On the Semantics and Ontology of Race: Constructivism Against Realism

by

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This paper is an essay in philosophical ontology tasked with defending a constructionist[1] approach to race. Anthony Appiah, in his *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture[2],* argues that the concept of race is an "empty concept" [3] precisely because it is both a semantic and an ontological fiction. He advises us to segregate race to the realm of the vague and fuzzy because all racial discourse, which he claims must transcendentally presuppose a biological notion of race in order to be meaningful, seductively misleads us to the extent that such discourse presupposes that the term "race" names a natural kind.[4] While identifying the concept of race as deficient, he challenges us to learn "to think beyond race."[5] His rebuke of race as a dysfunctional concept takes the form of casting race as a virus spreading the contagion of bad thinking, that is, delusional, even paranoid thinking.

This paper argues that while Appiah's theoretical interrogation of the concept of race is mainly accurate, race, nevertheless, is meaningful from a socio-cultural perspective[6]. Discourse about race need not require that races exist in the sense of being natural kinds. Race, I shall be arguing, is a construction, i. e., human agents with varied interests, purposes, and linguistic resources devise the conditions of meaningfulness for the term "race".

The general structure of the paper is as follows. I first present a critical discussion of Appiah's view on race by examining his realist view of meaning and reference. Next, I critically review his main arguments against the concept of race. In part two of the essay, I offer a discussion of constructionism. I describe this position, offer examples, and say why it more adequately accommodates a defense of the concept of race by treating it as a socio-historical construction rather than a scientific natural kind. It is obvious that I challenge Appiah's realist view that a meaningful concept is one that is intelligible and that the deciding grounds of the intelligibility is a matter of a concept referring to something that has existence. Meaningful concepts refer to objects whereas meaningless concepts do not refer to anything that has being.

PART I: Realism and Appiah's Rejection of Race

In executing his attack against race, Appiah recruits realist semantical and ontological presuppositions about truth and reference. Let us briefly examine these assumptions about truth and reference. Being a realist, he believes that the same general

theory of truth must be uniform and applicable to all systems of discourse. Consistency requires that our interest in truth entail applying the same realist procedures of analysis to all systems of discourse. We establish truth by analyzing statements in terms of truth conditions and not assertability conditions. This semantics parity imposes the requirement that we give an account of truth conditions by appealing to the objects or entities a discourse is ontologically committed to. Thus, on this view, we should subject the following sentences to the same parallel treatment:

(1) The cat is on the mat.
(2) New York City is bigger than the city of Boston.
(3) 2+2=4
(4) The X race is more intelligent than the Y race.

Consistent with a realist analysis the truth (1) requires the positing of, minimally speaking, a cat and a mat; (2) requires the positing of cities; (3) requires the existence of abstract objects, namely, numbers; and, finally, (4) requires the existence of certain kinds of objects, namely races.

Realists embrace the correspondence theory of truth. This commitment by realists evidences their partiality to an inflationary conception of truth which, minimally construed, treats the truth predicate as a matter of correspondence, agreement or, rather, of confrontation, between ideas, beliefs, propositions, or sentences and extra-linguistic reality.

Appiah's assumptions about reference, truth and knowledge are, as I have been urging, uncompromisingly realist in orientation. Perhaps it would help to summarize these assumptions at this point, keeping in mind that the battle between realist and nonrealists turns on the referentially transparent and referentially opaque. Call it realism, metaphysical realism or Platonism, the view essentially presupposes the following picture of things.

> One starts with assumption of a specifiable ontology—that the world consists of a definite totality of discourse-independent objects and properties. In relation to these objects one assumes a bivalent logic of excluded middle—each object either has or has not any property meaningfully applicable to it. One then operates with a truth-based epistemology—the world is described by language through the principle of correspondence, in which properties correspond to collections of objects, and statements are either true or false, depending on whether the states of affairs they correspond to are 'really' the case--that is, whether these states either do or don't obtain in the world.[7]

In conjunction with the above mentioned realist orthodoxy, Appiah recruits the causal theory of reference. The Causal theory of reference does not provide an account of the referent of a word (proper name) in terms of the term satisfying a set of descriptions.[8] A causal link between a word and an object establishes successful reference. More specifically, the connection between a word and a thing depends on a

baptismal ceremony performed by a community of language users. This dubbing activity, directly linking a word and an object, is transmitted from one generation to another through a causal chain. The term rigidly designates the object in any possible world.

Applying this notion of causal reference to natural kind terms, Kripke, the leading architect of the causal theory, maintains that natural kinds terms, such as "gold", "water" and "tiger" are rigid designators, that is, these terms pick out the same object in every possible world. Furthermore, these natural kind terms pick out or rigidly designate objects in virtue of the objects in question possessing certain essential properties. So that, for example, any substance lacking the atomic number 79 is not gold even if it is perceptually indistinguishable from gold. The causal theory of reference therefore courts essentialism. This essentialism holds that natural kinds are identified because they possess certain essences; and it is in terms of these essences that we can correctly claim that the world determines the referent of a term. Let us turn now to Appiah's rejection of race.

Argument From Classification

Racialism, according to Appiah, infers that,

... there are heritable characteristics, possessed by members of our species, which allow us to divide them into a small set of races, in such a way that all members of these races share certain traits and tendencies with each other that they do not share with members of any other race. These traits and tendencies characteristic of a race constitute, on the racialist view, a sort of racial essence; it is part of the content of racialism that the visible essential heritable characteristics of the 'races of Man' account for more than visible morphological characteristics - skin color, hair type, facial features-on the basis of which we make our informal classifications.[9]

But Appiah correctly considers racialism a vulgar and false position. There really are no races, he tells us, precisely because, among other things, there is no nonarbitrary way of effectively classifying human beings into groups with sharply defined boundaries. For if we were to use human physical characteristics as criteria for individuating races, then any arbitrary and insignificant set of physical characteristics will qualify as criteria for classifying individuals into groups. Clearly, if such classification is arbitrary, then the notion of race is insignificant precisely because it will be possible to individuate races on the basis of meaningless criteria. Finally, even if the criteria of classification are conservative in scope, there will be numerous individuals who will not fit into any classification scheme. Indeed, the mere fact that some individuals defy classification, on the basis of race, violates one common mark of a precise concept. A precise concept, in order to avoid being vague, should either determinately apply or not apply to an object or an individual. As Appiah states:

The classification of people into "races" would be biologically interesting if both the margins and the migrations had not left behind a genetic trail. But they have, and along that trail are millions of us (the numbers obviously depending on the criteria of classification that are used) who can be fitted into no plausible scheme at all. In a sense, trying to classify people into a few races is like trying to classify books in a library: you may use a single property--size, say--but you will get a useless classification, or you may use a more complex system of interconnected criteria, and then you will get a good deal of arbitrariness. No one--not even the most compulsive librarian!-- thinks that book classifications reflect deep facts about books.[10]

Appiah next discusses the premature journey of the concept of race from a folk concept to its unqualified role as a technical scientific concept; but he claims that the more technical notion serves no real significant biological purpose. As a folk concept, being a fuzzy concept like the folk concept of the mind or sensation, the concept of race suffered the fate of having been embedded within a folk theory about human races. As the scientific concept of race displaced the folk theory of race, races were no longer classified in terms of observable physical characteristics. Instead racial classification depended upon the existence of identifiable racial essences, that is, genetic traits or molecular structures. But, according to Appiah, no identifiable racial essences exist. He concludes as follows with regard to the concept of race:

The appeal of race as a classificatory notion provides us with an instance of a familiar pattern in the history of science. In the early phases of theory, scientists begin, inevitably, with the categories of their folk theories of the world, and often the criteria of membership of these categories can be detected with the unaided senses. Thus, in early chemistry, color and taste played an important role in the classification of substances; in early natural history, plant and animal species were identified largely by their gross visible morphology. Gradually, as the science develops, however, concepts are developed whose application requires more than the unaided senses; instead of the phenomenal properties of things, we look for "deeper," more theoretical properties. The price we pay is that classification becomes a more specialized activity; the benefit we gain is that we are able to make generalizations of greater power and scope. Few candidates for laws of nature can be stated by reference to the colors, tastes, smells, or touches of objects.[11]

Since there are no essences that individuate races, racial classification, particularly in terms of gross morphological features, really does not serve any significant biological purpose. Appiah reinforces this point when he writes:

To say that biological races existed because it was possible to classify people into a small number of classes according to their gross morphology would be to save racialism in the letter but lose it in the substance. The notion of race that was recovered would be of no biological interest--the interesting biological generalizations are about genotypes, phenotypes, and their distribution in

geographical populations. We would 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 human biology.[12]

The lack of racial essences, that is, essences existing in the world, Appiah maintains, renders the racial classification and the general notion of race insignificant. He states that "in the absence of racial essences, there could be no guarantee that some particular person was not more gifted [...] than any or all others in the population of other regions.[13] So, on Appiah's view, the concept of race fails to do the work many thinkers commonly expect it to perform. Put differently, the concept of race does not qualify to function as a valid concept and we should not extend to it any semantic privileges. Appiah continues in exposing the semantic incompetence and ontological poverty of the concept of race, for he adds that even if there were really races in the world, and if sharing a racial essence determined membership in a race, knowing an individual's race still would not yield information about the cognitive abilities or the moral character of an individual. Once again, Appiah writes, "The conclusion is obvious: given a person's race, it is hard to say what his or her biological characteristics (apart from those that human beings share) will be, except in respect of the 'grosser' features of color, hair, and bone (the genetics of which is, in any case, rather poorly understood)-- features of 'morphological differentiation,' as the evolutionary biologist would say."[14] The message is clear: Race cannot overcome its suspect semantic status through regimes of classification premised on racial essences.

The Difference Argument

Appiah also examines certain issues within the philosophy of biology and concludes that there can be no constructive definition of race chiefly in terms of biological differences. This conclusion follows from the fact that there are no major significant biological differences between two human beings taken at random from the human population and two (white) people taken from the population of England. And the above will hold for a comparison between a person taken from the population of Africa and a person taken from the population of Europe.[15] Appiah's point is quite simple: if physical differences among human beings were of any real biological significance, then there should be recognizable and specific differences which would clearly distinguish one race from other races. However, no substantial physical differences exist capable of underwriting variations in cognitive, moral and creative abilities which would, obeying the laws of nature, warrant separating human beings into clearly defined groups called races. Appiah concludes that:

> The underlying statistical facts about the distribution of variant characteristics in human populations and subpopulations are the same, whichever way the matter is expressed. Apart from the visible morphological characteristics of skin, hair, and bone, by which we are inclined to assign people to the broadest racial categories-black, white and yellow-there are few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire or in

China; and few too which are found in Zaire but not in similar proportions in China or in England.[16]

In pulling together his critical insights and having already done much to establish the hopeless pathological condition of the concept of race, Appiah reaches a final conclusion:

> 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. "...[E]ven the biologist's notion has only limited uses, and the notion that Du Bois required [sociohistorical], and that underlies the more hateful racisms of the modern era, refers to nothing in the world at all. The evil that is done is done by the concept, and by easy - yet impossible - assumptions as to its application.[17]

For Appiah, then, there is a certain ethics of semantic that we should adopt; failure to adopt this ethics in the case of race makes us guilty of a certain theoretical as well as physical evil.

It is indisputable that Appiah presupposes a correspondent notion of truth and a realist referential analysis of sentences in his attack against the idea of race. He points out that (1) we lack necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the concept race; (2) for any given criteria of classification of races there will be many people who do not fit into these classification; (3) most racial classifications are arbitrary and are not biological significant; and (4) there are no racial essences in the physical world. These four considerations, from a realist referential analysis, render sentences about races false since there are no races, that is, there are no mind independent entities described by such statements.

PART II: An Alternative Approach to Race

Appiah presents us with a challenge. Indeed, he denies any possible dialectic caress between his realist semantics and ontology and the concept of race. There seems to be no possibility of any dialectical synthesis between race and realism. We must decide whether to follow Appiah's lead and eliminate from our conceptual scheme concepts that fail to yield necessary and sufficient conditions of meaning. For example, consider the political concept of equality.[18] This concept does not admit to a necessary and sufficient definition that is universally acceptable to philosophers. But lacking a necessary and sufficient definition of equality has not and does not support eliminating the concept of equality on the grounds that it is semantically suspect. Can we not treat the concept of race in a similar manner?

Appiah takes us only half way. His leadership threatens to deliver us to a barren semantic desert and not the semantic promise land, freed of the plague of the dangerous concept of race. His efforts to splice the semantically valid from the semantically invalid on the altar of biology fail.

Although I agree with Appiah's conclusion of race not being a valid biological concept, I do not support the almost perfunctory move to deny the plausibility of attempts to rehabilitate race, assuming that one believes race needs rehabation because of its semantical delinquency, or to offer an alternative account of race on the grounds that either option ignores that race is semantically retarded and, consequently, beyond semantic and ontological redemption. Here, I argue in support of an alternative conception of race, one immune to the various problems correctly attributed to the mistaken assumption that the only possible justification of the concept of race should take the form of a biological defense along realist lines, the tendency to assume that scientific concepts provide the most effective model for what should counts as a genuine concept. Indeed, it is this persistent belief about race that often encourages charges of playing the race card when race gets theorized differently or attempts are made to employ race as a plausible category of analysis in situation where phenomenon would otherwise remain cognitively opaque.

Constructionism and Race

In the wake of Appiah's surgical dismantling of race, I firmly support a reconstruction of race along the lines of a constructionist account of race and consider this approach explanatory privileged. I will be calling my approach constructionism.[19] I, however, distance my version of constructionism from the vulgar constructionism now in vogue. According to the vulgar view, to say that X is a construction means that X is not real; X is artificial. There is also the assumption that establishing the constructedness of X makes X false. Finally, some believe that no one construction is better than any another.[20]

It is not my intention here to provide a robust ontological theory or to completely distinguish all the possible conceptions of constructionism. Nor is it my concern at this time to critically consider the implications of constructionism itself being a social construction.[21] I seek only to hint at the possible benefits a constructionist ontology can offer with regard to certain concepts. My version of constructionism is not an egocentrism tenaciously committed to the idea that isolated individuals can spontaneously create kinds without answering to any authority. Neither is it the thesis that groups of individuals can randomly create or rather will into existence the fantastic contents of their minds. I understand constructionism as a thesis about the existence of certain objects, entities, institutions and practices, etc. Here existence is not construed in terms of things being absolutely and totally independent of the mind but rather in terms of human activities, choices, values, actions, intentions etc. However, bracketing the notion of existence as being totally mind independent need not deny that constructions have some degree of permanency external to thought.

Consciousness, according to constructionism, constitutes the varied objects and entities causally linked to belief formation, as well as those objects anchoring the transactions between human beings and the world. Note that here I must confess to shifting between two senses of the term "the world". There is a sense in which there is a natural world, which is not the product of consciousness. However, there is no dualism

here in the sense of consciousness existing outside the world. Consciousness is already in the world. Or better yet, there is an intense dialectical interplay between consciousness and the natural world. We can also talk about the world in the sense of the world being something constituted, namely, a web or circuits of relationships, meanings, and signs. It is in this latter sense that we can talk about consciousness constituting the social world without flirting with views which hold that we can change reality by simply changing our thinking or that we can make things cease to exist by not thinking about them. Since I am somewhat apprehensive with talk about creating the world, I am more inclined to talk in terms of social reality as an achievement.

Constructionism, philosophically speaking, is then antiessentialist with regard to ontology, antirealist with regard to semantics, and antifoundationist with regard to epistemology. My view of constructionism is consistent with Ian Hacking's description. Constructionism, according to him, are the "various sociological, historical, and philosophical projects that aim at displaying or analyzing actual, historically situated, social interactions or causal routes that led to, or were involved in, the coming into being or establishing of some present entity or fact. "[22]

Certain insights are complicit in bringing forth constructionism. The physical world, ontologically speaking, is indeterminate precisely because the world in and of itself, totally independently of consciousness, is without any distinctions, categories, or differences, in short, without negations. Second, consciousness is a reality. Consciousness is, first, intentional, for all acts of thinking are about or rather are directed at something. Besides its intentionality, consciousness is also meaning-creating activity. Consciousness does not simply passively represent the world, but confers meaning upon objects. In perceiving, we simply do not see an object disinterestedly, but we see it as such and such. The intentionality of consciousness and its meaning-creating feature suggest that were it not for consciousness, there would no differentiations or distinctions in the realm of being. But consciousness does not impose differentiations and distinctions meaninglessly. Consciousness slices up the world in harmony with its concerns and projects. It is this activity of cutting up that is the metaphysical foundation of the existence of distinctions; it is the origins of our ontological categories as well as our numerous ontologies. Furthermore, we can, without too much exaggeration, say that categorization has great adaptive utility.

The ontological thesis of constructionism is not exclusively applicable to socio-cultural categories.[23] Constructionism may very well be a characteristic feature of the interaction among consciousness, language and the "world." Indeed, we can find constructionism at work in the philosophy of mathematics. There we find the idea that all fields of mathematics can be reduced to or modeled in set theory. If this assumption is correct, then matters of economy suggest that instead of having a plurality of entities in mathematics, -numbers, points, functions, functionals, and sets, - it would be preferable to have only sets. But since there is the claim that numbers are objects and that mathematical objects are sets, then it should be possible to say which sets number really are. But in mathematics there are two reductions of numbers to sets that are incompatible. On the Von Neumann's account, 2 is a member of 4 and according to

Zermelo, 2 is not a member of 4. Faced with this reduction problem, some thinkers reject realism in mathematics and deny that numbers are objects.

While resisting any involvement with the realist program to decisively establish numbers as mind independent abstract objects capable of discovery through mathematical activity, mathematical constructionists, while following in the tradition of Kant's notion of the a priori intuitions of space and time, maintain that number is an apriori intuition required for the possibility of counting. Furthermore, being antirealists, they insist that we are only justified in believing in the existence of a mathematical truth or object only if we have constructed a proof. Here we have a conception of mathematics opposed to the traditional view of mathematics as a timeless enterprise, a view of mathematical truths as eternal. For constructionists, mathematics takes place in time. Numbers exist only to the extent that we have a proof for them; they are constructed through the enterprise of proof construction, namely constructed by mental operations. According to Heyting:

> [W]e do not attribute an existence independent of our thought ,i.e., a transcendental existence, to the integers or to any other mathematical objects….[M]athematical objects are by their very nature dependent on human thought. Their existence is guaranteed only insofar as they can be determined by thought. They have properties only insofar as these can be discerned in them by thought…. Faith in transcendental …existence must be rejected as a means of mathematical proof.[24]

Indeed, Brouwer proudly proclaimed that "to exist' means nothing more than to be constructed; exist and constructed are, accordingly, synonymous. Let us turn to another case of constructionism.

Some would argue that the appeal to constructionism is not only philosophically wrong-headed but out right irrational, for in challenging realism in semantic and ontology, we are denying the authority of logic. If the powerful strategies of realism undermine the claimed validity of a concept, one such as race, philosophical scruples dictate that we eliminate this concept from our discourse if for no other reason than to avoid holding false beliefs.

The appeal to logic, hence, the requirement of rationality, does not pose an immediate problem for constructionism. Indeed, Nelson Goodman has championed constructionism precisely because he thinks that logic would be ontologically impaired without it. He maintains that " without some techniques for applying symbolic logic to extra-logical subject matter, problems that require symbolic logic will never yield clear and precise solutions."[25] Goodman tells us that the subject matter that makes it possible for symbolic logic to realize its potency is kinds. Interestingly enough, he does not restrict kinds to only natural kinds, those kinds with mind independent essences supposedly existing totally independently of human beings. Goodman prefers to talk about relevant kinds. He writes:

I say 'relevant' rather than 'natural' for two reasons: first, 'natural' is an inapt term to cover not only biological species but such artificial kinds as musical works, psychological experiments and types of machinery; and second, 'natural' suggests some absolute or psychological priority, while the kinds in question are rather habitual or devised for a purpose.[26]

Far from simply discovering kinds already existing in the world, we create kinds for a purpose: a clear case of constructionism. World construction, according to Goodman, is an imposing feature of human existence such that we can, in this context and, without exaggeration, talk about multiworld existence. There is no such thing as, on his view, discovering a world, he finds favor with talk about ways of world making. Consistent with such talk, Goodman radicalizes realist talk about the correspondence of a belief to reality, maintaining that there can only be correspondence to a reality under some particular description; "there is no one way the world is." Accordingly, he states that "without the organization, the selection of relevant kinds, affected by evolving tradition, there is no rightness or wrongness of categorization, no validity or invalidity of inductive inference, no fair or unfair sampling, and no uniformity or disparity among samples."[27] The close connection between the creation of kinds and normative judgments reinforces the plausibility of constructionism as an alternative to the promotion of realism in semantics and ontology as the only justified defense against relativism. Relativism is considered a profound threat to the objectivity of truth and knowledge. I have said enough about constructionism. We need to return to the issue of race.

As I have been maintaining, unlike Appiah's claim that race is semantically and ontologically suspect, as well as being biological invalid, race is best understood as a constructed category, making it a socio-historical construction.[28] Put differently, race "should be understood as a social category whose definition makes reference to a broad network of social relations, and it is not simply a matter of anatomical difference."[29] This socio-historical view of race dictates that classification of people into races need not be dependent upon the prior existence of biological essences. In advancing this constructionist view of race, following Hacking, I, too, support the transition in focus from semantics to focus on dynamics, meaning by dynamics the critical investigation of the construction, deconstruction, evolution, and maintenance of race through the stream of time.

Hacking advocates what he calls dynamic nominalism, the view that kinds of people come into existence when certain categories are created. He argues that certain kinds of people are constructed or, as he puts it, "made up." He is not claiming that that people are made in a manner similar to how automobiles are made. We do not make up people from the appropriate biological raw materials. People are made up or constructed, on Hacking's view, by falling under social and cultural categories. The people made up by these social and cultural categories are historical and not natural. In the context of this essay, Hacking's dynamic nominalism truly captures the tradition of race creation that has been such a pervasive feature of modern life. He maintains that

[p]eople are alive or dead, tall or short, strong or weak, creative or plodding, foolish or intelligent. These categories arise from the nature of people themselves, although we are by now well aware how "intelligence" can be wrapped by quotients. But consider the categories so much worked over [...], involving madness, criminality and other kinds of deviancy. Consider [...] what a soldier was in medieval times, and what he became with the new institutions of discipline and uniform: soldiers themselves became different kinds of people. We may begin to grasp at a different kind of nominalism, which I call *dynamic nominalism*. Categories of people come into existence at the same time as kinds of people come into being to fit those categories, and there is a two-way interaction between these processes.[30]

One virtue of constructionism is its capacity to accommodate a vigorous defense of the idea of the contestability of concepts, the view that certain concepts, particularly those of a socio-cultural nature are essentially contested, meaning that there is no general agreement about how to define these concepts and, consequently, different people will necessarily define these concepts differently. Once we focus on the dynamics of contestability we will be better able to understand the social and political conflicts dominating our political landscape.

Explaining their theory of racial formation, Michael Omi and Howard Winant write that "racial formation emphasizes the social nature of race, the absence of any essential racial characteristics, the historical flexibility of racial meanings and categories, the conflictual character of race at both the 'micro-' and 'macro-social ' levels, and the irreducible political aspect of racial dynamics."[31] This notion of race as a social formation captures the dynamics of change that would prevent any treatment of race as a natural kind. And here the vortices of contestation that throw race into the turbulence of political conflict indicate the folly in limiting the analytical relevance of race to a restricted biological function.

Indeed, the concept of race claims a certain inescapable analytical relevance with regard to our understanding of certain things. Understanding the history of new world societies would be almost impossible were it not for the analytical explanatory vigor of race.[32] This analytical explanatory enterprise is not dependent on the prior biological validity of race but is, I believe, viable to the extent that race is one of the major categories of classification used to structure systems of privileges, among other things, in the modern world. Indeed, race can help us better understand certain aspects of our current political reality that are otherwise obscured by the individualist framework of modern political thought.[33]

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[1] For more on the topic of ontology and construction see, Sally Haslanger, "Ontology and Social Construction," *Philosophical Topics*, Volume 23, Number 2 (Fall 1995).

[2] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[3] Richard Wasserstrom, instead of considering race an empty concept, treats race as a 'chameleonic' concept. See Richard Wasserstrom, "On Racism and Sexism," in Richard Wesserstrom, *Todays' Moral Problems*, edited (New York: Macmillan, 1978).

[4] It should be noted that even with the context of natural scientific investigation, there are other approaches to race. Nancy Leys Stephan argues that scientists have made great use of metaphor in sustaining notions of race with meaning.

See her, "Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science," in *Anatomy of Racism*, edited by David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1990) pp. 38-57.

[5] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Europe Turned Upside Down: Fallacies of the New Afrocentrism," *London Times Literary Supplement* (February 2, 1993), p. 25.

[6] For other similar approaches to race, as well as critiques of Appiah see, David Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993); and Lewis Gordon adopts an existential phenomenological approach to race. See Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ.: Humanities Press International, 1995).

[7] Brain Rotman, *Ad Infinitum: Taking God out of Mathematics and Putting the Body Back In* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993),and p. 18. For an excellent discussion of the causal theory of reference, see Nathan Salmon, *Reference and Essence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[8] Saul Kripke, "Naming and Necessity," in *Semantics of Natural Language*, ed. by Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1972).

[9] Appiah (1992), p. 13.

[10] Appiah (1992), p. 38.

[11] Appiah (1992), p. 38.

[12] Appiah (1992), p. 37.

[13] Appiah (1992), p. 39.

[14] Appiah (1992), p. 36.

[15] Appiah (!992), pp. 35-37.

[16] Appiah (1992), p. 35.

[17] Appiah (1992),p. 45.

[18] See Peter Weston, "The Empty Idea of Equality," *Harvard Law Review*, volume 95 (1982) and Anthony D' Amato, Is Equality a Totally Empty Idea?" *Michigan Law Review* (1983).

[19] For more on the various constructionisms, see Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (London: Penguin, 1967), Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The social Construction of Scientific Facts* (London: Sage Publications, 1979); John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995);Karin D. Knorr-Cetina, *The Manufacture of Knowledge: An Essay on the Constructivist and Contextual Nature of Science* (London: Pergamon, 1981); Andre Pickering, *Constructing Quarks: A Sociological History of Particle Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

[20] Sally Haslanger identifies three different versions of constructionism. According to her, "*Causal construction*: Something is causally constructed iff social factors play a causal role in bringing it into existence or, to some substantial extent, in its being the way it is." Sally Haslanger, "Ontology and Social Construction," *Philosophical Topics*, Volume 23, Number 2 (Fall 1995), p. 98. Examples of this form of construction are: individual women and cool dudes.

"*Constitutive construction*: Something is constitutively constructed iff in defining it we must make reference to social factors." Haslanger (1995), p. 98. Examples of this form of construction are: Operative concept of " coolness"; the operative concept of "woman's Nature."

"Pragmatic construction: A classificatory apparatus (be it a full-blown classification scheme or just a conceptual distinction or descriptive term) is socially constructed just in case its use is determined, at least in part, by social factors." Haslanger (1995), p. 100. Examples of this form of construction are: Woman's nature; intrinsic coolness, the distinction between men and women, distinction between male and female.

[21] For more on this issue, see Peter Slezak, "The Social Construction of Social Constructionism," *Inquiry*, Volume 37, Number 2 (June 1994), pp. 139-159.

[22] Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 48.

[23] For a discussion on the different uses of construction in the sociology of knowledge, see Sergio Sismondo, "Some Social Constructions," *Social Studies of Science* 23 (1993), pp. 515-53.

[24] A. Heyting, "The Intuitionistic Foundations of Mathematics," in Paul Benacerraf and Hilary Putnam, *Philosophy of Mathematics*, second edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983),p. 53.

[25] Quoted in Hacking (1999), p. 128.

[26] Nelson Goodman, *Ways of World Making* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), p. 10.

[27] Nelson Goodman (1978), pp. 138-139.

[28] For a good discussion of the historical process of racial construction see, Theodore Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994).

[29] Haslanger (1995), p. 98.

[30] Ian Hacking, "Five Parables," in *Philosophy in History*, edited by Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 122.

[31] Michal Omi and Howard Winnant, Racial Formation in the United States; From the 1960s to the 1990s, 2nd edition (New York: Rutledge, 1994), p. 4.

[32] See Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998).

[33] To the extent, that the concept of race presupposes the existence of group, this concept can take us beyond the limitations of the individualistic model of political analysis. See George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998). Within political philosophy Joseph Raz and Will Kymlicka support positions consistent with group rights of cultural minorities. See Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

In another context, the move to eliminate race by using the rhetoric of equal protection obfuscate the way in which whiteness functions as a normativity. See Robert Westley, "White Normativity and the Rhetoric of Equal Protection," in ed. *Existence in Black*, ed. Lewis Gordon (New York: Routledge,1997).