influential so this of course had a profound effect on how many people would come to view racial categories. The views of these thinkers and writers helped to convince people that race was in fact objectively real and that simply by identifying a particular person's race, one would be able to draw all sorts of valid conclusions about him/her.

In his piece titled "Of National Characters", which was published in the year 1748, David Hume argued that White people are indeed superior to every other race of human beings. As Hume saw it, "the character of a nation will much depend on moral causes";⁹⁹ he did not believe "that men owe anything of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate".¹⁰⁰ For Hume, the type of interaction that human beings have with other human beings like themselves has an enormous impact on how they choose to conduct themselves in the world. As he put it, "the human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse

⁹⁹ David Hume, "Of National Characters", in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 31.

¹⁰⁰ Hume, "Of National Characters", 31.

often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues”.¹⁰¹ Even though, Hume did acknowledge that human beings were very much the product of their social environment, he did not believe that all peoples necessarily had the same capabilities of achieving certain things. He alluded to this where he made the claim that even “though nature produces all kinds of temper and understanding in great abundance, it does not follow, that she always produces them in like proportions and that in every society the ingredients of industry and indolence, valor and cowardice, humanity and brutality, wisdom and folly, will be mixed after the same manner”.¹⁰² As Hume saw it, “there is some reason to think that all nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind”.¹⁰³ Considering this, he believed he was convinced that Negroes, and all other varieties of human beings, were inferior to White people; as Hume put it, “there never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences”.¹⁰⁴ He continued with this sentiment where he made the claim that even “the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valor, form of government, or some other particular”.¹⁰⁵ In regards to this, Hume believed that such a profound difference between Whites and non-Whites could not have existed if the laws of nature had not deemed it to be so.¹⁰⁶ For him, the supposed fact that “there [were] negroe slaves

¹⁰¹ Hume, “Of National Characters”, 32.

¹⁰² Hume, “Of National Characters”, 32.

¹⁰³ Hume, “Of National Characters”, 32, 33.

¹⁰⁴ Hume, “Of National Characters”, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Hume, “Of National Characters”, 33.

¹⁰⁶ Hume, “Of National Characters”, 33.

dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity” served to help validate his claims.¹⁰⁷

In an essay written in the year 1775, Immanuel Kant also wrote about the topic of race. As he saw it, “Negroes and Whites are not different species of humans (for they belong presumably to one stock), but they are different races, for each perpetuates itself in every area, and they generate between them children that are necessarily hybrid, or blendings”.¹⁰⁸ Kant went on to say that “blonds or brunettes are not different races of whites [because] a blond man can also get from a brunette woman altogether blond children, even though each of these deviations maintains itself throughout protracted generations under any and all transplantsations”.¹⁰⁹ As Kant saw it, there are four different races of humankind: the White race, “the Negro race”, “the Hunnic (Mongolian or Kalmuck) race”, and “the Hindu or the Hindustanic race”.¹¹⁰ About these races, Kant stated that he believed that all the peoples of Earth in some way or another sprang from these four original races.¹¹¹ In regards to why he believed these four categorizations to actually be races, Kant stated that “the reason for assuming Negroes and Whites to be fundamental races is self-evident” and that the Hindu race and the Hunnic race were in fact races because “the olive-yellow which underlies the more or less brown of the hot countries in the former race is just as impossible to derive from any other known national make-up as it is to derive the unique face of the latter”.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Hume, “Of National Characters”, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Immanuel Kant, “On the Different Races of Man,” in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 40.

¹⁰⁹ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 40.

¹¹⁰ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 41.

¹¹¹ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 41.

¹¹² Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 42.

In regards to how it was that these four races came into existence, Kant stated that it is the “foresight of Nature to equip her creation with hidden inner furnishings against all sorts of future circumstances in order that it be preserved and suited to the variety of climate or soil”.¹¹³ Thus, Kant believed that the human body has the potential to adapt (physically) to any part of the world in which it is placed. As he saw it, people of different races are “of one and the same genus, whose germs and natural dispositions have merely been developed appropriately at long periods in various ways”.¹¹⁴ According to him, “man was disposed for all climates and every constitution of ground; it follows that there must have lain in him many sorts of germs and natural dispositions, ready on occasion either to be developed or hold back”.¹¹⁵ In other words, Kant held the position that the human species was endowed with a body that had all the genes necessary to adapt to any climate that a human being may find him/herself in; while all human beings have these genes, only some of them will be made manifest based on the type of climate that a group of people finds themselves in. All of this of course was so that “[man] might be fitted to his place in the world, and that he might appear in the course of generations to have been born to that place and made for it”.¹¹⁶ To Heidegger, “air and sun [seemed] to be the causes which can penetrate most deeply into the generative force and can produce a lasting development of the germs and dispositions”.¹¹⁷ This, for him, was what ultimately caused separate races to come into existence; different climates caused peoples bodies to develop different characteristics over time.

¹¹³ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 43.

¹¹⁴ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 43.

¹¹⁵ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 43.

¹¹⁶ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 44.

¹¹⁷ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 44.

To help support this point, Kant focused on environments where there is “extreme damp heat of [a] warm climate”.¹¹⁸ About these areas, Kant made the claim that “the growth of the spongy parts of the body must increase in a hot moist climate; hence a tick snub-nose and tumid lips”.¹¹⁹ He also noted that in hot environments, “the skin must be oily, not only to moderate the influence of evaporation but also to prevent the injurious absorption of the noxious vapors of the air”.¹²⁰ The way Kant saw it, all Negroes smell bad because of the reaction that their skin had to the environment that they had grown accustomed to. To him, “the Negro is produced, well suited to his climate; that is, strong fleshly, supple, but in the midst of the bountiful provision of his motherland lazy, soft and dawdling”.¹²¹ Whites on the other hand came from an environment that was the best suited for human beings. As Kant put it, “that portion of the earth between the 31st and the 52nd parallels in the Old World [...] is rightly held to be that which the most happy mixture of influences of the colder and hotter regions and also the greatest wealth of earthly creatures is encountered”.¹²² For him, this is “where man too must have departed the least from his original formation because from here he is equally well prepared for all transplantations”.¹²³ He noted that “here, to be sure, [there are] white inhabitants, but they are brunette”.¹²⁴ Thus, Kant believed that whites were the original people on Earth. From his perspective, every human on the planet derived from white brunettes.

¹¹⁸ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 46.

¹¹⁹ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 46.

¹²⁰ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 46.

¹²¹ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 46.

¹²² Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 48.

¹²³ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 48.

¹²⁴ Kant, “On the Different Races of Man”, 43.

In his piece titled “Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime”, Kant made the argument “that different nations have different aesthetic and moral sensibilities”.¹²⁵ As he saw it, the mental attributes of a people can be determined by paying adequate attention to whatever in them coincides with proper morality.¹²⁶ Thus, Kant felt that each kind of European had a certain kind of innate nature. In regards to the Spaniard, Kant claimed that he “is earnest, taciturn, and truthful”.¹²⁷ Even though “he is often harsh and indeed quite cruel”, “there are few more honest merchants in the world than the Spanish”.¹²⁸ About the Frenchman, Kant pointed out that “he has a predominant feeling for the morally beautiful” and “is gracious, courteous, and complaisant”.¹²⁹ To him, The Englishman “is cool in the beginning of every acquaintance, and indifferent toward a stranger” but “as soon as he is a friend, he is laid under great performances of service”.¹³⁰ As Kant saw it, “the German has a feeling mixed from that of an Englishman and that of a Frenchman”;¹³¹ about the German, he (Kant) said that “he has a fortunate combination of feeling, both in that of the sublime and in that of the beautiful; and if in the first he does not equal an Englishman, nor in the second a Frenchman, he yet surpasses both so far as he unites them”.¹³² In regards to the Dutchman, Kant said that he “is of an orderly and diligent disposition and, as he looks solely to the useful, he has little feeling for what in the finer understanding is beautiful and sublime”.¹³³ Here, it becomes clear that even when it came to Europeans, Kant did not shy away from attempting to categorize them and pinpoint something in them that was unchanging and absolute. The world, as he saw it, was a place of rigidity in that many of its

¹²⁵ Immanuel Kant, “Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime”, in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 48.

¹²⁶ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 51.

¹²⁷ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 51.

¹²⁸ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 51.

¹²⁹ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 51.

¹³⁰ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 53.

¹³¹ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 54.

¹³² Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 54.

¹³³ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 54.

people had essential natures that were supposedly given to them by nature. While Kant was relatively flattering in his descriptions of Europeans, his analyses of non-Europeans were far more critical and condescending. It is clear from his description of them that he thought of them as being utterly inferior.

In his work, Kant described the Arab as being “hospitable, generous, and truthful” but said that “his inflamed imagination presents things to him in unnatural and distorted images, and even the propagation of his religion was a great adventure”.¹³⁴ From Kant’s perspective, “the Japanese could in a way be regarded as the English men of [Asia], but hardly in any other quality than their resoluteness”; he felt that for the most part, the Japanese “display few signs of a finer feeling”.¹³⁵ Kant did not think any better about the Indians and he said that they “have a dominating taste of the grotesque, of the sort that falls into the adventurous”.¹³⁶ He felt that “their religion consists of grotesqueries” and that their “sacrifice of wives in the very same funeral pyre that consumes the corpse of the husband is a hideous excess”.¹³⁷ In regards to the “Negroes of Africa”, Kant felt that they “have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling”. As he saw it, there are many differences between the White and the Negro races “and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color”.¹³⁸ Blacks, according to Kant, “are very vain but in the Negro’s way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings”.¹³⁹ Clearly, Kant did not have a very high opinion of Black people at all. In regards to a Black man who had given his opinion on something, he said that “this fellow was quite black from head to

¹³⁴ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 54.

¹³⁵ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 55.

¹³⁶ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 55.

¹³⁷ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 55.

¹³⁸ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 55.

¹³⁹ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 56.

foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid”.¹⁴⁰ According to Kant, “among all savages there is no nation that displays so sublime a mental character as those of North America”.¹⁴¹ As he saw it, “all these savages have little feeling for the beautiful in moral understanding, and the generous forgiveness of an injury, which is at once noble and beautiful, is completely unknown as a virtue among the savages but rather is disdained as a miserable cowardice”.¹⁴² He then went on to say that “the remaining natives of this part of the world show few traces of a mental character disposed to the finer feelings, and an extraordinary apathy constitutes the mark of this type of race”.¹⁴³

In his “Physical Geography” lectures, Kant made a few more observations about the Negro race. He made the claim that “one can say that the only true Negroes are in Africa and New Guinea. Not just the evenly smoked-black color but also the black woolly hair, the broad face, the flat nose, and the thick lips constitute the characteristics of these people, in addition to clumsy large bones”.¹⁴⁴ He also described the type of offspring that would be conceived if people of the Black and White races were to have children with each other. According to Kant, “white and black mixed produces *Mulattos*. The children that the latter have with whites are called in Spanish America *Terzerons*; their children out of marriage with a white person a *Quarteron*, their children with whites *Quinteron*, and their children with whites are then once again called white”.¹⁴⁵ In regards to where the most attractive human beings could be found, Kant made the claim that “the tallest and most beautiful people on dry land are on the parallel and the degrees

¹⁴⁰ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 57.

¹⁴¹ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 56.

¹⁴² Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 56.

¹⁴³ Kant, “Observations on the Feeling”, 56.

¹⁴⁴ Immanuel Kant, “Physical Geography,” in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 60.

¹⁴⁵ Kant, “Physical Geography”, 61.

which run through Germany”.¹⁴⁶ For him, “humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites”.¹⁴⁷ Kant supported this claim by asserting that “the yellow Indians do have a meager talent. The Negroes are far below them and at the lowest point are a part of the American peoples”.¹⁴⁸ While Kant did concede that these supposed “savages [did] have more strength than other civilized peoples”, he held firm to the notion that they were mentally inferior to whites.¹⁴⁹ As he saw it, they were in no way capable of building societies as vast and as intricate as the ones that existed in Europe.

In his book titled “On the Natural Varieties of Mankind”, which was published in 1776, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach also wrote on the topic of race; this work of his became quite popular and it became a text to which many people would refer to (in regards to racial issues) deep into the 19th century.¹⁵⁰ According to Blumenbach, it is safe to say that “animals belong to one and the same species, if they agree so well in form and constitution, that those things in which they do differ may have arisen from degeneration”.¹⁵¹ Since Blumenbach accepted this to be true he thought that it was imperative to take note of “the two golden rules which the great Newton has laid down for philosophizing”.¹⁵² The first of these rules is “that the same causes should be assigned to account for natural effects of the same kind”.¹⁵³ Because of this, Blumenbach felt that it was therefore necessary to “assign the same causes for the bodily diversity of the races of mankind to which we assign a similar diversity of body in the other

¹⁴⁶ Kant, “Physical Geography”, 59.

¹⁴⁷ Kant, “Physical Geography”, 63.

¹⁴⁸ Kant, “Physical Geography”, 59.

¹⁴⁹ Kant, “Physical Geography”, 63.

¹⁵⁰ Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 79.

¹⁵¹ Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties of Mankind,” in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 80.

¹⁵² Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 81.

¹⁵³ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 81.

domestic animals which are widely scattered over the world”.¹⁵⁴ The second one of Newton’s laws that Blumenbach took note of is that “we ought not to admit more causes of natural things than what are sufficient to explain the phenomena”.¹⁵⁵ Taking note of this, Blumenbach made the claim that “if therefore it shall appear that the causes of degeneration are sufficient to explain the phenomena of the corporeal diversity of mankind, we ought not to admit anything else deduced from the idea of the plurality of human species”.¹⁵⁶ In other words, he believed that if the theory of degeneration seemed like it could explain the differences between human beings, then it in fact could. Degeneration, for Blumenbach, was a biological fact and it is the reason why the world has such a wide variety of different races.

As Blumenbach saw it, there are five different races that can be recognized as being distinct; these races are the “Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay”.¹⁵⁷ In regards to the “Caucasian variety”, Blumenbach claimed that people in this grouping have white skin, “cheeks rosy...hair brown or chestnut-colored...head subglobular...face oval, straight, its parts moderately defined, forehead smooth, nose narrow” and “primary teeth [that are] placed perpendicularly to each jaw”.¹⁵⁸ He felt that Caucasians have “the kind of appearance which, according to [his] opinion of symmetry, [that can be considered] most handsome and becoming”.¹⁵⁹ According to Blumenbach, “the inhabitants of Europe (except the Lapps and the remaining descendants of the Finns) and those of Eastern Asia, as far as the river Obi, the Caspian Sea and the Ganges; and lastly, those of Northern Africa” could all be considered to be a

¹⁵⁴ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 81.

¹⁵⁵ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 81.

¹⁵⁶ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 81.

¹⁵⁷ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 84.

¹⁵⁸ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 84.

¹⁵⁹ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 84.

part of the Caucasian race.¹⁶⁰ About the “Mongolian variety”, Blumenbach said that they have the “colour yellow...hair black, stiff, straight and scanty...head almost square...face broad, at the same time flat and depressed” and “cheeks [that are] usually globular”.¹⁶¹ From his perspective, “this variety comprehends the remaining inhabitants of Asia (except the Malays on the extremity of the trans-Gangetic peninsula) and the Finnish populations of the cold part of Europe [and] the Lapps”.¹⁶² In regards to the “Ethiopian variety”, Blumenbach said that they have the “colour black...hair black and curly...head narrow, compressed at the sides...forehead knotty, uneven” and “lips (especially the upper) [that are] very puffy”.¹⁶³ With this classification of human beings, Blumenbach simply stated that it applied to all Africans.¹⁶⁴ About the “American variety”, Blumenbach said that they have “copper-coloured [skin]...hair black, stiff, straight and scanty...forehead short; eyes set very deep” and “[faces that are] invariably broad”.¹⁶⁵ Blumenbach claimed that “this variety comprehends the inhabitants of America except the Esquimaux”.¹⁶⁶ Lastly, about the “Malay variety”, Blumenbach said that they have “tawny-coloured [skin]...hair black, soft curly, thick and plentiful; [heads that are] moderately narrowed; [foreheads that are] slightly swelling” and “upper [jaws that are] somewhat prominent with the parts of the face when seen in profile”.¹⁶⁷ The way he saw it, “this last variety includes the islanders of the Pacific Ocean, together with the inhabitants of the Marianne, the Philippines, the Molucca and the Sunda Islands, and of the Malayan peninsula”.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁰ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 84.

¹⁶¹ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶² Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶³ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶⁴ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶⁵ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶⁶ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶⁷ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

¹⁶⁸ Blumenbach, “On the Natural Varieties”, 85.

Clearly, Blumenbach believed that there were certain physical characteristics that could serve to *empirically* prove someone's race. The way he saw it, a person having a specific facial structure or a certain hair texture could serve to prove if he/she was "Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, [or] Malay".¹⁶⁹ As was already indicated earlier, Blumenbach believed that people of the Caucasian variety have the most beautiful bodies. Because he felt that Caucasian variety "produces the most beautiful race of men"¹⁷⁰, he believed that it would be safe to assume that the first human beings to ever walk the Earth were of this race. In regards to Mount Caucas (the supposed origin of the Caucasian race), Blumenbach stated that "it seems we ought with the greatest probability to place the autochthones of mankind" there.¹⁷¹ Even though Blumenbach did think of races as being empirically real, he did not believe in perpetuating inequality solely based on people's races. On the contrary, Blumenbach was a man who "believed himself to be opposed to racism, and indeed wrote several essays objecting to the idea that non-white peoples are inherently incapable of excelling in the arts and the sciences".¹⁷² Despite this, Blumenbach's writings on race had a considerable effect on how people in his era would come to justify their racist beliefs. Influential thinkers like him, Hume, and Kant all attested (whether discretely or more overtly) to the notion that White people were superior to other "races" of people. One of the ways these men (particularly Kant and Blumenbach) did this was through an appeal to the theory of degeneration. By making the claim that White people were the original race of people here on Earth, these men were tacitly (whether consciously or unconsciously) endorsing the view that whites were somehow more *entitled* than the other peoples of Earth. Furthermore, the rigid descriptions that these men gave about races supported the notion that race is something that is a

¹⁶⁹ Blumenbach, "On the Natural Varieties", 84.

¹⁷⁰ Blumenbach, "On the Natural Varieties", 86.

¹⁷¹ Blumenbach, "On the Natural Varieties", 86.

¹⁷² Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment*, 79.

complete and unquestionable fact of nature; this of course opened the door for certain essences to be attributed to different races. Hume and Kant clearly made these kinds of connections in their works. As they saw it, not only were non-Whites physically inferior to Whites, but they were morally and intellectually inferior to them as well. Kant's comment that the opinion that a black man gave was totally irrelevant because of the mere fact that he was black is a clear example of this. Clearly, the issue of race was something that all three of these influential and widely respected thinkers looked at using a paradigm of absolutes. This type of outlook had major implications for how other people would ultimately come to view race.

Chapter 4: A Simple Fact of Nature

In this chapter, the extent to which race, and all its supposed deeper implications, began to be taken for granted will be explored. Close attention will be paid to encyclopedia entries on race, Thomas Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia, and the scientist Samuel Morton's findings about the skull sizes of people of different races. It will be shown that in all three of these works, racist beliefs played a key role in the formation of arguments and conclusions. Again, the point here is that these racist beliefs were simply taken for granted. At the time these works were produced, race was seen as being something that could objectively more or less indicate a person's potential and worth; the notion that Whites were superior to non-Whites was a widely held sentiment. Thus, even an encyclopedia (which was supposed to have factual and unbiased facts), a President who wrote against slavery, and a scientist (who was supposed to be unbiased in his pursuit of the facts) fell victim to these hate-filled conceptions of humanity and the world. The view that races were immutable categorizations that could serve to define an individual's very being continued to be adopted.

By the mid-eighteenth century, rigid, hierarchical views of race were viewed as being so factual that racial definitions were put in encyclopedias. According to the "Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts, et des meiters" which was "co-edited by Dennis Diderot and Jean Rond d'Alembert, and published from 1751 to 1772"¹⁷³, the term "negre", the French word for "Black person", is a "man who inhabits different parts of the earth, from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn".¹⁷⁴ As was stated in the encyclopedia, "Africa has no other inhabitants but the blacks" and Blacks themselves are quite unique "not only [because of their] color, but also [because] the facial traits [that] distinguish them from other men: large

¹⁷³ Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment*, 91.

¹⁷⁴ Encyclopedie, "Negre," in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 91.

and flat noses, thick lips, and wool instead of hair”.¹⁷⁵ As the writers of the encyclopedia saw it, Blacks “[appeared] to constitute a new species of mankind”.¹⁷⁶ Something else that was also noted in the encyclopedia was that “if one moves further away from the Equator toward the Antarctic, the black skin becomes lighter, but the ugliness remains”.¹⁷⁷ In regards to the dark skin of the Negroes, it was said that it contained “bile [that is] as dark as ink” and that this bile “is always more or less black in proportion to the skin color of the negro”.¹⁷⁸ It was also said that “the blood [of Negroes] is blackish-red [...] according to the grade of blackness of the negro’s skin” and “it is certain that the bile re-enters the chyle in the blood, and flows with it through all parts of the body”.¹⁷⁹ In another encyclopedia, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* which was published in 1798, the term “negro” was defined as “a name given to a variety of the human species, who are entirely black, and are found in the torrid zone, especially in that part of Africa which lies within the tropics”.¹⁸⁰ The encyclopedia described Negroes as having “round cheeks, high cheek-bones, a forehead somewhat elevated, a short, broad, flat nose[s], thick lips, small ears, ugliness, and irregularity of shape”.¹⁸¹ In regards to the moral character of Negroes, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* said that “vices the most notorious seem to be the portion of this unhappy race: idleness, treachery, revenge, cruelty, impudence, stealing, lying, profanity, debauchery, nastiness and intemperance, are said to have extinguished the principles of natural law, and to have silenced the reproofs of conscience”.¹⁸² As the writers of the encyclopedia saw

¹⁷⁵ Encyclopedie, “Negre”, 91.

¹⁷⁶ Encyclopedie, “Negre”, 91.

¹⁷⁷ Encyclopedie, “Negre”, 91.

¹⁷⁸ Encyclopedie, “Negre”, 92.

¹⁷⁹ Encyclopedie, “Negre”, 92.

¹⁸⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Negro,” in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 94.

¹⁸¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Negro”, 94.

¹⁸² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Negro”, 94.

it, people of the Negro race are quite inferior in that “they are strangers to every sentiment of compassion, and are an awful example of the corruption of man when left to himself”.¹⁸³

Thomas Jefferson also discussed the Negro race in his book titled Notes on the State of Virginia which was published in the year 1787.¹⁸⁴ He made the claim that even though the society in which he lived had come to accept slavery as something that was normal, there was something very troubling about the institution. Jefferson touched upon this where he made the claim that “there must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of [the American] people produced by the existence of slavery among us”.¹⁸⁵ As he saw it, “the whole commerce between master and slave [was] a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other”.¹⁸⁶ According to Jefferson, slavery was quite dangerous because it could have a very negative effect on the minds of young people. Jefferson’s fear about slavery was that “children [would] see [it], and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal” and as Jefferson saw it, “this quality is the germ of all education in” all human beings.¹⁸⁷ Thus, Jefferson thought that slavery would encourage young Americans who were “nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny” to grow up to be tyrannical adults themselves. To Jefferson, slavery was wrong in that it “[permitted] one half the citizens [...] to trample on the rights of the other, it [transformed] those into despots, and these into enemies, [and it destroyed] the morals of the one part, and *amor patriae* of the other”. Jefferson also made the point that “with the morals of the [American] people, their industry is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man will [labor] for himself who can make another [labor]

¹⁸³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Negro”, 94.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia,” in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 95.

¹⁸⁵ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 95.

¹⁸⁶ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 96.

¹⁸⁷ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 96.

for him”.¹⁸⁸ Thus, Jefferson felt that slavery was very dangerous in that it could erode the work ethic of many Americans. When it came to the issue of American slavery, Jefferson was also worried that its injustices would cause the wrath of God to fall upon the United States. As he put it, he “[trembled] for [his] country when [he reflected] that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever”.¹⁸⁹ Indeed, Thomas Jefferson felt that in regards to American slavery, “the Almighty [had] no attribute which [could] take side with [slave-holding Americans] in such a contest”.¹⁹⁰ It was for this reason that Jefferson hoped “for a total emancipation” of slavery in which American slave holders would willingly give up their slaves.¹⁹¹

Despite having these beliefs about slavery, Jefferson held the belief that Blacks were naturally inferior to whites. In regards to Black people, Jefferson made the claim that “whether the black of the negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf-skin, or in the scarf-skin itself; whether it proceeds from the [color] of the blood, the [color] of the bile, or from that of some other secretion, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us”.¹⁹² Thus, according to Jefferson, the innate differences that existed between Blacks and Whites were so readily apparent that they didn’t even have to be looked into. As he saw it, Blacks were quite different than Whites in that “they secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odor. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold, than whites”.¹⁹³ Jefferson also made the claim that Negroes “seem to require less sleep” because “a black, after hard [labor] through the day will be included by the slightest amusements to sit up

¹⁸⁸ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 96.

¹⁸⁹ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 96.

¹⁹⁰ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 97.

¹⁹¹ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 97.

¹⁹² Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 97.

¹⁹³ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 98.

till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of morning”.¹⁹⁴ Negroes, as Jefferson saw it, are quite simpleminded in that all of the things that trouble them are of no importance and are fleeting in nature.¹⁹⁵ As he put it, “their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection” and that “this must be ascribed [to] their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in [labor]”.¹⁹⁶ Jefferson really touched upon his point where he made the claim “that in memory [Blacks] are equal to whites” but “in reason [they are] much inferior”.¹⁹⁷ He also expressed his belief in the mental inferiority of Negroes where he made the claim that “never yet could [he] find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration”.¹⁹⁸ Blacks, according to Jefferson, had natural inadequacies and as he saw it, “the improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by everyone and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life”.¹⁹⁹ To strengthen this point, Jefferson mentioned slaves in the Roman Empire who went on to become (as he put it) the “rarest [of] artists”.²⁰⁰ According to him, these slaves managed to “[excel] too in science”²⁰¹ despite the fact that they were severely disadvantaged by their status as slaves. As Jefferson saw it, the reason why these slaves were able to accomplish extraordinary things but Negro slaves were not was because “they were of the race of whites”,²⁰² by accomplishing all of those admirable feats, white slaves were simply expressing their innate potential. Blacks on the other hand were simply incapable of doing such a thing. It was for these reasons that Jefferson put

¹⁹⁴ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 98.

¹⁹⁵ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 98.

¹⁹⁶ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 98.

¹⁹⁷ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 99.

¹⁹⁸ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 99.

¹⁹⁹ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 100.

²⁰⁰ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 101.

²⁰¹ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 101.

²⁰² Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 101.

forth the opinion “that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind”.²⁰³ As he saw it, Negroes simply did not have the potential that White people had.

One scientist who certainly agreed with this sentiment was Samuel George Morton. In her book titled Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America’s Unburied Dead, Ann Fabian mentioned the fact that Morton was a man who “collected skulls: animal skulls and human skulls”.²⁰⁴ In fact, Morton had collected so many skulls that “by the time [he] died in 1851, he had nearly a thousand human crania, a collection many thought was the largest collection in the world”.²⁰⁵ According to Fabian, Morton would conduct his work as a scientist by racially classifying human skulls and then proceeding to measure them.²⁰⁶ As she put it, “Morton’s skulls launched American work in craniology and mapped out the contours of a distinctive American inquiry that involved thinking about race, particularly the racial characteristics of Africans, and collecting dead bodies, particularly the bodies of Native Americans”.²⁰⁷ While Morton was a racial essentialist and “he subscribed to the widely held belief that there were five races- the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the American, the Malay, and the Ethiopian”, he also held the position “that each race represented a different species created for one of the earth’s continents, an idea that set him at odds with clergymen and believers who were certain that all men were the children of Adam”.²⁰⁸ Morton’s views were also quite unique in that “while anatomists and naturalists had studied variation in the shape of skulls and sketched their facial angles, Morton

²⁰³ Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, 103.

²⁰⁴ Ann Fabian, *Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America’s Unburied Dead* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1.

²⁰⁵ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 1.

²⁰⁶ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 1.

²⁰⁷ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 1.

²⁰⁸ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 1, 2.

measured their volume and worked out an average cranial capacity for each of the races”.²⁰⁹ According to the results of his studies, Caucasians had the largest skulls; this had major implications in that under the premises of Morton’s scheme, “the larger the cranial capacity, the larger the brain” and “the larger the brain, the better the man”.²¹⁰ Thus, Morton believed that “the Caucasian ‘race is distinguished for the facility with which it attains the highest intellectual endowments’”.²¹¹ In other words, he felt the Caucasians were mentally superior, and thus better, than people of all other races.

Stephen Jay Gould also discussed Samuel Morton in his piece titled “American Polygeny and Craniometry before Darwin”. Like Fabian, Gould also pointed out that “Morton’s fame as a scientist rested upon his collection of skulls and their role in racial ranking”.²¹² He mentioned that initially, Morton “filled the cranial [cavities of the skulls he collected] with shifted white mustard seed, poured the seed back into a graduated cylinder and read the skull’s volume in cubic inches” in order to get his readings for the holding capacities of the skulls he examined.²¹³ Morton however ceased using these seeds because they could not provide reliable results due to the fact that they “did not pack well, for they were too light and still varied too much in size, despite sieving”.²¹⁴ When Morton used mustard seed to measure skulls, “remeasurements [...] might differ by more than 5 percent, or 4 cubic inches in skulls with an average capacity near 80 cubic inches”.²¹⁵ Because of this, Morton “switched to one- eighth- inch- diameter lead shot ‘of

²⁰⁹ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 2.

²¹⁰ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 2.

²¹¹ Fabian, *Skull Collectors*, 2.

²¹² Stephen Jay Gould, “American Polygeny and Craniometry before Darwin,” in *The Racial Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future*, ed. Sandra Harding (United States: Indiana University Press), 101.

²¹³ Gould, “American Polygeny and Craniometry”, 101.

²¹⁴ Gould, “American Polygeny and Craniometry”, 101.

²¹⁵ Gould, “American Polygeny and Craniometry”, 101, 102.

the size called BB' and achieved consistent results that never varied by more than a single cubic inch for the same skull".²¹⁶

According to Gould, "Morton published three major works on the sizes of human skulls- [...] the *Crania Americana* of 1839; his studies on skulls from the Egyptian tombs, the *Crania Aegyptica* of 1839; and the epitome of his entire collection in 1849".²¹⁷ Each of these works had a table in which Morton would summarize the results of his skull analyses by ranking each race's average skull volume.²¹⁸ As pointed out in Gould's piece, Morton's results always "matched every good Yankee's prejudice- whites on top, Indians in the middle, and blacks on the bottom".²¹⁹ Even though Morton paraded these results as if they were truly objective and completely factual, Gould pointed out that after he had taken a look at Gould's recorded data it became clear that "Morton's summaries are a patchwork of fudging and finagling in the clear interest of controlling a priori convictions".²²⁰ Despite this, Gould found "no evidence of conscious fraud" on Morton's part and thus he concluded that if Morton was indeed "a conscious fudger, he would not have published his data so openly".²²¹ Morton, according to Gould, was so convinced of the superiority of Caucasians that he conducted his experiments with the full expectation of validating a conclusion that he already had come to in his mind. As Gould saw it, "if scientists can be self-deluded to Morton's extent, then prior prejudice may be found anywhere, even in the basics of measuring bones and toting sums".²²²

²¹⁶ Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

²¹⁷ Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

²¹⁸ Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

²¹⁹ Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

²²⁰ Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

²²¹ Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

²²² Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry", 102.

The encyclopedia entries, Thomas Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia, and Samuel Morton's experiments regarding the skulls of different raced peoples all go to show just how widely accepted racial classifications had come to be at a certain point in history. During the era in which these works were produced, race was not only viewed as a legitimate means of empirical classification, but it was also thought of as an indicator of a person's innate potential. Whites were seen as being naturally gifted and capable while Blacks were seen as being immoral, completely ignorant, and vile. All of this of course was accepted as being factual; the mere fact that encyclopedias, books that were supposed to have completely factual information, referred to Black people in such a blatantly derogatory manner is a clear indication of this. In regards to Jefferson, his piece is particularly interesting because it shows that even a person who stood opposed to slavery could still hold very deep, racist convictions. Despite the fact that Jefferson saw slavery as an abomination that had to be eradicated, he believed that the mental and physical inferiority of Negroes was a simple fact of Nature. Thus, even an influential thinker who sympathized with the Negroes still believed them to be utterly inadequate. Morton, a man who was supposed to be an objective scientist, is a profound example of someone who was so convinced of a natural racial hierarchy that he seemingly unknowingly tampered with the results of his experiments in order for them to validate his racist beliefs. This kind of acceptance of the supposed fact that Black people, and other people who were not White, were inferior to Whites had an enormous impact on how many Whites would come to view other people who they did not view as being like themselves. It also gave many Whites a desire to provide absolute proof in justification for why they had the racist beliefs that they did. They needed unquestionable evidence that racial hierarchy was in fact a law of nature.

Chapter 5: Scientific Validation

This chapter will discuss how people obtained scientific justification for their racist beliefs. It will be shown that when Charles Darwin published his book On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, it had an enormous impact on how people viewed race. Many people found his theory of Natural Selection to be quite sound and thus they began applying it to the existence of different races. This gave rise to the conception of Social Darwinism. Under the precepts of Social Darwinism, it was argued that competition between people of different races (and sometimes social classes) was natural and that in this competition, it was inevitable that the strong would come to dominate and the weak would come to be dominated; it was after all in congruence with a biological fact. Thus, in many regards, racial inequality came to be viewed as something that fell in line with the natural laws of nature; before the emergence of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection many people did have this kind of sentiment, but Darwin's theory gave them a valid scientific premise on which they could rest their racist beliefs. This led to many scientists and writers offering scientific proofs and explanations as to why the White race was superior to every other race on Earth.

It certainly could be said that the arguments given in Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life gave people the indisputable proof that they were looking for. In his work, Darwin made the claim that "if variations useful to any organic being do occur, assuredly individuals thus characterized will have the best chance of being preserved in the struggle for life; and from the strong principle of inheritance they will tend to produce offspring similarly characterized".²²³

²²³ Charles Darwin, Chapter 4, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/origin.html> (accessed 19 March 2013).

This, according to Darwin, was the process of Natural Selection; according to this principle, organisms with favorable characteristics are able to outperform (and thus outlive) other organisms that do not have all the characteristics that are needed for them to survive.²²⁴ Darwin alluded to this where he made the claim that “Natural selection [...] leads to divergence of character and to much extinction of the less improved and intermediate forms of life”.²²⁵ For Darwin, this “divergence of character” is very important in that “during the modification of the descendants of any one species, and during the incessant struggle of all species to increase in numbers, the more diversified these descendants become, the better will be their chance of succeeding in the battle of life”.²²⁶ Thus, Darwin believed that Natural Selection is a means through which organisms are perpetually struggling to stay alive and improve themselves; through this struggle, Nature also improves and replenishes itself as a whole. Darwin summed this up where he made the statement that “as buds give rise to fresh buds, and these, if vigorous, branch out and overtop on all sides many a feebler branch, so by generation I believe it has been with the great Tree of Life, which fills with its dead and broken branches the crust of the earth, and covers the surface with its ever branching and beautiful ramifications”.²²⁷

Something that Darwin really stressed in his work was the element of competition that often exists between different organisms. This was a large part of the reason why he referred to life as being a “Struggle for Existence”;²²⁸ often times, members of the same species have to compete with each other in order to get access to the most vital of resources. For example, Darwin pointed out that “two canine animals in a time of dearth, may be truly said to struggle

²²⁴ Darwin, Chapter 4, *On the Origin of Species*.

²²⁵ Darwin, Chapter 4, *On the Origin of Species*.

²²⁶ Darwin, Chapter 4, *On the Origin of Species*.

²²⁷ Darwin, Chapter 4, *On the Origin of Species*.

²²⁸ Charles Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/origin.html> (accessed 19 March 2013).

with each other which shall get food and live”.²²⁹ Similarly, Darwin claimed that “a plant which annually produces a thousand seeds, of which on average only one comes to maturity, may be more truly said to struggle with the plants of the same and other kinds which already clothe the ground”.²³⁰ In regards to mistletoes, Darwin claimed that even they undergo a struggle for existence in that “several seedling [mistletoes], growing close together on the same branch, may more truly be said to struggle with each other”.²³¹ Furthermore, Darwin pointed out that “as the [mistletoe] is disseminated by birds, its existence depends on birds; and it may metaphorically be said to struggle with other fruit-bearing plants, in order to tempt birds to devour and thus disseminate its seeds rather than those of other plants”.²³² As Darwin saw it, this kind of competition was an essential feature of life here on Earth because “as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life”.²³³ Thus, “although some species may be now increasing, more or less rapidly, in numbers, all cannot do so, for the world would not hold them”.²³⁴ In regards to all of this, Darwin claimed that “all that we can do, is to keep steadily in mind that each organic being is striving to increase at a geometrical ratio” and “that each at some period of its life, during some season of the year, during each generation or at intervals, has to struggle for life, and to suffer great destruction”.²³⁵ As Darwin saw it, people can “console [themselves] with

²²⁹ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³⁰ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³¹ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³² Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³³ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³⁴ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³⁵ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

the full belief, that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply”.²³⁶

In his piece titled, “Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race”, Rutledge M. Dennis highlighted the implications that Darwin’s discoveries had had for the way in which people came to view race. As he saw it, people used Darwin’s scientific principles as a means to provide scientific validation for their racist beliefs and practices; this of course was Social Darwinism. Something that Dennis pointed out is that even “before the suppositions of Social Darwinism enshrined the idea of European superiority as a key feature of natural evolution and selection, the association between color (race) and intellectual predisposition had long been a topic for discussion among many European thinkers”.²³⁷ Thus, the emergence of Darwin’s scientific principles proved to be very useful to these thinkers in that before Darwin’s theory of Natural Selection, “the racist logic of these thinkers, though mostly declarative and deeply rooted in the idea of European supremacy and ‘colored’ inferiority, lacked a grand and global philosophical and political framework within which it could logically operate”.²³⁸ According to Dennis, “though Darwin focused primarily on the biological evolution of animal species and almost never addressed the cultural or social consequences of [the] evolution for humans, others like Herbert Spencer, who first coined the phrase ‘survival of the fittest,’ reasoned that Darwinist principles were intended to buttress the case that biological evolution could be equally applicable to human societies”.²³⁹ As Spencer saw it, “human societies, like biological species, operate according to the principles of natural selection, are governed by competition and fitness, and evolve from an undifferentiated (homogeneous) and primitive state

²³⁶ Darwin, Chapter 5, *On the Origin of Species*.

²³⁷ Rutledge M. Dennis, “Social Darwinism, and the Metaphysics of Race,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 64, no.3 (1995), 244.

²³⁸ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²³⁹ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

to one of differentiation (heterogeneity) and progress”.²⁴⁰ It was his belief that “those too weak or ill-equipped to compete, or those who are unwilling and unable to do so [...] ought not to be given an artificial boost to keep them on Nature’s battlefield”.²⁴¹ Thus , it was “Spencer’s belief that racial conflict was the key to social progress because it entailed a ‘continuous over-running of the less powerful or less adapted by the more powerful or more adapted, a driving of inferior varieties into undesirable habitats, and occasionally, an extermination of inferior varieties’”.²⁴² According to Dennis, Spencer’s “great fear was that governments would intervene to keep the less powerful afloat with artificial devices such as social welfare policies, thereby upsetting Nature’s natural selection process”.²⁴³

Dennis also focused in on a man named William Graham Sumner, who was the nation’s most prominent Social Darwinist during the antebellum era of American history.²⁴⁴ Like Spencer, Sumner took the “ideas of *laissez-faire* government, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest and applied them to American society”.²⁴⁵ In regards to the slavery that existed within the United States, Sumner thought of it to be beneficial to mankind because it enabled those who were superior to focus on things that would ultimately help society to advance while it left the menial work to be done by those who were inferior.²⁴⁶ He took the position that “all individuals begin the competitive socioeconomic race on an equal footing” and that because of this “even if the competition is unequal or certain individuals are given an edge, [...] the element of chance, along with motivation and natural ability, were the deciding factors in determining an

²⁴⁰ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²⁴¹ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²⁴² Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²⁴³ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²⁴⁴ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²⁴⁵ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

²⁴⁶ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 244.

individual's or a group's fate".²⁴⁷ Given all of this, it was clear to Dennis that "Darwin's, Spencer's, and Sumner's views [...] helped to set the tone and mood for relations between the races as well as the classes in American society" and that "in their world views, talent and virtue were features to be identified solely with Europeans".²⁴⁸ Despite this, Dennis believed that none of these men were as racist as Karl Pearson and Benjamin Kidd, who were both Social Darwinists from the country of England.²⁴⁹ According to Dennis, both of these men "were territorial expansionists who viewed European, and especially English colonialism, imperialism, and other efforts to control the natural resources and people of distant continents as natural components of the Darwinist principles entailed in the struggle for existence, survival, and supremacy".²⁵⁰ As Dennis put it, "Kidd and Pearson saw English political, economic, and cultural control of 'inferior' races as not only necessary to England's political and economic survival, but also important for bringing civilization to the unenlightened".²⁵¹ According to Pearson's views, the fact that *all* Whites are superior meant even Whites who were poor had a part to play in the imperialist project and that "the very survival of Western civilization depended upon such a partnership".²⁵² As Dennis saw it, this kind of thinking was tolerated in both the United States and England because it was very much in accordance with these nations' foreign and domestic agendas.²⁵³ According to him, even "though England lacked the internal racial problems that existed in the United States, its vast empire required it to develop external racist colonial and imperialist policies based on Social Darwinist principles".²⁵⁴ With the United States

²⁴⁷ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 244, 245.

²⁴⁸ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 245.

²⁴⁹ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 245.

²⁵⁰ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 245.

²⁵¹ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 245.

²⁵² Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 245.

²⁵³ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 245.

²⁵⁴ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 246.

on the other hand, Social Darwinism was used to validate racism and the existence of laissez-faire economics practices.²⁵⁵

In his book titled Natural Selection and the Race Problem, which was published in the year 1905, Benjamin K. Hayes also drew his own conclusions about what sort of implications Darwin's theory had for different races of human beings. As Hayes saw it, "in a scientific discussion prejudice can have no place" and because he had this view he believed that White scientists who were analyzing people of other races had to forget that they were people of the White race analyzing people of other another race.²⁵⁶ In regards to Darwin's On the Origin of Species, Hayes said that "it was destined to become the most notable production of the nineteenth century" in that "it revolutionized human thought and [that] in the light of its teachings all institutions, both human and divine, had to be studied anew".²⁵⁷ According to Hayes, "the universal law of evolution had been announced by Herbert Spencer in the early fifties, but it was not until 1859, with the appearance of Darwin's book, that the theory of Natural Selection was born".²⁵⁸ Hayes made the observation that according to Darwin's theory, "the animal which is best able to meet conditions- best adapted to its environment, which, because of strength, color or habits, can procure its food or escape its enemies is the one which lives. This is 'The Survival of the Fittest'".²⁵⁹ Hayes went on to explain that "the survivor transmits its superior traits to its offspring, and the slight variability, added to by countless generations, finally evolves a new species".²⁶⁰ This, according to Hayes, is Natural Selection.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ Dennis, "Social Darwinism", 246.

²⁵⁶ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection and the Race Problem*, (Charlotte: Charlotte Medical Journal, 1905), 1, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/hays/hays.html> (accessed 19 Mar. 2013).

²⁵⁷ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 2.

²⁵⁸ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 2.

²⁵⁹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 4.

²⁶⁰ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 4.

Hayes believed that if people accepted “[Darwin’s] theory, [...] that all animal life descended from a few primitive forms, [they would be] able to trace, step by step, every stage in the development of the higher forms of life” (pg. 4).²⁶² For instance, Hayes believed that “no one can watch the antics of a chimpanzee without being impressed with its similarity in action and mentality to a four or five year old boy” (pg. 5).²⁶³ He pointed out that “at birth, and for some years after, Shakespeare had less intelligence than a monkey, while St. Paul knew less difference between right and wrong than a pointer dog”.²⁶⁴ Even though Hayes believed that if monkeys and dogs were given thorough training they would likely be able to make some advances, he held the position that “it is certain that a dog would never become a monkey, nor a monkey a man”.²⁶⁵ As he saw it, if dogs and monkeys were “left to themselves, it is doubtful if either dogs or monkeys would ever attain to a higher stage than that which they now occupy”.²⁶⁶ It was his belief “that the same law is operative when applied to the various races of men”.²⁶⁷

As Hayes saw it, “history is one continuous record of the struggle between races, nations and political parties”.²⁶⁸ It was his belief that in this struggle, Blacks had shown themselves to be completely and utterly inferior. Hayes touched upon this point where he made the statement that “at the dawn of history [the Black man] was fully developed, and during the past three thousand years he has not made one step of progress”.²⁶⁹ He also made the claim that “independently, [the Black race] has shown no power to advance” and that “the superiority of the American negro to his African brother, who is a savage and a cannibal, is due to slavery, and could have been

²⁶¹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 4.

²⁶² Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 4.

²⁶³ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 5.

²⁶⁴ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 5,6.

²⁶⁵ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 6.

²⁶⁶ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 6.

²⁶⁷ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 6.

²⁶⁸ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 7.

²⁶⁹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 8.

acquired in no other way”.²⁷⁰ Thus, Hayes believed that “the present attainment of the American negro has been solely the result of his close personal contact with the white man” and that it should not “be forgotten that most of the leaders of the negro race are men with “Anglo-Saxon blood in their veins who partake more of their Caucasian than of their Ethiopian lineage”.²⁷¹ From Hayes’ perspective, “left to itself, a negro population lapses into barbarism” and “the Republic of [Haiti] is an example of this”.²⁷² To him, it was clear that “just so far as personal contact with the whites has been withdrawn, to that extent has the negro retrograded”.²⁷³ Hayes thought that “it is a serious question if [the Black race] has not relapsed more during the past forty years [from when he wrote his book] by losing the intimate association of the white man”.²⁷⁴

In regards to the issue of why the White race “[cherished] in its bosom one of the humblest races of earth” (the Black race), Hayes stated that it was because there had never been a “Struggle for Existence” between the two races. As Hayes saw it, “the black man has never been a competitor, but has always been subservient to the white race. And just so long as he remains subservient his position is secure, and just so soon as he becomes a competitor his fate is sealed”.²⁷⁵ At the time Hayes wrote his piece, he did not feel that it was “necessary [for the Black man] to work for a white master, or remain a menial”.²⁷⁶ He argued that “in a country whose natural resources are underdeveloped, as [was] the case with the South, a man may serve a municipality or a State”.²⁷⁷ Thus, Hayes believed that “so long as the negro [rendered] this

²⁷⁰ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 8.

²⁷¹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 9.

²⁷² Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 9.

²⁷³ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 9.

²⁷⁴ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 9.

²⁷⁵ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 10.

²⁷⁶ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 10.

²⁷⁷ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 10.

service he is protected by the white man as a gardener protects his hot-house plants”.²⁷⁸ Even though Hayes held this position, he felt that “even here the Struggle for Existence is felt, for wherever you find a white man whose work brings him into competition with a negro, there you find a man who cherishes a bitter hatred of the entire negro race; and were it not for the protecting arm of the non-competing white man these rivals of the negro would [have turned] upon him in a single night”.²⁷⁹ From Hayes’ perspective, this was because “the negro [in his opinion, had] ceased to be the useful artisan of which the South [stood] solely in need, and [had] divided into two classes- those who [aspired] to social equality with the whites, and those who have retrograded, and because of crime and vagrancy, [had] become a menace to civilization”.²⁸⁰

Hayes believed that even “if every American negro could, by some miraculous power, be endowed with Prof. Du Bois’ scholarship, or if every tenth negro could have this priceless gift, the two races could no longer occupy the same soil” because “every page of human history points to the fact that one or the other would have to go, nor [could it be doubted] that the exodus would take place amid scenes of uproar and carnage”.²⁸¹ Even though Hayes refused to claim “that the white man would have a greater right to the soil than the negro, [or] that there would be any possible justification for the course that he would pursue”, he was “convinced that if the negro were in a position to make a contest for supremacy that the tragedy enacted with the Indian would be repeated”.²⁸² In other words, Hayes believed that if Blacks began to compete with Whites, the Black population would be ravaged, just like the Native American population was. Hayes argued that at the time he wrote his book, “there [had] been an awakening in the South” in that “her [...] advancement along industrial lines [had] been such as to excite the admiration and

²⁷⁸ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 11.

²⁷⁹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 11.

²⁸⁰ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 11.

²⁸¹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 12.

²⁸² Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 12.

wonder of the nation”.²⁸³ He pointed out that “Northern capital [had] turned in this direction” and that because of this “the resources of the South will be developed; great centers of wealth will gradually arise; every form of industry will be pursued; and there will be a rapid increase in population”.²⁸⁴ Despite all of these good things, Hayes felt that “save in the cotton fields of the far South, the negro [had] failed to meet the conditions” because “while his misdirected energies [had] been spent clamoring for social and political equality, the monopoly which for nearly three centuries he held upon Southern labor has slipped from his hands”.²⁸⁵ As Hayes saw it, “the time [was] not far distant when [Negroes would have to] enter upon a Struggle for Existence with men of Anglo-Saxon blood”.²⁸⁶

In regards to all of this, Hayes firmly believed “that the [Black and White races] cannot occupy the same soil on terms of equality”.²⁸⁷ He argued that “to do so the laws of nature must be changed, and race prejudice buried; the law of development broken, and savages changed into civilized men at a bound; the laws of Natural Selection rendered inoperative, and the weak contend equally with the strong in the Struggle for Existence”.²⁸⁸ This, according to Hayes, is utterly impossible. As he put it, “these laws will not be changed, and even while we are talking they are silently solving the problem”.²⁸⁹ Hayes believed that the Negro’s fate is sealed because American “civilization offers the negro alcohol, gambling hells and venereal diseases, but it does not give the power to resist temptation”.²⁹⁰ As Hayes saw it, “[American] civilization offers individual liberty, but liberty to the ignorant means license and crime”; it “offers industrial

²⁸³ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 16.

²⁸⁴ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 16.

²⁸⁵ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 16.

²⁸⁶ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 16.

²⁸⁷ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 17.

²⁸⁸ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 17.

²⁸⁹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 17.

²⁹⁰ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 18.

advancement but a refusal to comply with the conditions means poverty and disease”.²⁹¹ As Hayes saw it, the Negro race had failed to comply to these conditions time and time again. He believed that even though “the North regarded [the Negro race] as a down-trodden race, and took a peculiar interest in his welfare”, “this interest will not live through another generation” and “when these friends of the negro are gone, and sectional strife in this country shall have been forgotten, racial prejudice will live then as” it did during the time when Hayes wrote his piece.²⁹²

As Hayes saw it, the Black race was in trouble because according to him, their “death-rate [... was] already twice that of the whites as a whole, while in towns and cities it [was] nearly three times as great, and the proportion [was] constantly on the increase”.²⁹³ Again, Hayes believed that this supposed fact in conjunction with his observation that Negroes would soon have to “adjust [themselves] to a civilization which [they] cannot comprehend, and face racial prejudice where [they] formerly found sympathy and aid” would serve to put/keep them in a subservient position within American society.²⁹⁴ Hayes argued that this was totally natural in that “when freedom came it was inevitable that the strong, intelligent, law-abiding race should control the weak, ignorant, lawless race”.²⁹⁵ He touched upon this point where he made the claim that “history records no instance in which [the Black and White races] have become amalgamated, nor lived upon the same soil upon terms of equality; nor does it record an instance in which the African, by any course of training has become an integral part of an advanced civilization”.²⁹⁶ As Hayes saw it, is a simple fact that “the weak has ever been dominated by the

²⁹¹ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 18.

²⁹² Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 18.

²⁹³ Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 19.

²⁹⁴ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 19, 20.

²⁹⁵ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 20.

²⁹⁶ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 20.

strong, and where the strong cannot control it will destroy”.²⁹⁷ Thus, “as long as a weaker race will render service, it will be protected by the stronger, “but whenever and wherever the weaker becomes a competitor of the stronger, the Struggle for Existence will be brief, and the relentless hand of Natural Selection will place the weaker in the list of those that are numbered with the past”.²⁹⁸

In his piece that was already discussed earlier in this thesis, Rutledge M. Dennis pointed out even more effects that Darwin’s theory of Natural Selection had had on the minds of people who viewed it within a racial context. According to him, “during the last two decades of the 19th century, the belief in natural selection, racial purity, and racial struggle, elevated to a high level by the Social Darwinists, was given new emphasis by Francis Galton, the father of the eugenics movement”.²⁹⁹ In regards to the issue of whether it is heredity or a person’s environment that serves to “decisively [determine] individual characteristics”, Galton staunchly believed it to be heredity. As Dennis put it, “key to Galton’s hereditarian ethos was his view that society must dispense with the erroneous idea of natural equality among humans”.³⁰⁰ Galton’s “eugenics program encouraged childbearing among the ‘filter stock’ of Western society, namely its wealthy Anglo-Saxon upper classes; and discouraged it among those whom he considered ‘unfit,’ namely those of the lower classes and people of color”.³⁰¹ According to Dennis, Galton was so convinced of his own ideas that “in an effort to prove inherent differences between the social classes in England, [he] constructed a series of tests focusing primarily on sensory and motor skills assessments”.³⁰² Galton was not the only scientist with these kinds of objectives and as

²⁹⁷ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 20, 21.

²⁹⁸ Benjamin K. Hayes, *Natural Selection*, 21.

²⁹⁹ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰⁰ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰¹ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰² Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

Dennis pointed out, “the movement to scientifically ‘prove’ that hereditary factors were paramount to intellectual endowment was accelerated by the work of two Frenchman, Alfred Binet and Theophile Simon, who constructed the first practical intelligence test in 1905”.³⁰³

Dennis went on to state that “this instrument, the Binet-Simon Scale, was later modified and extended by Lewis Terman and his associates at Stanford University in 1916 to yield the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, one of the first to utilize the concept of the ‘intelligence quotient’ or IQ”.³⁰⁴ In regards to this, Dennis claimed that “the modern fascination with testing was partly a reflection of the growing scientism emerging among the academic disciplines , especially the social or human sciences, which were being challenged by those who viewed the techniques and methodologies of the natural sciences as a representative of ‘true’ or ‘hard’ science”.³⁰⁵ To many people, the “reliance on standardized tests such as Binet’s and other quantifiable assessments of intelligence was one way of proving that the social sciences could be as objective and impersonal as the study of chemistry or physics”.³⁰⁶ Despite this, many of the scientists who carried out these tests were quite biased in their “search for measures to validate Galton’s thesis of Anglo-Saxon superiority”.³⁰⁷ According to Dennis, “this idea, which sought validation under the rubric of Social Darwinism, was mainly an ‘after-the-fact’” assertion- that is, Anglo-Saxons were believed superior because they enjoyed political, economic, and cultural hegemony over non-Anglo-Saxon people”.³⁰⁸ Because of this, Dennis believed that the American standardized tests that were given to non-Anglo-Saxons “during the first two decades of the 20th century” were quite faulty and that “the manner in which the test scores of these

³⁰³ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰⁴ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰⁵ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰⁶ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰⁷ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

³⁰⁸ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246.

various immigrant and migrant groups were announced [...] attests to the racist nature of both the tests and their uses”.³⁰⁹ Thus, Dennis felt that “like Social Darwinism, the IQ testing movement did not create or cause racial discrimination or oppressive behavior; it simply enabled certain Whites to better justify long-standing ideological assumptions, policies, and oppressive behaviors. IQ tests thus became ideological weapons in the campaign to label certain persons so as to better exploit them”.³¹⁰

Evidently, Darwin’s Origins of Species had an enormous impact on how people in the United States and other parts of the Western world came to view race; many people regarded Darwin’s theories of Natural Selection and the Struggle for Existence as being scientifically sound and looked for ways that they could apply them to a racial hierarchy. This of course opened the door for scientific racism to begin to have a major influence on how people came to “objectively” view the world. With their acceptance of the “fact” that everything in the world was based on competition and that those who were at the bottoms of society were innately inferior competitors, scientists and thinkers like Galton, Binet, Simon, Sumner, Pearson, Kidd, Spencer, and Hayes found it easy to accept the notion that non-Whites were inherently inferior to Whites. As they saw it, their observations were representative of the facts about race because they were nothing more than mere reflections of something that Darwin had proved to be biologically true. This again, was an attempt by these scientists and thinkers to concretize race and make it something that could be viewed as being entirely objective. Under the guise of presenting objective, scientific information and statistics, many of them hoped to find a way that they could validate the racist beliefs that they themselves already had. With the “scientific” view of race that sprung out of Darwin’s observations about the world, races were not only viewed as

³⁰⁹ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 246, 247.

³¹⁰ Dennis, “Social Darwinism”, 247.

categories that could serve to define a person's essence, they were viewed as categories that were now scientifically valid. Thus, a person would have no need to feel sympathy or guilt for someone of an "inferior" race who was suffering from the evils of injustice and inequality; the difference in societal positions could simply be attributed to the laws of Nature. Furthermore, the "fact" that certain races of people were just innately inferior meant that trying to better their condition would be completely futile; their inferiority was viewed as being hereditary and thus incapable of being altered in any way. This of course gave racist societies all the more reason to neglect the "inferior"-raced people that lived within their borders. Evidently, the introduction of "hard" science into theories of racial hierarchy was an attempt on the part of racist scientists and thinkers to make the conception of different kinds of human beings entirely static; *scientifically* speaking, Whites would always be able to demonstrate their superiority and non-Whites would always demonstrate their inferiority (whether or not they wanted to).

Chapter 6: Deviations from the Statuesque

In this chapter, much attention will be given to anthropologists who refused to accept notions of Social Darwinism and scientific racism as proper ways of looking at the world. The anthropological outlooks of Franz Boaz, Ruth Benedict, and Ashley Montagu will be summarized and it will be shown how these anthropologists helped change the way others in the anthropological community viewed race by completely rejecting racist methods of classifying people. Indeed, all of these anthropologists believed that it was very important to take many different factors into consideration when analyzing the different groups of people on Earth; they by no means subscribed to the belief that race was something that could serve to fully define a human being. This kind of thinking began to gain popularity and it eventually helped lead to the demise of the race concept within the anthropological community.

Even though scientific racism did get to a point of being very popular in the United States and other parts of the Western world, there were a number of anthropologists who refused to view race strictly as a biological term. According to Rachael Caspari, Franz Boas was one of these anthropologists. In her piece titled “From types to Populations: A Century of Race, Physical Anthropology, and the American Anthropological Association”, Caspari made the claim that “the story of race in U.S. anthropology (including physical anthropology) cannot be discussed without reviewing the role of Boas and the [American Anthropological Association]”.³¹¹ As Caspari saw it, Boas is a very important figure in that “instead of accepting the assumptions of the race concept [at a time when many people did], he treated them as objects of inquiry”.³¹² According to her, Boas “wound up rejecting biological determinism rather early in the game, and, later, his work questioned the validity of human types, thus challenging the

³¹¹ Rachael Caspari, “From Types to Populations: A Century of Race, Physical Anthropology, and the American Anthropological Association,” *American Anthropologist* 105, no. 1 (2003), 68.

³¹² Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 68.

essentialism at the core of the race concept”.³¹³ As Caspari put it, Boas’ “strongest contributions to physical anthropology were statistical, which he applied to studies of metric human variation”;³¹⁴ “a major outcome of these studies was his appreciation of the importance of variation, which he used later to critique the idea of racial types”.³¹⁵ In fact, “as early as 1894, [Boas] explicitly rejected racial determinism of culture: ‘Historical events appear to have been much more potent in leading races to civilization than their faculty, and it follows that achievements of races do not warrant us to assume that one race is more highly gifted than another’”.³¹⁶ Indeed, “before the Turn of the Century, [Boas] was looking at human variation in nonracial ways, more interested in the impact of the environment (including culture) on biology than the effect of biology (race) on culture”.³¹⁷ According to Caspari, Boas’ “most famous work regarding race was [a study] performed between 1908-10 on head shape in U.S. immigrants” in which “he found changes in head form that undermined the dogma of the stability of racial types and the European focus on head shape as a major indicator of race”.³¹⁸ Thus, “through his work on racial questions, Boas challenged both biological determinism and the nature of racial categories, two critical components of the race concept”.³¹⁹

Herbert S. Lewis also discussed Franz Boas in his piece titled “The Passion of Franz Boas”. According to Lewis, Boas had several “ideals” that he tried to live up to;³²⁰ for example, “Boas believed in the pursuit of ‘truth’ through the science of anthropology” and “recognized that all premises, conclusions, and beliefs are- and by their very nature must be- subject to

³¹³ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 68.

³¹⁴ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 68.

³¹⁵ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 68.

³¹⁶ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 69.

³¹⁷ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 69.

³¹⁸ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 69.

³¹⁹ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 69.

³²⁰ Herbert S. Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas,” *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 2 (2001), 450.

criticism, challenge, modification, and further interpretation”.³²¹ Boas, as Lewis put it, also “believed [...] that anthropology-science- could be used to improve the human condition by lessening the reign of the unknown and ignorance” and that it also could be utilized “as a tool with which to fight for the rights of the oppressed and the mistreated”.³²² As Lewis stated, Boas was a lover of intellectual liberty in that “he insisted upon freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression and was devoted to the idea that a person should develop his or her own ‘innate powers’ and should be a thinking, independent individual”.³²³ For Lewis, it was clear that Boas did not ascribe to racism in that “he fervently believed in the absolute value of equal rights and equal opportunity for all individuals and peoples”.³²⁴ On the contrary, “he hated classifying and lumping people into categories and insisted upon the importance of individuality”.³²⁵ And “although [Boas] argued strenuously against the assumption that one’s own culture (American, German, ‘western’, or any other) was superior to others, he did not, as a result, argue that one should suspend judgment on matters of ultimate values”.³²⁶ As Lewis put it, Boas “was not an ethical relativist but believed fervently in the pursuit of these values”.³²⁷

Something that Lewis made quite clear is that “when Boas began his work in America, evolutionism was the dominant (even ‘hegemonic’) paradigm in anthropology, sociology, and political economy”.³²⁸ Lewis also pointed out that “in addition to evolutionism, racial determinism and Social Darwinism were also in the ascendance and these touched the emotions

³²¹ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 450.

³²² Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 450.

³²³ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 450.

³²⁴ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 451.

³²⁵ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 451.

³²⁶ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 451.

³²⁷ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 451.

³²⁸ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

and socioeconomic interests of American and European elites even more”.³²⁹ Despite the fact that “this was the era of the passage of Jim Crow laws, racial segregation, and anti-black and antiforeigner agitation”, “Boas, a new immigrant, virtually all alone, started to combat all of these from the very beginning of his career, drawing upon his view of humanity and on his science”.³³⁰ According to Lewis, “Boas’ attack on evolutionism, in addition to its theoretical and technical aspects, involved an attempt to establish the common humanity of ‘primitive man’ in scientific and popular discourse”.³³¹ Boas wanted to “to remove the supposed gap between ‘our’ minds and ‘theirs’”.³³² In fact, Boas stated himself that “there is no fundamental difference in the ways of thinking of primitive and civilized man. A close connection between race and personality has never been established”.³³³ Boas “also argued that ‘achievements of races do not warrant us to assume that one race is more highly gifted than another’” and “that civilizations are a product of history, including diffusion and chance, rather than biology”.³³⁴ As Boas saw it, “each ‘race’ contains so much variation within it that the average differences between it and others are much less than each contains within itself; and that racial prejudice is ‘the most formidable obstacle to a clear understanding’ of these problems”.³³⁵ Thus, it is clear that Boas wanted societies like the United States to have a “greater tolerance of other ‘forms of civilization’ and sympathy for ‘foreign races’ so that, ‘as all races have contributed in the past to cultural progress in one way or another, so they will be capable of advancing the interests of mankind, if we are only willing to give them a fair opportunity’”.³³⁶

³²⁹ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³⁰ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³¹ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³² Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³³ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³⁴ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³⁵ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

³³⁶ Lewis, “The Passion of Franz Boas”, 453.

Another anthropologist who did not accept racial essentialist views was Ruth Benedict. In the piece titled “Ruth Benedict Anthropological Folklorist”, Virginia Wolf Briscoe discussed Benedict’s stance on issues like race. According to Briscoe, Benedict had the “assumption [...] that if we became truly educated cultural relativists, aware of the enormous variety of behavioral options open to mankind and no longer limited solely to those of our own cultures, we would then be freer to discard the undesirable traits of our own making”.³³⁷ Indeed, Benedict was herself “trained by Boas in strict empirical observation” and came to have very similar views to her mentor.³³⁸ As Briscoe put it, “although Benedict saw the dominant pattern of a given culture to be innate to it, she denied that it was biologically based or genetically transmitted”.³³⁹ According to Briscoe, Benedict’s “rejection of the thesis of biological determination of culture had a still more important corollary in Benedict’s thought, that is, that her focus should not be the individual in his culture but the culture in which the individual pursued his own ends”.³⁴⁰ Evidently, the effects of culture played a very prominent role in Ruth Benedict’s conception of human societies. From her perspective, “although the intention of a community could be present within the structure of every institution in [a] society, that was not necessarily the case, for societies were seen to be involved in a dynamic process of constant adaptation, selecting, rejecting, reworking traits to fit the model with some societies achieving a greater level of integration around a single dominant theme than others”.³⁴¹ Because of this, Benedict viewed “social institutions [...] as potential modalities for the transmission of [a] dominant culture pattern”.³⁴² For her, “the dominant ideas of [a] culture, its social system and principal cultural

³³⁷ Virginia Wolf Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict Anthropological Folklorist,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 92, no. 366 (1979), 446.

³³⁸ Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict”, 448.

³³⁹ Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict”, 449.

³⁴⁰ Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict”, 450.

³⁴¹ Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict”, 451.

³⁴² Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict”, 451.

expressions, were imbedded in the members of that culture and caused them to share a certain world view, set of values, and identity”.³⁴³

In her piece titled “Race: What it is not”, Ruth Benedict spoke specifically about her views on race. In regards to race, Benedict made the statements that the “Chinese have a yellowish skin and slanting eyes”, that “Negroes have a dark skin and wide flat noses”, and that “Caucasians have a lighter skin and high thin noses”.³⁴⁴ As she saw it, “the color and texture of the hair of these peoples differ as much as do their skin and noses” and all of these physical characteristics are the “outward and visible signs by which we recognize race; they [for Benedict,] are racial characteristics”.³⁴⁵ According to Benedict’s view, race is something that is real and “when we talk about race we are talking about (1) heredity and (2) traits transmitted by heredity which characterize all the members of a related group”.³⁴⁶ Something that Benedict believed is that “the first necessity in discussing race is to outline what race is *not*”.³⁴⁷ As she put it, “a great deal of the confusion about race comes from confusing hereditary traits with traits which are socially acquired”.³⁴⁸ Language, for Benedict, is one of those traits. As Benedict saw it, “a man’s hereditary features and the language he speaks depend on two different sets of circumstances” and “if not even a man’s speech organs account for the language he speaks, still less do racial features like skin colour, cephalic index, eyes, and hair determine his mother tongue”.³⁴⁹ To give a real world example of this, Benedict mentioned the fact that “the Negroes in America speak English or Spanish or Portuguese or French, depending upon the language of

³⁴³ Briscoe, “Ruth Benedict”, 457.

³⁴⁴ Ruth Benedict, “Race: What it is not,” in *Theories of Race and Racism: Reader*, ed. Les Black and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2000), 113.

³⁴⁵ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 113.

³⁴⁶ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 113.

³⁴⁷ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 113.

³⁴⁸ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 113.

³⁴⁹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 113.

the country in which they live”.³⁵⁰ This, for Benedict, was clear proof of the fact that language could not be used to identify a person’s race.

Something else for Benedict that serves to differentiate race from language is that “racial types maintain themselves over longer periods and over greater areas than language does”.³⁵¹ As she saw it, “people of the same racial type commonly speak several languages which cannot be reduced to a common linguistic family”.³⁵² To exemplify this point, Benedict focused in on the term “Aryan”. According to her, “*Aryan*, the term [which was] used in Germany for the preferred race, is the name of a group of languages which includes the Sanskrit of ancient India and languages of ancient Persia”.³⁵³ She also pointed out that “*Aryan* has also been commonly used as a term covering a much larger group of languages, the Indo-European, which includes not only Sanskrit and Old Persian but German, English, Latin, Greek, Armenian, and Slavic”.³⁵⁴ Because of this, Benedict felt that “in whichever sense *Aryan* is used, it is a language term and has no reference to a peculiar German racial heritage”.³⁵⁵ Thus even though “the Nazis, when they selected the term, were obviously thinking of it in the latter sense of *Indo-European*”, “the people speaking Indo-European languages have no unity of racial type either in skin, in eye or hair colour, in cephalic index or in stature”.³⁵⁶ This of course was all linked to Benedict’s assertion that “the fundamental reason why language cannot be equated with race is that language is learned behavior, and race is a classification based on hereditary traits”.³⁵⁷ As

³⁵⁰ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 113.

³⁵¹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 114.

³⁵² Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 114.

³⁵³ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 114.

³⁵⁴ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 114.

³⁵⁵ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 114.

³⁵⁶ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 114.

³⁵⁷ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

Benedict saw it, “language is only one special instance of how learned behavior varies in mankind without relation to physical type”.³⁵⁸

According to Benedict, “culture is the sociological term for learned [behavior] : [behavior] which in man is not given at birth, which is not determined by his germ cells [...] but must be learned anew from grown people by each new generation”.³⁵⁹ As she saw it, “the degree to which human achievements are dependent on this kind of learned [behavior] is man’s great claim to superiority over all the rest of creation; he has been properly called ‘the culture-bearing animal’”.³⁶⁰ For Benedict, “this non-biological transmission is a great advantage in that it allows for much greater adaptability to circumstances but it progressively lessens the importance of biologically transmitted [behavior]”.³⁶¹ People, according to Benedict, are quite subject to change in that “the great aggressors of yesterday [can] become the mild peace-lovers of today”.³⁶² As an example of this, she focused in on the nation of Japan. As Benedict pointed out, despite the fact that “Japan has a history of peace and non-aggression that cannot be matched in the Western World”, “since 1853 they [had] fought five times overseas and [were] well on their way to becoming one of the most aggressively warlike nations of the world”.³⁶³ In regards to the Japanese, Benedict felt that “their race [had] not changed, but their behavior [had]”.³⁶⁴ Thus, racial identity, as Benedict saw it, does not serve to define how it is a racial group chooses to conduct itself in the world.

³⁵⁸ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

³⁵⁹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

³⁶⁰ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

³⁶¹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

³⁶² Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

³⁶³ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115, 116.

³⁶⁴ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 115.

As Benedict saw it, there are no societies that are completely composed of one pure race. According to her, “the more we know about the fortunes and the vicissitudes of any civilization, the less it proves to be the peculiar offspring of an unmixed race”.³⁶⁵ From her perspective, “the great social truth made clear by archaeology is that culture lives on and maintains itself though the race perish”. The reality, as she saw it, is that “the archaeologist looking back over the long centuries sees, not the destruction of [a] civilization when one racial carrier was superseded, but the continuity of its history in the hands of one racial type after another”.³⁶⁶ For instance, Benedict claimed that “the growth of human civilization in the European Palaeolithic (Old Stone) Age has a cultural, but not racial, continuity”.³⁶⁷ In regards to this, Benedict said that “this lack of racial continuity in the small corner of Europe during the prehistory is better established for Europe than for other parts of the world because the archaeology of Europe is better known, but all that prehistoric research is uncovering in Africa, in Asia, and in Central America tells the same story”.³⁶⁸ Benedict took this assertion even further by making the claim that “essential cornerstones of [Western] civilization are the inventions of other races”.³⁶⁹ She said that even though people “[described] this civilization of ours as built on steel and gunpowder”, “steel was invented either in India or in Turkestan, and gunpowder in China”.³⁷⁰ She then went on to say that even though “we prefer to identify our Western culture by its printing presses and literateness”, “paper and printing were both borrowed from China”.³⁷¹ As Benedict saw it, even “our economic life with its great concentration of population is based on the cultivation of grains and of animals which are Neolithic inventions from Asia”. She also pointed out that “algebra was

³⁶⁵ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁶⁶ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁶⁷ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁶⁸ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁶⁹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁷⁰ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁷¹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

a method of calculation [which was] borrowed by Europeans from Asiatic peoples”.³⁷² Benedict made mention of all of this in order to make the point that “wherever we look, the truth is forced upon us that many different races have contributed to the growth of our culture, and that when we hold culture as the constant, race is a variable”.³⁷³

As Benedict saw it, “a race does not move forward as a whole”.³⁷⁴ She buttressed this claim by pointing out that while “some groups of Arabs built up great states under Sultans with regal [splendor where] the arts and sciences flourished, and they were in the vanguard of the civilization of their day”, “other members of the same race were simple Bedouins following their herds from pasturage to pasturage”.³⁷⁵ Thus, race, for Benedict, “is not a touchstone by which civilized people can be separated from uncivilized”.³⁷⁶ On the contrary, “rude people of barbarian ancestry have shown themselves to be abundantly able to adopt the highest extant civilizations and to contribute to their development”.³⁷⁷ Because of this, Benedict believed that “history cannot be written as if it belonged to one race alone”.³⁷⁸ As she saw it, “civilization has been gradually built, now out of the contributions of one race, now of another”.³⁷⁹ Thus, “the lesson of history is that pre-eminence in cultural achievement has passed from one race to another, from one continent to another; it has embraced not whole ‘races’ but certain fragments of an ethnic group which were for certain historical reasons [favorably] situated at the moment”.³⁸⁰ For Benedict, no race of people can claim to be superior because “individuals of

³⁷² Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 116.

³⁷³ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁷⁴ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁷⁵ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁷⁶ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁷⁷ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁷⁸ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁷⁹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 117.

³⁸⁰ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 118.

whatever race [...] have often left their names enrolled in history”.³⁸¹ Since this had “happened in Mesopotamia, in China, in India, in Egypt, in Greece, in Rome, and in England” it is evident (from Benedict’s perspective) that “no racial type has a monopoly of high culture”.³⁸² As Benedict saw it, “human history is a vastly more complicated thing than a mere record of the distribution of anthropomorphic measurements, and cultural achievements are not mechanically transmitted and guaranteed by any racial inheritance”.³⁸³

Ashley Montagu was also an anthropologist who did not believe that an essentialist view of race was valid. As he put it in his paper titled “The Concept of Race”, it would “be better if the term ‘race’ [was] altogether abandoned”.³⁸⁴ According to him, it is “clear that man’s cultural activities have introduced elements into the process of human racion which have so substantially modified the end-products that one can no longer equate the processes of racion in lower animals with those which have occurred in the evolution of man”.³⁸⁵ Montagu made the argument that while “the factors of mutation, natural selection, drift, isolation, have all been operative in the evolution of man”, “so have factors as ever-increasing degrees of mobility, hybridization, and social selection, and it is the effects of these and similar factors which [...] makes the employment of the term ‘race’ inapplicable to most human populations as we find them today”.³⁸⁶ In regards to why the term “race” should not be used, Montagu said that “we do not want a prejudiced term which injects meanings which are not there into the differences. We want a term which as nearly mirrors the conditions as a term can, not one which falsifies and

³⁸¹ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 118.

³⁸² Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 118.

³⁸³ Benedict, “Race: What it is not”, 118.

³⁸⁴ Ashley Montagu, “The Concept of Race,” *American Anthropologist* 64, no. 5 (1962), 919.

³⁸⁵ Montagu, “The Concept”, 919.

³⁸⁶ Montagu, “The Concept”, 919.

obfuscates the issue”.³⁸⁷ As Montagu saw it, this is precisely what a term as convoluted as “race” does; it attaches a myriad of false meanings to people and this only leads to more confusion. Thus, since Montagu felt that “it is rather more desirable to allow the conditions or facts to determine the meaning of the terms by which we shall refer to them, than to have pre-existing terms determine the manner in which they shall be perceived and ordered”, he asserted that the term “race” has to be done away with.³⁸⁸

According to Montagu, “the term ‘race’ has a long and tortured history”.³⁸⁹ As he saw it, the word was used (during the time he wrote his piece) as a way to refer to “a subdivision of a species the members of which resemble each other and differ from other members of the species in certain traits”.³⁹⁰ He argued that with this sort of paradigm, “physical type, heredity, blood, culture, nation, personality, intelligence, and achievement are all stirred together to make the omelet which is the popular conception of ‘race’”.³⁹¹ In regards to the term “race”, Montagu made the argument that it “is a particularly virulent term, the epidemiology of which is far better understood by the social scientist than by the biologist- who should, therefore, exercise a little more caution than he usually does when he delivers himself on the subject”.³⁹² Something that Montagu pointed out in his piece is that “the difficulty with taking over old terms in working with problems to which they are thought to apply is that when this is done we may also take over some of the old limitations of the term, and this may affect our approach to the solution of those problems”.³⁹³ Thus, “what the investigator calls ‘the problem of human races’ is immediately

³⁸⁷ Montagu, “The Concept”, 919.

³⁸⁸ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁸⁹ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹⁰ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹¹ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹² Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹³ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

circumscribed and delimited the moment he uses the word ‘races’”.³⁹⁴ Montagu felt that this is the case because to the investigator, “‘race’ implies something very definite [...], something which in itself constitutes a solution, and the point [that Montagu wanted to make] is that far from the problem meaning something like a solution to him, it should, on the contrary, constitute itself in his mind as something more closely resembling what it is, namely, a problem requiring investigation”.³⁹⁵ In regards to Montagu, his “chief objection to the term ‘race’ with reference to man is that it takes for granted as solved problems which are far from being so and tends to close the mind to problems to which it should always be open”.³⁹⁶

As Montagu saw it, “it is simply not possible to redefine words with so longstanding a history of misuse as ‘race’, and for this, among other cogent reasons, [he thought that] it is ill-advised”.³⁹⁷ Montagu felt that “for this reason alone it would appear to [be] unwise to afford scientific sanction to a term which is so embarrassed by false meanings as is the term ‘race’”.³⁹⁸ In regards to the objection that a “race” should be viewed as “a population which happens to differ from other populations in the frequency of one or more genes”, Montagu responded with the question: “Why call such populations ‘races’ when the operational definition of what they *are* is sharply and clearly stated in words used to convey what we mean, namely, populations which differ from one another in particular frequencies of certain specified genes?”.³⁹⁹ Again, Montagu believed that the term “race” is dangerous because as he saw it, “when men make a heavy investment in words they are inclined to treat them as property, and even to become

³⁹⁴ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹⁵ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹⁶ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

³⁹⁷ Montagu, “The Concept”, 923.

³⁹⁸ Montagu, “The Concept”, 923.

³⁹⁹ Montagu, “The Concept”, 923.

enslaved by them, the prisoners of their own vocabularies”.⁴⁰⁰ As he put it, “taxonomies and terms should be designed to fit the facts, and not the facts forced into the procrustean rack of pre-determined categories”.⁴⁰¹ He thought that “if we are to have references, whether terminological or taxonomical, to existing or extinct populations of man, [...] the conditions as we find them [should] determine the character of our terms or taxonomies, and not the other way around”.⁴⁰²

Montagu held the position that “since what we are actually dealing with in human breeding populations are differences in the frequencies of certain genes”, a term like “genogroup” should be used to replace the word “race”.⁴⁰³ Montagu felt that “if necessary, we could [...] speak of ‘geographic genogroups,’ ‘local genogroups,’ and ‘microgenogroups’” to as substitutes to the term “race”.⁴⁰⁴ In regards to all of this, Montagu stated that a genogroup could be “defined as a breeding population which differs from other breeding populations of the species in the frequency of one or more genes”, a geographic genogroup could “be defined as a group of breeding populations characterized by a marked similarity of the frequencies of one or more genes” and a microgenogroup could be defined as “a partially isolated population with one or more gene frequency differences serving to distinguish it from adjacent or nonadjacent local genogroups”.⁴⁰⁵ Montagu then went on to point out that one should never make overgeneralized claims about geographic genogroups because “one or more of the genogroups in a geographic genogroup may have acquired their frequencies for a given gene quite independently of the other local populations comprising the geographic genogroup”.⁴⁰⁶ According to him, “this is a

⁴⁰⁰ Montagu, “The Concept”, 924.

⁴⁰¹ Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

⁴⁰² Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

⁴⁰³ Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

⁴⁰⁴ Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

⁴⁰⁵ Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

⁴⁰⁶ Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

possibility which is, perhaps, too often overlooked when comparisons are being made on the basis of gene frequencies between populations, whether geographic or not”.⁴⁰⁷

Montagu then went on to discuss “the advantages of the general term ‘ethnic group’”.⁴⁰⁸ As he saw it, the terms “race” and “ethnic group” are very different in that while “the layman’s conception of ‘race’ is so confused and emotionally muddled that any attempt to modify it would seem to be met by the greatest obstacle of all, the term ‘race’ itself”, “the term ‘ethnic group’ serves as such a challenge to thought and as a stimulus to rethink the foundations of one’s beliefs”.⁴⁰⁹ Thus, “the term ‘race’ takes for granted what should be a matter for inquiry” while the term ‘ethnic group’ does not.⁴¹⁰ In regards to the opposing positions that “one does not change anything by changing names” and that “re-education should be attempted by establishing the true meaning of ‘race,’ not by denying its existence”, Montagu made the assertion that, within his scheme, “the term ‘ethnic group’ is not offered as a substitute for ‘race’”.⁴¹¹ As he saw it, “the term ‘ethnic group’ implies a fundamental difference in viewpoint from that which is implied in the term ‘race’” in that “it is first and foremost an attempt to clarify the fact that the old term is unsound when applied to man, and should therefore not be used with reference to him”.⁴¹² Montagu went on to say that “at the same time ‘ethnic group,’ being an intentionally vague and general term, is designed to make it clear that there is a problem to be solved, rather than to maintain the fiction that the problem has been solved”.⁴¹³ According to him, racism cannot be eradicated without first eradicating the term race because “if one desires to remove a prevailing erroneous conception and introduce a more correct one, one is more likely to be

⁴⁰⁷ Montagu, “The Concept”, 925.

⁴⁰⁸ Montagu, “The Concept”, 926.

⁴⁰⁹ Montagu, “The Concept”, 926.

⁴¹⁰ Montagu, “The Concept”, 926.

⁴¹¹ Montagu, “The Concept”, 926.

⁴¹² Montagu, “The Concept”, 926.

⁴¹³ Montagu, “The Concept”, 926.

successful by introducing the new conception with a distinctively new term rather than by attempting redefinition of a term embarrassed by longstanding unsound usage”.⁴¹⁴ Thus, the main distinction between the term “ethnic group” and the term “race” is that “‘ethnic group’ is concerned with questions” while “the term ‘race’ is concerned with answers, unsound answers, where for the most part there are only problems that require to be solved before any sound answers can be given”.⁴¹⁵

Considering everything that has just been discussed, it is clear that anthropologists Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, and Ashley Montagu were all thinkers who did not view racism as being a valid viewpoint. As they saw it, there was no way that a person’s race could be used to define his/her inherent nature. On the contrary, it is quite clear that each one of them viewed the human species as being too complex to fit perfectly within a rigid, racial paradigm based solely on hierarchy. From their perspectives, there was no superior “race” and all peoples were capable of genius and virtue. This of course was not a very popular view at the time these anthropologists decided to share their opinions with the public; many scientists were still arguing for the existence of a natural racial hierarchy and many other people still had deep-seated racial intolerance that they thought to be perfectly justified. Despite this, Boas, Benedict, and Montagu all decided to share their views, which were for the most part, in direct opposition to the views of the masses. Thus, when very few people were willing to argue against the notions of the existence of a natural racial hierarchy and White superiority, these people took it upon themselves to change the way people viewed race; they helped expose other people to the view that the concept of race was in no way capable of being able to define a person’s essence or overall potential. Eventually, it was this kind of thinking that wound up changing the

⁴¹⁴ Montagu, “The Concept”, 927.

⁴¹⁵ Montagu, “The Concept”, 927.

anthropological culture in the United States and in other parts of the Western World. Gradually, anthropologists ceased focusing on the biological implications of race and began focusing more on its societal meanings/ implications.

Chapter 7: The Rejection of the Race Concept

In this brief chapter, a look will be taken at the details of how the concept of race came to be rejected within the anthropological community. The conflict that existed between different anthropologists, some of who believed in the validity of the race concept and some of those who didn't, will be highlighted and it will be shown how this conflict was eventually handled by the American Anthropological Association and the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

As Rachael Caspari mentioned in her piece (that was already discussed earlier in this thesis), “the very public rejection of race by many anthropologists in the 1960s was one of a number of responses, beginning in the 1930s, by the scientific community to racism in the larger society”.⁴¹⁶ According to her, “thinking about the race concept itself had evolved with the development of the modern synthesis in biology, and the application of its principles to human variation and evolution”.⁴¹⁷ Caspari continued to touch upon this where she mentioned that “several of [the synthesis’] architects, especially Ernst Mayr and Dobzhansky saw the populational thinking of the synthesis and emerging understandings of population genetics to be influential weapons in a war waged by science against public racism”.⁴¹⁸ This sort of view on race began to get more and more popular within the anthropological community and while “some anthropologists, as well as other scientists, had been active in antiracism campaigns since the early 1930s”, “an even larger group of scientists sought to undermine the scientific racism used to support opponents of the civil rights movement” during the 1960s.⁴¹⁹ During this period, the AAA (American Anthropological Association) “found itself pitted against groups seeking to

⁴¹⁶ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 71.

⁴¹⁷ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 71.

⁴¹⁸ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 71.

⁴¹⁹ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

influence public racial policy in the name of science”.⁴²⁰ People like Carleton Putnam, who was a racial essentialist, argued that “the AAA [was] a left-wing conspiracy that deliberately concealed the ‘truth’ about race” while others held firmly to the belief that Franz Boas was right in saying that there is no such thing as a natural racial hierarchy.⁴²¹

In the year 1962, Putnam published a book titled Race and Reason in which he argued for the utility of racial segregation. According to Caspari, this book, and other works that were like it, “consciously pitted the subdisciplines of anthropology against each other, claiming that ‘scientific’ anthropologists [...] rejected the dismissal of race and that they had *evidence* of racial inequality that made blacks undeserving of full citizenship”.⁴²² One of these anthropologists that provided the “facts” that racial segregationists would use to bolster their arguments was Carleton Coon. As Caspari put it, “Coon was very active behind the scenes of the segregationist cause through his association with Putnam and others”.⁴²³ In fact, he himself wrote a book titled The Origin of Races in the year 1962, in which he “suggested that five major races of humans evolved in parallel from *Homo erectus* at five different times and at different rates”.⁴²⁴ Coon “further suggested that each racial lineage crossed the *sapiens* ‘threshold’ at different times in prehistory and implied that the length of time each had been in the *sapiens* state was correlated with the level of ‘cultural achievement’ of different racial groups”.⁴²⁵ Thus, Coon himself “contended that Caucasoids and Mongolians crossed this threshold considerably earlier than Africans (Negroids and Capoids) and Australians (Australoids), a claim that clearly had social

⁴²⁰ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴²¹ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴²² Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴²³ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴²⁴ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 65.

⁴²⁵ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 65.

implications”.⁴²⁶ Considering this, it is quite apparent why Putnam used Coon’s views as a means to validate his book; they were both racists who believed in the innate superiority of the White race.

According to Caspari, Putnam’s writings in Race and Reason “had wide circulation; they were published in newspapers throughout the South, and there was even a ‘Putnam Letters Committee’ dedicated to raising funds to publish the letters in Northern newspapers, where they appeared as paid advertisements and were used as mass mailings of segregationist propaganda”.⁴²⁷ These kinds of “attacks from Putnam and other racists like Henry Garrett and Wesley George prompted resolutions on race from both the AAA in November 1961 and the AAPA[also known as the American Academy of Physician Assistants] in 1962”.⁴²⁸ While at “a press release on the 60th Annual Meeting of the AAA, Gordon Willey, then president of the AAA, called for a resolution in response to ‘publications on race and racial differences as a basis for social and political action’” and made the claim that works of this kind were not anthropological in nature and that they would not be seen as valid by the AAA.⁴²⁹ Indeed, “the resolution passed unanimously”.⁴³⁰ Not too long after this had happened, “the AAPA passed a resolution introduced by Stanley Garn that specifically condemned Race and Reason and the misuse of science within it”.⁴³¹ After the resolution had been passed, “Coon resigned from the presidency of the AAPA, claiming the resolution was inappropriate and that scientists should keep out of the integration issue”.⁴³² Thus, since this time period, “both the AAA and the AAPA

⁴²⁶ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 65.

⁴²⁷ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴²⁸ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴²⁹ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴³⁰ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴³¹ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴³² Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

have continued to deny anthropological identity to their intellectual descendants”.⁴³³ As they saw (and still do see) it, the concept of race is in no way provides a valid paradigm for making observations about the human species on a whole. In regards to this, Caspari stated that it was “because of evolutionary and genetic influences, [that] the newer generation of physical anthropologists grew up thinking about human variation in ways that were not (at least explicitly) racial”.⁴³⁴ Despite this, the study of racial anthropology has not been completely eradicated. On the contrary, there are still establishments, like the Pioneer fund, that still “[continue] to fund research meant to demonstrate human inequality”.⁴³⁵ Likewise, “articles ‘demonstrating’ racial inequality continue to be produced and funded by incarnations of the same foundations that supported similar work throughout the century”.⁴³⁶ Thus, even though the concept of race has officially been dismissed as being an inadequate and misleading term by most anthropologists, there are still a few of their rogue counterparts who beg to differ.

⁴³³ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴³⁴ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 73.

⁴³⁵ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

⁴³⁶ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 72.

Chapter 8: Social Constructionist Perspectives

With the rejection of the race concept by the vast majority of the anthropological community, anthropologists began to view race as being nothing more than a social construct. In this chapter, close attention will be paid to the work of Ian Hacking who discussed social construction in his The Social Construction of What? and also developed a categorization of the different kinds of social constructionists. After this, the arguments of W.E.B Du Bois, who believed that the concept of race had great social importance, will be summarized. The debate that Du Bois' work has caused will be examined and the views of Lucius T. Outlaw, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Robert Gooding-Williams will be examined as well. The views of each of these men will then be classified under Hacking's scheme of different kinds of social constructionist approaches.

After the rejection of the race concept within the anthropological community, people began to come to the conclusion that the realities of race are far more social than they are natural; they started to reject the notion that the divisions between different races are biologically absolute and they began making the claim that race is a social construction. In The Social Construction of What? , Ian Hacking provides a detailed analysis of the social constructionist perspective(s). Hacking shows that claiming or concluding that something is socially constructed is hardly ever simple as it might seem; before one can justifiably make this claim, one must have a good grasp of the complexities of a social construction and how it can manifest itself in a variety of different ways. As Hacking put it, “people begin to argue that X is socially constructed precisely when they find that” “in the present state of affairs, X is taken for granted; X appears to be inevitable”.⁴³⁷ A very likely reason why people would desire to argue that X is by no means

⁴³⁷ Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (The United States of America: First Harvard University Press, 2001). 12.

“inevitable” is because they view X as something that has a negative impact on society, and they also view X as something that did not necessarily have to exist at all let alone exist in the way that it does now. Thus, by claiming that X did not and does not always have to be the way it is (or was), many social constructionists hope to bring attention to how X can be viewed in order to make it possible for/ promote change; the process all starts by first showing that a particular social construction exists only because of certain contingencies.

A point that Ian Hacking reiterated is that often, the “X” that is being discussed is quite vague in that it may mean different things to different people. This is a problem because people cannot have meaningful discussions about a particular social construction if it is not first clearly established which social construction they are talking about. For instance, if two people were having a discussion about the social construction Z and one was talking about the idea of Z while the other person was talking about the actual people to whom this social construction applies, the two people would not be talking about the same thing (even though they both would be discussing Z). For example, if two people were having a discussion about the social construction of teenage mothers and one person was talking about the idea of teenage mothers while the other was talking about the actual people to whom this social construction applies, they would be talking about two different things. As Ian Hacking saw it, social construction is quite complicated and because of this, it is not enough to simply say that something is socially constructed; simplifying social construction may lead to the forming of a conception that fails to truly encapsulate how a supposed socially constructed thing functions in society. Ian Hacking summed this up nicely when he wrote: “if someone talks about the social construction of [a particular thing], they are likely talking about the idea, the individuals falling under the idea, the interaction between the idea and the people, and the manifold of social practices and institutions

that these interactions involve: the matrix, in short”.⁴³⁸ So to draw upon the example of teen moms again, if someone were to discuss the social construction of teen moms, he/she would be talking about the idea of teen moms, the actual people who are considered to be teen moms, the relationship that exists between the idea of teen moms and the actual people who are teen moms, and the institutions in which this relationship plays out. Indeed, taking this kind of approach to social construction is very important, especially when looking at something as complex as race. Social constructions are very intricate and the ways in which they impact people’s lives are multifaceted.

In The Social Construction of What? Hacking stated that when someone deems that a particular thing (X) is a social construction that several implications can follow: “that X is not inevitable; that X is a bad thing; and that the world would be a better place without X”.⁴³⁹ Not all social constructionists subscribe to all three of these claims about a particular social construction; different social constructionists consider different premises to be true when analyzing certain social constructions. According to Hacking’s scheme, there are 6 different versions of social constructionism that can be recognized as being distinct. These views are: historical, ironic, reformist, unmasking, rebellious, and revolutionary. Depending on what beliefs a social constructionist has about a particular social construction, he/she will fall into one of these categories. As will be soon shown, each brand of social construction is unique and has its own set of implications.

When one opts to analyze a social construction from a historical standpoint, he/she “presents a history of X and argues that X has been constructed in the course of social

⁴³⁸ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 34.

⁴³⁹ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

processes”.⁴⁴⁰ While he/she does come to the conclusion that “X is the contingent upshot of historical events”, he/she refrains from making any judgments about the social construction.⁴⁴¹ As Hacking put it in his book “a historical constructionist could be quite noncommittal about whether X is good or bad”.⁴⁴² So for example, a social constructionist who comes to realize that all the recognized nations of Earth exist only because of the occurrence of certain historical events, but refuses to make any value judgments about the existence of these nations (which are in themselves social constructions) would be assuming a historical view of the situation. When a person decides to have an “ironic attitude” about a social construction, he/she assumes the position that while X did not necessarily have to be the way it is, “we are nevertheless stuck with it” and that “it forms part of our way of thinking which will evolve, perhaps, in its own way, but about which we can do nothing much right now”.⁴⁴³ As Ian Hacking saw it, the historical and ironic “gradations of constructionist commitment” are very much related to each other because in both the historical and ironic conceptions of social construction, one realizes something is indeed a social construction, but does not deem it necessary to take any action towards changing the supposed social construction whatsoever.⁴⁴⁴ When one takes a historical approach to a social construction, he/she realizes that history played an essential role in how that particular construction came to materialize in the world. Again, a historical social constructionist sees that “X is the contingent upshot of historical events”.⁴⁴⁵ While he/she does acknowledge this, he/she does not necessarily feel that the social construction (X) should be altered. For the historical social constructionist, simply knowing the historical origins of a particular social construction is

⁴⁴⁰ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

⁴⁴¹ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

⁴⁴² Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

⁴⁴³ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

⁴⁴⁴ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

⁴⁴⁵ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

enough. Perhaps it may be safe to say that the ironic social constructionist takes things one step further than the constructionist whose view is historical in that under the lens of ironic social constructionism, an actual judgment is made about a particular social construction. With ironic social constructionism, a person comes to the conclusion that while a social construction (X) exists as it is simply because of history, there is simply nothing that we can do to change it (even though X may have its own share of problems). An example of this would be someone saying that while the nations that exist today only came to exist because of certain historical events and are in themselves social constructions, it does not necessarily mean that we can now live in a world in which there are no nations. Thus, the situation is perceived as being ironic in that while X did not have to affect people's realities the way that it does, it is a part of our realities nonetheless and we simply have to come to accept it.

When one assumes a reformist view of a particular social construction, he/she sees the social construction as something that is a bad for society in some respect; he/she believes that while "we have no idea at present how to live our lives without X", "we can at least modify some aspects of X, in order to make X less of a bad thing".⁴⁴⁶ The reformist notion of social construction is very different from historical or ironic notions of social constructionism in that it promotes looking at and analyzing social constructions for the purpose of changing how the negative aspects of these constructions affect people's lives. In fact, when one uses a reformist lens, he/she always takes the position that a particular social construction (X) is bad and does way more harm to society than it does good. Despite this, the reformist social constructionist realizes that the members of a particular society "have no idea at present how to live [their] lives

⁴⁴⁶ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

without X”.⁴⁴⁷ This is because they have always lived in an environment in which X has been a part of the accepted social reality. In spite of all this, the reformist still believes that X can be and should be altered in some way in order to deter many of the negative implications that it has for people’s lives. This way, X becomes “less of a bad thing”.⁴⁴⁸ Evidently, the reformist approach to social construction is far more proactive than the historical or ironic approach. With it, people are able to acknowledge that certain features of a particular social construction may be bad and they are actually encouraged by the possibility that they can actually do something about it.

When one ascribes to an “unmasking” view of a social construct, he/she “does not seek to refute [a social construct] but to undermine [it] by exposing the function [it serves]”.⁴⁴⁹ On the contrary, he/she does not feel the need to rigorously analyze a social construction in itself. Instead, the constructionist believes that by simply showing the (negative) function a particular social construction serves in society, it will serve “to strip it of a false appeal or authority”.⁴⁵⁰ A good example of unmasking social constructionism would be the study on head shape that Franz Boas, who was already discussed in this thesis, carried out between the years 1908-10. Again, Boas’ discoveries were quite impactful in that “he found changes in head form that undermined the dogma of the stability of racial types and the European focus on head shape as a major indicator of race”.⁴⁵¹ Thus, Boas’ findings helped lead people to the conclusion that race is not a brute fact of nature. The key thing to note about the unmasking form of social constructionism is that it operates based on the belief “that once one sees the ‘*extra-theoretical function*’ of an idea, it will lose its ‘practical effectiveness’”.⁴⁵² In other words, unmasking social constructionists

⁴⁴⁷ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

⁴⁴⁸ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 19.

⁴⁴⁹ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

⁴⁵⁰ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

⁴⁵¹ Caspari, “From Types to Populations”, 69.

⁴⁵² Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

believe that once people see how it is that a particular social construction functions to perpetuate an inadequate paradigm, they will eventually come to stop viewing the social construction as being valid. In his work, Hacking made it clear that unmasking social constructionism can be very much linked to reformist social constructionism. As he saw it, it is very possible for “a reformist [to be] an unmasker” and for “an unmasker... [to be a] reformist”.⁴⁵³ Likewise, a reformist social constructionist may also be an unmasking social constructionist. In both cases, a social constructionist views a particular social construction as something that is bad and needs to be addressed in some way (in order to prevent further negative impact on people’s lives).

Perhaps it would be safe to say that the most aggressive kinds of social constructionists can be classified as rebellious or revolutionary. Hacking states that a person who believes “that X is not inevitable; that X is a bad thing”, “that the world would be a better place without X” and that X can be eliminated would be considered to be rebellious and that a person “who moves beyond the world of ideas and tries to change the world in respect of X is revolutionary”.⁴⁵⁴ The social constructionist who is a revolutionary believes everything that the rebellious social constructionist does, but he/she is more of an activist than the rebellious social constructionist in that he/she actually “tries to change the world in respect of X”.⁴⁵⁵ Even though this is a pronounced difference between these two conceptions of social constructions, both the rebellious and the revolutionary outlooks are very, very similar to each other. In fact, it is quite clear that it would be possible for a social constructionist who was a revolutionary to also be a rebel. Something that be noted here is that both the rebellious and revolutionary outlooks on social

⁴⁵³ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

⁴⁵⁴ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

⁴⁵⁵ Hacking, *The Social Construction*, 20.

construction are quite aggressive: they both unashamedly want to rid a society (and possibly the world) of a particular social construction.

Issues of social constructionism certainly do arise in W.E.B Du Bois' essay titled "The Conservation of Races". There, Du Bois claimed that "the American Negro has always felt an intense personal interest in discussions as to the origins and destinies of races".⁴⁵⁶ Black Americans, from Du Bois' perspective, had such a preoccupation with race "primarily because back of most discussion of race with which [they are] familiar, have lurked certain assumptions as to [their] natural abilities, as to [their] political, intellectual and moral status, which [they] felt were wrong".⁴⁵⁷ Because of this, many of the American Negroes living in Du Bois' time felt "led to depreciate and minimize race distinctions, to believe intensely that out of one blood God created all nations, and to speak of human brotherhood as though it were the possibility of an already dawning to-morrow".⁴⁵⁸ Despite this, Du Bois felt that "in [their] calmer moments [Negroes had to] acknowledge that human beings are divided into races".⁴⁵⁹ As he saw it, the existence of races is something that is quite apparent throughout the world. He even went as far as to say that in the United States, "the two most extreme types of the world's races have met" and that because of this "the resulting problem as to the future relations of these types is not only intense and living interest to [Americans], but forms an epoch in the history of mankind".⁴⁶⁰

Something that Du Bois noted in his work is that "when [it came] to inquire into the essential difference of races", "it [is] hard to come at once to any definite conclusion".⁴⁶¹ He took

⁴⁵⁶ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," in *Theories of Race and Racism: Reader*, ed. Les Black and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2000), 79.

⁴⁵⁷ Du Bois, "On the Conservation", 79.

⁴⁵⁸ Du Bois, "On the Conservation", 79.

⁴⁵⁹ Du Bois, "On the Conservation", 79.

⁴⁶⁰ Du Bois, "On the Conservation", 79.

⁴⁶¹ Du Bois, "On the Conservation", 79.

note of the fact that “many criteria of race differences have in the past been proposed, as color, hair, cranial measurements and language”.⁴⁶² While Du Bois did feel that “all these physical differences are patent enough, and if they agreed with each other it would be very easy to classify mankind” he realized that “unfortunately... these criteria of race are most exasperatingly intermingled”.⁴⁶³ Du Bois expanded upon this point where he made the observation that “color does not agree with texture of hair, for many dark races have straight hair; nor does color agree with the breadth of the head, for the yellow Tartar has a broader head than the German”.⁴⁶⁴ For Du Bois, “the final word of science” in regards to the issue of race “is that [there are] at least two, perhaps three, great families of human beings- the whites and Negroes, possibly the yellow race”.⁴⁶⁵ It was Du Bois’ belief “that other races have arisen from the intermingling of these two”.⁴⁶⁶ Despite his belief in the existence of these races, Du Bois held the position that “so far as purely physical characteristics are concerned, the differences between men do not explain all the differences of their history”.⁴⁶⁷ From Du Bois’ perspective, as “great as is the physical unlikeness of the various races of men their likenesses are greater, and upon this rests the whole scientific doctrine of Human Brotherhood”.⁴⁶⁸

For Du Bois, “although the wonderful developments of human history teach that the grosser physical differences of color, hair and bone go but a short way toward explaining the different roles which groups of men have played in Human Progress”, “there are differences- subtle, delicate and elusive, though they may be- which have silently but definitely separated

⁴⁶² Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 79.

⁴⁶³ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁶⁴ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁶⁵ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁶⁶ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁶⁷ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁶⁸ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

men into groups”.⁴⁶⁹ He stated that “while these subtle forces have generally followed the natural cleavage of common blood, descent and physical peculiarities, they have at other times swept across and ignored these”.⁴⁷⁰ From Du Bois’ perspective, these subtle forces are very important in that “they have divided human beings into races, which, while they perhaps transcend scientific definition, nevertheless, are clearly defined to the eye of the Historian and Sociologist”.⁴⁷¹ Because of this, Du Bois felt that “the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races”.⁴⁷² As he saw it, the concept of race was so inextricably linked with human civilization that anyone “who ignores or seeks to override the idea of race idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history”.⁴⁷³

According to Du Bois, a race “is a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life”.⁴⁷⁴ He made the claim that there are “eight distinctly differentiated races, in the sense in which History tells us the word must be used”;⁴⁷⁵ these races are “the Slavs of eastern Europe, the Teutons of middle Europe, the English of Great Britain and America, the Romance nations of Southern and Western Europe, the Negroes of Africa and America, the Semitic people of Western Asia and Northern Africa, the [Hindus] of Central Asia and the Mongolians of Eastern Asia”.⁴⁷⁶ Du Bois also made the claim that there were some minor races which he said comprised of “the American Indians, the Esquimaux and the South

⁴⁶⁹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁷⁰ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁷¹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁷² Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁷³ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁷⁴ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 80.

⁴⁷⁵ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

⁴⁷⁶ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

Sea Islanders”.⁴⁷⁷ In regards to how distinctions are made between each of these races, Du Bois felt that it must be “[acknowledged] that physical differences play a great part, and that, with wide exceptions and qualifications, these eight great races of to-day follow the cleavage of physical race distinctions”.⁴⁷⁸ Du Bois elaborated on this where he pointed out that “the English and Teuton represent the white variety of mankind; the Mongolian, the yellow; the Negroes, the black”.⁴⁷⁹ While Du Bois did realize that physical features did have much correlation with racial divides he held the position that “no mere physical distinctions would really define or explain the deeper differences- the cohesiveness and continuity of these groups”.⁴⁸⁰ As he saw it, “the deeper differences are spiritual, psychical, differences- undoubtedly based on the physical, but infinitely transcending them”.⁴⁸¹ Thus, while Du Bois did believe that physical attributes did have something to do with race, he believed that race is by no means something that can solely be based on one’s physical appearance. On the contrary, Du Bois believed that “the whole process which has brought about these race differentiations has been a growth, and the great characteristic of this growth has been the differentiation of spiritual and mental differences between great races of mankind and the integration of physical differences”.⁴⁸² Thus, race, for Du Bois, is something that transcends mere physical markers; it has less to do with how people look and more to do with who a people are on a deep, spiritual level.

Du Bois really put emphasis on this point where he discussed that during “the age of the nomadic tribes”, there “were practically vast families, and [there were] as many groups as

⁴⁷⁷ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

⁴⁷⁸ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

⁴⁷⁹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

⁴⁸⁰ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

⁴⁸¹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

⁴⁸² Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 81.

families”.⁴⁸³ Du Bois stated that “as the families came together to form cities the physical differences [between them] lessened, purity of blood was replaced by the requirement of comicile, and all who lived within the city bound became gradually to be regarded as members of the group”.⁴⁸⁴ Thus, in regards to this occurrence, “there was a slight breakdown of physical barriers”;⁴⁸⁵ “the larger and broader differences of color, hair and physical proportions were not by any means ignored, but myriads of minor differences disappeared, and the sociological and historical races of men began to approximate the present division of races indicated by physical researches”.⁴⁸⁶ Du Bois stated that “at the same time [all of this occurred,] the spiritual and physical differences of race groups which constituted the nations became deep and decisive”.⁴⁸⁷ As Du Bois put it, “the English nation stood for constitutional liberty and commercial freedom; the German nation for science and philosophy [and] the Romance nations stood for literature and art”.⁴⁸⁸ In regards to “the other race groups”, Du Bois made the assertion that they “are striving, each in its own way, to develop for civilization its particular message, its particular ideal, which shall help to guide the world nearer and nearer that perfection of human life for which [all people] long”.⁴⁸⁹ Thus, each race has a particular mission of value that it has to accomplish.

In his work, Du Bois made the claim that “ some of the great races of today- particularly the Negro race- have not as yet given to civilization the full spiritual message which they are capable of giving”.⁴⁹⁰ Du Bois felt that in order for these messages to be delivered (and for humanity as a whole to benefit from them), racial groups had to be developed “not as

⁴⁸³ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁸⁴ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁸⁵ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁸⁶ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁸⁷ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁸⁸ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁸⁹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁹⁰ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

individuals, but as races”.⁴⁹¹ He touched upon this where he made the point that “for the development of Negro genius, of Negro literature and art, of Negro spirit, only Negroes bound and welded together, Negroes inspired by one vast ideal, can work out in its fullness the great message [that they] have for humanity”.⁴⁹² Du Bois was deeply convinced that “if the [Negroes were] ever to be a factor in the world’s history”, they would have to come to the realization that “their destiny is *not* absorption by the white Americans”.⁴⁹³ Through this, Du Bois felt that it could be proven “that not only Negroes are capable of evolving individual men like Toussaint...but are a nation stored with wonderful possibilities of culture” who’s “destiny is not a servile imitation of Anglo-Saxon culture, but a stalwart originality which shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals”.⁴⁹⁴ Upon stating this, Du Bois turned his attention to the possible critique that Black Americans should not try to preserve their racial identity due to the possibility that focusing on race might only exacerbate racial tensions in a multi-racial society like that of the United States’. In response to this, Du Bois made the observation that while Black Americans were Americans “not only by birth and by citizenship, but by [their] political ideals, [their] language, [and their] religion”, “farther than that, [their] Americanism does not go”; “at that point, [they] are Negroes”.⁴⁹⁵ By making these claims, Du Bois was voicing the opinion that even though Black Americans had much in common with White Americans from a political standpoint, they did not share anything with them from a racial standpoint. In other words, most Americans had a White racial identity and this was just not something that American Negroes had. Because of this, Du Bois felt that it was the Negro race’s “duty to conserve [their] physical

⁴⁹¹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁹² Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 82.

⁴⁹³ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 83.

⁴⁹⁴ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 83.

⁴⁹⁵ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 83.

powers, [their] intellectual endowments, [and their] spiritual ideals”.⁴⁹⁶ He felt that “as a race [Negroes] must strive by race organization, by race solidarity, by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development”.⁴⁹⁷

According to Du Bois, it is important for Negroes to realize that their “one haven of refuge is [themselves], and but one means of advance, [their] own belief in [their] great destiny, [and their] own implicit trust in [their] ability and worth”.⁴⁹⁸ He felt that in order for the people of the Negro race to advance themselves “they *must* be honest, fearlessly criticizing their own faults, zealously correcting them”.⁴⁹⁹ As Du Bois saw it, “no people that laughs at itself, and ridicules itself, and wishes to God it was anything but itself ever wrote its name in history”.⁵⁰⁰ Du Bois believed that without having some sort of pride in their racial identity, Negroes would be rendered incapable of “[speaking] to the nations of earth a Divine truth that shall make them free”.⁵⁰¹ This was one of the reasons why Du Bois felt that an organization like the American Negro Academy could be very useful. According to Du Bois, this academy “[aimed] at once to be the epitome and expression of the intellect of the black-blooded people of America”.⁵⁰² Du Bois wanted the Academy to “be impartial in conduct” in that “while it aims to exalt the people it should aim to do so by truth- not by lies, by honesty- not by flattery”.⁵⁰³ Du Bois had a firm belief in the great potential of the Negro race and he believed that through the encouraging of unity and diligence this potential could be expressed.

⁴⁹⁶ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁴⁹⁷ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁴⁹⁸ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁴⁹⁹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁵⁰⁰ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁵⁰¹ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁵⁰² Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 84.

⁵⁰³ Du Bois, “On the Conservation”, 85.

In On Race and Philosophy, Lucius T. Outlaw, like Du Bois, made the claim that the concept of race should be preserved rather than eradicated. As he saw it, “it is very important that we continue to make use of the concepts *race* and *ethnie* (or *ethnic groups*) and their derivatives (*raciality*, *ethnicity*) as important resources for continuing efforts to critically (re-) construct and maintain social realities”.⁵⁰⁴ Outlaw stressed that race is a naturally occurring thing in the world. In regards to this, Outlaw claimed that “the complicated process (biological, socio-cultural, historical) by which [distinct] populations and population subgroups are formed and maintained are... *raciation* and *ethnicization*”.⁵⁰⁵ It was his belief “that raciation and ethnicization are facts of human evolutionary histories” and that because of this, race and ethnicity are legitimate constructs for classifying a person’s identity.⁵⁰⁶ While Outlaw did not believe that race was biologically natural, he did believe that it was natural in the sense that every group of people felt the need to create various kinds of social identities for themselves. Outlaw touched upon this where he claimed that raciation and ethnicization “are important aspects of the socially contingent, but anthropologically necessary, ways in which we humans, as social animals, organize meaningfully, give order to, and thus define and construct the world’s in which we live, our *life-worlds*, and do so in the process of surviving while subject to the evolutionary forces of social and natural histories”.⁵⁰⁷ As Outlaw saw it, the fact that categories of race and ethnicity are socially constructed, does not mean that they are necessarily completely devoid of positive significance and value. Race, for Outlaw, matters because while it may not be a construct that is validated by scientific principles, it emerged as a result of natural occurrences

⁵⁰⁴ Lucius T. Outlaw, *On Race and Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1996), 2.

⁵⁰⁵ Outlaw, *On Race*, 5.

⁵⁰⁶ Outlaw, *On Race*, 5.

⁵⁰⁷ Outlaw, *On Race*, 5.

in the world; in order for people to better the chances of survival and flourishing, it was “anthropologically necessary” for them to first view themselves as being one people.⁵⁰⁸

Outlaw made it quite clear in his work that viewing race as a legitimate form of classification does not necessarily lead to racial inequality. On the contrary, it is possible for races to exist without there being any form of racial hierarchy or hatred. As he put it, “racialism neither is nor need become racism; nor must ethnocentrism become invidious. In neither case should the one be conflated with the other: that is, racialism with racism, ethnocentrism with invidious ethnocentrism”.⁵⁰⁹ In other words, Outlaw held the position that it is possible for people to recognize and take pride in their own races and ethnicities without hating or having ill intentions towards anyone who they perceived as being different from themselves. Outlaw touched upon this where he stated that he believed that it is important to develop “social and political philosophies and policies that might help [people] to fashion communities in which racism and invidious ethnocentrism have been minimized and curtailed...even while races and ethnies are both conserved and nurtured, without chauvinism, to the enrichment of [all people]”.⁵¹⁰ He believed that through the acknowledgement of race, and the significance of its link to history, people could come to have a better understanding of themselves and of other people with different racial identities. This was the view of race that made the arguments of W.E.B. Du Bois (in regards to race) very appealing to Outlaw. As Outlaw saw it, Du Bois’ conception of race was very insightful in that it focused on the intangible elements that serve to make it so important. Outlaw viewed himself as engaged in the same project that Du Bois was attempting to do, which was “to work out an understanding of raciality and ethnicity, the

⁵⁰⁸ Outlaw, *On Race*, 5.

⁵⁰⁹ Outlaw, *On Race*, 8.

⁵¹⁰ Outlaw, *On Race*, 2.

processes of their formation and maintenance, that is focused on the ordering world making of evolving humans”.⁵¹¹ Again, Outlaw thought that “in and through this world-making, driven by survival needs and competition for resources, that racion and ethnicization develop as responses to the need for life-sustaining and meaningful acceptable *order* of various kinds”.⁵¹²

While Outlaw did believe that “raciality and ethnicity...are indeed ‘social constructions’”, he came to the conclusion that “humans *must* construct [themselves]” in order to have meaningful lives.⁵¹³ For this reason, he considered race to be “both social and natural”;⁵¹⁴ it is social to the extent that people actively decide, whether they know it or not, what it means to be of a certain race and it is natural to the extent that human beings must form collectives in order to increase their chances of surviving and thriving in the world. As Outlaw put it, “sociality-organized associations among humans- is a crucial aspect of ...natural conditions of human existence: they are necessary for survival”.⁵¹⁵ Despite this, Outlaw felt that “humans are without a fixed, pre-established ‘nature’ that determines the historical particularities of existence and telos”.⁵¹⁶ This was why he believed that “there are no ‘pure’ races; nor are there unique characteristics - physical and cultural – that would be included in any definition of a given race or ethnic in contrast to the statistical frequencies of appearance of the various combinations of biological and visible physical and cultural characteristics of socially defined raciality”.⁵¹⁷ As he saw it, “human populations and their sub-groupings are better understood as *social-natural kinds*”.⁵¹⁸ These “social-natural kinds” are crucial to the survival of human beings because

⁵¹¹ Outlaw, *On Race*, 8.

⁵¹² Outlaw, *On Race*, 8.

⁵¹³ Outlaw, *On Race*, 21.

⁵¹⁴ Outlaw, *On Race*, 17.

⁵¹⁵ Outlaw, *On Race*, 17.

⁵¹⁶ Outlaw, *On Race*, 17.

⁵¹⁷ Outlaw, *On Race*, 12.

⁵¹⁸ Outlaw, *On Race*, 12.

without them, people would have no solid conception of who they are. Construct like race are extremely important because they link a person with a particular history and way of conducting him/herself in the world.

Considering this, it is no wonder why Outlaw found W.E.B. Du Bois' arguments to be particularly insightful. Much like Outlaw, Du Bois "sought to rethink 'race' in support of a project that would 'conserve' races in the context of democratic pluralism".⁵¹⁹ In other words, Du Bois also believed that it is possible to view races as actually being real without viewing the existence of these races within a hierarchical framework. As Outlaw saw it, Du Bois' conception of race was appealing because it was one "in which culture was to play the leading role".⁵²⁰ For Outlaw, the fact that Du Bois felt that "no mere physical distinctions would really define or explain the deeper differences- the cohesiveness and continuity of [racial] groups" and that "the deeper differences [between races] are spiritual, psychical differences- undoubtedly based on the physical, but infinitely transcending them" served to show that Du Bois' conception of race was by no means one that was based solely on genetics or phenotype.⁵²¹ Outlaw touched upon this where he made the claim that "in defining 'race' Du Bois was sufficiently insightful not to regard the relationship between physical characteristics, on one side, and mental and cultural ('spiritual') factors on the other, as necessary such that the former determined the latter".⁵²² On the contrary, Outlaw viewed Du Bois' conception of race "as a *cluster* concept in which the elements are connected in an indefinitely long disjunctive definition such that 'each property is severally sufficient and the possession of at least one of the properties is necessary'".⁵²³ Thus, Outlaw credited Du Bois' concept of race with providing a paradigm for viewing race that made

⁵¹⁹ Outlaw, *On Race*, 151.

⁵²⁰ Outlaw, *On Race*, 152.

⁵²¹ Outlaw, *On Race*, 153.

⁵²² Outlaw, *On Race*, 154.

⁵²³ Outlaw, *On Race*, 155.

it possible for racial characteristics to be regarded as being completely separated from each other and to be viewed on singular terms. With this kind of view, members of the same race do not necessarily have to have *all* of the same qualities in order to be considered members of the same race. As long as they share at least one racial property, whether it is of a physical, cultural or spiritual nature, they can be considered as having the same racial identity. This conception of race helps to undermine racial essentialist doctrines which hold the position that all the people of a particular race have all of the same exact qualities. Outlaw also stressed that “reading Du Bois’ effort as though he attempted to define a natural kind disregards his explicit concern to situate a discussion of race squarely with an understanding conditioned by attention to history and sociology”.⁵²⁴ Thus, for Outlaw, Du Bois’ conception of race is one that highlights race’s great importance from a social and a historical standpoint. This was very important to Outlaw because as he saw it, even though race is by no means a valid biological concept, it cannot be disregarded because “the racial and/ or ethnic life-world provides the resources and nurturing required for the development, even, of individual talent and accomplishment such that distinctive contributions can be made to human civilization”.⁵²⁵

In *In My Father’s House*, Kwame Anthony Appiah made the argument that the concept of race has absolutely no biological validity and that because of the negative effect that it has had on people’s lives, it should be eradicated. Through an analysis of colonial history and how Africa came to be viewed as *Africa*, Appiah was led to the conclusion that the idea of Africa and the entire notion of the “black race” were/are nothing more than the result of oppression. Throughout his work, Appiah mentioned how Africa has come to be associated with things like poverty, barbarity and darkness. Ironically enough, it was Appiah’s view that even certain proponents of

⁵²⁴ Outlaw, *On Race*, 155.

⁵²⁵ Outlaw, *On Race*, 157.

Pan-Africanism helped to perpetuate these views of Africa. One of Appiah's essays focuses on the Pan-Africanist views of Alexander Crummell. As Appiah put it, Crummell "is widely regarded as one of the fathers of African nationalism".⁵²⁶ Even though Crummell has this kind of legacy, he "had not the slightest doubt that English was a language superior to the 'various tongues and dialects' of the indigenous African populations".⁵²⁷ In the year 1862, Alexander Crummell, who was himself "African-American by birth [and] Liberian by adoption", wrote The Future of Africa.⁵²⁸ The title of the book itself was quite uncontroversial in that many "of the Europeans, Americans, and Africans equipped with the English to read it... found [nothing] odd in its title".⁵²⁹ Instead, they took it as a given that a place named Africa did/does in fact exist and that all the people residing in that place did have a singular future that was at stake; they turned a blind eye to all the diversity of peoples, languages and customs that existed within "Africa's" borders and instead chose to view "Africa" as being completely one-dimensional. As Appiah saw it, this conception of Africa that Crummell wrote about (and himself accepted) was based on nothing more than "a picture that Crummell learned in America and confirmed in England".⁵³⁰ Thus, the image of "Africa" that Crummell referred to in his work was one that was formulated by and perpetuated by non-Africans. Another thinker

As Appiah saw it, it was clear that even though Alexander Crummell "initiated the nationalist discourse on Africa in Africa", he still "inherited a set of conceptual blinders that made him [and other African Americans] unable to see the virtue in Africa, even though they needed Africa, above all else, as a source of validation".⁵³¹ As Appiah put it, the fact that "they

⁵²⁶ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

⁵²⁷ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 5.

⁵²⁸ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 5.

⁵²⁹ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 5.

⁵³⁰ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 5.

⁵³¹ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 5.

conceived of the African in racial terms [made it so that] their low opinion of Africa was not easily distinguished from a low opinion of the Negro”.⁵³² In other words, African American thinkers often viewed Africa through the lens of race. Crummell viewed Africa as “the motherland of the Negro race”.⁵³³ For him, Africans shared a common destiny “not because they shared a common ecology, nor because they had a common historical experience or faced a common threat from imperial Europe, but because they belonged to this one race”.⁵³⁴ It was on the basis of this racial divide that horrid institutions like colonialism in Africa were able to function and to thrive. In the case of Alexander Crummell, he believed that this racial divide was very real. The fact that he had “such low opinions and such high hopes of the Negro” had a direct impact on why he even chose to publish The Future of Africa. He wanted to see Africa, a place that he saw as the home of spiritual darkness and the Negro, come to be more civilized (or to put it bluntly, more Europeanized). Throughout his work, Appiah tried to drive home the point that race does not actually exist from a biological standpoint. He disagreed with Alexander Crummell’s conception of Africa because he believed that even the notion of Africa itself was based on what Europeans had classified as being the “Negro” race. Under Crummell’s conception of race/Africa, it did not matter how vast a continent Africa was and the great number of distinct peoples of different ethnicities and cultures that it had living within its borders; the fact that Europeans had designated them as being “black” made them African.

Another thinker Appiah believed to be captured by faulty racial thinking was W.E.B Du Bois. It was Appiah’s belief that even though Du Bois had tried to get away from a scientific conception of race (by appealing to “deeper differences”), Du Bois could not escape the implicit

⁵³² Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 5.

⁵³³ Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 5.

⁵³⁴ Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 5.

scientific assumptions that often accompany racial classifications. Appiah pointed to Du Bois' reference to the notion that people of a particular race have "common blood".⁵³⁵ It was Appiah's belief that even Du Bois' use of the term "common blood" served to show that Du Bois' scheme of racial classification was still one that made the issue of race a matter of biology. As Appiah saw it, Du Bois' attempt to attribute racial divisions to different histories is not enough because "sharing a common group history cannot be a criterion for being members of the same group, for we would have to be able to identify the group in order to identify *its* history".⁵³⁶ In other words, a group of people's history cannot be traced before it is first established that they are in fact a group. Appiah believed that much of Du Bois' racial classification scheme was constructed based on the premises of faulty racial divides which serves as an explanation as to why "Du Bois was thrown back on the 'scientific' definition of race, which he officially rejected".⁵³⁷

Here, it becomes quite clear that Appiah viewed racial classification as something that is very problematic. As he saw it, even if someone wanted to do away with the negative implications of racism, he/she could not do it while looking at the world using a racialized paradigm. In the case of Alexander Crummell, he fell into the trap of believing in Africa's (and therefore black) inferiority even though he is seen as being one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism; his association of Africa with people of the "black race" made it easy for him to attribute Africa's perceived shortcomings to Africa's people (the people of the supposed Negro race). Appiah believed that it was this kind of racial thinking that caused blacks to be associated with what was inferior, even when the person writing was supposed to be a Pan-Africanist. As Crummell saw it, Africa, the home of the Negro, was also the home of spiritual darkness and

⁵³⁵ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 30.

⁵³⁶ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 32.

⁵³⁷ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 34.

inferiority. Appiah believed that it was Crummell's acceptance of European notions of race that caused Appiah's arguments to become corrupted. In the case of W.E.B. Du Bois, Appiah believed that even though Du Bois tried to argue for the equality of all races he could not do it while viewing race as something that actually existed. Even after attempting to unmask a scientific conception of race and view race as something that is completely historical, Du Bois found himself tacitly accepting scientific notions of race nonetheless. Appiah pointed this out to show that even a person like Du Bois, a person who rejected biological notions of race and tried to argue for racial equality, still found himself accepting racist ideas because of the ever-present racist implications of race itself.

In the case of Appiah himself, he believed that race does not exist as a scientifically valid concept. As he saw it, "given only a person's race, it is hard to say what his or her biological characteristics will be, except in respect of the 'grosser' features of color, hair, and bone".⁵³⁸ In his work, Kwame Appiah made the observation that "in the biological conception of the human organism, in which characteristics are determined by the pattern of genes in interaction with environments, it is the presence of the alleles (which give rise to these moral and intellectual capacities) that accounts for the observed differences in those capacities in people in similar environments".⁵³⁹ Realizing this, Appiah stated that "the characteristic racial morphology-skin and hair and bone- could be a sign of those differences only if it were (highly) correlated with those alleles".⁵⁴⁰ Appiah then went on to argue that "since there are no such strong correlations, even those who think that intellectual and moral character are strongly

⁵³⁸ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 36.

⁵³⁹ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 37.

⁵⁴⁰ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 37.

genetically determined must accept that *race* is at best a poor indicator of capacity”.⁵⁴¹ Another thing that Appiah touched upon in his work is that the traditional signifiers of a person’s race (skin, hair, and bone structure) are actually quite arbitrary. As he put it, “we could just as well classify people according to whether or not they were redheaded, or redheaded and freckled, or redheaded, freckled, and broad-nosed too, but nobody claims that this sort of classification is central to biology”.⁵⁴² To put things simply, Appiah believed that “the truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us”.⁵⁴³ In other words, Appiah believed that we cannot expect race to provide a *meaningful* way of classifying human beings. This is precisely why Appiah felt that even the very notion of race has to be done away with; it attempts to simplify the world but the world (and the people living in it) is far too complex to fit perfectly within a racialized framework. Thus, while it is true that people are in fact different from each other, race is itself a faulty conception in that it attempts to interpret and decipher these differences in a rigid way.

In “Outlaw, Appiah, and Du Bois’s ‘The Conservation of Races’”, Robert Gooding-Williams made several observations about the debate between Outlaw and Appiah discussed in previous portions of this thesis. Through clearly laying out the positions of both of these philosophers (and of course the opinions of W.E.B. Du Bois), Gooding-Williams hoped to make their arguments as clear to readers as possible. Towards the end of his piece, Gooding-Williams constructed an argument of his own in regards to Du Bois’s conception of race. As he saw it, “Du Bois [proclaimed in his work] that the physical differences between races cannot explain the

⁵⁴¹ Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 37.

⁵⁴² Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 37.

⁵⁴³ Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 45.

spiritual differences” that exist between them.⁵⁴⁴ Gooding-Williams felt that “by rejecting the view that the physical differences between races explain their spiritual differences, Du Bois [repudiated] one of the most influential claims put forth by the racial sciences of the nineteenth century: namely, that physical racial differences explain the spiritual (psychological), social and cultural differences distinguishing different racial groups”.⁵⁴⁵ This, according to Gooding-Williams, was quite a radical view for someone to have of race, especially in the time period Du Bois lived in. A statement of Du Bois’ that Gooding-Williams focused in on was Du Bois’ claim that race “is a vast family of human beings, *generally* of common blood and language, *always* of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life”.⁵⁴⁶ From Gooding-Williams’ perspective, Du Bois’ “claim that the members of a race are ‘generally’ of the same blood suggests that common blood, like common language is...‘inessential’ to membership in the same race”.⁵⁴⁷ This of course serves to make race a concept that is not based upon biology. As Gooding-Williams put it, “Du Bois’s use of ‘generally’ to qualify ‘common blood’ implies that, strictly speaking, ‘common blood’ is not one of a set individually *necessary* and jointly sufficient conditions for determining whether two individuals are members of the same race.⁵⁴⁸ Thus, “x and y are members of the same race if, *and only if*, they share in common a history, traditions, impulses *and strivings*”.⁵⁴⁹

Gooding-Williams really tried to stress this point through his analysis of Du Bois’ account of the racial classifications of Teutonic and English. Du Bois felt that “from a physical or

⁵⁴⁴ Robert Gooding- Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah, and Du Bois’s ‘The Conservation of Races’,” in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Race and Culture*, ed. Bernard W. Bell (New York: Routledge, 1996), 47.

⁵⁴⁵ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 48.

⁵⁴⁶ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 48. 49.

⁵⁴⁷ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 49.

⁵⁴⁸ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 49.

⁵⁴⁹ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 49.

biological perspective, there is nothing to distinguish the Teutons from the English: they both represent, without mixture, ‘the white variety of mankind’⁵⁵⁰ Despite this, Du Bois still held the opinion that the Teutons and the English were of different races. From his perspective, the fact that, even though both the Teutons and English are White, they did not have a “common history, traditions and impulses” made them incapable of in fact being of the same race. Gooding-Williams touched upon this where he made the claim that under Du Bois’ scheme, “the subtle historical, legal, and religious forces producing the spiritual differences between the Englishman and the Teuton have... ‘divided human beings into races,’ as it is precisely these forces that have constituted the Teutonic and the English races as distinct entities”.⁵⁵¹ By pointing this out, Gooding-Williams was attempting to show that Du Bois’ conception of race is not one that is based on physical characteristics. On the contrary, it is one based on several other intangibles (i.e. history, traditions, impulses etc.). Considering all of this, it would be safe to assume that in the debate between Appiah and Outlaw, Gooding-Williams would agree more with Outlaw. Like Outlaw, Gooding-Williams believed that “Du Bois’s sociohistorical and stated definition of ‘race’ draws its motivation from a theoretical belief in the possibility of nonbiological explanations of spiritual differences between the races” .⁵⁵²

Judging by all of this, it would appear that under Hacking’s scheme of classification for different kinds of social constructionists, Du Bois, Outlaw, (and possibly Gooding-Williams) would all be most accurately classified as being historical social constructionists (in regards to race). While they did all view the existence of race as being somewhat contingent on historical occurrences, and racism as being bad, they did not view race itself as being bad and they did not

⁵⁵⁰ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 47.

⁵⁵¹ Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 48.

⁵⁵² Gooding-Williams, “Outlaw, Appiah”, 50.

hold the position that the world would be a better place without the concept of race. On the contrary, each of these men held the position that even though racial divides cannot be validated through biological means, the realities of their historical and social implications are real nonetheless and should be preserved for the sake of their value. Thus, it would likely be safe to say that Du Bois, Outlaw, and Gooding-Williams were more opinionated than the average historical social constructionist in that while they did recognize race as existing as a result of historical events, they did not refrain from assigning a value judgment to it. As was already stated, they all expressed the opinion (Du Bois through his own work and Outlaw and Gooding-Williams through their support of Du Bois' work) that race is a positive, and necessary social construct. Hence, even though racialization occurred the way it did because of a particular course of history, it *had* to take place in order for human beings to make progress.

In regards to where Appiah would fit into Hacking's social constructionist categories, it is quite apparent that he had rebellious views in regards to race; he did indeed believe that "that [race] is not inevitable; that [race] is a bad thing; and that the world would be a better place without [race]". He also believed that it is *possible* to get rid of the term "race" completely. Something that is very apparent in Appiah's work is that he did not view the term "race" as something that can be redeemed. As he saw it, the term can never escape its biological meaning/connotations because before a group of people can even be considered to be a race, it must first be established that they are in fact a group that can be readily identified. Thus, even when someone tries to separate their concept of race from biology, there are still some traces of biological thinking in his/her conception. Just to reiterate what Appiah believed about race, he felt that "the truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask

race to do for us”.⁵⁵³ Thus, even if we could neatly divide all the peoples of Earth into racial categories using their hair, bone structure, and skin color, it would not be able to tell us anything substantive about the supposed group of people on a whole. All we would be able to tell is that according to a certain paradigm, a particular person has a physical appearance that is “similar” to the appearance of other people within a designated group; this of course is all superficial because a person’s hair, bone structure, and skin color are only a few of the myriad qualities that serve to make that individual who he/she is. Furthermore, the fact that only certain physical characteristics are designated as being “racial” serve to show for Appiah that racial classification is by no means something that springs from nature; on the contrary, it is a human conception that perpetuates the illusion that there are in fact deep biological differences that serve to divide the human species into so-called races.

⁵⁵³ Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 45.

Chapter 9: Towards a Brighter Destiny

In this chapter of my thesis, I will respond directly to the work of W.E.B. Du Bois and I will also articulate my own understanding of race. I will then proceed to classify myself according to Ian Hacking's scheme of different social constructionists.

Truly, the debate about Du Bois' "On the Conservation of Races" is a highly controversial one in which both sides have very solid points. In regards to Du Bois' intentions in writing the essay, it cannot be denied that what he was trying to do was quite progressive; he was attempting to inspire pride and unity among the Black people in America during a period in which mainstream society viewed them as being cursed, incompetent, and hopelessly inferior. By encouraging Black Americans not to run from their blackness but to embrace it, Du Bois was essentially telling them to love and accept themselves. This sort of self-respect was something that had to be cultivated among Black Americans during that time because the fact of the matter was that even if they viewed the race concept as being invalid, they still would have been viewed as "Black" by the rest of American society nonetheless. Thus, blackness was not something that African-Americans could simply afford to dismiss; they would have to address it, and more importantly, they would have to take an active role in defining what it would be. Du Bois' scheme was very insightful in this regard and the fact that he was trying to encourage Black Americans that they too had valuable contributions to make to the world at large was a very rebellious opinion, especially at the period of American history in which he had shared these views. Thus, in many regards, Du Bois' essay can be viewed as a noble attempt to bring dignity and self-appreciation to African-Americans at a time in which they were viewed by American society as being inferior in almost every way.

Also, it should be stated that Du Bois' attempt to separate racial qualities from physical attributes was also quite rebellious for the period in which he made this claim. Again, during the time in which Du Bois wrote his essay, people viewed race as something that could be completely determined by a person's physical attributes. However, by saying that "the wonderful developments of human history teach that the grosser physical differences of color, hair and bone go but a short way toward explaining the different roles which groups of men have played in Human Progress"⁵⁵⁴, Du Bois was diminishing the importance of a person's physical appearance when it came to identifying his/her race; he was trying to make the point that the issue of race is not primarily a matter of biology. On the contrary, he felt that there were a myriad of factors that had to be considered before it could be properly determined what race a person belongs to. Adopting this sort of outlook on race certainly was a step in the right direction on the part of Du Bois because at the time he wrote his essay, too many people living in America had views on race that were overly simplistic and that failed to give adequate attention to the great potential that all people had, regardless of the fact of whether they were White or not. Thus, even though Du Bois' views on race still do have small traces of biological assumptions, they still should be commended nonetheless because they encouraged a critical analysis of race at a time in which many people were stubborn about their illogical conceptions of race.

Here it should be stated that even though Appiah was a bit too harsh towards Du Bois in that he did not give enough consideration to the historical circumstances under which Du Bois wrote his essay, he was right in stating that "race" is a term that should be eradicated from people's vocabularies. As was shown in the early portions of this thesis, the concept of race had its beginnings with the belief that there were deep, biological differences between certain groups

⁵⁵⁴ Du Bois, "On the Conservation", 80.

of people. For the sake of building and preserving this paradigm, certain attributes like a person's skin color, bone structure, facial features, and hair texture were designated as physical markers that could serve to undeniably prove that particular person's race. These physical markers were then given meaning and soon it came to be the case that whoever was of the supposed White race was seen as being intelligent, capable, and beautiful and whoever was not White was seen as being somehow inferior. Thus, it is clear that the concept of race was used to perpetuate inequality and injustice among the people of Earth; the very idea of race was conceived with the belief that there was a natural hierarchy that existed/ that was supposed to exist among human beings. For this reason, it is impossible to use the term race without it having some kind of biological connotation or meaning; it had its origins in the perpetuation of inequality and the term can never truly be extricated from its roots. Thus, even though Du Bois' conception of race was indeed a step in the right direction for the period in which it was produced, race is a term that should (at least eventually) have no applicable use in contemporary society. Considering this, Appiah was very right in asserting that Du Bois' idea of race still had many biological assumptions and he was just as right in making the claim that "there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us".⁵⁵⁵ Simply put, human populations are far too complicated to coincide perfectly with the rigid categories and meanings that race provides.

Despite this, Lucius T. Outlaw's argument in defense of Du Bois should not be completely dismissed; indeed, he was right in making the claim that human beings have to form groups among themselves in order to survive and to establish a stable sense of identity. Even though this may be true, it does not mean that the use of race is a valid means of dividing the peoples of Earth. While Outlaw was right in saying that it is completely natural and necessary for

⁵⁵⁵ Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 45.

people to form groups, he was incorrect in asserting that “raciation” is one of the processes through which this must be carried out. Something that Outlaw did not pay adequate attention to in his work is who it was that decided which people would be put in which races; indeed the very paradigm for viewing and classifying race was created and shaped by people who were interested in promoting the idea that they were superior and everyone else who did not look enough like them (according to their standards) was inferior. Thus, the only people who took an active role in *initial* raciation were the people who had the power to establish racial distinctions that would be recognized; for example, an African who became a victim of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade had absolutely no control over the fact that he would be viewed as being “Black” but a certain class of his European observers on the other hand, did. Furthermore, raciation in today’s society involves no significant input from the people who are being “raced” so to speak. People, Black and White alike, are simply given a racial classification that they supposedly fit into and are encouraged to uncritically accept a standard of classification that was engineered by people who were interested in creating hierarchy among human beings and thus promoting inequality. Even though many of these people have come to accept, and even embrace these classifications, it does not make them any more valid. On the contrary, raciation is by no means a necessary component of human life; people do not need the concept of race in order to form a meaningful attachment to a group and to have a solid conception of who they are.

One thinker who was already discussed earlier in this thesis who had a very accurate view of race, aside from Outlaw, was Ashley Montagu. As was already mentioned, Montagu believed that the term “race” should be eradicated from people’s vocabularies because it attempts to bring finality and certainty to an issue where there is none. As he put it, a term like race should not be used at all because “it is rather more desirable to allow the conditions or facts to determine the

meaning of the terms by which we shall refer to them, than to have pre-existing terms determine the manner in which they shall be perceived and ordered”.⁵⁵⁶ In regards to this, Montagu was very right; a term like race should not be used because it does not fully correlate with the real facts regarding humanity and it was originally formulated and used for unjust purposes. The fact of the matter is that the original definition of race has been proven to be completely invalid from a biological standpoint and that because of this, any attempt to redefine the term will still fall short of accurately explaining the diversity that exists within the human species; one cannot salvage a term that was conceived in and for the purpose of perpetuating ignorance. Thus, Montagu was right in stating that “it is simply not possible to redefine words with so longstanding a history of misuse as ‘race’”.⁵⁵⁷ Simply put, “race” is a corrupted term that has myriad different connotations that do not necessarily have any correlation with reality.

Considering all of this, I think it would be safe to assume that under Hacking’s scheme of classification, I would be considered to be rebellious; I hold the position that “that [race] is not inevitable; that [race] is a bad thing; and that the world would be a better place without [race]”. I also hold the position that the concept of race can be gotten rid of despite the fact that people have been using it for centuries. Something that people must come to realize is that the original scheme of racial classification has been proven to be false: race does not adequately capture the vast amount of diversity that exists within the entire human population and furthermore, the deeper meanings that have been attached to it have been shown to be more sociological in nature than biological. Because of this, racial classifications are completely arbitrary; they are nothing more than a certain combination of designated physical traits that can actually prove nothing about a person past the fact that under a certain paradigm, his/her physical appearance makes

⁵⁵⁶ Montagu, “The Concept”, 920.

⁵⁵⁷ Montagu, “The Concept”, 923.

him/her likely to be classified as being in a particular group. Looking at things from this perspective, there is no reason for race to be viewed as an essential component of an individual's identity; it has no inherent meaning and as Appiah mentioned in his piece, it cannot do what we want it to do; it is simply not possible to view all the people of Earth through the simple, rigid paradigm that race provides.

Despite this, it does not mean that the importance of history and diversity should be done away with. On the contrary, people should celebrate their cultures and heritages, but they should never forget the history of race and the pain, deception, and strife that was caused as a result of its introduction into the world. Indeed, we cannot preserve the concept of race, a concept that was formed under fallacious assumptions, for the sake of wanting to commemorate our pasts; holding on to such a concept would only serve to impede the progress that we have already been making. Thus, while the eradication of the race concept would by no means be easy to accomplish, it surely would be a worthy goal. This certainly would not be something that we could expect to happen overnight; again, the race concept has been around for centuries and just a mere 60 years ago, racial segregation in this country was viewed as being entirely ethical and legal; people still have wounds from these times and many others are still dealing with the effects of these injustices to this very day. Despite this, we cannot let the effects of a lie prevent us from reaching towards a brighter destiny, a destiny in which people are viewed as they are and not as they "should be" so that they can be fit into racial categories. Perhaps then we will be able to focus more on our similarities and less on our differences.

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