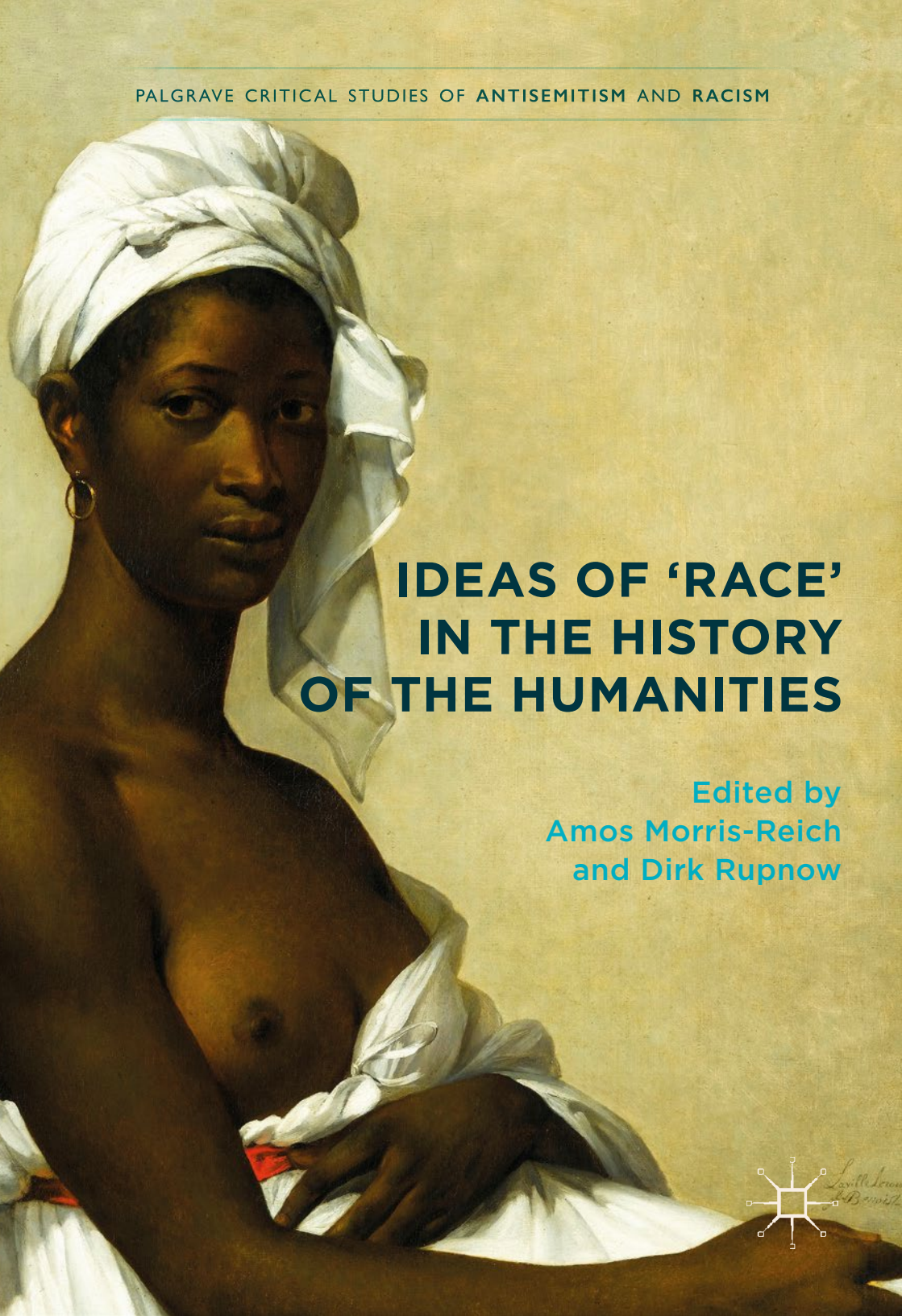
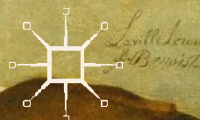


PALGRAVE CRITICAL STUDIES OF ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM



**IDEAS OF 'RACE'
IN THE HISTORY
OF THE HUMANITIES**

Edited by
Amos Morris-Reich
and Dirk Rupnow



Palgrave Critical Studies of Antisemitism and
Racism

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Ideas of 'Race' in the History of the Humanities

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Authentizität (Fink, 2015) and (with V. Lipphardt, J. Thiel and C. Wessely) *Pseudowissenschaft. Konzeptionen von Nichtwissenschaftlichkeit in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Suhrkamp, 2008).

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Introduction

Amos Morris-Reich and Dirk Rupnow

In the decades following World War II and the Holocaust—years that witnessed European decolonization and the African American civil rights movement—the concept of race slowly but surely lost its legitimacy as a cultural, political and scientific category. Nevertheless, for much of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, concepts of race enjoyed widespread currency, playing an integral role in numerous fields of knowledge, in some cases even serving as an essential basis. This volume is concerned with the hitherto neglected role of the humanities in the histories of the idea of race.

For reasons that we shall turn to shortly, contemporary scholarship has by now firmly associated notions of race with late nineteenth-century biology and physical anthropology rather than with the humanities. Thus the scholarly imagination of today populates the racial studies of the past with anthropologists dressed in white doctors' coats and measuring the skulls of dark-skinned and half-naked native subjects, but not with distinguished historians, book in hand and ruminating in their armchairs. And yet recent scholarship has documented notions of “race” within a wide range of fields

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of the humanities and across a wide range of national contexts—the history of art, history, historical economics, musicology and various forms of Orientalism, to name but a few disciplines. To date, however, no collective and comprehensive attempt to address the history of notions of race in the humanities as a whole has been carried out. The aim of this collection of essays is to begin to fill in this significant lacuna.

Of course, from the beginning of this intellectual venture it is crucial to acknowledge the lack of any singular and essentialist idea of “race” (as we shall see below, a not dissimilar point must also be made with regard to the very idea of the “humanities”). In the early twenty-first century in English-speaking countries, “race” is widely used as a social construct, while in post-Holocaust Germany it is primarily understood as a biological concept (*Rasse*). But “race” has always been understood differently in different languages, historical periods and national contexts; indeed, its meaning has always been contested and it has always been a more or less diffuse and fuzzy concept. All this makes an undertaking such as the present difficult—but also necessary.

Today, “race” connotes historical notions of descent, biological ideas of heredity and cultural attributions.¹ Research on the history of the concept of race (for example in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*) usually distinguishes a pre-scientific usage of the term from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries (with forerunners reaching back to the thirteenth century in the Romance languages: Italian *razza*, Spanish *raza*, Portuguese *raça*, French *race*). In contrast to the later, “modern” connotation of the term, its meaning in this early modern period was more that of a long ancestral heritage or line of descendants with exceptional quality. As such, the term was not only applied to human beings but also to domestic animals and cultivated plants. Important for the development of the term was the Spanish *Reconquista* and the French debate on nobility. A more general and sustained discussion of different forms of human beings commenced in the late seventeenth century in the context of the colonization of the New World. “Race” now became one of several terms used to describe human diversity. Its modern meanings, however, were acquired only over the course of the nineteenth century, when the notion of “race” became associated with two of the most significant intellectual developments of the age: on the one hand, “race” became mixed up with concepts of “folk” and “nation” and hence bound to the development of comparative philology, mythology and politics; on the other hand, Charles Darwin used the term within the context of his evolutionary theory, connecting it to the notion of “species.”

Nineteenth-century German universities were particularly important sites for the development of ideas of race, which were central to many academic disciplines. Both sociology and anthropology, for example, were greatly influenced by similar conceptual developments, such as Herbert Spencer's account of organic differentiation and Charles Darwin's and Ernst Haeckel's theories of evolution. Concepts of race, however, developed differently in different disciplines. In particular, anthropology was conceptually, if not always empirically, differentiated from *Ethnologie*, *Völkerkunde* and *Völkerkunde*, and referred to the natural scientific study of man and the species' biological history. Hence it inherently entailed concepts of race—in the plural, including concepts ranging from racial determinism to the idea of race as at least in part a social construct. While up to the turn of the twentieth century German anthropology was led by anti-racist and anti-antisemitic liberals such as Rudolf Virchow, the status of biology in general and race in particular came to be fiercely disputed in German sociology.² And yet, while all these nineteenth-century developments have worked in one way or another to irreversibly shape our understanding of “race,” the very categories of nineteenth-century racial thought have today become problematic, and this impairs our ability to interpret the history of the concept of race. Complex matters of translation (such as the crucial distinction between “*Rasse*” and “*Volk*” in the German context and the mismatch between the former and “race” in English, as Christopher Hutton shows in his contribution) further impede our historical interpretations.

With its history of domestic slavery and its turn-of-the-century anxieties over mass European immigration, North America played a particularly important role in the development of twentieth-century thinking about race. Following the heyday of racial social science between around 1880 and 1920, the North American academic community found itself increasingly divided between those who viewed race as a fundamental and necessary foundation for the scientific study of humans and human societies and those who saw race as a spurious category of pseudoscience.³ Then, during the late 1940s and through the 1950s, and in the wake of the atrocities and mass crimes committed by Nazi Germany in the name of and guided by concepts of race, North American anthropology departments, now increasingly under the influence of the disciples of Franz Boas, transformed race into a negative category that served as an object of criticism as opposed to a valid anthropological category. Yet it was only in the 1980s, in the context of the wider critical turn fostered by postmodernism, that North American anthropologists turned to reflect upon the

history of their discipline's intertwinement with ideas of race.⁴ From the mid-1980s onward, significant work on the role of race in the history of anthropology has been conducted, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that this critical reflection has generated a fundamental transformation of anthropology.⁵

While these developments in North American anthropology departments are to be welcomed wholeheartedly, they nevertheless generate two distinct problems with regard to our understanding of the histories of race. First and most obviously, the transformation of race from a valid scientific into a negative and pseudoscientific category impairs our ability to sympathetically engage with the work of students of race before World War II. It is of course precisely the business of the intellectual historian to overcome the anachronism that naturally attaches itself to our readings of past texts, but in the case of "race" this task is made particularly difficult by the profound emotions engendered by the bloody and brutal historical events associated with ideas of race that occurred between the composition of such texts and our readings of them today. We will return to this issue later on in this Introduction. But a second, more subtle and more insidious interpretative problem must be addressed immediately: the critical turn taken by anthropology, generating as it has a host of studies associating the scientific idea of race with the history of anthropology, has not as yet been followed by the various disciplines that compose the humanities. The result is that race is today far more associated with anthropology than with the humanities. In other words, because the humanities have yet to examine the role of racial thinking in their histories, the erroneous impression has arisen that race has played a negligible or no role in these histories. The present volume is intended as a first step toward rectifying this profoundly problematic state of affairs.

But what do we mean by "the humanities"? In the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith could write that the "general division" of ancient Greek philosophy into the "three great branches" of natural philosophy, moral philosophy and logic "seems perfectly agreeable to the nature of things."⁶ In a rough and ready manner of speaking we may today agree with Smith, identifying his "moral philosophy" with our "humanities" and noting the key contrast of both terms with what we now describe as the "natural sciences" (Smith's "natural philosophy"). But while the simple designation of "not being natural science" may capture much of what we take to be the subject of this volume, any simplistic identification of moral philosophy with the humanities will obscure key elements of the history that we wish to reconstruct. The term "humanities" appears to

have been coined in North American universities as recently as the 1920s, as an English-language equivalent to the German *Geisteswissenschaften* (although, as we shall see below, the correspondence is not exact). It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the term became common currency in Great Britain.⁷ For some years prior to this date the accepted umbrella term would have been “moral science,” a contested designation standing (very roughly) somewhere between the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment and the humanities of the twentieth-century university. These are not interchangeable terms and the distinctions between them, as well as the various conflicting interpretations offered of each of them at particular times, would need to be properly explored in any systematic survey of the place of ideas of race within the wider intellectual history of the last few hundred years. For the purposes of the present volume, however, it is sufficient to provide but a brief glimpse of the genealogy of our present conception of the humanities.

Broadly speaking, contemporary presumptions of the universal signification of the term “humanities” are a manifestation of the dominance of twentieth-century academic culture by a tradition of Kantian (or neo-Kantian) philosophy. One consequence of this dominance is that earlier traditions have been obscured and effectively written out of intellectual history. It is only relatively recently, for example, that modern scholarship has unearthed the seminal role of the tradition of Protestant natural law in the emergence of early modern moral philosophy.⁸ To provide but one indication, it is now clear that divergent responses to Hugo Grotius’s distinction between perfect and imperfect rights generated the two opposing traditions of moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁹ The natural law framework was essentially discarded with Dugald Stewart’s formulation of Common Sense philosophy, which exerted tremendous influence in nineteenth-century Britain, North America and even (albeit indirectly) France. Objecting to Smith’s agreement with the ancient division of philosophy into natural philosophy, ethics and logic, Stewart insisted that “*Matter* and *Mind* ... are the two most general heads which ought to form the ground-work of an Encyclopedical classification of the sciences and arts.”¹⁰ Stewart here signaled the transition from eighteenth-century moral philosophy, with its key concern with sociability, to nineteenth-century moral science, in which the nature of the individual human mind became the central object of contention.

The great debates of nineteenth-century English-language moral science turn upon the psychological question of whether mental introspection reveals innate powers and first principles (Stewart) or simply the play

of impressions and ideas (J. S. Mill). But whichever position was adopted, the point is that the different moral sciences—and these included, at various times, history, law, logic, ethics, psychology, political economy and political science—were not simply defined as such by virtue of this position, but they were also supposedly grounded in the correct account of the human mind.¹¹ This was still the situation at the turn of the twentieth century. It was only in 1903, for example, that an Economics Faculty was created at Cambridge University—hitherto economics had been taught as but one of several moral sciences. In general, the disappearance of the category “moral science” was the result not of intellectual development but rather of the processes of academic specialization that witnessed, over the course of about half a century, the establishment of separate faculties and, consequently, independent identities for the various one-time moral sciences. It was only in the wake of such fragmentation and subsequent intellectual amnesia that the term “humanities” could enter into the vocabulary of the universities as a new catch-all label.

Even in the German context it would be quite wrong to regard *Geisteswissenschaften* as a timeless category. In the German universities significant innovation occurred as early as the years after 1825, when the new and reformed universities restructured teaching and research along disciplinary lines. The new academics were increasingly specialists who wrote primarily for their peers and taught mainly to create a new generation of scholars in their subject.¹² Many new disciplines like philosophy, history and philology now came into existence as distinct social entities. The conception of these various fields as all belonging to the *Geisteswissenschaften*, however, had to wait until the introduction of that term, which occurred as part of the intense methodological and ideological controversy that took place in the third part of the nineteenth century. The term was introduced by Wilhelm Dilthey, according to some accounts, as the German translation of the term “moral sciences” that Dilthey found in the sixth book of J. S. Mill’s *System of Logic* (1843).¹³ Literally, *Geisteswissenschaften* means “sciences of the spirit,” and the term encompasses that which is authentically human and, as such, is in fact wider than the English-language term “humanities,” at least if the latter are understood as predominantly historical-philological disciplines. At the heart of Dilthey’s thinking was a distinction between *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften*; between, that is, the sciences of the natural world and the sciences of man. While the latter engaged with law-like causal relations, the former, he insisted, must focus on understanding human beings by way of the

recreation of their respective mental worlds through the method of *verstehen* (“understanding”) the meanings and reasons that inform human actions. Appearing in the *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* in 1883, Dilthey’s theory reclassified, regrouped and reorganized the relationships between various fields of knowledge and disciplines and defined their positions within or without the humanities.

But Dilthey’s was not the only theory around. Indeed, his notion of the *Geisteswissenschaften* was developed as part of a wider controversy involving, directly or indirectly, the likes of Moritz Lazarus and Heymann Steyntal (to whom Dilthey was responding), as well as Georg Simmel, Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert and Max Weber, to name only some of the most prominent names. Thus *Geisteswissenschaften* was but one of several alternative differentiations and principles, more or less close to Dilthey’s, but regrouping other fields of knowledge together or insisting that the fields dealing with humans as a whole pertain to society (*Sozialwissenschaften*) or culture (*Kulturwissenschaften*), rather than the “spirit” (*Geisteswissenschaften*). In other words, even within nineteenth-century Germany the definition of the humanities, in its English rendition, is neither stable nor definitive but subject to discussion and controversy. Furthermore, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are here talking about two different levels or registers, which are related but by no means the same. The first level pertains to fields and disciplines (such as history, philology, pre-history etc.) and the latter to a theory that classifies (and defines) different forms of knowledge and that, in one sense at least, could be seen as a theory of knowledge or meta-knowledge structure. As a theory of knowledge this is both an analytical structure and a theory laden with values. Finally, it is also not sealed; it is easy to document instances of the traffic of ideas in and out of fields that count as *Geisteswissenschaften* into others that do not, or vice versa.

All of this should teach us to be wary of too easy an application of the term “humanities” in any inquiry into the intellectual history of the last few hundred years. Clearly, the terms “moral philosophy,” “moral science” and “*Geisteswissenschaften*” are not synonymous, and even the German term cannot be taken as an exact equivalent of “humanities.” The example of economics may provide a useful illustration. It was under the impetus of the neo-classical economist Alfred Marshall that, in Cambridge in 1903, economics was taken out of the moral sciences and established in its own faculty. Now, Marshall is usually regarded as one of the founders of modern mathematical economics, and few people today would

classify modern economics as a member of the humanities; and yet in 1903 nobody questioned that economics *was* a moral science (the issue was whether this particular moral science was important enough to merit a separate faculty). Clearly, then, the criteria for membership in the moral sciences differ from the criteria for membership in the humanities, and the same point could just as readily be made with regard to eighteenth-century moral philosophy. Indeed, these varying (and contested) criteria cannot but be regarded as potential elements in any intellectual history of race (for it is an open question whether different classificatory schemes are more or less amenable to the development of racial ideas). But as we have already emphasized, the present project has not been conceived as a systematic and comprehensive study; it is rather intended as a first exploratory step toward filling a fairly gaping lacuna in the literature. As such, we feel it sufficient to draw attention to the problems inherent in the usage of any one particular term to describe the kinds of intellectual groupings we have in mind, but nevertheless to continue to employ the term “humanities” on the practical ground that this is the recognizable and accepted term within contemporary academic cultures.

In the first instance, the very notion of *Geisteswissenschaften* or humanities would seem fundamentally incompatible with the history of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion that one typically associates with race. But although the theorization of race was based in biology and used the language of the natural sciences, it could never be reduced to a purely scientific project: the racializers were, after all, attempting to devise a classification system that would naturalize cultural, intellectual and psychological characteristics as well as physical ones. Yet in racial discourses it is almost never possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between physical or bodily and mental or cultural attributes. Furthermore, there is flow in both directions; that is, from the natural sciences to the humanities and vice versa. This is why, to take a particularly concrete example, in the Nazi “racial state” the humanities were equally as important as the natural sciences in defining race and justifying the implementation of racist practices.¹⁴ But more generally, it is important to realize that the category of race was prominent in comparative philology before it was taken up by biology and anthropology, and ideas of race were appropriated from philology not only by anthropology but also by many humanistic disciplines, such as art history, musicology, theology, religious studies, history, literary studies, philosophy, architecture, folklore and archaeology. In all these fields, notions of race were empirically present (for instance the

distinction between Southern and Northern art) as well as intertwined in complex ways with the guiding principles and methodological considerations of different fields of knowledge (for instance *Anschauung* or *Stil*). But what in one context belongs to the “surface” of scientific knowledge as opposed to the “deep structure” can be reversed in another, as can be seen in the contributions of Derek Catsam on race in the South African humanities and in Nigel Eltringham’s chapter on the Hamitic theory from nineteenth-century France and Britain to the Rwandan genocide of the second half of the twentieth century. Notions of race were present in a manner both specific to languages, national cultures, disciplines and fields of knowledge and reaching across disciplines, fields of knowledge, and cultural and national lines. In short, race has a long-standing, deep-seated and complex history within the humanities, vestiges of which are still discernible in modern scholarship. The humanities, however, have never paid special attention to the role of race in their history, and many scholars in the humanities are unaware of the role of race even in their own fields of knowledge.

The individualist nature of humanistic scholarship, the nature of discourse in the humanities and the typical forms of publication have all contributed to the fact that the history of race in the humanities has not been raised or addressed collectively. But these aspects intrinsic to scholarship in the humanities have also been strengthened by the major dispute over the scientific status of race that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the critical discourse that arose in the mid-1980s and which has to date involved primarily anthropologists. Only in the last decade or so have individual historians, operating in different fields, started to turn their attention to the history of scholarship in various branches of the humanities, thus leading them to directly confront the role of race therein. Prominent examples include the history of German Orientalists (Suzanne Marchand), the discipline of history (Ingo Haar, Dirk Rupnow), art history (Margaret Olin, Kymberly Pinder), musicology (Ruth HaCohen, Michael Steinberg), linguistics (Christopher Hutton), theology (Susannah Heschel, Denise Kimber Buell) and the study of religion (Stefan Arvidsson). These individual studies have broken new ground with regard to the role of race in specific fields of the humanities and have brought to light and sharpened the pressing need to address the role of notions of race in the humanities in a far more comprehensive and systematic manner.

Although the origin of this volume is a conference that took place in Haifa in 2010, the volume differs significantly from that conference. The

idea for the conference itself was fired by the experience of both editors, who had independently come to the conclusion that crucial aspects of the history of race and racism had far more to do with an intrinsic history of the humanities than with that of the natural sciences or the political sphere. We then started to look around and realized that there was a growing body of literature that corroborated this intuition with regard to specific aspects of the humanities, but no combined discussion across the various contexts. Such a joint discussion, ranging from the eighteenth through the twenty-first centuries and involving different national contexts and different linguistic and disciplinary skills, could only be pursued through a collective endeavor, and the conference was intended to serve as a first step in that endeavor.

We then issued a call for papers for the conference and received a large number of applications. Many of these focused on critical perspectives on the history of ideas of race in the humanities. Our interest, however, lay not in critical and, to an extent, external perspectives on race in the humanities, but rather in authors who were either committed in one way or another to concepts of race or else viewed race as necessary for the treatment of their subjects in certain respects. The conference, which was much wider in scope than the current volume, was the first time these aspects of the history of the humanities were discussed jointly.

The conference brought together some of the most distinguished authors in their respective fields across the humanities, discussing different continents, intellectual traditions, historical periods and political, social and linguistic subjects and contexts. Only following the conference presentations and discussions did we begin to understand the sheer size of the subject that the conference had opened up. And it was only after the conference was over, in a long and arduous process facilitated by discussion, reflection and review, that the ideas of the editors about the shape of the volume and the required form of this introductory chapter crystallized.

What became increasingly apparent to us was that in opening up a vast subject that had been greatly neglected by scholarship, we faced the choice of either reifying a partial segment of its history, most likely the more clearly racist end of the spectrum (about which both editors had independently published extensively),¹⁵ or, on the other hand, opening and historically deconstructing some of the different and shifting historical entanglements and underpinnings of ideas of race in the history of the humanities. Each of these strategies, however, would come at a price: the former would give the appearance of a clearer and more consistent role for

ideas of race in the history of the humanities, but it would also entail historical partiality and even misrepresentation; the latter, meanwhile, would express a wider segment of the historical continuum, but the chapters collected in the volume would seem more disparate.

It gradually became clear to us as historians that the latter strategy was stronger and historically more productive. We then wrote this Introduction, which seeks to reflect this strategy. Our insistence on deifying the history of ideas of race in the history of the humanities, on emphasizing the entanglements between race and the humanities in particular contexts, on pointing out different modalities of relationship and even on calling attention to the inability to fully fix and stabilize the meaning of “race” and the boundaries of the “humanities” across history and national context reflects this strategic choice. The contributions collected here are thus not randomly chosen but express our growing conviction that the first step, in this current state of research, should not be to artificially contract the field but, on the contrary, and even at the risk of having the selection viewed as insufficiently historically defined, to move towards demarcating an as-yet-uncharted field.

From all this it should be clear that the essays collected in this volume do not attempt to exhaust the subject. Rather, they offer carefully selected chapters that methodically study varying manifestations of ideas of race in the history of the humanities. These chapters demonstrate race as a string of notions in texts, images and music, in various branches of the humanities ranging from linguistics to folklore, art history and musicology, in their local contexts as well as in wider contexts that are arguably shared.

Despite the fact that both editors of this volume study, in one way or another, National Socialism in its wider context and have a background in German history, Nazism is purposely almost completely absent from the volume. This decision was made because the editors feel that the subject of race in the Nazi context has been thoroughly studied, as has the history of the humanities in Nazi Germany.¹⁶ The Nazi context is an obvious and necessary one in the study of race because of the extremity of the case, but because the aim of this volume is to kick-start a more systematic and wide-ranging historicization of notions of race in the humanities in a non-teleological and non-deterministic way, it seemed appropriate to cast the net in less-charted waters and to seek out appearances of race in other contexts. Having said this, it must immediately be conceded that Nazi Germany remains as subtext in much of the discussion, and one of the constant questions that undergirds many of the chapters pertains to the

relationship between politically and culturally distant periods and national contexts as well as the relationship between notions of race and explicitly political frameworks.

The aim of this collection of essays, then, is to historicize notions of race in the humanities. Several questions run through the contributions collected in this volume, addressing the historical sources of concepts of race in the humanities, their functions and significance and their specificities. The first goal of this book is to begin the collection of an empirical body of knowledge on the subject. But a second goal is to elaborate the conceptual distinctions and historical and analytical assumptions that are necessary for the study of this subject. Given the intimate relationship of race with slavery, oppression, persecution and genocide, any such discussion of concepts and historical assumptions is of course sensitive. In the remainder of this Introduction, we attempt to elucidate the major questions that this history involves and to explicate some of the considerations that we bring with us in approaching this subject.

THREE HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF RACE

The editors of this volume have not been guided by a “strong” thesis concerning the history of concepts of race in the humanities. Indeed, we do not believe that one gains a stronger understanding of this history if one poses a quasi-deterministic account of a trajectory that, for example, begins with its dissemination in the eighteenth century as a reflexive idea for the categorization of human group differences, runs through hierarchical notions of the nineteenth century and culminates in Nazi crimes justified on racial grounds. The trajectory of race afforded by this volume is, by contrast, contingent, partial, relative to and dependent on external variables, themselves dynamic and unstable. Our intention in this section is to offer three historical arguments that may serve as a guide to the interpretation of this history as a whole. Obviously, not all of these three arguments are equally relevant to the various interpretations of the manifestations of race that follow, but we believe that they perform necessary interpretative work in the understanding of the history of concepts of race in the humanities as a whole.

Our first argument is that race, when looked at from the perspective of the humanities, is not primarily about physical but about cultural and mental differences. In contemporary North America, and to a great

extent in Europe as well, there is a widely shared belief that race is primarily a category of physically observable superficial difference (“race is skin deep”). This tendency is probably connected to the critical turn that anthropology has taken towards race in its own disciplinary history, but it is not helpful in the reconstruction and understanding of the history of race in the humanities. One of the major accomplishments of the chapters that follow is that they serve as a corrective to an entrenched focus upon physical difference and point to the frequent (but by no means exclusive) conceptualization of race as a deep structure that organizes human history and culture. This contrast, it may be noted, is not unrelated to that between the visible and the invisible, where in some contexts race is essentially about the visible and about visible differences, whereas in others it is equally essentially about non-observable, almost hidden and in a sense stronger or more threatening differences.

Our second argument is that it is necessary to draw distinctions between several interrelated but independent genealogies of race as a concept (or set of dynamic concepts). Thus one genealogical line of development runs from Count de Gobineau—whose primary form of argumentation as found in his *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* was historical—through to the *Rasse*system of the twentieth century. In this line, racial purity is the highest attribute, aesthetic as well as biological. Another line begins with Charles Darwin and leads, by way of Francis Galton, to modern eugenics. In this second genealogy, it is variability that plays the crucial role: Darwin conceptualized species as by definition dynamic and historical rather than stable, and as therefore lacking a fixed border; and race therefore came to be conceptualized as, in principle, also lacking a permanent and fixed border.

Finally, our third argument is that the discovery of the idea of race is a specifically modern phenomenon, which cannot be separated from the sense of the crisis of modernity which accompanied the belief in the period as an era unlike anything that had preceded it, a veritable *sui generis*. In this sense, ideas of race are inseparable from what could be termed a form of reactionary logic as a response to modernity. That is, a structural relationship can be discerned between the belief in the natural division of the human species into races and the belief that modern conditions increasingly undermine and erode that boundary. Many writers on race were responding to what they felt to be the disintegration of traditional forms of social, community, family and natural life in the wake of serious, immediate processes with irreversible implications. Race was thus established as

a natural category that was—at that very moment—disintegrating; race is “discovered” as being on the verge of collapse as the laws of nature come apart at the seams.

WHEN DOES THE HISTORY OF RACE BEGIN?

Our third argument above, that race is a specifically modern phenomenon, is contentious, and a word should be said concerning the wider debate surrounding this issue. In several respects, the present volume can be seen as taking on issues that were raised and discussed in the volume *The Origins of Racism in the West* (2009), edited by Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler.¹⁷ Our starting point was the fact that the *term* race is a latecomer and there is no evidence for its existence in the ancient or medieval world. Eliav-Feldon, Isaac and Ziegler, however, attempt to push the beginning of this history of race and racism back to the ancient world by retrieving evidence of what they term “proto-racism.” A discussion of the historical origin of race is also a discussion of its conditions of possibility and it is important, therefore, to bring to the surface what is at stake in the determination of the *terminus a quo* of race as an idea, and as a category that could then manifest itself in social and political life.¹⁸

While it is probably possible to find earlier evidence of proto-racism, and even if the actual historical moment of its emergence cannot be determined with any degree of certainty, the history of the notion of race and the massive dissemination of intellectual, social and political practices that are directly or indirectly justified in terms of race are genuinely modern phenomena. As already indicated in the first section above, during the eighteenth century race was not a clearly defined category with a well-delineated reference; indeed, the appellations “race” and “human varieties” were not conceived solely or even primarily in terms of whiteness and blackness, nor were they visually represented solely as such. In one respect the history of race, as with many other scholarly and scientific concepts, is one of increasing differentiation and exactness and receives more technical definitions only towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is of the essence of race as a concept, however, that while it seemed stable to contemporaries, and especially to students of race, it was in fact an unstable, hybrid, contextual category operating within the various sciences at the interface of the social and the biological.¹⁹

To accept that race is specifically modern has many ramifications, because it places this history in relation to that of European enlightenment; the emergence of modern sciences, colonialism and imperialism;

the rise of nationalism; and ideas of secularism as well as the processes of secularization. Ideas and representations can create objects—persons, places, ideas—that is, a world with social dimensions. Enlightenment philosophers attempted to define “man” not only as an endlessly varied empirical being but also normatively, by seeking a common human nature. If race is recognized as contemporaneous to the rise of Enlightenment philosophy, it is difficult not to see that it appears as another facet of the desperate attempt to save the normative in the face of the empirical. In this vein, those disposed to think with readymade concepts may well identify the history of race as not simply parallel to but in fact born out of what is fashionably referred to as “the Enlightenment project.” By the same token, the recognition of the modernity of race fosters the recognition of its direct connection with the fortunes of religion in the modern world (as shown in this volume by George S. Williamson in his chapter on Schelling, and Dani Schrire in his chapter on the emergence of Jewish folklore). Indeed, if modernity is identified with change and instability, then race can be understood as providing a particularly important category allowing for the relating of not only difference but also similarity, for talking about what ties people together over time and space.

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AND CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RACE

The very idea of notions of race in the humanities confronts the historian with several interpretative hurdles that arise from the massive changes in assumptions about race that have occurred between the early modern period and the early twenty-first century. From early in the second half of the twentieth century onwards, historians have increasingly worked with the epistemic assumption that races are not simple biological entities but are rather, in one way or another, constructs, inevitably involving social and political (that is, non-biological) considerations. Simultaneously, commitment to notions of race has become a commitment to racism. Consequently, historians tend to approach branches of knowledge committed to race from an external point of view, treating them as ideological constructs—a tendency that complicates the study of these bodies of knowledge by way of the normal tools of intellectual history. The specific problem that we face here, however, is not so much with the moral or ethical judgments themselves, but with what such judgments do to our capacity to write this chapter in the history of the humanities.

Race is one of the strongest examples in modern intellectual history in which contemporary historians are unable to fully identify with the object of their research. Historians today simply cannot write a “positive” history of race, devoid of ambivalences and tensions.²⁰ This is, therefore, not the task that we have set ourselves in this volume, although our chosen path is in certain ways even harder, more sensitive and riddled with more tensions. To reiterate: the task of this volume is to provide an empirical and conceptual foundation for the history of ideas of race in the humanities. We hope to achieve this goal in part by providing a first shot at a comprehensive body of positive historical evidence on the subject. While this “positivist” intention might sound simple and straightforward, it is in fact complex. The historian’s trade is based to a great extent on the notion of “empathy,” that is, on the ability to identify with the subjects of history as a necessary condition for their understanding. Full identification with the writers of race is no longer an option for contemporary historians, nor do we believe that it would contribute to a stronger historical interpretation. But a history that is entirely external to the subject all too readily slides into didacticism and moralizing, and is weak in the sense that it does not capture the essence of the real questions at hand.

One possible solution, which we do not choose to take, is the sociological one developed in the second half of the twentieth century. From our perspective, the point of departure of the sociological solution is the fact that ideas (in this case, of race) are always embedded in concrete social situations and are always both the fruit and fuel of social relations. But late twentieth-century social theorists took this approach one step further by moving from restricted definitions of racism, directly related to notions of race, to the study of racism according to its social effects, which they increasingly found to conform to social relations between majorities and minorities in stratified social and political power structures. This move allowed for powerful insights into the social manifestations of racism that escaped analysis tied to direct discourse about race. In a logical consequence of this tendency, an influential definition of racism that arose in the second half of the twentieth century went so far as to speak of “race-less racism.”²¹

Whatever its merits, this sociological approach to racism is unhelpful for the study of the history of race as an intellectual idea, string of ideas or intellectual trajectory. According to the sociological perspective, various kinds of power relations that can readily be detected across history are to be defined as racism, even though they existed prior to the emergence of

the term “race” and completely independently from any idea of race—and the effect of such a circular definition is to block a priori any evaluation of the historical specificity of race. Without forgetting for a moment the social and political effects of race, the study of which is strengthened by sociological approaches, our reasoning as intellectual historians is that a precondition for the history of race in the humanities is that it first of all be studied in intellectual terms, as a signifier, a string of ideas, which arguably holds a certain amount of historical specificity. This endeavor can only be achieved by way of the careful reconstruction of major chapters in the manifestation of race as a term, concept or idea in its immediate, local and wider historical contexts.

An intellectual approach to the history of race also suspends judgment about any *necessary* relationship between race and racism, a judgment that is built into many sociological approaches. Historically, it is clear that ideas of race are in many cases inseparable from the emergence of sometimes crude forms of social and political racism. But we believe that one of the most productive ways of studying ideas of race is by bringing to the surface overt but also sometimes only implied hierarchies and asymmetries connected to race. Hard as it is to face historical contingency in a case such as this, most of the chapters in this volume attempt to differentiate between, on the one hand, what writers in various contexts intended their ideas to be and, on the other, what they became. Suspending the question of the necessary relationship between ideas of race and forms of racism allows us to broach the question of whether racism is in fact always built into ideas of race; that is, whether there is a causal relationship between the two or simply mere correlation and historical contingency.

At the crux of the intellectual approach to the history of race stands a resistance to any a priori definition of race as a precondition for its historicization. Definitions that work well in one context do not in another. For instance, while in his chapter Joan-Pau Rubiés differentiates between racism and the presence of taxonomic notions of race and identifies the existence of notions of race with the establishment of a hierarchy between different human groups, in other chapters, such as George S. Williamson’s account of race in Schelling’s philosophy, this definition has little to do with the issues at hand. We believe that our approach here contributes to a historical appreciation which is not deficient in moral or ethical terms. Given the essentially tainted historical nature of race, there cannot be a universally agreed upon strategy for its historical reconstruction and interpretation, and therefore for every historian its study involves a kind of

balancing act between the assumptions about race of the present day and an attempt to treat past ideas about race with historical empathy.

This is perhaps the appropriate moment to observe that a focus upon race necessarily also touches upon two subjects that are deeply entangled with the history of race: eugenics and antisemitism. To begin with eugenics, while there are indeed numerous intersections between eugenics and the history of race, the two are not the same and should not be confused. Eugenics itself has a complex history, greatly varying across different national contexts, but there is growing agreement among historians that, unlike race, eugenics was on the whole a product of a middle-class reform movement.²² The relationship between race and antisemitism is less easily dealt with, for it is recognized as one of the most complex questions in modern Jewish history: the history of race and the history of antisemitism. Animosity towards Jews precedes the emergence of modern notions of race and its origins are profoundly different. What complicates the picture is that at some historical moment, in the German context arguably in the latter part of the nineteenth century, virtually all antisemitic ideas and statements become sustained by ideas of race—to the extent that the former can no longer be separated from the latter. But not all discussions of Jews in terms of race were directly or even implicitly antisemitic, and there are complex asymmetries built into the relationship between the two. Modern antisemitism, especially in the twentieth century, has a specific history which is not merely a subcase of race or racism. No history of notions of race in the twentieth century can ignore its relationship to antisemitism, and chapters in this volume touch on this relationship in the spheres of music, folklore and economic history. But it was a deliberate decision on behalf of the editors not to make the subject of antisemitism central to this volume and thereby “paint” the history of notions of race as a whole in its terms.

RACE IN THE HUMANITIES

When we narrow our range of vision from an intellectual history of race to an intellectual history of race *in the humanities*, a number of further issues come into focus. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the question of whether the very idea of race can be understood as originating in the humanities or whether its presence in the humanities invariably signals a previous importation from the natural sciences. Of course, as with material inventions so with conceptual innovations: multiple discoveries

are probably the rule rather than the exception, which is to say that to claim on occasion an internal origin within the humanities is not to claim that race arose exclusively or solely within the humanities. The question comes up, however, because it is commonly assumed that ideas of race first arose *only* within the natural sciences and were subsequently exported into humanistic discourses. The chapters of this volume corroborate the claim of multiple origins: *some* notions of race originated independently in humanistic discourses, their manifestations tied to specific humanistic sensitivities and goals; others were imported from other spheres of discourse, most prominently those related to natural philosophy.

A further issue concerns the multiple contexts within which any particular idea of race in the humanities operates. Indeed, as the chapters of this volume illustrate, discussions of concepts of race in the humanities never belong to a single, determining context. Whether the subject is race in the history of art or in the history of folklore, there are inevitably several, sometimes competing and often disparate, contexts, and it is always necessary to unearth the local contexts of any particular discussion. Local contextualization can refer to political categories in a given society, conceptual traditions in a field of inquiry or a specific social situation. Indeed, the “same” racial idea can have different and sometimes contrary meanings in different contexts.²³ Part of what constitutes the context of an idea involves the understanding of and significance attributed to social realities by different actors, which of course varies from case to case. For instance, as Rubiés argues in his chapter, there is a clear relationship between writing on race and the fact that slavery in the colonial and imperial contexts is exclusively of individuals from Africa. Forms of justification in writing on race, in this respect, are inseparable from and sometimes cannot be understood at all in isolation from contemporary political and social changes.

Of course, there are several possible forms of the relationship between context and discourse. Ideas are not simply shaped by context; they also play a role in the construction of contexts, and there are also more elusive and more challenging modalities, for instance the possible impact of certain unexplained empirical facts on the emergence of racial discourse. As Sergio Della Pergola has pointed out, in the second half of the nineteenth century the number of Jews in Europe grew rapidly, at a pace that was far faster than was the case for non-Jews.²⁴ Different theories arose to explain this observed fact, including theories that argued that Jews are more immune than other populations to certain diseases. In German economics, as touched on by Nicolas Berg in his chapter in this volume,

Sombart developed an economic theory that explained the emergence of modern capitalism with the Jews and, ultimately, grounded his argument on race. Sombart's theory might have originated with an empirical observation, but this does not mean that the resultant theory was true, the only one possible or even helpful or relevant for understanding the fact at hand. Again, the history of music and musicology demonstrates that social or cultural fantasies can also affect notions of race in the humanities, as shown by Anna G. Piotrowska's article in this volume, with images of Jews and of Gypsies relating to themes of nomadism and fluidity within musicology.²⁵

In the work of the historian, reconstruction follows deconstruction. After distinguishing and differentiating myriad contexts in the history of the idea of race in the humanities, the attempt must be made to at least begin to put the various pieces together, thereby creating a composite picture comprised of various layers. Oftentimes these layers are rife with apparent inconsistencies and tensions. However, from the multiple local contexts and instances one must attempt to ascertain a single composite image. As we strain to catch a glimpse of the bigger picture that the following chapters bring into view, it can be seen that this picture does not match any preestablished view of race in the humanities. Studying manifestations of race across national contexts, languages, historical periods and intellectual traditions thus unravels conceptual, semantic and rhetorical preconceptions. This volume illustrates that race functions in greatly divergent ways, ranging from concepts that are central to, undergird or organize a certain intellectual field of inquiry, as in the genre of racial history, to instances in which the position of race is conceptually far more peripheral, as, for example, in the case of at least some forms of economic thought.

RACE AND METHODOLOGY

One set of questions that pertain to the subject of race and the humanities warrants a separate discussion in this Introduction. We find these questions not only extremely productive but also almost entirely neglected; they concern the relationship between the various methodologies of the different humanities and their potential to assume notions of race. Specifically, we are interested in whether there are disciplines, methods of study and objects that are more susceptible to notions of race than others. Is it, for instance, only a historical accident that analytic philosophy has been less

prone to notions of race than phenomenology or branches of art history or philology? Do such divergences result from the politics of the field, its objects or something about its methods of study, its fundamental epistemic and ontological assumptions? We do not believe it is possible to say that certain fields, disciplines or methods were inherently predetermined to appropriate notions of race. But the articles collected in this volume do suggest that certain methodologies were more predisposed to develop, appropriate or integrate notions of race than others.

A short detour through the close and parallel case of the role of statistical methods in the emergence of anthropology and genetics highlights some aspects of the role and status of methodology in the history of race. It is still a common interpretative assumption of historians of science that a clear separation is to be made between the scientific method and its actual use. The method in and of itself is seen to be essentially neutral and unbiased. For example, in the history of genetics or physical anthropology it is often claimed that physical anthropological or genetic methods are not inherently racist but are rather, in themselves, neutral and “blind,” and that it is particular scientists who misuse and abuse these methods. In *The Politics of Large Numbers*, however, Alain Desrosières suggests a different interpretation.²⁶ He points out that Francis Galton and Karl Pearson, the founders of eugenics who both made major contributions to modern statistics, pursued a project that they sought to found upon two pillars, the one political (eugenics) and the other scientific (biometrics). Desrosières observes that eugenics, the political pillar, has by now lost legitimacy and so appears obsolete but that biometrics has endured and indeed stands today at the basis of numerous branches of biology and economics. But given the initial intentions of Galton and Pearson, it is questionable whether it makes sense to insist upon a clear epistemic division between their statistical methods and their ideological model.

We want to suggest the importance of thinking through similar episodes in the history of the humanities. Methodologies have the potential to bring facts to the surface, if not to generate empirical objects. Margaret Olin’s comparison of classification and “close observation” in art history and anthropology, Suzanne Marchand’s analysis of major developments in the methodologies of oriental philologists and Christopher Hutton’s focus on comparative philology’s encounter with Chinese languages all prove the importance of methodology. Scholarship in the humanities, partaking as it always does in the generation of culture and never fully separable from cultural ideologies, cannot be broken down into discrete individual

components, into disparate objects, categories and methods. We argue, nevertheless, that a focus upon method is indispensable for the historian concerned with the history of race in the humanities. Furthermore, as an empirical fact, different methodologies within the humanities seem to have a different relationship to race, not only in historical practice but also in philosophical potential. As shown by some of the following chapters, and to name just three methods peculiar to the humanities with which racial notions were at one point or another interwoven, methodologies such as the idealization of language in philology, “close observation” in the history of art and the search for “essences” in Husserlian phenomenology seem to be theoretically more prone to ideas of race than others.

Empirically, two fields in particular have demonstrated great potential for developing notions of race: the history of art, with its visual emphasis, and philology or linguistics, with its emphasis upon linguistic form. In her contribution on the former in this volume, Margaret Olin shows how historians of art who developed a method of close observation in the context of the identification of artistic styles integrated this method with the observation of minute racial differences. It is probably not possible to determine whether there is anything in the method of close observation that makes race particularly appealing or whether the coming together of the two is mere historical contingency, with ideas of race completely external to the method. It is clear, however, that there is nothing in the methodology itself that could serve as a potential check against the appropriation of notions of race. Christopher Hutton’s discussion in his chapter in this volume suggests that the case of philology is perhaps more complicated, with a deep tension between older linguistic and newer visual or biological constructions of European identity standing at the intellectual heart of the politicization of race from the 1870s onwards. As Hutton points out, it is a moot point whether this period witnessed the corruption of an older, cultural idea of nationality by a new biological idea of physical types or whether the science of cultural anatomy was subverted by an encounter with older cultural, linguistic theories of national identity.²⁷ The point to be emphasized here is simply that, as a matter of historical fact, philological studies has enjoyed a particularly intimate connection with ideas of race.

Having argued for the significance of methodology to the history of notions of race in the humanities,²⁸ we want also to suggest that “similar” methodologies can function differently or have different political ramifications in different social contexts. This suggestion may be instantiated by

way of concrete example. Here are three theories that bear certain methodological similarities: the Aryan theory, the Hamitic theory and the Nordic theory. According to the Aryan theory, originated by British Orientalists in India, most notably the Welsh philologist William Jones, a single language group connected modern nations as diverse as Iran, India and Great Britain, the modern inhabitants of which could thus be regarded as in some sense of kindred stock. Clearly, such a theory fitted into and supported one particular British attitude toward colonial rule in India (an Orientalist attitude toward colonial rule in India, it may be noted, that was sharply opposed by both Evangelicals and philosophical radicals, such as James Mill).²⁹ Also related to British colonialism, but arising somewhat later and in the wake of the emergence of modern theories of race (and, as shown by Nigel Eltringham in this volume, mainly imported from France), the Hamitic theory constituted an analogous approach to Africa in which differences between material cultures existing in Africa in close geographical proximity were explained in terms of a past intrusion of a racially foreign element, that is, by a past intrusion of a light-skinned North African racial element. But rather than positing kinship between rulers and ruled, as with the Aryan theory, the Hamitic theory worked rather to explain divergences among the ruled. The Nordic theory, which arose from a somewhat different conceptual background (a background that included the writings of Count de Gobineau) and was upheld by the likes of Ludwig Schemann, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Hans F. K. Günther, simply posited the “Nordic race” as the sole creator of civilization and so the ultimate force behind any evidence of civilization found anywhere on the globe. All three of these theories—Aryan, Hamitic and Nordic—postulate a past intrusion (or intrusions) into particular geographical regions by a foreign element (linguistic, ethnic or racial), thereby introducing a higher form of civilization to that region. And yet these similarities notwithstanding, these theories served very different interests.

As a matter of fact, these three theories have never been studied in unison or in a comparative framework. But even a cursory comparison reveals that the three involve different historical, geographical, disciplinary and linguistic contexts. Empirically, the three are also comprised of divergent and unequally rich and complex discourses. Furthermore, writers involved in each of the three theories were spurred by different motivations. Scholars of the Aryan theory, at least in its early stages, combined philological scholarship with a concern with colonial identities. Those who later wrote on the Hamitic theory, by contrast, were

not engaged in a discourse that involved immediate questions of identity (let alone theories that might serve as a bridge between themselves and the subjects of their inquiries). And those involved in the Nordic theory were very clearly motivated by domestic political movements as opposed to the concerns of colonial government. Although in terms of respective methodologies one could point to certain similarities, in terms of the relationship between respective writers and notions of race, one can perceive several quite different modalities at work. In his contribution to this volume, Christopher Hutton argues along similar lines focusing on a different set of racial ideas.

From a contemporary perspective and despite the similarities among their respective arguments, the scholarly status of these three theories today is entirely different. The first is now viewed as the fruit of genuine scholarship, which, although a source of major ongoing controversy, is necessary (and alive) for scholarship in related fields. The latter two, however, have been judged to be unfounded and deeply corrupt forms of racist scholarship. But what matters to us is less the divergence of contemporary judgment than simply the illustration that this exercise in comparison provides of the methodological and empirical complexities involved in the attempt to contextualize notions of race in the humanities. While the strategy of the authors in this volume has been, on the whole, historical rather than sociological, the lines that they have taken have been sufficient in our view to show that different cases correspond with varying modalities with regard to the ideational, ideological and political dimensions involved, and that they can only be studied in their specific local as well as wider contexts.

PLAN OF THE VOLUME

This volume brings together for the first time some of the most prominent scholars in a number of different fields in order to discuss the roles of notions of race in the humanities. Opting for methodical historicization, this volume does not provide authoritative answers and evades grand narratives and generalizing arguments. Although the chapters collected in this volume focus on historical subjects in contexts that are sometimes national or even local, as will become apparent, they often involve other national, temporal and geographic contexts as well. The chapters are ordered chronologically. In his contribution, the early modernist Joan-Pau Rubiés considers a number of pre-Enlightenment examples of religious persecution,

colonial policy and philosophical attempts to classify the peoples of the world, suggesting the presence of proto-racist principles. Covering much historical ground, Rubiés seeks to assess the contribution of early modern cultural encounters and their conceptualization to the origins of modern racism.

Taking on a comparative perspective, the art historian Margaret Olin examines in her chapter the relationship between modes of art-historical classification and two of the sciences with which art history has had reciprocal exchanges: physical anthropology and the classificatory science of comparative anatomy. Her intention is to determine whether or not the “bedrock” of formal analysis was responsible for racial classification and, therefore, whether racial thinking followed inevitably from the introduction of formal analysis as a methodology.

Also within the German intellectual tradition, the cultural and intellectual historian George S. Williamson studies the role of the notion of race in the philosophy of Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), especially his massive *Lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology*, pointing to the synthesis of early nineteenth-century ideas regarding religion, culture and race. Reconstructing the largely neglected role of racial thinking in Schelling’s later philosophy, Williamson also points to its subterranean influence on later thinkers, including Friedrich Nietzsche.

In her contribution, the German historian Suzanne Marchand poses—and answers—the question of what work notions of race were expected to do for some of the key figures in German Oriental studies, scholars who studied the primeval histories of the ancient Near East and South Asia. She illuminates their theological and mythographic quests for order and the relation of those quests to the critical questions of cultural originality and autonomy as they unfolded over the course of the nineteenth century.

The two following chapters study the entwinement between the notions of race in two different intellectual traditions and how these affected the positions assumed by authors and the work done by practitioners in the field. The folklorist Dani Schrire traces the development of Jewish-German folkloristics through the specific concept of “Jewish *Volk*,” opposing any racial formulation and therewith the intertwining of race and “*Volk*” in German folkloristics. The historian Nicolas Berg focuses on the conference “Judaism in Law” that Carl Schmitt and Hans Frank convened in Berlin in October 1936, the proceedings of which represent a prominent document of antisemitic and racist violence in the humanities during the Third Reich. The chapter traces

both the antisemitic argumentation at the conference and the role of race within the intellectual tradition to which the speakers saw themselves belonging.

Studying the junction of the histories of musicology and of music performance, the cultural historian and musicologist Michael P. Steinberg looks at the staging practices, in Germany and the United States, of works by the antisemitic and racist German composer Richard Wagner (1813–83), and especially at various attempts to grapple with the political potencies of his music dramas and with aspects of Wagner that have historically been associated with his antisemitism. The musicologist Anna G. Piotrowska dedicates her chapter more generally to the concept of race in musicological thought and to a case study of so-called “Gypsy music.”

Shifting attention from the wider German context to the French and African contexts, the anthropologist Nigel Eltringham focuses on the work of the French anthropologist Joseph Deniker (1852–1918) and his influential book *The Races of Man* (1900) as a source for fantasies of both the “Hamite” and the “Aryan” as biogenetically superior races. While Deniker himself rejected any ideas of biogenetic superiority or inferiority, his ideas were appropriated (and distorted) with appalling consequences in Europe and Africa. Eltringham shows that Deniker also provided a concept (that of the “ethnic group”) which, despite its own conceptual problems, has contributed to the contemporary rejection of racial determinism. The historian of linguistics Christopher Hutton demonstrates that while in anthropology notions of race have been criticized and rejected, this has not been the case in linguistics. Hutton takes us to a different geographical context altogether, that of China, and shows how the importation of European linguistic traditions and concepts, which cannot be separated from the history of notions of race in linguistics, has affected modern identities there. The chapter analyzes the rise of phonocentrism as a key element of state building and argues for the centrality of the notion of “*Volk*” in understanding modern China.

Moving the discussion yet again, from linguistics to history and education and from China to South Africa, the historian Derek Charles Catsam evaluates South African historiography, which is inextricably bound up with the country’s racial past and its present social realities: no country has a humanities culture that is as deeply tied to the concept and manifestation of race as is that of South Africa. Catsam’s chapter looks at the development of South African historiography during the apartheid era and

assesses the state of both historiography and the historical profession in the nearly two decades since Nelson Mandela's release.

The last word in this volume is reserved for the eminent cultural historian Sander L. Gilman, the person who has arguably done more than anyone else to bring to the surface the intricate connections between race, gender and culture in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. From a personal and forward-leaning perspective, Gilman wraps up the volume with observations on race and the humanities in the twenty-first century.

We take it as a sign of strength that in our various juxtapositions of "race" and the "humanities" certain historical and intellectual patterns begin to emerge and certain hitherto invisible ties become apparent. This new contextualization will require a certain remapping of the historical terrain. If this volume provides the historical knowledge, analytical principles and fundamental vectors that are the necessary (if surely not sufficient) basis for the future study of similar ideas and contexts, it will have achieved its aim.

NOTES

1. Michael Banton, "Race: As Classification," in *Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies*, ed. Ellis Cashmore (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 333–334; Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Racialized Boundaries. Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* (London and New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1992); Werner Conze, "Rasse," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 5, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 135–178.
2. The German dispute was resolved early in the twentieth century, with such luminaries as Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber and Georg Simmel working to expel the idea of race from the discipline of sociology. See Y. Michal Bodemann, "Ethnos, Race and Nation: Werner Sombart, the Jews and Classical German Sociology," *Patterns of Prejudice* 44, no. 2 (2010): 117–136. Similar developments occurred in Britain, with T. L. Hobhouse overseeing a weeding out of the biological roots of British sociology; see Chris Renwick, *British Sociology's Lost Biological Roots. A History of Future's Past* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

3. In a masterful account, American historian Carl Degler has not only shown the centrality of Franz Boas's role in the demise of scientific racism, but also how his success was predicated on fundamental changes within American society that shifted ideas of race in the 1920s and 1930s. Carl Degler, *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 57–213.
4. See the 1986 volume, edited by Clifford and Marcus, following an earlier conference: James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).
5. In the context of biology see the edited volume by Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll and Kurt Bayertz which culminated a yearlong workshop in Berlin. Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll and Kurt Bayertz, ed., *Rasse, Blut und Gene. Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).
6. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, vol. 2, *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. R. H. Campbell, A. S. Skinner and W. B. Todd (Oxford: Clarendon; Indianapolis: The Liberty Fund, 1976–87), p. 766.
7. On the recent introduction of the term ‘humanities’ see Stefan Collini, *What Are Universities For?* (London: Penguin, 2012).
8. In 1987 Richard Tuck called for the rescue of “modern” natural law from its assimilation to neo-Thomism and its marginalization by neo-Kantianism: Richard Tuck, “The ‘Modern’ Theory of Natural Law,” in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 99–122. For a summary of the scholarly response to this call see Ian Hunter, “The Recovery of Natural Law: Hochstrasser’s History of Morality,” *Economy and Society* 30 (2001): 354–67. For an account of the struggle between metaphysical philosophy and natural law in Germany see Ian Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
9. David Hume and Adam Smith developed Grotius’s position by separating justice from the other moral virtues, establishing a minimalist and formal universal definition of it (thereby injecting a historical component into the practice of justice) and identifying it as

the foundation of society. On the other hand, the mainstream Scottish Enlightenment tradition insisted upon the objectivity of morality and the political necessity of virtue (i.e. they upheld the connection between and social need for the enforcement of both perfect and imperfect rights). See Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Incidentally, recognition of this intellectual division undermines currently fashionable talk of “the Enlightenment Project.”

10. William Hamilton, ed., *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co., 1854–60), 17; emphasis in the original.
11. For changing conceptions of the moral sciences in mid- and later Victorian Cambridge, see David S. Palfrey, “The Moral Sciences Tripos at Cambridge University, 1848–1860” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2003), and chapters 2 and 3 in Simon Cook, *The Intellectual Foundation of Alfred Marshall’s Economic Science: A Rounded Globe of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
12. Roger Smith, *The Norton History of the Human Sciences* (New York and London: Norton, 1997), pp. 372–373.
13. Erich Rothacker, *Logik und Systematik der Geisteswissenschaften* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1948), p. 6.
14. Dirk Rupnow, “Racializing Historiography: Anti-Jewish Scholarship in the Third Reich,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, no. 1 (2008): 27–59.
15. Amos Morris-Reich, *Race and Photography: Racial Photography as Scientific Evidence, 1876–1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Amos Morris-Reich, “Arthur Ruppin’s Concept of Race,” *Israel Studies* 11, no. 3 (2006): 1–30; Amos Morris-Reich, “Race, Ideas, and Ideals: A Comparison of Franz Boas and Hans F. K. Günther,” *History of European Ideas* 32, no. 3 (2006): 313–332; Dirk Rupnow, *Judenforschung im Dritten Reich. Wissenschaft zwischen Politik, Propaganda und Ideologie* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011); Dirk Rupnow, Nicolas Berg and Dan Diner, eds., “Judenforschung—Zwischen Wissenschaft und Ideologie,” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 5 (2006).

16. See Anson Rabinbach and Wolfgang Bialas, eds., *Nazi Germany and the Humanities* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).
17. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler, ed., *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
18. Views on the parallel question of whether nationalism is principally a modern phenomenon diverge. For our purposes we may identify modernists (such as Erich Hobsbawm and Ernst Gellner) and primordialists (Anthony S. Smith and Benedict Anderson). See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Erich Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).
19. For sophisticated documentation of this in the Dutch colonial contexts see Ann L. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 2002), and *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
20. It is not surprising to discover that the only conference with a similar agenda to the one that provided the springboard to this volume was concerned with the history of criticisms of race and racism in North America. The “Race in the Humanities” conference was held at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse in 2001 (<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-africa&month=0105&week=a&msg=U06n76rFNHPLrshPKFhQxQ&user=&pw=>, accessed August 21, 2012).
21. Etienne Balibar, “Is there a ‘Neo-Racism?’” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Immanuel Wallerstein and Etienne Balibar (Verso: London, 1991), pp. 17–28.
22. Most recently, see Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
23. On Darwinism in the American South and in New Zealand, see N. Livingstone, *Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 4, 121–122.

24. Sergio Della Pergola, comments made during the conference “Concepts of Race in the Humanities,” Haifa, Israel, October 26–28, 2010.
25. The history of the stereotypes of Jews and Gypsies in various disciplines illustrates the contingency behind the processes whereby fantasies of this kind solidify into social forms: in Britain no connection was made between Jews and Gypsies, unlike in central Europe where the connection was automatic and found its way into ethnography and literature.
26. Alain Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).
27. Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009). For the tension between visual and linguistic notions of race in the late nineteenth century see Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 1997).
28. There are several additional questions that follow from the history of methodology. In the current context perhaps the most important pertains to methodologies that were tied to race, persisted and are still with us as legitimate methodologies in which explicit racial notions have disappeared but in which, nonetheless, many observations based on and tied to race remain present—such as linguistic maps or trees in the sciences of language or the differentiation between Southern and Northern art in the history of art.
29. See Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*.

Were Early Modern Europeans Racist?¹

Joan-Pau Rubiés

INTRODUCTION

The extent to which racism can be documented in early modern, or indeed ancient and medieval, sources, largely depends on how narrowly we define it. A generous definition would take as a starting point all cases of ethnic discrimination, blurring the distinction between racism and xenophobia. This is of course problematic, especially if we are concerned with assessing the role of race in the human sciences in Europe. A slightly more rigorous approach would insist that racism is applicable whenever one finds some justification for ethnic discrimination based on a concept of race that involves naturalistic (or genealogical) criteria, however diversely formulated this theoretical underpinning. For the early modern period, when rather than distinct “human sciences” we find a collection of humanistic disciplines ranging from natural history to moral philosophy, this approach has some advantages, because it connects the political uses of the idea of racial differences (not necessarily the *word* race) to a broad spectrum of rationalizations. However, the emphasis on ethnic discrimination does not always meet with scholarly consensus either. For some authors, all ethnic

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distinctions supported by naturalistic explanations of human difference would constitute racism, whether they were used to justify discriminatory policies or not. From this perspective what matters most is the rationalization of difference, rather than its uses, potentially separating the concept of race from the history of racism.

A final position, and the most extreme in terms of restricting the definition, would focus on the existence of a fully worked out theory of how humankind can be classified according to fundamental biological differences that are transmitted genetically *and* which have an impact on cultural capacities, with the corollary that there exist naturally superior or inferior peoples.² An interesting aspect of this definition is that it connects racism to an Enlightenment construct which is central to the history of the human sciences, a sophisticated theory of the history of civilization through stages of cultural development. This invites us to seek to disentangle the relationship between this theory and the rise of scientific racism. However, a potential pitfall of any approach focusing on the late Enlightenment and the first decades of the nineteenth century is to retrospectively interpret the previous centuries as a mere prelude to this fatal moment, in some cases even assuming a teleological argument by which earlier rationalizations of human diversity are judged not on their own terms, but simply as elements of a process of formation of a fully developed discourse about race, a logical corollary to the rise of the West as a global imperial civilization.³

To sum up, the more rigorous definitions of a racial theory would insist that biological differences distinguishing humans can be assessed collectively rather than individually, that they are transmitted genetically rather than environmentally, and that they have a significant impact on mental and cultural capacities.⁴ For example, racial differences would help distinguish rational peoples capable of reaching the highest levels of civilization from those who are naturally inclined to serve, or who need to be ruled in order that they may reach sufficient levels of cultural development. In a strict definition of racism, the distinction between savages and the civilized, or between different degrees of civilization, would be accounted for in terms of inescapable natural inclinations and, in particular, the power of inherited traits, as opposed to cultural transmission and the accidents of historical development.

Behind the choice of less or more rigorous definitions there rages a substantial debate about historical causality. If we adopt the weaker

definitions, racism becomes pervasive in the Western tradition, and for example ancient Greek medical theories of geographical or climatic influence, especially when applied to political and rational capacities, would fall within the radar of a history of racism.⁵ These theories were very influential in medieval and especially early modern intellectual culture, so clarifying this kind of argument is highly relevant. Equally important in this context is the extent to which negative stereotypes about Jews and their discrimination, or the discrimination of New Christians on the grounds of Jewish ancestry, involved racism. By contrast, if we focus on the idea that *fundamental* natural capabilities are *biologically inherited* (and hence inescapable) within recognizable collective types (differences which may be indicated for example by skin color or body type), we are led to the widely held idea that a decisive, sharp break took place in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when a peculiar confluence of three distinct intellectual and scientific traditions whose origins lie in the seventeenth century saw precisely this kind of theory rise to prominence. In this “modernist” account, whilst we might talk about some marginal elements of proto-racism in ancient, medieval and early modern intellectual traditions, what accounts for the rise of modern “scientific” racism was the coming together of three threads: first, in the context of the growth of irreligion within the radical Enlightenment, the secularization of universal (or world) history, which eroded the anthropological monogenism of the biblical tradition and made possible the growth of polygenism.⁶ It was no longer the case that, on religious grounds, everybody took it as given that, at least in the beginning, all mankind was one. Equally important (as we have seen) was the development of sharper theories of the progress from barbarism to commercial civilization, especially within the context of the Scottish Enlightenment, which focused the minds of philosophers on explaining cultural differences from a perspective that was both global and historical. Last but not least, and culminating a tendency within natural history that also went back to Enlightenment writers such as the Count of Buffon, we must note a new emphasis on physical taxonomies which, eventually, connected with the emergence of a theory of the variation and evolution of the species. Arguably some obvious historical circumstances of this coming together of intellectual influences must also be noted: the existence of a sharp eighteenth-century debate about the justification for African slavery, where skin color was part of the rhetorical repertoire, on the one hand, and the growth of European colonialism more generally,

on the other, which suddenly, in the so-called imperial meridian of the turn of the nineteenth century, extended beyond an already thoroughly European-dominated Atlantic to also encompass India, or even Egypt, within a fresh imperialist embrace.⁷

My view is that sharper definitions allow us to make better historical judgments, and in this respect the distinction between modern “scientific” racism (hard racism) and other justifications for ethnic or religious discrimination must be maintained. On the other hand, it is also clear that the earlier theories of human variety and cultural differences, sometimes taking forms that can be described as “soft” racism, often contributed to ethnocentrism, colonialism and religious persecution.⁸ Moreover, the possibility of causal connections between these forms of “soft” racism and the later, and as we know potentially more destructive, “hard” racism must not be dismissed. I would therefore like to position my article in an exploratory middle ground, seeking to define both the differences, but also the potential connections, between early modern and modern forms of racism, with the mid-eighteenth century as a cutting point. I would like to do so in the spirit of not only understanding the purely theoretical content of early modern ethnic and cultural classifications, and in particular their underlying anthropological assumptions, but also of reflecting upon how these theories and assumptions may or may not have supported discriminatory practices. The concept of race is important because it is connected to racism, but it is useful to distinguish the two. Not all racial classifications were developed in the spirit of supporting policies of aggression and discrimination, but they certainly had the potential to do so, and it is part of our task to determine the nature of this connection.⁹

The material for this enquiry is potentially vast, and here I will limit myself to a few case studies within the history of early modern ethnography and cultural encounters. At some points I will refer all too briefly to important existing discussions—there is, for example, a vast literature on the persecution of people of Jewish ancestry in early modern Spain, and a no less important debate about the role of race in the justification for African slavery. For the purposes of this essay I can do little more than summarize some of the conclusions. By contrast, I will seek to interrogate in some detail a few late Renaissance and seventeenth-century sources that in my view have not been sufficiently explored, and which can help us refine the typology, the chronology and the extent of a genealogy of

modern racism. The essay will consider race in relation to four themes in particular: the naturalistic theory of national temperaments according to climate; the assumptions underlying the discourse on religious diversity; imperial and colonial ideologies; and the notion of a worldwide hierarchy of civilizations. It will conclude with a reflection on the connections, but also the distance, between early modern ideas of race and the hard racism that emerged in the late eighteenth century.

Let me end this introduction by saying that although my enquiry is limited to the Western tradition, I am not assuming that this is an exclusive European story. Rather the contrary: although “hard” racism is a European creation of a specific time, I believe that many of the forms of “soft” racism, by which cultural differences and negative ethnic stereotypes are justified on theoretical grounds seeking to naturalize such differences, have interesting equivalents in other cultures, for example in Arabic, Persian or Chinese ethnographies. Systematic research on these parallels and their differences would be worthwhile.¹⁰ Equally interesting is the analysis of the extent to which non-Western traditions were influenced by European notions of race throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but this, again, lies outside the scope of this essay.

NATIONAL TEMPER AND CLIMATE IN EARLY MODERN ETHNOGRAPHY

Early modern Europeans wrote a remarkable amount of works with ethnographic content, that is, works concerned with the empirical description of various peoples of the world and their character, religion and customs. These ethnographic materials can be found in a variety of genres, from travel accounts to works of history and geographical syntheses. They also influenced philosophical speculation of a legal, moral and political kind, from natural law theories to debates about human nature and the goods or ills of civilization. It may be generally possible to distinguish ethnography, which is mainly descriptive, from those works where ethnology had an important role, that is, those texts which speculated through logical arguments about natural and cultural differences amongst human peoples, often connecting those differences to origins (history) and environment (geography and climate). Although it would be primarily within ethnological speculations that racist ideas could become prominent, works of simple ethnography might also, through the use of language, carry racist connotations.

While my intent here will be to look closely at those examples where early modern forms of racism might be plausibly found, the first observation must be that the *dominant* discourse of the vast bulk of early modern ethnography either did not use the word “race,” or used it in ways that were seldom racist in a modern sense of the word. The word race, as has been shown, first developed in the romance languages in the fifteenth century and had its origins in animal breeding, denoting the ancestry of individuals in positive or negative terms.¹¹ However, what we usually find in works of ethnography is a focus on religion, manners and customs, often described without excessive moral bias. Descriptions of physical traits were usually matter-of-fact and rarely displayed an assumption that skin color, hairiness or body type were fundamental criteria for interpreting moral capacities or levels of civilization (the most significant exception being the idea that black color had negative connotations—we shall return to it). There was nevertheless one widely used concept that requires some attention, the idea of “national character,” “nature” or “temper.” To the extent that there was a prominent concept connecting observed differences in customs and behavior amongst human societies to natural principles, this was it.

Two examples can help us decode the logic of this concept. The first one is a positive use, and displays how the idea of natural character was often endorsed as a mode of self-representation in order to claim collective rights and honor. The second is associated with the active creation of a negative stereotype about a foreign people. Taken together, these two examples illuminate some of the limits of early modern ethnological classifications inspired by medical environmentalism.

Sixteenth-century Catalans had a dubious reputation as a people given to banditry and an excessive of love of liberty. This was at least the view of ambassadors and other occasional travelers who left a written record, and at the end of the reign of Philip II many at the court thought that perhaps the Principality would be ruled more effectively through the stricter laws of Castile. It was in part to counteract this image that a rural aristocrat, Don Francisco Gilabert, wrote his *Discourses on the quality of the Principality of Catalonia, the inclination of its inhabitants, and its government* (Lérida, 1616). Although these discourses ranged over many themes and contained a great deal of practical advice, in the *arbitrista* tradition of the period, the cornerstone of Gilabert’s political thought was the idea that Catalans had a particular nature or inclination, determined by the region’s geography and proved by its history, which happened to be choleric.

In the tradition of Jean Bodin and Giovanni Botero, he asserted that the laws of Catalonia, and indeed its mixed type of government, responded to the particular strengths and needs of that particular nature (they could in fact be understood as the appropriate remedies for particular humors), and that therefore it was futile to attempt to rule the Catalans according to any other laws. What the *Discourses* sought to prove was that it was perfectly possible to address the problem of banditry (Gilabert had in fact been personally involved in serious civil disorders) and other political, educational and economic issues through a systematic engagement with the established legal traditions peculiar to the Principality—quite the contrary to the policy pursued by most viceroys. Indeed, the very legitimacy of the power of the state was made conditional upon the need to rule according to law and, by implication, the constitutional system, which required parliamentary consent for any new legislation.¹²

There was of course a great deal of wishful thinking in these proposals, notwithstanding Gilabert's appeal to his personal experience and practical sense. The subsequent history of Catalonia, culminating in the major revolt of 1640, suggests that although Gilabert's little book reached the libraries of ministers of state such as Olivares, its argument did not convince many at the court. However, the *Discourses* helped articulate a tenacious defense of a legal and political tradition of self-government which had a great deal of social support amongst the Catalan elites. It also shows how aristocratic self-representation could appeal to the idea of a collective nature, supported by a late Renaissance version of environmental determinism, in order to respond to negative stereotypes. This suggests that whilst early modern ethnography fed many stereotypes about national character, within Europe no less than outside it, the idea of a collective temperament or inclination connecting the natural to the moral and historical spheres was not seen *by itself* as a source of negative discrimination. In this case, medical anthropology was mobilized in support of a mixed constitution because it strengthened the claims to a particular provincial identity in a multinational monarchy.

By contrast with the marginalized and bandit-rife province of Catalonia, the huge kingdom of China enjoyed a remarkably positive image in early modern Europe. This was to a large extent the work of Jesuit missionaries who, from Matteo Ricci at the end of the sixteenth century to Jean-Baptiste du Halde in the first decades of the eighteenth, offered, through impressively detailed works, the image of a well-ordered and prosperous country, ruled by an elite of literati selected on merit and imbued with a Confucian

ideology of filial piety and service to the state. The Chinese were not then perceived as racially distinct—the Jesuits and other Europeans usually described them as both white and very rational, that is, quite similar to Europeans. They did have their peculiar national traits, however. For example, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), author of one of the most important accounts of China published in the period, thought that they were courteous, industrious, diligent and naturally gifted for the mechanical arts, but also niggardly, false, xenophobic, cruel and notoriously lacking in military virtues (indeed they were “effeminate”).¹³ This image, generally confirmed by subsequent writers, was the more powerful because the Jesuits had an unrivaled knowledge of China and its language and philosophy. Since the country rarely admitted any European foreigners, few were ever in a position to challenge their interpretation from a position of equal scientific authority. Nevertheless, the Jesuits had many enemies, within and outside the Catholic Church, and their generally positive image of China had complex implications. These involved their missionary method of accommodation, which many other Christians contested for making concession to idolatry; the validity of biblical chronology, which the antiquity of Chinese records questioned, causing considerable anxiety amongst the orthodox; and the possibility of virtuous atheists who simply followed a natural morality, a scandalous proposition championed by Pierre Bayle which fed the culture of intellectual libertinism.

Not surprisingly given all these worries, in the first decades of the eighteenth century the dispute about the accuracy of Jesuit claims became to a large extent also a debate about the national character of the Chinese. One of the most negative accounts of China published in this period, part of the narrative of the circumnavigation of the world by British corsair commander commodore Anson, contributed to bursting this Jesuit bubble. First published in 1748, the final chapters of the narrative, dealing with a visit to Macao and Canton, had the following to say about the national character, or temper, of the Chinese:

It may perhaps be impossible for a European, ignorant of the customs and manners of that nation, to be fully apprized of the real incitements to this [faithless] behaviour. Indeed, thus much may undoubtedly be asserted, that in artifice, falsehood and an attachment to all kinds of lucre, many of the Chinese are difficult to be paralleled by any other people.¹⁴

This very negative image concerning the “fraudulent and selfish turn of temper” of the Chinese (to which were added observations about their

effeminacy and lack of spirit) was supported by a number of colorful anecdotes and opposed to “the legendary accounts” of Catholic missionaries. In reality, some of the key elements of this description, from the lack of martial spirit of the Chinese to their attachment to lucre and fraudulent practices, had been noted by Jesuits like Ricci or Valignano from the start. What had changed was the balance of judgment, and indeed Anson’s voyage helped create a more negative stereotype, one that would provide ammunition for a number of writers of the Enlightenment.¹⁵ For example, Montesquieu, who was keen to question too positive an image of Chinese civilization, and of their government in particular, was very receptive to this information.¹⁶

Anson’s narrative, written by his chaplain Richard Walter and possibly edited by the mathematician and political pamphleteer Benjamin Robins under Anson’s own direction (the work was in effect an extended panegyric), reflected an official viewpoint.¹⁷ Interestingly, another journal of the same expedition written by Lawrence Millichamp made similar comments, with some “racial” observations attached:

The people are of a low stature and of a yellow complexion; in general, ingenious, artful and treacherous. Covetousness seems to be their darling passion, for they will all be guilty of the most infamous crimes to gratify it.¹⁸

Whilst some Jesuits had noted that the Chinese were artful, treacherous and covetous, the point about a “low stature and yellow complexion” was a departure from the dominant view established in the late sixteenth century, by which the Chinese were considered white. Although only a marginal detail in this context, it is nevertheless symptomatic of a shift from Renaissance environmentalism to an eighteenth-century emphasis on racial distinctions.

What is already clear from these two examples is the extent to which the language of national temperaments could have both positive and negative uses, and could therefore be used tactically for political and other rhetorical ends. But was it racist? In particular, was it racist when employed to create a negative stereotype about a whole people? Attributing collective traits to the Chinese, or even a natural inclination, did not necessarily imply a biological basis for it, although associating specific physical traits to a moral temper could suggest a connection, and in any case the theory of temperaments was a theory about *natural inclinations that were hard to resist*. In Anson’s narrative, for example, a Chinese individual was made to confess that he could not help being dishonest, this was *how he was*

fashioned.¹⁹ For a fuller answer, we must consider in some more detail the theoretical assumptions behind early modern theories of national character.

The vast majority of explicit rationalizations of national character in this period—and this certainly includes the Catalan example discussed above—were geographical and climatic, that is, environmental, rather than strictly historical *or* strictly genealogical. A national temperament, whether it was associated to physical traits or not, defined the nature and inclination of an ethnic-cultural collective (a nation being primarily a people defined by traditions, laws and language, rather than a state). Each geographical environment created a collective temperament that was particular in its needs and therefore required particular laws and customs. It is symptomatic for example that Montesquieu, one of the most powerful writers in the application of environmental theory to political analysis, rationalized Chinese covetousness and cowardice in relation to climate and history: the precariousness of the natural economy of China had prompted ancient legislators to stimulate industry and submission and this alone allowed the Chinese to prosper. Montesquieu even made the point that it was improper to compare Chinese morality to European morality: moral systems were relative to geography and history.²⁰ Through habituation, negative moral traits might become second nature to certain peoples, but this second nature was the product of the circumstances of time and place rather than an essential biological trait.²¹ Although rapid changes were hard to envisage, these traits were not fixed. However, they were hard to escape. Strictly speaking, the Chinese could not be morally faulted for their economic frauds.

Montesquieu's understanding of a flexible nature underpinning human variation was to become the cornerstone of the Enlightenment discourse on human diversity, but it largely followed the mainstream tradition of medical anthropology. The notion of *habitus* (a settled disposition) becoming a second nature, for example, was of Aristotelian origin, and indeed, the whole environmental tradition had ancient Greek roots.²² The theory of climates had been developed by writers such as Hippocrates and Galen in relation to a medical theory of humors, and aimed therefore at an ideal balance. Climatic extremes led to exaggerated anthropological traits, while a temperate zone ensured the best possible combination. This Greek emphasis on moderation had been embraced by European writers from Albertus Magnus in the thirteenth century to Montesquieu in the eighteenth, and there can be little doubt that we are talking about a

fairly consistent intellectual tradition harking back to classical models. For example, Montesquieu's association of despotism, an extremely authoritarian and thus unhealthy form of monarchical rule, with the slavish nature of Asiatic peoples, could be traced back to Aristotle's *Politics*. Aristotle, in fact, provided the most authoritative source for the application of environmental theory to the political sphere, by opposing Europe to Asia and two extremes, with Greece participating in both the energetic spirit of colder climates, and the intelligence of warmer ones, all of which helped explain the unique Greek political genius.²³ Although heat and cold, dryness and humidity, and levels of sunlight, were the obvious starting points for the division of climates into progressive zones, more obscure astrological influences were often added to the rationalization of climatic differences, especially when latitude failed to produce a homogeneous anthropological picture.²⁴ The common idea was that peoples from colder climates had to make up for lack of external heat and, therefore, were more vigorous and industrious, but also a little thick; those from hot, tropical areas were more indolent, but of subtler disposition, and much given to sensuality. "Southerners" (in the northern hemisphere) were, at best, creative and contemplative; at worst, cruel and lustful.

What is interesting is that the ideal geographical core which would produce the best balance of humors and the most rational men (those best fit to govern in fact) tended to shift according to authors, in a manner that was blatantly self-serving. The Catalan Gilabert's provincial patriotism was entirely typical of this period, and could be found in writers across a huge geographical spectrum, not only in Europe but also in New World colonies such as New Spain. For Jean Bodin, a French patriot writing in the late sixteenth century (that is a few decades before Gilabert) and one of the most influential authors on the subject, there could be no better place than France, a country that ancient writers would have considered northern and barbarian.²⁵ Ingenuous modifications of the theory could be used to move the geographical core of a moderate climate a few degrees towards the north-west, from Aristotle's Greece to Bodin's France, but ultimately the arguments reverted to the impact of contact between populations, wise lawgivers and other historical circumstances. For Bodin it was crucial to conclude that government could change peoples and their dispositions. Similarly, Giovanni Botero emphasized the influence of one people over another, what today we might call "cultural contact."

Early modern environmentalism suggested the importance of the geographical setting but ultimately gave way to human agency. As we have

seen, even Montesquieu distanced himself from a strict geographical determinism, making the point that while climate helped explain particular local outcomes, the issue was how geography related to institutional and historical elements. The advantage of a temperate climate was that it widened the scope for political agency.²⁶ The environment could be said to “incline” peoples to certain moral traits and helped rationalize common stereotypes about national character, but only to the extent that one chose to emphasize cultural inertia. The ultimate primacy of history set the limit to environmental determinism in the same way that it would set the limit to the earliest racial classifications by natural historians, for example those elaborated by Buffon in the second half of the eighteenth century. Human adaptability and the migration and interbreeding of peoples would emerge, in the natural histories of the Enlightenment, as the key to interpreting racial classifications based on physical characteristics in a way that did not detract from the unity of humankind.

Climate, understood as a geographical and environmental influence upon the character of peoples, was the theoretical principle underlying early modern ethnology which claimed scientific pretensions. However, other principles were equally or even more important for classifying peoples and assessing their capacity for moral development and, indeed, for political rights. Of these, none was as crucial as religion.

CHRISTIAN UNIVERSALISM AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

Whether a people were Christian (possibly heretical), Muslim, Jewish or “gentile idolaters” constituted the most fundamental criterion employed by late medieval and early modern writers in order to describe and evaluate the peoples of the world. Most Europeans assumed that religious law had supreme value. It also provided the foundation for natural and, to some extent, civil law. As I have argued elsewhere, possibly the most important development of early modern ethnological speculation was a growing awareness that religious classifications and those based on degrees of civilization followed different logics, that is to say, that it was perfectly possible to be civilized without being Christian, and in terms of the radical Enlightenment, that it was in fact often easier to be civilized without being fanatically religious. This was, to a large extent, the outcome of intense intellectual analysis of both religion and civilization, a task to which ethnographic sources made a huge contribution.²⁷

Leaving aside this secularizing tendency, associated with the ideal of religious toleration, the primacy of religious classifications presents us with the apparent paradox that while religion provided one of the important reasons for collective discrimination and persecution, its fundamental premises in Christianity were universalistic, and therefore went against any deep racialization of humankind. For example, the important sixteenth-century debate about the moral and political capacities of the Native American peoples concluded with the idea that, for all their barbarism, Indians were rational beings capable of Christianity, and shared a common origin with the rest of mankind. From a Christian orthodox position this conclusion was almost inescapable. It is true that a great deal of discrimination fed by very negative stereotypes prevailed in practice, combining the view that the peoples of the New World did not understand some of the fundamental principles of natural law with the idea that they were naturally given to vice and indolence. To underpin this image of natural indolence, the discourse of natural history continued to maintain that either through climatic influences (such as tropical humidity), historical isolation or for other reasons, American Indians were in some respect naturally weaker than the people of the Old World. It is, however, important to emphasize that the role of religion in this debate was usually contrary to the most extreme forms of discrimination, and that it was precisely the combination of biblical monogenism with the evangelical mission that worked most consistently against a crude application of the Aristotelian idea, mobilized by the imperialist hawks, that some peoples were by nature slaves. To a very large extent, the capacity for Christianity and civilization of the conquered peoples of the New World was an a priori assertion stimulated by the universalistic assumptions of Christianity, even if in practice the principle of spiritual equality was often challenged by other kinds of inequalities. It was possible to mitigate Christian universalism through the legend of the curse of Ham, or by appeal to natural history, but it was a struggle. I am not, by the way, convinced by some recent arguments seeking to show that Christian universalism was, from its very roots in antiquity, predicated on an intense form of ethnic exclusivism, through the paradoxical appropriation of the inheritance of Israel.²⁸ Writers such as Eusebius certainly described Christians as a new *ethnos* opposed to both Jews and gentiles, but there was nothing racial about it, as the aim was precisely to expand across the whole world by incorporating everybody into the new collective. In addition, participation in it was ultimately individual.

While biblical monogenism provided the most decisive intellectual limit to racial classifications, it never excluded religious persecution. One could argue that two different and often contradictory religious logics were in operation, one seeking to expand the church, the other seeking to purify it. The persecution of New Christians and *Moriscos* (forcibly converted Moors) in sixteenth-century Spain offers a case in point. Although all I can attempt here is a very rough sketch of a heavily researched subject, it is important to include it in the wider picture. From the 1390s to the 1520s, forcible conversions of Jews and Muslims were driven by a growing intolerance of alternative faiths and a desire to incorporate all within the church, but these very premises—the fact that quite often it was not realistic for a supposedly free agent *not to* accept baptism—made these conversions suspect. The persecution of the “fake” Christians this policy produced eventually led to cultural discrimination, as a number of customs, including dress and language, also became suspect by association: they were seen as an obstacle to full religious assimilation. For example, the argument was often made that there could be nothing wrong about Arab-speaking Christians *per se*, and yet the contextual logic of social interactions eventually led to the idea that, unless the Arabic of the *Moriscos* was replaced by vernacular romance languages of the Christian population, they would never abandon their residual Islam and become truly Christian. In the case of the *Moriscos*, who constituted a relatively homogeneous and concentrated population, the persistence of various forms of negative discrimination provoked new forms of cultural resistance, and in some cases violent protests. The fear of another rising which the Ottomans might support, combined with an admission of the failure of preaching campaigns, eventually led to their expulsion, even though their status as Spanish naturals was never in doubt—these were communities who had lived in Spain for centuries. While the engine for discrimination had been sociocultural, the final decision to expel was based on reason of state, a political judgment rather than a strictly religious or economic one. Only children were allowed to remain (one might say that they were kidnapped from their fleeing parents), because they alone were exempt from the mechanisms of cultural reproduction that prevented full assimilation.²⁹

In the case of New Christians, their integration into urban society was far more successful, and a new Inquisition was created especially to persecute those who were suspect of “Judaizing.” The evidence suggests that large numbers of New Christians were assimilated, but of course many others fled to Portugal or elsewhere, and a considerable number were burned.³⁰ Although the maintenance of discriminatory measures such as the concept of “purity of blood” does suggest a racial element, or at least a

genealogical one, it is important to keep in mind that the underlying logic never ceased to have a religious dimension. It was the Christian notion of heresy as a disease that was transmitted socially and culturally that offered the blueprint for suspecting people just because of their ancestry. Jewish “blood” and even “race” (understood as ancestry) was the surest indicator of the suspected cultural reproduction of Jewish practices or beliefs within the family. Again, it was the logic of social and political interactions that had transformed religious intolerance into racialized discrimination, through a complex dialectic by which Jewish endogamic practices and cultural resistance played a role alongside negative anti-Jewish stereotypes, and the sharp contradictions of forced conversions.³¹

In these two parallel cases, despite their interesting differences, what the process suggests is that religious persecution, supported of course by negative ethnic stereotyping, led to cultural persecution and that, in turn, either to expulsion or to genealogical inquisition and discrimination.³² The difficulty of isolating religion from cultural practices and their reproduction within biological families made it impossible to simply apply abstract theological categories, and widened the scope of persecution to proto-racial concepts. The harder it was to discriminate, the more insidious the racial element—here understood as biological ancestry—became. As David Nirenberg recently observed, medieval people had various ways of rationalizing the transmission of cultural traits across generations, and the emergence and triumph of a genealogical approach in the case of the New Christians was the result of an intense debate rather than a given.³³ This was, curiously enough, the same Christian society that debated with similar intensity the nature of the American Indians and their capacity for Christianity and civilization. In all these cases, a theological culture was faced with the impossibility of reconciling its universal aspirations with its obsession with purity, and gave way to a system of hierarchical discrimination and inquisitorial persecution. Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, while the Spanish Inquisition kept a watchful eye on peninsular New Christians, in New Spain and Peru the religious orders created special tribunals to extract confessions from Indians accused of continuing to practice their old idolatry in secret.³⁴

COLONIALISM, SLAVERY AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The peoples of the New World posed a problem of colonial policy as well as an intellectual one of interpretation. Although in the ethnographic descriptions produced by explorers and conquerors such as Columbus and

Cortés there was no hesitation in describing these “Indians” as rational human beings, however innocent, or ignorant, of the things of the Old World, the question of their status as full moral beings and their consequent political rights was soon raised in relation to policies of subjection and evangelization. There was never any doubt that royal policy adopted a paternalistic approach by which natives were to be brought into the church, treated as vassals and taught the rudiments of European civilization, but how best to do this in the context of an often brutal colonization was far from clear. In particular, the extent to which the Native Americans were capable of self-rule became an issue for open debate, with the positions largely determined by different visions of empire. Views polarized around two extremes: the idea espoused by some humanist jurists such as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494–1573) that the barbarians of the New World were so deficient in moral understanding and rationality that they presented an example of Aristotelian “natural slaves,” and the opposite view defended by some missionary friars, most notably the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566), arguing that the Indians were on the whole as rational, virtuous and capable of civilization as the gentiles of antiquity, and that therefore all they required was to be invited to become Christians as autonomous moral and political beings. The account of this debate by Anthony Pagden has made it clear how the Aristotelian paradigm adopted by the hardline imperialists was soon forced into a retreat and replaced by a more nuanced view, largely defined by the natural law arguments of Francisco de Vitoria (ca. 1485–1546), by which native Americans were to be seen as rational men of the same ancestry as all others, but whose moral understanding, potentially perfect, suffered from lack of actual development through historical circumstances. They therefore might be improved through the paternalistic care and good education of a Christian rule.³⁵ Whatever “racist” tendencies one might find in the Aristotelian doctrine of natural slavery had therefore been neutralized, without making it impossible for the Spanish Crown to continue to pursue an imperial policy that treated the natural inhabitants like “children.” Upon these paternalistic principles, writers like the Jesuit José de Acosta (1540–1600) in his enormously influential *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (1590) were able to offer a hierarchical classification of levels of barbarism and relative civilization, to which varying colonial and missionary policies could apply. Degrees of coercion and accommodation were relative to the perception of the cultural and political achievements of each particular Gentile nation.

One important aspect of Acosta's ethnological synthesis was his emphasis on assuming biblical monogenism for solving the problem of how the Americas had been peopled. However, this emphasis on a common origin for all mankind, which tallied perfectly with the theological principle that the New World barbarians were morally and rationally capable, did not exclude the possibility of rationalizing some anthropological differences as natural inclinations. Although in Acosta's account the historical development of civilization according to a quasi-universal pattern took center stage, for many contemporary writers—especially those concerned with natural history—the theory of environmental influences remained more directly relevant. The medical theory of climate and temperaments was seen to apply to the New World no less than in Europe, and (again) crucially, not always to support a negative stereotype. Rather, we find the same ambivalent uses of environmentalism that we discussed earlier in relation to the Old World. For Las Casas, “buenos entendimientos” and “buenas inclinaciones” were the outcome of moderate climates, and one could confirm by experience that the same latitudes that were well balanced in the Old World, for example Asia Minor, were also favorable in the New.³⁶ But if Las Casas found a positive use of climate to make his point about Indian rationality (his own views about Africans were far less positive), those who believed that Indians were temperamentally vicious—and there were many—could also suggest that there were negative geographical influences in operation. Interestingly, however, the limitations of environmental explanations were also noted. Writing in Peru during the first half of the seventeenth century, the Jesuit natural historian Bernabé Cobo (1580–1657) took it as a scientific statement that “some lands, by virtue of their vigour and fertility, produce more robust and burly men, and consequently men with stronger bodily constitutions than other lands which are weak and sterile,” and that the common physical make-up and tendencies of the Indians of the New World could be explained in relation to region and climate.³⁷ The Indians were “phlegmatic” (moist), and that explained both their slowness and low levels of energy compared to Spaniards, and their extraordinary forbearance. They were also sanguine (warm), which explained their superior adaptability to high-altitude cold climates. Cobo also observed that all Indians were physically very similar in some respects, for example in connection to the color and shape of their eyes, and in the type and distribution of their hair. At some point, however, he acknowledged that his observations precluded a purely climatic explanation, because the Spanish born in America remained different in all

those respects. The inescapable conclusion was that some genetic differences (inheritance through blood) were more decisive than climatic influences.³⁸ Interestingly, Cobo stopped short of extending to moral capacities this genetic argument. He did note that all Indians, despite their different regions, languages and customs, shared some common traits which were rather negative, such as a tendency to intoxication and their lack of thinking about the future. He also insisted that given their relative physical and moral uniformity (compared to Old World peoples), all Indians had a relatively recent common origin, and that therefore their many languages must have split from a common one, a process he sought to explain by noting that oral languages without written support changed rapidly, especially for isolated communities spreading rapidly to new lands.³⁹ However, the mental turpitude that he perceived and described was due to “limited mental activity” rather than any intrinsic “lack of power of reasoning.” The historical context of lack of literature, sciences and fine arts determined that the full potential for human intelligence was not realized. In the final analysis, those “ingrained savage vices” of the American peoples that one might associate with a second nature (they had “nearly become innate”) were made conditional not on inheritance or climate but on lack of instruction which, in turn, depended on historical development. This solution confirmed Acosta’s classification of types of barbarism and pointed towards the Enlightenment primacy of the history of civilization.⁴⁰ In effect, Acosta and Cobo foreshadowed the basic elements of what we may call the orthodox consensus of the high Enlightenment in relation to race, by which a fundamental monogenism was accompanied by secondary differentiation through a combination of environmental influences, genetic transmission, and cultural agency. Theirs was, however, not a conclusion driven by sheer empirical observation, but also by the authority of the Catholic Church and its determination to consider all Indians capable of moral freedom, and thus salvation.⁴¹

Cobo’s subtlety was rather exceptional and might be connected to his deep thinking about the issue, both as a Counter Reformation missionary with theological training, and as a remarkable natural historian of the New World who also studied its flora and fauna, region by region.⁴² In this respect, his approach to the Indians was marked by the application of logical reasoning to extensive empirical observations. However, the vast majority of writers continued to rely on cruder climatic explanations. The logical corollary to geographical explanations of the peculiar inclinations of American natives was that similar influences would apply to

settlers of Spanish ancestry, and this is what we often find. Writing in the 1570s, Philip II's royal cosmographer of the Indies Juan López de Velasco (ca. 1530–98) noted the belief that Spaniards born in the New World (or *creoles*) became temperamentally like the natives due to the influence of the climate; hence, they tended to resemble the locals in bodily size, skin color and psychological inclination (implying that change would have taken place over time even if there had been no genetic mixture with local women).⁴³ In effect, they degenerated. This kind of view at the heart of the Council of Indies of course elicited a robust *criollo* response.⁴⁴ Hence Juan de Cárdenas (1563–1609), a doctor living in New Spain, a few years later suggested quite the opposite: the climate did influence the Spaniards born in the Indies, but in a thoroughly positive way, as they naturally spoke better and more subtly than those *cachupines* just arrived from Spain. This is because they acquired the sanguine temperament which corresponded to the hot and warm climate of the land, with a choleric progression as they grew older, altogether an excellent combination to make people intelligent, happy and generous, albeit potentially also inconstant.⁴⁵ The Indians, however, were phlegmatic, which explained why they did not go bald amongst other things.⁴⁶ The discrepancy between the degenerative impact of the tropical climate upon the American Indians, and the more positive temperament acquired by the Spanish settlers living in the same lands, required some rationalization that went beyond a simple climatic influence upon permeable bodies, and which also took account of genetic descent. Some natural (or constitutional) differences between peoples were so deeply ingrained that the impact of the environment became secondary.⁴⁷ With these variables, the same general influences produced different effects.⁴⁸ Within this particular discourse of *criollo* settler colonialism, something that looks very much like racism did eventually develop, although its impact was circumscribed. As Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra noted, this racialization of the bodies of the Spanish, Indians and Blacks developed by humanist doctors in seventeenth-century New Spain (Juan de Cárdenas was only the first in a line that included several others) was the discourse of a colonial elite rather than the imperial perspective of rulers in Spain. It was a direct response to the need to defend a creole patriotic identity whilst maintaining the subordination of the supposedly indolent native workforce, something impossible to achieve with the simple environmental determinism of the Renaissance.⁴⁹ What separated Cárdenas from his Catalan contemporary Gilabert is that the former could not afford to extend aristocratic claims to the idea of

a national temperament that encompassed the common people. Within the mature constitutionalism of the Crown of Aragon, aristocratic liberty (once defined in opposition to peasant servitude) was gradually becoming a collective ideal, but in New Spain, *criollo* rights had to be restricted to the colonial elite.

Despite the primacy of this emphasis amongst the settler population, in the New World encounter the Christian ideal of world evangelization acted as a powerful deterrent for any official sanction of a racist ideology of empire, especially within Catholic contexts that relied on the support of papal donations to justify trade monopolies and colonial dominions. As we have seen, this does not mean that very negative ethnic stereotypes about the inferior mental capacity of the Native Americans did not circulate, or that policies of abuse and discrimination did not persist. The point is that they could not be officially justified on a fully racist basis for as long as there was a discourse of Christianization and civilization.⁵⁰ While Christianity itself was *not* tolerant of religious diversity, the overwhelming emphasis of the evidence points towards its universalizing bias. Especially important was the biblical doctrine of monogenism, which often worked as a brake for extreme forms of naturalistic explanations of biological differences within humankind. The debates about the American Indians are a case in point. From Las Casas to Cobo, the descent of the American Indians from Adam and Noah was a crucial assumption, even while natural historians and antiquarians could debate at length whether they came by sea or land, from Asia or Norway, from a Scythian ancestry or from the ten lost tribes of Israel. The standard line in Spanish ethnological speculation was that any temperamental and physical differences between the indolent and beardless Indians and their Old World ancestors could be explained as a result of climatic influences or the historical circumstances of migration and isolation, a model that facilitated the emergence of an orthodox consensus. The same is true of the debate in Northern Europe. When in the 1640s two Dutch Protestants divided by religion, Hugo Grotius and Johannes de Laet, shook the embryonic Republic of Letters of northern Europe with their embarrassingly impolite controversy about the soundness of Grotius's eccentric theory that the Norse were indeed the most plausible ancestors of the peoples of the New World, they could only agree on one thing: none of them wished to promote the impious theory that there had been other men before Adam.

The existence of "men before Adam" was precisely the thesis that had been put forward by Isaac la Peyrère (1596–1677), a messianic thinker of New Christian background whom all orthodox confessions agreed to

classify as a heretic. La Peyrère's extreme vision questioned mainstream interpretations of the Bible, and unwittingly paved the way for skepticism towards its literal meaning.⁵¹ The danger to orthodoxy was quickly perceived, and it is possible to argue that polygenism became one of the themes of the libertine culture of irreligion that made possible the radical Enlightenment. Although no racist form of colonialism was intended by La Peyrère, whose use of the American Indians as pre-Adamites was incidental to his reading of Genesis as only properly relating to the Jews, his attack on an orthodox interpretation of the Bible implied questioning the textual accuracy of sacred scripture, and explicitly eroded the monogenist consensus. It made racialized polygenism more thinkable not only for natural and philosophical historians of a secular bent, but also for ideologically conservative apologists of slavery eager to free themselves from the constraints of the orthodox consensus.

The invention of polygenism had a European context, but it soon acquired an Atlantic significance. In the New World, the problem of origins posed itself naturally as an intellectual problem rather than one of imperial apologetics. In fact, there was no simple connection between racial distinctions and justifications for empire, as the capacity for civilization of "savage nations" could often support colonial imperialism predicated on the subjugation of natives "for their own good." As we have seen, a racialized discourse only became influential in the context of the complex strategies needed by creole patriots, following a colonial rather than an imperial logic. However, in the case of African slavery, where an extensive trade rather than a colonial dominion was developed, the argument seems quite different from the start. Another kind of servitude was at stake, and the Aristotelian theory of natural slaves, or equivalent justifications based on the idea of just war, could flourish unchecked. In addition, color could be easily mobilized as a marker of degeneration within a monogenist account, mainly by appealing to the idea of a curse of the sons of Ham.

Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, as we have seen so central to the beginnings of the Spanish debate about the American Indians, was originally driven by the need to combine the political freedom for the Greeks with their corollary, the necessity of forced labor in Greece, precisely in order to sustain the *polis* as an elite institution. The generalized slavery of despotic regimes in the East might be explained by the nature of the climate, but the slavery of forced foreign labor in Greece itself required that a biological basis be found for it, unless one were to accept the sophistic

argument that the condition of servitude was purely conventional. In medieval Europe, however, the dominant tradition was precisely the Stoic-Christian version of the sophistic position: slavery *was* a human institution that went against the natural equality of men, and although it was justified by the law of peoples (*ius gentium*), and might be interpreted from an Augustinian theology as a punishment for human sins, the slavery of the flesh could not trump the freedom of the spirit. Hence, given the widespread existence of slavery as a legal institution and thriving markets in the Mediterranean, the usual justifications for slavery by canon lawyers and scholastic jurists (including late scholastics) relied on the concept of capture in just war, a concept often linked to the infidelity of the enemy and the prospect of eventual Christianization and emancipation. There was also the traditional Roman law corollary that the children of women slaves were born slaves. Although most slaves were foreigners by origin, no racial or biological argument was central to this justification. It is perhaps for this reason that the biblical curse of Canaan was occasionally invoked in folk arguments, in order to identify slavery with particular peoples. This curse, by which the descendants of Ham were to serve the descendants of Shem and Japheth, would have a long life, although there was a great deal of variation in its application to particular regions.⁵² Crucially, the story did not fully challenge the unity of mankind. It is certainly not the case that the discourse on slavery was necessarily connected to Black African peoples. Up to the fifteenth century, most slaves were bought in the Black Sea, or otherwise were Muslims captured in war, for example in the western Mediterranean as the Christian kingdoms successfully expanded.

The early modern rise of the Atlantic slave trade radically changed the parameters and eventually generated a stronger emphasis on racial justifications for slavery, linked to a supposed natural inferiority of Black peoples for civilized behavior. The specter of Aristotle's ideas on natural slaves reemerged when it was noted that Africans seemed better adapted to hard work in tropical climates than American Indians and European Whites. Interestingly, it was not only the mere association of successful plantation slavery with Africans that stimulated racial justifications, but also the parallel rise of the legal principle of personal liberty in Europe, combined with the growing fear of miscegenation and emancipation in the colonies. Hence, as David Brion Davis noted, in British colonies Black freedmen were heavily discriminated against in order to keep the slaves in submission, applying a logical argument of "contagion" through bad example not dissimilar to that which had led to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain

in 1492.⁵³ It was, in other words, the need to defend a thriving system of slavery in a mature colonial climate, and upon new intellectual grounds, that made rigid legal discrimination on racial grounds more prominent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was especially true of the British colonies, where there was no paternalistic Monarchy exercising a continuous oversight over the behavior of the settler population towards Indians and Blacks.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the parallels with the emergence of a creole discourse on racial differences in Spanish America are suggestive, as in both cases it was an elite interest group that drove the shift of emphasis.

In this novel context arguments about natural inferiority, always popular amongst the advocates of plantations, were eventually mobilized against European critics of slavery, such as Bodin and Montesquieu. It is interesting that these two French theorists of the power of climatic influences stood out for their criticism of slavery, whilst modern natural law theorists, from Grotius to Locke, sought to justify it upon new grounds. However, these justifications were not racist either, and may be distinguished from the arguments for the legal discrimination of “negroes” that developed in the context of colonial plantations and eventually spread their influence back to Europe, by the likes of Edward Long and his *History of Jamaica* (1774). Traditionally, because African rulers controlled their side of the slave trade, many Europeans involved in the business were more concerned with transferring responsibility for the “just” capture of slaves in war, or their condemnation through criminal laws, than with denigrating Africans as biologically inferior. When attacking, or defending, slavery, the correct interpretation of natural law was more important than race. Grotius argued, for example, that the sheer historical *prevalence* of the practice of sparing war captives in order to make them slaves was by itself a good argument (after all, slaves were getting something out of it), whilst Locke, who invested in the Royal African Company, solved the problem by stating that even though there could be no room for slavery within civil society, masters could keep their African slaves in a perpetual “state of war,” thus denying them their natural right to liberty. This may sound cynical but was not exactly racist. Montesquieu, following this same logic to opposite effect, was adamant that there could be nothing natural about slavery if nature was understood to reflect right reason. The force of climate in warm climates helped explain why slavery was prevalent in some countries, but this kind of “nature”—the nature of environmental influence—ran contrary to natural law as a description of how things ought to be. It was a rather subtle distinction, which allowed some apologists

for slavery in the colonies to still appeal to Montesquieu as one of their authorities for the continuation of the institution in the tropics.⁵⁵

In contrast with the discourse that sought to justify slavery on naturalistic grounds, the early modern ethnography of African peoples presents a far more complex picture, which I can only begin to describe here. Suffice to note that there existed a powerful negative stereotype throughout the whole period, which meant that the same Bartolomé de Las Casas who had defended the intelligence and moral inclinations of the American Indians on the grounds of climatic temperance, could participate in the common argument that the heat of “Ethiopia” (Africa) explained both the black color of the inhabitants, and their cruel and bestial disposition.⁵⁶ However, the Dominican had the interests of American Indians in his mind when he wrote this. Those who concerned themselves directly with Africa tended to offer far more positive accounts, and often ignored color entirely as a marker of cultural capacity (in fact, it was precisely because travelers were often so positive about African rationality that some American slave owners, like Thomas Jefferson, eventually became reluctant to grant such sources any credibility, preferring their own observations in the plantations).⁵⁷ Above all else, most observers and many compilers distinguished between the qualities of different African nations, rather than generalized around a single negative stereotype, and in a curious reversal of fortunes, by the mid-eighteenth century many insisted that Africans were naturally more capable of civilization than American Indians.⁵⁸ Even the Hottentots, which throughout the seventeenth century emerged as representatives of the least civilized (or most degenerate) of all African peoples, inspired some sympathetic ethnographies, such as Peter Kolbe’s *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum* (1719), a work which would help Rousseau conceptualize his controversial account of the early stages of the history of mankind as the most happy and natural state.⁵⁹ But this was of course only one of the many possible uses of the savage. Within the overtly racist tradition of the late eighteenth century, which sought to equate the most savage men with anthropomorphic animals in order to provide a naturalistic basis for a hierarchical understanding of human differences, the negative stereotype reasserted itself, and the Hottentots in particular were often compared with “orangutans” (a name by which all apes were often described in the debates of the late Enlightenment), in this way transforming Rousseau’s speculations about man in the state of nature into yet another detrimental association.⁶⁰

CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

The notion of a hierarchy of civilizations was, like climatic environmentalism, an Enlightenment discourse whose origins can be traced back to the Renaissance.⁶¹ Europeans had inherited the broad distinction between barbarians and civilized, prevalent in classical sources, but they refined it through actual encounters in colonial and missionary settings. By the time of Acosta's *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (1590), a book which famously distinguished a progression through three levels of barbarism in the Americas, it had become clear that imperial and ecclesiastical policies were to be adjusted according to degrees of cultural achievement, with urban civilizations deserving most respect (in fact, according to a Providential disposition, the pagan empires of the New World, by subjecting the savage nations to political and religious order, had prepared the ground for a more effective Christian conquest).⁶² More than the Mexicans and Incas, however, it was the gentiles of Japan and China, reached by the Jesuits through the Portuguese commercial outposts, but also by the Spanish from Mexico via the Philippines, that were perceived as most obviously rational and civil, because besides their social and political institutions they had sophisticated technologies, a system of high learning and a written record. What was at stake was the extent to which they managed to equal the cultural and political achievements of modern Europeans. For example, relying on the reports about Ming China that reached New Spain in the 1580s, Acosta classified the Chinese at the highest level of barbarism; however, he argued that Europeans must be placed above the most civil gentiles not only because of the truth of Christianity, but also because they were more learned.⁶³ His argument hinged almost entirely on his assessment of the superiority of the European system of writing:

Not one single nation of Indians discovered in our times uses proper letters or writing, but only the other two types, which are images or figures, and I understand this to be true not only of the Indians of Peru and New Spain, but also in part of the Japanese and Chinese.⁶⁴

Acosta's knowledge of China was quite derivative. Paradoxically, it was in the context of the oriental missions rather than colonial America that the great Jesuit effort to encompass all the civilizations of the world in a late Renaissance global vision developed a more overt racial discourse. This was mainly due to the contribution of Alessandro Valignano, Visitor to the

Eastern missions, in a series of regional summaries written for the superior in Rome in the late 1570s and early 1580s, and revised in the following two decades as part of a history of the Jesuit mission.⁶⁵ Although the work was never published, it informed Jesuit writers in Europe and their readers, for example Gian Pietro Maffei's *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI* (1588). Valignano's analysis was also present in the Latin dialogue *De Missione Legatorum ad Romanam Curiam* published in Macao in 1590, although the text was attributed to Duarte de Sande, who had given it the final form. This composition supposedly showed the observations of Europe by a group of Japanese teenagers whose journey the Jesuits had organized in order to obtain patronage from the pope, Philip II, and other Catholic princes.

Although the Japanese had indeed kept a diary of their observations, as instructed by their Jesuit tutors, *De Missione* was an elaborate work of propaganda that articulated Valignano's own interpretation of how the different civilizations compared. Dialogue 33 offered the Jesuit view of China, mainly following Ricci's positive assessment. It concluded, however, that "even though the kingdom of China is celebrated everywhere in the East, there can be no doubt that it is inferior to Europe, the most noble part of the earth."⁶⁶ The following dialogue went even further, with an unprecedented global vision of the world in which Europe's position ahead of all other regions was justified "on account of its climate, the intelligence of its peoples, its industry and nobility, the organisation of its life and government, and for the abundance of excellent studies."⁶⁷ Through his mouthpiece the Japanese traveler Miguel, who momentarily put aside his Japanese national identity in order to become, like Socrates, a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world, Valignano postulated the existence of three universal levels of civility which could be linked to three broad anthropological types: Blacks, Asian Whites, and European Whites. In this way, Valignano established in a fundamentally novel manner a racist link between the lowest levels of barbarity and darker colors: although some of the peoples of Asia "can be considered white and intelligent, all those others who are dark are by nature rough and unrefined."⁶⁸ Needless to say, the point of all this was to demonstrate to a Japanese audience the superiority of Christian Europe over China and over Japan, as witnessed by the Japanese themselves. At the same time, the dialogue reassured the Japanese of their position above the peoples of India and South-East Asia, by creating a racial hierarchy within Asia from white to almost black.

The passages devoted to “Black peoples” thus provided a low counterpoint to the intermediate category of “civilized gentiles” to which the peoples of Japan and China belonged.⁶⁹ The lowest racial category embraced the peoples of America, Africa and southern Asia—all described as “dark,” albeit with degrees: Indians South of Goa, Malays and American Indians were not as dark as the Black Africans, and also less savage.⁷⁰ But Black peoples in general had no law or religion, lacking cultivation and human sensibility. They were, indeed, natural slaves, as Aristotle had asserted (a paradoxical convergence with the hardline imperialist views of Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, given Valignano’s defense of cultural accommodation).⁷¹ Valignano went on to attribute to these peoples a natural tendency toward the imaginary fantasies of gentile idolatry, although he also noted that the Japanese, as gentiles, were also given to those vain beliefs (hence it should be clear that gentilism was not determined by race, although race could create a predisposition towards irrationality). By inviting the Japanese to distance themselves from the “savage” Blacks, Valignano was also inviting them to convert to Christianity, the religion of the superior races.

Valignano’s racism was attenuated only by the Christian assumption of mankind’s original unity. This monogenism, in turn, was qualified by the assertion that Adam and Eve were white. Valignano then logically considered various climatic explanations for the darkening of the original color, dismissing a simple correspondence of climate and race on the basis of scientific observations (because not all peoples living in very hot climates were equally dark-skinned, and Black people remained black in a cold climate).⁷² Instead, he focused on genetic transmission from parents to children (in Aristotelian idiom, on “nature” transmitted by “seed”). However, he still needed to explain the original divergence between human groups. Miguel, the Japanese speaker that represented the author’s views, considered dark color as a stain, hence one possibility was descent from Ham and his malediction (this hypothesis was reinforced by the observation that Africans were not only dark-skinned, but also their expressions were sad-looking and twisted, and their nature wild, uncivilized, and inhuman).⁷³ However, even if all this was true, this racial divergence must also have a natural dimension, for example, it could have been caused over a long period by the sun’s heat, since it is clear that all peoples of the world had peculiar physical traits; hence, the Japanese and Chinese differed from Europeans for their small eyes and flat noses.

This racist interpretation helped Valignano domesticate the idea of a gentile civilization for the case of China. Mainly following Ricci’s early

letters for his description, the dialogue explained that the country was very fertile, prosperous and abundant in people; the inhabitants were industrious and extremely skilled in the mechanical arts. They were also given to letters, although these were difficult to learn. The Chinese practiced natural and moral philosophy, and the Jesuits acknowledged that in this moral field the Chinese had obtained some excellent results: so much so that “nothing better could be expected of men without the light of faith.” However, the dialogue also emphasized that Chinese natural science was full of errors, although recognizing that some knew astronomy very well. The art of government was the main concern of the Chinese cultural elites, and in effect they ruled according to the law of nature, by giving authority to the learned (a meritocracy of literati was of course quite close to the Jesuit ideal of promoting talents in a centralized hierarchy). A hierarchy of prudent magistrates dedicated to justice ensured general peace and tranquility in a vast kingdom, an obvious contrast with the continuous wars of Christian Europe. In accordance with this, their best religious sect was that of Confucius, who, guided by nature, taught many things that were praiseworthy, although it was a pity that Confucius was not explicitly monotheist, and that his cult of ancestors was idolatrous.⁷⁴ However, lack of faith was not the only issue. Whilst it was true that Christianity had perfected the customs and intelligence of Europeans to the highest point, Valignano agreed with Acosta’s judgment that Europe was clearly superior to China on wider grounds. Taken as a whole, Europe was bigger and more civilized (it had more and better cities, especially in Italy), produced a wider range of products (people lived more luxurious lives), their arts (military and political included) flourished in a superior manner, and their nobility was respected and cultivated. Valignano here imposed his Italian aristocratic seal upon the definition of civilization.

Valignano’s racialization of a hierarchy of civilization did not break the monogenist assumptions of the Catholic missions, but it placed them under tension, in many ways anticipating a potential for racism within the orthodox consensus which would find fuller expression in the natural and philosophical histories of the late Enlightenment. However, this new racial emphasis was not universal in the Jesuit order. For example, Pedro Paez, missionary in Christian Abyssinia in the following years, wrote at length about the people of “Ethiopia,” their customs, political traditions and religious beliefs, without at any point associating their dark color to any negative features.⁷⁵ Nor did Valignano’s move have anything to do with overt political imperialism. Rather the contrary: it responded to an essentially

Machiavellian calculation of unique missionary needs, which dictated that a peaceful method of cultural accommodation, and the formation of a native clergy, should be adopted for powerful and civilized gentiles, without questioning the idea that when dealing with more savage peoples, conquest may be necessary and justified. It was in essence the same argument offered by Acosta, that the most savage had to be treated more violently, with the addition of a racial marker. Valignano, educated at Padua, was obviously influenced by Aristotle's idea of natural slavery. However, in his racialized elitism he was also driven by aristocratic prejudices. If the European word "race" was born out of a late medieval concern with breeding, and if the purity of genealogical descent was often an aristocratic obsession, it is perhaps not surprising that a nobleman from Chieti (Abruzzo) in the kingdom of Naples, standing at the very top of the Jesuit order in Asia, should adopt a racialized view of cultural diversity in order to rationalize why some peoples deserved better treatment than others: as Francis Xavier had quickly perceived, the Japanese and Chinese were not only the best gentiles but also rather "like us," rational and white.⁷⁶

THE BIRTH OF RACIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Valignano's emphasis was not typical of his order, and the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries who contributed so much to describing the world of human diversity for early modern Europeans did not on the whole insist on a racial interpretation of the history of civilization. It was rather the French traveler and medical doctor François Bernier (1620–88), a disciple of the Neo-Epicurean philosopher Pierre Gassendi, also famous for his account of Mughal India, who has sometimes been credited for introducing a systematic racial classification as a modern scientific novelty in the Republic of Letters. His *Nouvelle division de la Terre par les différentes espèces ou races d'hommes qui l'habitent*, published in the *Journal des Sçavans* in April 1684, proposed a division of the world according to racial types, rather than regionally, and distinguished 'four or five' human species: Eurasians (which included most of Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, much of South-East Asia, North Africa and probably the Americas); Black Africans (although the Hottentots from the Cape could almost be classified as a separate group); Oriental Whites (encompassing Tartary, China, Japan, Siam and the northern parts of South-East Asia); and Lapps, who merited a special place.⁷⁷ Physical traits such as the shape of face were more important than mere color in this division. It is, however, easy to exaggerate

the significance of Bernier's proposal.⁷⁸ In fact his brief dissertation was a *pièce d'occasion* offered to Madame de la Sablière, analytically quite loose and driven by claims to empiricism rather than any existing theoretical debate. As a famous philosophical traveler in the world of Parisian salons, Bernier was most proud of his personal observations, with the caveat that his experience was casual, hence his treatment is impressionistic: extremely vague for America (it is doubtful he had seen any American Indians), rich for part of the East (extensive travels in the Levant, Persia and especially India), very partial about Africa (he knew Egypt and the Red Sea, and had seen pretty Black slaves in the market in Moka), and exaggerated about the far north (his most negative stereotype concerned the Sámi he had seen in Danzig). Bernier questioned the idea that physical traits only depended on environmental factors, such as the climate, air, water and diet: genetics, *la semence*, also had a role to play. This conclusion, however, was far from novel. Considering his writings more broadly, Bernier's views combined standard climatic-humoral relativism with a racial classification which was largely limited to physical traits, without establishing a connection between those superficial traits and the analysis of civilization. Rather, his main concern was comparing female beauty: women in Lahore, albeit slightly darker than those of Kashmir, were even prettier, while amongst the Turks Circassians were considered to be the best. The higher prestige for whiter skin in India was a Mughal tradition he reported, rather than his own European construct. Commentators who read a Eurocentric notion of cultural superiority in Bernier's racial classification therefore seem mistaken.⁷⁹ Rather the contrary, he thought that peoples of temperate Europe, the Americas and India, culturally very different, belonged to roughly the same racial group, and he explained the differences between the civilizations of India and Europe through climate and institutional history.

Rather than racial taxonomy per se, what is perhaps more interesting is the fact that Bernier's *divertimento* (his account of female types was full of sexual innuendo) was a product of salon culture and reflected the skeptical attitude towards scientific and religious authorities that gained ground amongst libertine circles throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. In his key writings, Bernier was a great critic of political despotism and religious superstition, although his European targets were well hidden behind his analysis of India. It was in fact within the context of the scandal created by the overt polygenism defended by Isaac la Peyrère in his *Prae-Adamitae* (1655) that the kind of racial classification according to physical type proposed by Bernier could have most impact. We do not find Bernier

at all making that connection—in fact he wrote as a monogenist (in his *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, he followed his master in adopting the religious orthodox line for the origin of the population of the Americas, either by land, possibly from North-East Asia through “Anian,” or by navigating straits and channels; exactly the same solution proposed by the Jesuit Acosta).⁸⁰ However, it was arguably within the same libertine streak of the Enlightenment, one willing to mobilize natural and moral history against religious and scientific orthodoxy, that we must eventually place the work of Voltaire (1694–1778), who did indeed embrace racial polygenism. He did so on a number of occasions, from his unpublished *Traité de la métaphysique* (ca. 1734) to the various editions of his influential *Essai des moeurs* (1756, 1761, and especially 1765, which included as preface *La Philosophie de l’Histoire*, an overtly anti-Christian and deistic account of human origins and ancient history).⁸¹ For Voltaire, the existence of different human races, or species, was self-evident, but his definition of species was superficial and, unlike Buffon’s, did not involve the capacity for reproduction as a criterion (although he seemed to believe that racial mixtures led to degeneration). Rather, from the start his analysis emphasized physical and moral differences in order to target the biblical myth of creation (albeit not on atheistic grounds, as Voltaire was a Deist after all). For example, it was not necessary to struggle with the problem of the origins of the American Indians through labored geographical and etymological speculations, because it was unnecessary to take seriously the biblical account of Adamic origins. What for Jesuit writers such as Acosta and his successor Joseph-François Lafitau had been a theological assumption, for Voltaire became an ideological target, motivating his otherwise under-theorized polygenism.⁸² Voltaire’s racism was *sui generis* and certainly not a justification for colonialism: he embraced human difference as positive (hence his defense of universal tolerance), and although he thought there may be natural reasons why Black peoples had been enslaved, he also denounced the abuses of the slave system.⁸³ Indeed, his non-biblical Deism made him insist that all human beings, created separately by the same Providence, shared the same natural law, and deserved equal respect. In effect, he defined humankind as a moral rather than a physical unity, although the role of racial temperaments (or the genius of nations) in shaping culture remained rather hazy.⁸⁴

Bernier’s writings pointed towards Montesquieu’s environmentalist analysis of political difference no less than towards Voltaire’s biological racialism. The crucial point is that the discourse on racial classifications did not necessarily lead to polygenism, unless accompanied by heterodox

ideas about religion.⁸⁵ Instead, it offered a naturalistic refinement of the monogenist account, albeit often maintaining its Eurocentric assumptions. The count of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle de l'homme* (1749), a true landmark of the natural history of the Enlightenment which included a chapter on the "Variétés dans l'espèce humaine," offers a case in point.⁸⁶ Buffon (1707–88) assumed the biblical paradigm to be true, but he did not build his argument for the unity of mankind as a species on its authority: rather, he developed a full comparative account of the diversity of nature, establishing criteria by which, however similar their anatomical structures, the most savage man (the Hottentot) and the most man-like ape (the so-called "orangutan") were radically different, because only man was naturally social, rational and linguistic. The variety of men displayed degrees of cultural sophistication, social organization and power over nature, not levels of rationality or sociability. In effect Aristotle's definitions were restated against Rousseau, who had speculated that natural man was, unlike real savages, solitary and pre-rational, albeit perfectible. Underpinning Buffon's account was a powerful notion of species, defined according to the capacity to produce fertile progeny. This criterion established the existence of a unity of origin, an ideal prototype, but it nevertheless gave way to variety, physical and temperamental, according to the further influences of climate, diet and way of life, for men no less than for other animals. In this model, race understood in its broadest sense became an intermediate category between a single biological species and a multiplicity of ethnic groups or nations (people of the same physical race could therefore speak different languages and adopt different customs).⁸⁷ The history of human interactions with their environment and with each other, not nature alone, had created a variety of physical types.⁸⁸ Assuming, unlike Darwin the following century, the fixity of species, Buffon interpreted variations from the putative prototype as a degeneration, and was entirely Eurocentric in his assumption that the original color of mankind was white, but his races were historically flexible. Some distinct groups, like the Lapps, were like Tartars who, constrained by a very cold climate, had degenerated as much as was conceivable. Other Tartars, however, had mixed with the Chinese, and in any case the difference between these two peoples, some perfect barbarians, others extremely civilized, were more cultural than physical.⁸⁹ Hence, although Buffon included temperamental inclinations and *moeurs* (customs) alongside phenotype in his racial classification, establishing an implicit association, the elements could be separated. The "race of Blacks" was as diverse as that of "Whites," and Cornelius de Pauw's idea that all

American Indians were naturally weaker than the peoples of the Old World was untenable—it was only in some particularly hot and humid areas that people, native or foreign, displayed a lack of vigor.⁹⁰ All variations, physical and moral, resulted from environmental causes and (against the crude geographical taxonomy proposed by Linnaeus in the various editions of his *Systema Naturae*) did not create a *fixed* racial hierarchy, because the influences could change through movement and contact: White peoples would become black after many generations living in a hot climate and eating the local diet, for example.⁹¹ The unity of a distinct human species had not been broken.⁹²

CONCLUSION: THE BREAKDOWN OF AN ORTHODOX CONSENSUS

We may conclude that various constituent elements of later racist thought existed but did not constitute a dominant discourse in early modern Europe. Rather, they appeared on the margins of a cultural system that negotiated issues of ethnic, social and cultural hierarchy in an ideological context that emphasized universalism, monogenism and the power of environmental, educational and historical influences over human beings. Natural history and moral history (or “history of civilization”) had a different focus but were closely connected in support of this orthodox consensus, and often shared the same scientific methods and authorities, from Aristotle to the ethnographic observations of modern travelers. However, in particular contexts, an emphasis on the biological inheritance of human capacities came to the fore, although racist principles were usually contested and failed to create an alternative consensus. For this reason, identifying the potential for racism of certain ideas, and the kinds of contexts in which they flourished, might be more relevant than seeking to find fully fledged early modern racism.⁹³

As we have seen, environmental explanations for cultural difference did not exclusively apply to distinguishing Europeans from non-Europeans in a hierarchical fashion, but in fact were widely used to explain “temperaments” amongst various nations within Europe too. The theory of “temperaments” did have some correlation to cultural traits, such as customs and laws, professional skills and aptitude for the arts. At the same time it is important to emphasize that this correlation did not always relate to the kinds of colored racial groups that would become prevalent, for example, in the history of Atlantic forced labor. Nor did they usually imply

a “fixed nature” based on inheritance: environmentalism assumed that collective temperaments were influenced by geography and diet rather than by ancestry. In addition, it often included the corollary that human agency, such as government action, and the interactions between peoples, could transform a collective. We could perhaps even say that those “modern” racial classifications based on physical traits which emphasized the power of genetic inheritance developed within natural history *in opposition* to the earlier climatic models of ethnic diversity supported by late Renaissance medical science and political anthropology. Having said this, the potential of climatic theories, with their long “scientific” pedigree, to offer naturalistic accounts in support of ethnic prejudice and generalizations about different cultures must not be ignored. In fact, as we have seen, the exploration of the logical limits of climatic determinism when defining human qualities had a clear potential for racialization, through the appeal to inheritance. Thus, the incongruities observed when colonists and colonized lived in the same region often led to more emphasis on genetic analysis, which could privilege either history or race, depending. Even within the orthodox consensus, the association of physical traits such as color and a hierarchical understanding of the capacity for rational civilization could flourish.

A proper analysis of what happened after 1750 is beyond the purpose of this essay. What is clear is that we can talk about the crystallization of a new and potentially more aggressive discourse of genetic difference, built on racial classifications but also permeated by the temptation of polygenism. But it seems equally important to emphasize the persistence of an orthodox consensus, more Eurocentric than racist, against which the new use of racial distinctions must be interpreted.⁹⁴ In fact, the *modus operandi* of this orthodox consensus becomes especially clear when we can delineate a powerful attack upon it. In this view, perfectly represented by Buffon, most human differences, both physical and moral, could be explained by the long-term influence of climate, that is the environment, upon a common nature that admitted a degree of flexibility, with some subsequent variations brought about by historical circumstances, for example migrations, commerce and other external cultural influences. The model proclaimed the diversity of national temperaments, and could explain different degrees of civility as well as peculiar customs without dissolving the monogenist assumption about the unity of humankind and the universality of its basic natural capacities. Climate and customs created a second nature, physical and moral, over the generations, but things could change

again, as the ultimate influences were history (including migration and miscegenation) and culture (because habits formed character).⁹⁵

In the last decades of the eighteenth century this sophisticated model was challenged by increasingly overt racist readings of the polygenist thesis, transforming what had originally been a libertine theme, in fact an expression of religious heterodoxy often transmitted by naturalists and philosophers, into a polemical tool mobilized by slave owners such as Edward Long, a planter in Jamaica. Hence whilst the emphasis on species differentiation within mankind could be achieved through overt polygenism, that is by appealing to separate creation acts, in order to maintain the authority of biblical orthodoxy it was also possible to combine the idea of anthropological degeneration after the fall—a process that brought some branches of mankind below the capacity for full human rationality—with the evidence of different levels of cultural achievement in the historical record, in what amounts to a form of mitigated monogenism which was popular among authors of a conservative bent keen to emphasize the depth of racial diversity. It is within this group that the continuities with the environmentalist orthodox consensus are more apparent: sometimes only a matter of emphasis and bias separated the assumptions of those who proclaimed that the physical and temperamental differences between the descendants of Adam and Eve were only superficial, from those who saw a chasm between “separate species of the same genus” opening over the generations.⁹⁶

The year 1774 seems to have been important in this story, with the coming together of important publications such as the *Sketches of the history of man* (Edinburgh, 1774) by Lord Kames, the *History of Jamaica* (London, 1774) by the above-mentioned Edward Long, and to some extent also *Of the origins and progress of language* (Edinburgh, 1774) by Lord Monboddo, all of which challenged the views proclaimed by Montesquieu and Buffon (a few years later we can add the work of the antiquary Edward King to this polygenist collection).⁹⁷ It was perhaps as a reaction to these publications that the authors of Raynal’s *Histoire des deux Indes*, between the first (1770) and third (1780) editions, shifted their emphasis from a racial endorsement of slavery (different color transmitted genetically, different human species, natural inequality, natural slavery) to a position closer to Buffon’s: the former view was denounced as an error, and the differences between Black and White peoples were declared superficial (the genetic transmission of these differences did not preclude a common origin).⁹⁸ The “scientific” debate about skin color was acquiring a new

political significance, and the libertine version of polygenism no longer had much appeal for those committed to attacking injustice on humanitarian grounds. Other authors writing in the same years, such as the Anglo-Irish hack writer Oliver Goldsmith (whose *History of Earth* of 1774 popularized the work of Buffon in English), the German doctor and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, the philosopher Emmanuel Kant, and the American cleric and philosopher Stanhope Smith, also came to the defense of the orthodox consensus.⁹⁹ We may note in this respect that although Blumenbach's racial classification later served as basis for scientific racism, and despite the fact that, together with Buffon, he thought that Adam and Eve had been white, on the whole his theory emphasized the unity of mankind and was firmly critical of the more extreme racist views expressed by other authors. His views, like Buffon's, were more Eurocentric than racist. The same is true of Kant, who adopted a racial classification of inherited traits but defended monogenism, and increasingly privileged climate and custom over biology when interpreting cultural diversity. The logic underlying racism in this respect could be quite different from the logic underlying racial classifications. Let me emphasize again that the roots of this orthodox consensus within the human sciences are not (as is sometimes assumed) in Montesquieu: the model in fact permeated late Renaissance culture, and Montesquieu was simply the author who formulated it most cogently for the Enlightenment (often directly following the lead of seventeenth-century philosophical travelers, such as Jean Chardin); hence, defenders of the mainstream tradition of monogenism modified by climate and custom would refer to Montesquieu and Buffon as their key authorities.¹⁰⁰

From the late Renaissance to the height of the Enlightenment the idea of a hierarchy of civilizations gained ground within the context of a universalistic discourse about mankind, generating what we might describe as a controlled tension. Writers could place more or less emphasis on biological traits when describing the natural genius and capacity of nations, but the environment and history were the key explanatory factors, and attempts to question the unity of mankind were, on the whole, firmly rejected. Why did the orthodox consensus break? As we have seen, concern with ethnic purity, or at least the desire to keep some groups subordinated, was crucial to the logic underlying racism, whichever theoretical form it took. However, purity within the religious discourse of Christianity was limited by universalistic assumptions in a way that purity in a secularized naturalism could not be. With the crisis of biblical authority, or at least of

traditional readings of Genesis, the monogenist deterrent was weakened (albeit far from destroyed) at about the same time that the criterion of ethnological classifications based on the history of civilization took center stage, altogether defining an enhanced European sense of cultural superiority on increasingly non-religious grounds. In addition, the dramatic experience of the growth and specialization of Atlantic slavery had created a strong bias within some quarters towards the justification of Black slavery on the grounds of a peculiar case of racial inferiority. Finally, the appropriation of the taxonomies of natural history by polygenists keen to question the unity of humankind provided hard racism with a claim to scientific plausibility, and tested the limitations of climatic explanations, decades before the idea of the fixity of species became widely questioned. Savage men had always been described as bestial, and in the eighteenth century “orangutans” were sometimes considered wild men, but it was the idea of common humanity, not of evolution from apes, that was at stake.

NOTES

1. I am grateful for the support of my former institution the London School of Economics during the research for this article and to Silvia Sebastiani for her comments.
2. In this case, a strong racial theory would underpin systematic racism.
3. The early modern period is not always well represented in general surveys. Michael Bainton, *Racial Theories*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), offers a thematic analysis rather than a historical account, and is patchy for the period before the nineteenth century. Ivan Hannaford, *Race. The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), does cover a good chronological span, but it often focuses on the word “race” rather than wider conceptual uses, and the analysis is irregular. An important and recent exception is the extended case study offered by Rotem Kowner, *From White to Yellow. The Japanese in European Racial Thought 1300–1735* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014). Kowner emphasizes the gradual maturation of a pre-Enlightenment racial discourse in advance of the modern idea of race. His evolutionary and quasi-teleological model, positing various logical stages in the formation of European racial thought, raises the issue of whether the cultural process was

- genuinely interactive with respect to the Japanese and other peoples encountered, or primarily European in its causes.
4. The core issue of race surely is resort to genealogy or biological inheritance as an explanation for diverging rational and moral (in modern idiom “cultural”) capacities belonging to collectives, with a tendency to see those differences also expressed in apparent physical traits like body type or skin color. An element of fixity is implied: attempts to associate racism to mutability in my view can only confuse matters for everyone.
 5. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), takes this controversial line, and suggests that Graeco-Roman proto-racism created a prototype for the modern form of racism that developed in Europe during the eighteenth century. The study is rich in material but interprets classical environmentalism as racism, failing to appreciate the extent to which modern racism emphasized genealogical inheritance, or the idea of a separate species, against climate. In fact climatic explanations of ethnic difference did not usually deny the possibility of change, and in this respect would fall under the category of ethnic prejudice proposed by Isaac as distinct from racism (p. 24). For a reply to his critics, see also B. Isaac, “Racism: A Rationalization of Prejudice in Greece and Rome,” in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 32–56.
 6. Richard H. Popkin, “The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth-Century Racism,” in *Racism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1973), pp. 245–262; Dominique Tombal, “Le polygénisme au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles: de la critique biblique à l’idéologie raciste,” *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 71 (1993): 850–874. Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chapters 3 and 4; David N. Livingstone, *Adam’s Ancestors: Race, Religion and the Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).
 7. C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780–1830* (London: Longman, 1989); also, more broadly, C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, Oxford, 2004). However, we must beware of a facile association of racial classifications with imperialism. Some of the late

- Enlightenment thinkers who theorized racial diversity, such as Kant, were, however Eurocentric, emphatically anti-imperialist. Kant placed the power of culture over inherited biological traits in order to imagine a global order on federalist principles led by the European values of civil liberty and rationality.
8. It may be argued that the distinction between soft and hard racism is unnecessary, since in all cases there was ethnic discrimination. In this respect “racism is racism,” however it may be rationalized. My argument, however, is that historically it matters how scientifically plausible within a cultural system is the theoretical underpinning for such discrimination.
 9. For a slightly different approach see the recent and substantial monograph by Francisco Bethencourt, *Racisms, from the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), which appeared after this article had originally been submitted. I have taken the opportunity to update the references in order to note a few points of divergence. Bethencourt defines racism as “prejudice concerning ethnic descent, coupled with discriminatory action,” and through a wide-ranging historical analysis emphasizes the political motivations behind racism.
 10. It is no good to claim that racism is uniquely Western because only in the West was ethnic prejudice rationalized systematically (M. Eliav-Feldon, B. Isaac and J. Ziegler, “Introduction,” in *Origins of Racism*, p. 9) unless such research has been undertaken. For one thing, Greek philosophy and climate theory were also influential in Arabic and Persian cultures. For a first attempt at comparing the Chinese and European ethnographic traditions see Joan-Pau Rubiés and Manel Ollé, “The Comparative History of a Genre: The Production and Circulation of Books on Travel and Ethnographies in Early Modern Europe and China,” *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 1 (2016): 259–369.
 11. Charles de Miramon, “Noble Blood, Noble Dogs: The Invention of the Concept of Race in the Late Middle Ages,” in *Origins of Racism*, pp. 200–216, notes the aristocratic associations of this usage, but also its marginality. The earliest examples appear in French and Catalan (personal communication).
 12. I have written more extensively on Gilabert’s political thought in “Reason of State and Constitutional Thought in the Crown of Aragon, 1580–1640,” *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 1 (1995): 1–28,

- and “Don Francisco de Gilabert i la Idea del Govern Mixt: Fortuna i Prudència del Constitucionalisme Català dels Segles XVI i XVII,” *Pedralbes. Revista d’Història Moderna* 16 (1996): 97–132.
13. Matteo Ricci, *Della entrata della Compagnia di Giesù e Christianità nella Cina*, ed. Piero Corradini and Maddalena del Gatto (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2000), pp. 20–89. Ricci offered his observations empirically and did not appeal to the notion of a temperament subject to a climatic influence, but other Jesuits did, for example his superior Valignano (who relied on Ricci’s materials). In fact, rather paradoxically, Valignano suggested that the Chinese, especially those from the north, because they were white and intelligent, lived in a cold land, and ate a good diet, were probably capable of more martial virility than their actual behavior showed! That is to say, because the behavior of the Chinese did *not* fit with their climate and the anthropological type, their effeminacy, rather than expressing their true nature, must have been shaped by political and cultural life. See Alessandro Valignano, *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales (1542–1564)*, ed. Josef Wicki (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1944), p. 247.
 14. *A Voyage around the World in the Years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV by George Anson*, ed. Glyndwr Williams (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 351–352.
 15. Elsewhere (*A Voyage*, p. 368) the narrative commented further upon the “disposition and genius” of the Chinese, noting that albeit “a very ingenious and industrious people,” as evinced by their manufactures, in reality their works lacked originality and aesthetic quality. Their talents, in other words, were second rate, and they only truly excelled at imitation. The analysis concluded with the truly insulting statement that “these defects in their arts are entirely owing to the peculiar turn of the people, amongst whom nothing great or spirited is to be met with.” Even their vaunted Confucian morality was little more than an absurd obsession with “ridiculous attachments” that had nothing to do with “the proper criterion of human actions.” These passages, needless to say, created great controversy in Europe.
 16. For Montesquieu, it was especially important to classify the Chinese government as despotic. See J. P. Rubiés, “Oriental Despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu,” *The Journal of*

- Early Modern History* 9, nos. 1–2 (2005): 109–180, and in more detail, Jacques Pereira, *Montesquieu et la Chine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008). Besides Anson, Montesquieu relied on the anti-Jesuit antiquarian polemicist abbé Renaudot (1718) and the Swedish diplomat Lange (1726) for his harsh judgment about Chinese dishonesty.
17. The likelihood is that the particular passages quoted here were written by Robins, who had not been in the expedition but had access to Walter's journal and other sources. For a discussion of the problem of authorship see G. Williams in *A Voyage*, pp. xxi–xxv.
 18. Glyndwr Williams (ed.), *Documents Relating to Anson's Voyage round the World 1740–1744* (London: Navy Records Society, 1967), pp. 191–192.
 19. “Chinese man very great rogue truly, but have fashion, no can help” (*A Voyage*, p. 355). The occasion was provided by Anson's local interpreter, who had tried to pocket a present from the English Commodore to the local Mandarin, but had been found out and severely punished. The actual statement, in the broken jargon of the interpreter, is almost satirical and must be treated with caution.
 20. “C'est la nécessité, et peut être la nature du climat, qui ont donné à tous les Chinois une avidité inconcevable pour le gain; et les lois n'ont pas songé à l'arrêter ... Ne comparons donc la morale des Chinois avec celle de l'Europe.” *De l'Esprit des Lois*, XIX, 20, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. R.Caillois, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1949–51), II, p. 571. A similar point had been made by Montaigne's friend Pierre Charron in *De la Sagesse* (1601; 1604): customs could not be assessed as vices or virtues because they were natural to peoples according to their climate (book I, ch. 38, conclusion).
 21. Associated to the idea of an anthropological second nature was the notion of custom, of huge importance throughout the early modern period. For a sketch see Donald R. Kelley, “‘Second nature’: The Idea of Custom in European Law, Society and Culture,” in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 131–173.
 22. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, immensely influential in Renaissance Europe, argued that moral habits (customs) became like second nature because a regular disposition to act in a certain

way would create a regular pattern of actual behavior. Hence good habits, or character, were the foundation of moral virtue—by contrast, nature as such was not malleable. *NE* II: 1.

23. *Politics* VII: 7.
24. This combination of medical theory and astrology is discussed by Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore. Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). This work, despite its age, remains fundamental to any study of early modern environmentalism. As Glacken notes, latitude was rarely sufficient to explain differences between peoples, and other considerations were also added: longitude, landscape and weather, for example.
25. Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, transl. Beatrice Reynolds (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 116. First published as *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566). See also *Les six livres de la République* (1576; revised 1579), book 5, chapter 1. Bodin's analysis for the northern hemisphere was based on distinguishing the cold north, which encouraged strength (but also sexual indifference), the warm south, where subtlety and religious mysticism prevailed (as well as sexual vice), and a temperate middle, ruled by prudence. France was in the last category and excelled in the art of government, avoiding the extremes of levity and obstinacy. On the medieval origins of Bodin's climate theory see Marian J. Tooley, "Bodin and the Medieval Theory of Climate," *Speculum* 28 (1953): 64–83. The contrast between the free and vigorous barbarians described by Tacitus in his *Germania* and sixteenth-century Germany was even more dramatic, and elicited much commentary. Already in the thirteenth century the learned Dominican Albertus Magnus, whose *De Natura Locorum* may be considered the most important medieval contribution to climate theory, was proposing to shift the center of gravity of the temperate zone from the Mediterranean to Germany, his own country.
26. Montesquieu, *Réponses et explications données a la faculté de théologie*, in *Oeuvres*, II, p. 1173: the proposition "il y a de tels climats où le physique a une telle force que la morale n'y peut presque rien" had caused scandal, but in reality "le livre de l'*Esprit des Lois* forme un triomphe perpétuel de la morale sur le climat, ou plutôt, en général, sur les causes physiques." The "empire of climate" was

- only an influence over human agency. Montesquieu in effect developed the anti-deterministic principle (already present in the late Renaissance paradigm articulated by Bodin) that government action *could* change things, through his thorough analysis of how laws and forms of government interacted with climatic influences.
27. Joan-Pau Rubiés, “New Worlds and Renaissance Ethnology,” *History and Anthropology* 6 (1993): 157–197. In more detail in *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India Through European Eyes (1250–1625)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
 28. Aaron Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius’ Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Denise Kimber Buell, “Early Christian Universalism and Modern forms of Racism,” in *Origins of Racism*, pp. 109–131.
 29. Within the vast literature on the *Moriscos*, the standard account remains Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Bernard Vincent, *Historia de los Moriscos: Vida y tragedia de una minoría* (Madrid: Alianza, 1978).
 30. Exact numbers are hard to come by, but consider the discussion in Michael Alpert, *Secret Judaism and the Spanish Inquisition* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2008), pp. 27–33. The controversy over whether there was a racial persecution is considered in pp. 15–18.
 31. The negative stereotypes offered a permanent repertoire which could be mobilized against Jews, but I would be wary of describing them as a “mentality” which might by itself explain successive cases of violent persecution, in what amounts to a form of cultural determinism. The reenactment of a tradition cannot be explained by the mere force of the tradition itself. Rather, particular political outcomes must be interpreted through the contextual analysis of particular uses of a variety of possible ideas and stereotypes. On this problem see Myriam Yardeni, *Anti-Jewish Mentalities in Early Modern Europe* (New York: University Press of America, 1990), and my review of it in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1992): 315–317.
 32. For a well-informed and notably judicious comparative analysis see also James S. Amelang, *Parallel Histories: Muslims and Jews in Inquisitorial Spain* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013).

33. David Nirenberg, "Was There Race before Modernity? The Example of 'Jewish' blood in Late Medieval Spain," in *Origins of Racism*, pp. 232–264. Cf. Bethencourt, *Racisms*, pp. 138–151, who seeks to challenge the model that posits an evolution from "cultural" (or religious) prejudice to "natural" arguments based on genealogy and blood. Bethencourt concludes that the persecutions of converted Iberian Muslims and Jews represent "clear cases of racism," and that what was at stake was the nature of Christianity as a universal religion open to all. However, I am not sure that this radical formulation does justice to the evidence: the fact that genealogical and cultural notions were deeply entangled does not mean that the distinction was not important in the period, and there are sufficient examples of successful integration through acculturation to make it clear that religion and customs were for many the key underlying concern.
34. Although the Apostolic Inquisition was not considered suitable by the Castilian Crown for Christians so "young" in their faith, the special tribunals created by the missionary orders to persecute idolatry, sometimes controversially, adopted very similar models.
35. Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man. The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 57–108.
36. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Apologética Historia Sumaria*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Alianza, 1992), I, pp. 408–418 and 456–458. Las Casas relied on Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, Avicenna and Albertus Magnus, demonstrating the direct application of ancient and medieval climatic environmentalism to the interpretation of New World anthropology in order to counteract negative stereotypes.
37. Bernabé Cobo, *Obras*, 2 vols., Biblioteca de Autores Españoles (Madrid: Atlas, 1953), II, p. 13.
38. Despite emphasizing genetic causes, Cobo did not wish to rule out diet as an alternative explanation for the Spanish proclivity to some illnesses that the Indians were commonly exempt from, such as rotten teeth or gallstones.
39. Bernabé Cobo, *History of the Inca Empire*, transl. Ronald Hamilton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), pp. 39–42. Compare the Spanish original: *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, in Cobo, *Obras*, II, pp. 27–29. It is interesting to note that both modern linguistic and genetic analysis have tended to confirm the model developed by

- Acosta and Cobo for the peopling of the New World, albeit of course without the same chronological and theological constraints.
40. It would, however, be exaggerated to treat Cobo as representing a creole Enlightenment *avant-la-lettre*, as some have suggested. Cf. Claudia Brosseder, “Bernabé Cobo’s Recreation of an Authentic America in Colonial Peru,” in *God in the Enlightenment*, ed. William J. Bultman and Robert G. Ingram (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 83–106.
 41. *History*, chapter 5, pp. 20–24; *Obras*, II, pp. 16–19.
 42. Cobo, born in a family of *hidalgos* from the Andalusian village of Lopera, left Spain at the age of 15 and was educated in Peru, largely by the Jesuits themselves, in the early 1600s, first in the College of Saint Martin, later as a novice. It is therefore interesting that he was able to produce such an accomplished natural history entirely in a colonial setting. For details of his biography see Francisco Mateos’s introduction to *Obras*, pp. vii–xlvii. The book was written in the 1630s, completed in 1653, and sent to Spain, but not printed. Only the first part of this ambitious work, including fourteen books on natural history and pre-Hispanic Peru, had survived complete, as well as a section on the foundation of Lima. Unfortunately the Castilian text has not been edited from the best manuscripts, and we still rely on the late nineteenth-century transcription by Marcos Jiménez de la Espada. See also Luis Millones Figueroa, “La historia natural del padre Bernabé Cobo: algunas claves para su lectura,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (2003): 85–97.
 43. *Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias*, ed. Justo Zaragoza (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Fortanet, 1894), pp. 37–38.
 44. Justo Zaragoza, editor of Velasco’s manuscript (which was a draft), noted that this passage had been crossed over by the censors of the Council of the Indies, disappearing from the clean copy.
 45. *Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* (Mexico, 1591), III, 2. ed. Ángeles Durán Madrid, 1988, pp. 208–214. The tendency towards inconstancy was not absolute and could be compensated by the practice of virtue. Cárdenas, himself a migrant from Spain, insisted that this was not a trait acquired in urban life, but could be tested by comparing people of rural backgrounds living amongst Indians.

46. By contrast, the Indians were beardless for genetic reasons, as their ancestors lost their facial hair when they lived like savages and without clothes. Cárdenas, who was obviously improvising, struggled to make sense of all physical differences according to a theory of humors.
47. As noted by Enrico Martínez, a physician of German origins whose *Repertorio de los tiempos y historia natural desta Nueva España* (Mexico, 1606) was influenced by Cárdenas. I owe this reference to Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, “New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600–1650,” in *Nature, Empire and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World*, pp. 64–95 and 103. The views articulated by Martínez were in turn echoed by the Augustinian creole Antonio de la Calancha (1584–1654).
48. That the same natural causes could produce different effects according to secondary variables was one of the conclusions reached by Acosta in his *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, and may be considered an important key to Counter Reformation natural science.
49. Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World,” p. 103.
50. The same conclusion is reached by Anthony Pagden, “The Peopling of the New World. Ethnos, Race and Empire in the Early Modern World,” in *Origins of Racism*, pp. 292–312.
51. On La Peyrère see Richard Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1677): His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 1987). Also Livingstone, *Adam’s Ancestors*, ch. 2.
52. On the impact of this idea in eighteenth-century Europe, see Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, chapters 3 and 4. More needs to be done in tracking the specific intellectual influences behind this myth and their contexts of interpretation. The use of the story of the three sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, to establish worldwide ethnic and geographical genealogies is first documented in antiquity by the Hellenized Jewish historian Josephus, and was also important in the Middle Ages, from Isidore to Alcuin, who connected it to the three Mediterranean continents. See Benjamin Braude, “The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997): 103–142.
53. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca and Oxford: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 262–288.

54. As noted by Joyce Chaplin, "Race," in *The British Atlantic World 1500–1800*, ed. D. Armitage and M. J. Baddick (Palgrave: Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 154–172. For British attitudes see also Anthony J. Barker, *The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (London: Frank Cass, 1978).
55. It is always important to bear in mind the distance between theoretical positions and practical behavior. In the same way that many abuses were committed under the official discourse of paternalistic care in Spanish America, which always implied a concern with universal evangelization, many participants in the French or British Enlightenments (for example David Hume) were able to combine criticism of the slave trade on economic, political or humanitarian principles with the ownership of slaves or investment in plantations. Some of these contradictions are explored in Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).
56. Las Casas, *Apologética Historia*, I, pp. 409–410.
57. Noted by Jonathan D. Sassi, "Africans in the Quaker Image: Anthony Benezet, African Travel Narratives and Revolutionary-era Anti-slavery," in *Journal of Early Modern History* 10 (2006): 95–130, p. 126, quoting from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787). Influenced by Montesquieu, Jefferson opposed slavery in principle and believed in equal human rights, but, like Hume, he suspected Blacks to be naturally inferior. He also believed in racial segregation, and continued to own about 200 slaves.
58. The sheer difficulty of recording the history of the African interior made it difficult to write about them except in terms of ethnography or natural history. However, many travelers' accounts and armchair cosmographies contradicted the general idea of an undifferentiated mass of savages, noting regional differences and degrees of political development. See Ann Thomson, "Thinking about the History of Africa in the Eighteenth Century," in *Encountering Otherness. Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Guido Abbattista (Trieste: University of Trieste Press, 2011), pp. 253–265. Interpretations also differed widely between the pervasive image of Africans as degenerate brutes, and the idea of people of great talent, even with potential for "progress" (in some eighteenth-century sources) whose prospects had been marred by European greed, as proposed by the abolitionist

- Quaker Anthony Benezet. On how Benezet used travel accounts see Sassi, “Africans.”
59. Peter Kolbe, *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum* (Nuremberg, 1719). The French abridgement by Jean Bertrand, *Description du Cap de Bonne-Esperance*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1741), was more reliable than the earlier English translation by Guido Medley of 1731. Rather than idealizing the Hottentots as noble savages, what Kolb did was to restore them to their humanity. See Anne Good, “The Construction of an Authoritative Text: Peter Kolb’s Description of the Khoikhoi at the Cape of Good Hope on the Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 10 (2006): 61–94. More generally, François Fauvelle-Aymar, *L’Invention du Hottentot: Histoire du Regard Occidental sur les Khoisian XV^e-XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 2002). I discuss Rousseau’s usage in Joan-Pau Rubiés, “Ethnography, Philosophy and the Rise of Natural Man 1500–1750,” in *Encountering Otherness*, pp. 97–127.
 60. Notably Lord Monboddo. On the impact of anatomy see also Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness. Science and slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, 2011).
 61. See Joan-Pau Rubiés, “The Concept of a Gentile Civilization in Missionary Discourse and its European Reception: Mexico, Peru and China in the *Repúblicas del Mundo* by Jerónimo Román,” in *Missions d’Évangélisation et Circulation des Savoirs XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles*, ed. Charlotte de Castelnaud et al. (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), pp. 311–350.
 62. The three kinds of government amongst the Indians were monarchies (albeit largely tyrannical), local communities ruled by councils with elected military leaders, and lawless nomads, that is complete barbarians. Acosta speculated that all Indians began at the lowest level, but some had progressed towards a more orderly and rational organization. Josef de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, ed. Fermín del Pino Díaz (Madrid: CSIC, 2008), p. 219.
 63. Acosta, *Historia natural*, pp. 207–208. In particular, despite their obvious skill, “all the knowledge of the Chinese consists of learning how to write and read, because they do not reach the higher sciences.”
 64. Acosta, *Historia natural*, p. 206. Acosta devoted chapters 5 and 6 of the sixth book to explaining how the Chinese mandarins had to

- spend years learning thousands of characters (as now the Jesuits in China had to do, charitably, in order to conduct their mission). However, Acosta misunderstood some aspects of the system of writing. For a discussion see Pagden, *The Fall*, pp. 187–190.
65. Valignano, *Historia*. See also Anton M. Üçerler, “Sacred Historiography and Its Rhetoric in Sixteenth-Century Japan: An Intertextual Study and Partial Critical Edition of *Principio y Progreso de la Religión Christiana en Japón (...)* (1601–1603) by Alessandro Valignano” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1998).
 66. Duarte de Sande [Valignano], *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam* (Macao, 1590), p. 398: “Quauis igitur regnum in toto hoc Oriente sit celebratissimum, non dubium tamen est, clarissimae orbis terrarum parti, Europae molto inferius esse.” I have relied on the facsimile published in Tokyo in 1935. There is now also an English edition: *Japanese Travellers in Sixteenth-Century Europe. A Dialogue concerning the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia*, ed. Derek Massarella and transl. J. F. Moran (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2012).
 67. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*, p. 407.
 68. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*: “Unde fit, ut quauis aliqui albo colore praediti ingeniosiqui dici possent, reliqui tamen omnes qui subnigri sunt, rudi admodum impolitaque sint natura.”
 69. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*, pp. 35–46 (fifth dialogue).
 70. The key distinction was between *albo colore* and *nigro colore*. Africans were *nigri*, South Asians and American Indians *subnigri*.
 71. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*, p. 44: “We can say that, generally speaking, all these peoples have no law or religion ... but that like animals that nature inclined towards the earth and to obey their stomachs, they live largely devoted to their low desires and vices, without any cultivation or human feelings; and with reason a European philosopher said that these peoples were born to serve.”
 72. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*, pp. 39–42. Valignano was not the first to consider the issue of why climate could not fully account for color differences. As early as ca. 1502, Amerigo Vespucci, writing to the Florentines, had been obliged to justify his observations about skin color, noting that the American Indians in Brazil were not as dark as Africans in the same latitude. The reason, he thought, was that that the climate was not in fact identical, and that in any case, through miscegenation, nature and custom could trump

- climate. See Amerigo Vespucci, *Il Mondo Nuovo*, ed. Mario Pozzi (Turin: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1993), pp. 95–96.
73. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*, p. 41.
74. Sande [Valignano], *De Missione*, p. 395. In fact, in the following decade Ricci was about to develop a far more positive view of the Confucian attitude toward religion: despite the fact that many Confucian scholars now appeared as “Epicureans,” the original teachings of Confucius were naturally monotheistic.
75. *Pedro Páez's History of Ethiopia, 1622*, ed. Isabel Boavida, Hervé Pennec and Manuel João Ramos (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2011), pp. 71–73. The inhabitants of Abyssinia were described as dark in color, but with variations (some almost as pale as the Portuguese). They had good facial features, strong bodies, excellent resistance to deprivation and were most intelligent (like the best in Europe) and courteous. Indeed, they stood out for their capacity to control the natural passions, entirely at odds with the classical stereotype of people of the southern climates.
76. The aristocratic roots of the concern with lineage that developed in the fifteenth century and that lie behind the early modern concept of race are also emphasized by David Nirenberg, “Was There Race before Modernity?” and Charles de Miramon, “The Invention of Race.” On Valignano’s racial ideas see also Paolo Aranha, “Gerarchie razziali e adattamento culturale: la ipotesi Valignano,” in *Alessandro Valignano S.I. Uomo de Rinascimento*, ed. Adolfo Tamburello, M. Antoni Üçerler, SJ and Marisa di Russo (Rome: Institutum Historicum Spicetates Iesu, 2008), pp. 77–98.
77. *Journal des Sçavans*, April 24, 1684, pp. 133–140. Although first published anonymously as addressed to Abbé de la Chambre, Sylvia Murr established that the discourse on race was an extract from a miscellany of “Etreneis” sent to Marguerite la Sablière in 1688. Compare the manuscript of the variant version sent to Madame La Sablière from Montpellier in January 1688, in Sylvia Murr, “Les ‘Etreneis a Madame de la Sablière’ de Bernier: la conversation savante du joli philosophe gassendiste,” *Corpus: Revue de Philosophie*, 20–21 (1992): 275–286. The simpler hypothesis is that the “Nouvelle division” had originally been written for circulation within la Sablière’s salon (a circle in which the abbé de la Chambre participated), and the 1688 text had been revised for her specifically.

78. I have discussed the place of Bernier's racialism in his wider thought in Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Race, Climate and Civilization in the Works of François Bernier," *L'Inde des Lumières. Discours, histoire, savoirs (XVII^e-XIX^e siècle)*, "Purushartha" 31 (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2013), pp. 53-78.
79. For example, Siep Stuurman in his otherwise interesting article: "François Bernier and the Invention of Racial Classification," *History Workshop Journal* 50 (2000): 1-21. Similarly: Pierre Boule, "François Bernier and the Origins of the Concept of Race," in *The Color of Liberty. Histories of Race in France*, ed. Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 11-27. Boule offers a useful contextualization, but is less convincing when associating Bernier with a Eurocentric hierarchy (his views of India were largely shaped by his Mughal friends), with polygenism (his notion of *espèce d'homme* carried no such connotation) or with aristocratic prejudice (he was of peasant origins).
80. *Abregé de la Philosophie de Gassendi*, 8 vols. (Lyon, 1678), vol. V, pp. 25-26. Had Bernier been more systematic, he would have connected the thesis of a Tartar origin to his racial classification, placing the American Indians with the Tartars and Chinese, rather than Europeans. His hesitation reflects the empirical nature of his geographical expertise, confined to the Old World.
81. Compare "Des différentes espèces d'hommes," *Traité de Métaphysique*, in *Mélanges*, ed. Jacques van den Heuvel (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), pp. 159-161, to the various statements in *Essai des Mœurs*, ed. René Pomeau, 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1963), II, pp. 305-346. For a consideration of Voltaire's views on race, see José-Michel Moureaux, "Race et Alterité dans l'Anthropologie Voltairienne," in *L'idée de "race" dans les sciences humaines et la littérature (XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles)*, ed. Sarga Moussa (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), pp. 41-53.
82. We might consider Voltaire's polygenism superficial, because it was rhetorically opportunistic and lacked a strong theoretical basis. For example: "On peut réduire, si l'on veut, sous une seule espèce tous les hommes, parce qu'ils ont tous les mêmes organes de la vie, des sens et du mouvement. Mais cette espèce parut évidemment divisée en plusieurs autres dans le physique et dans la moral" (*Essai*, II, p. 341). What follows is a rather unsystematic list of observations of physical diversity in the Americas, without subjecting the ethnographic sources to any quality control.

83. *Essai*, II, p. 335 on the inferiority of Blacks.
84. Voltaire's views on the subject did not lack contradictions, in part because many of his interventions were motivated by separate polemics, for example against Buffon's emphasis on climate over genealogy, and against Rousseau's idea of a pre-social man in the state of nature. What mattered in history was the eventual rise of civilization, but the inclinations of peoples were naturally unequal, and whether racial distinctions set an absolute limit to the progress of savage nations in Africa or America remained to be seen: Would the Indians of Brazil ever produce a John Locke? These contradictions are explored by Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au Siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971), pp. 281–306.
85. Religious heterodoxy was not necessarily deistic or anti-biblical—consider cases such as Isaac La Peyrère or Lord Kames, both of them Christian (or New Christian) polygenists.
86. Buffon's *De l'Homme* (1749) was the third volume of his encyclopaedic *Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière* (Paris, 1749–89). I follow the text established by Michèle Duchet in 1971, and reprinted in 2006, which also includes successive additions: Buffon, *De l'homme*, introduced by Michèle Duchet, with an essay by Claude Blanckaert (Paris: Harmattan, 2006).
87. He made this clear in his reply to critics published as an “addition” in 1777: Buffon, *De l'Homme*, p. 326.
88. As Buffon concluded in the powerful ending of his essay “Variété dans l'espèce humaine” (1749), the most perfect exposition of what I have called the orthodox consensus: “il n'y a eu originairement qu'une seule espèce d'hommes, qui, s'était multipliée et répandue sur toute la surface de la terre, a subi différents changements par l'influence du climat, par la différence de la nourriture, par celle de la manière de vivre, par les maladies épidémiques, et aussi par le mélange varié a l'infini des individus plus o moins ressemblants.” He also noted that any physical variations were at first individual, but became generalized amongst distinct groups through the continuous action of the same causes, and genetically transmitted through the generations. Buffon, *De l'Homme*, pp. 320–321.
89. The Lapps and their relation to other neighboring groups in the North, such as the Samoyeds of Siberia, became one of the bones of contention between Voltaire, who saw them as racially very distinct notwithstanding the similar climate, and Buffon, who found

more similarities. It is interesting that they were already one of Bernier's original races.

90. *De l'homme*, p. 274. The polemic against Cornelius De Pauw's thesis concerning the general weakness of nature in the New World in his *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américaines* (Berlin, 1768–69) appeared in the additions of 1777: see Buffon, *De l'Homme*, pp. 368–374.
91. The American Indians were a special case, since their physical uniformity suggested a recent migration of savage nomads from elsewhere. The climate was more uniform than in the Old World, but in any case they had not been long enough in the hottest regions to become as dark as Africans—nor for those who were more civilized, such as the Incas, to progress much in the arts and sciences.
92. For the wider context of biological thinking see Jacques Roger, *Les Sciences de la Vie dans la Pensée Française du XVIII^e siècle. La Génération des Animaux de Descartes à l'Encyclopédie* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1963), especially pp. 527–584. Henry Vyverberg, *Human Nature, Cultural Diversity, and the French Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), discusses climate, but has little to say about race.
93. My emphasis on dominant discourse is not to deny that various practices that we might consider racist preexisted racialist ideologies. It is also worth noting the wide impact of the stereotyped images of the four continents that emerged in the late Renaissance—here we might talk about a dominant visual discourse. See in this respect Bethencourt, *Racisms*, pp. 65–78.
94. The point is not that racism required polygenism—in fact quite a few monogenist thinkers expressed racist views. Rather, for as long as the orthodox consensus held, it was more difficult for race to emerge as they key criterion for interpreting a hierarchy of moral and political capacities, at the expense other historical and environmental factors.
95. Writers who entirely emphasized history and culture (or custom) and dismissed physical causes for human diversity also existed, especially within the more skeptical currents of the Scottish Enlightenment. David Hume's essay "of national characters" (1748) comes to mind, including his paradoxical footnote on the natural inferiority of "negroes" (*Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller [Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987],

p. 208). The point was not that he sought to find a new kind of naturalistic (racial) justification for slavery—in fact, elsewhere he questioned the value of the institution, especially of ancient domestic slavery (he wrote less about plantation slavery). Rather, Hume was skeptical of the power of climatic influences on societal development, and for that reason the case of Black peoples, so uniformly inferior in his view, presented itself as a major *exception*, one that seemed hard to explain on purely historical grounds. What created the exception was not a theoretical bias towards racial explanations, but rather the severely limited and prejudiced nature of the empirical evidence for a “uniform and constant difference” that Hume had at his disposal. Other Scots, such as Adam Ferguson and (to some extent) William Robertson, tended to emphasize the universal uniformity of human nature, on the whole giving support to the orthodox consensus.

96. Kames, Long and King were polygenists, but Monboddo accepted a single creation of the human species. His arguments about the origins of language, however, assumed a complete degeneration into animal behavior, pre-social and prelinguistic, illustrated by the “orangutans,” in a manner reminiscent of Rousseau’s *Second Discourse*. In this respect his polygenism was cultural. The expression “different species of a single genus” belongs to Long.
97. For a rich account of the polygenist debate in the Scottish Enlightenment see Silvia Sebastiani, *I Limiti del Progresso. Razza e Genere nell’Illuminismo Scozzese* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), emphasizing both the use made by Edward Long of Hume’s not so minor footnote, the hidden influence of Voltaire over Kames, and the role of Beattie’s Aberdeen group in articulating a conservative defense of orthodox monogenism against the threat of Hume’s moral skepticism. For a revised English edition see Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment. Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).
98. *Histoire des Deux Indes* (1780), vol. III, book, XI, pp. 122–127. Muriel Brot, “La couleur des hommes dans l’*Histoire des deux Indes*,” in *L’idée de “race”*, pp. 87–98, describes these changes, noting that Jussieu was responsible for the new version. Diderot also intervened in this new edition, attacking the idea of racial purity on historical grounds.

99. This defense continued well into the nineteenth century, including for example James Prichard.
100. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors*, ch. 3. Sebastiani (*I Limiti*, p. 266) notes, however, that, within the Scottish Enlightenment, the conservative humanitarian reaction against Hume's skepticism led by James Beattie and Thomas Reid, albeit largely reliant on Linnaeus and Buffon, was ambivalent towards the latter for his implicit Epicureanism, which neglected the role of Providence in the history of nature. Nevertheless, the naturalistic versions of monogenism later proposed by John Anderson (or by the German Zimmerman) were in essence refinements of Buffon's model. See also in this context P. B. Wood, "Buffon's Reception in Scotland: The Aberdeen Connection," *Annals of Science* 44 (1987): 169–190.

Formal Analysis: Art and Anthropology

Margaret Olin

Pay attention, we are told. Look carefully. Scholars in art history, especially, like to think that close looking can yield results, that it can tell us about whatever we are looking at, and prevent us from making at least a few grievous mistakes. Even those of us who do not regard close observation as an end in itself make the assumption that close attentiveness to visual cues is necessary, if not sufficient for our scholarship. Yet a look at art history's historical relation to other disciplines raises issues about close looking that challenge that assumption. This essay points to these questions as they have arisen in my research in artistic formalism and the scientific culture of visuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and seeks to preserve a space for formal analysis in art historical research.¹

PRISONERS OF WAR

A large government-sponsored interdisciplinary undertaking in prison camps in Germany during World War I, involving a distinguished group of anthropologists and linguists, sought “to use prisoners of war undergoing an involuntary residence in Germany for phonetic speech recordings.”²

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Seeking prisoners representative of ethnic or linguistic groups, the scholars made skull measurements, performed X-rays and sometimes palatograms in order “to study the unusual sounds of exotic tribes at their place of origin.” Lutheran bookkeepers were perhaps considered exotic, since some specimens of the type appear in the study.³ The recordings became the basis of an acoustical archive and the essays by the scholars were collected in a book.⁴

The book and the archive also contained photographs of many of these and other prisoners. In the preface its editor writes, “For providing stimulation and the guidance for these photographs, which were made to my specifications by the photographer at the art historical institute of the University of Berlin, Herr Gerdes, I hereby thank Professor Goldschmidt.”⁵ The reference was to Adolph Goldschmidt, Ordinarius in Art History at the university in Berlin, famous medievalist, teacher or mentor to most art historians of note who came out of German universities between 1904 and 1929.⁶ Goldschmidt’s “guidance” did not end with his suggestion that photographs be taken. According to his memoirs, he participated in the photographic process itself. Herr Gerdes was a fine photographer, Goldschmidt wrote, but his intelligence did not extend to this task, and someone with greater understanding had to go along. Professor Goldschmidt himself possessed that greater understanding. Consequently he spent a great deal of time during the war years in German prisoner of war camps. There, besides photographing the prisoners, the photographer also photographed the camps themselves, and the activities held in them. Goldschmidt owned a copy of at least one of the books in which Doegen used his photographs, perhaps given him by Doegen in recognition of his role.⁷ In the camps he celebrated his birthday, saw French plays, took a dislike to an Indian festival, feared being left on his own in a room full of Africans, but asked to be introduced to Nigerians from Benin, origin of wonderful bronze heads that he had seen in Berlin. A curiosity about the relation between ethnicity and art may have led him to the camps. His memoirs express his lively interest in the prisoners whom he met there during the Great War. Indeed, the different ethnicities he encountered in his travels, including African Americans he met in the United States during various sojourns there, invariably attracted his interest.

As an art historian, did Goldschmidt have a scholarly reason to urge that these photographs be taken, and, having done so, why was it necessary for him to direct the photographer who took them? Of what could his superior understanding have consisted? It is hard to imagine a photographer so intellectually challenged as not to grasp the only guidelines that

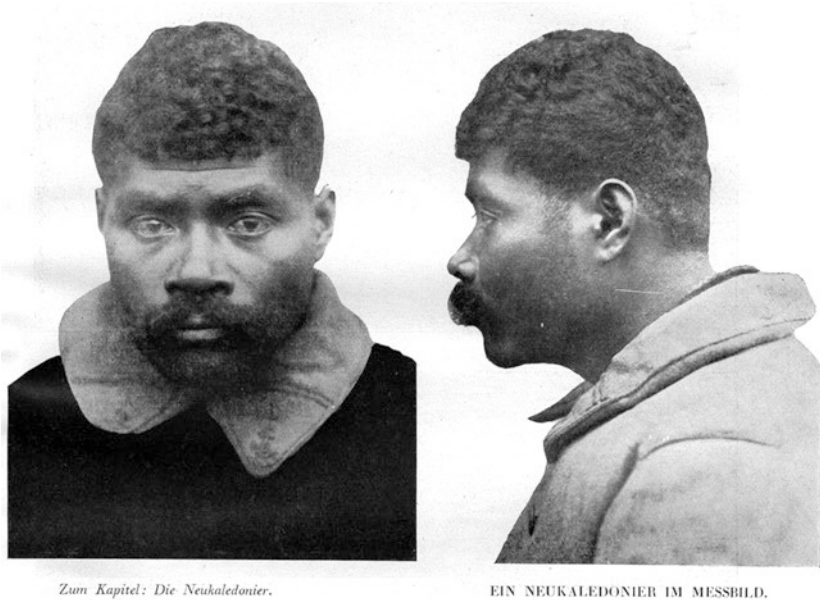


Fig. 1 “Ein Neukaledonier im Messbild.” Source: Doegen, *Unter fremden Völkern*

Goldschmidt mentions, namely that the photographs necessitated sharp-profile and frontal views, taken without any headgear, where possible.⁸ Most portraits in the book follow these guidelines straightforwardly (Fig. 1).

It can only have been Goldschmidt’s formal expertise that qualified him for this work. Goldschmidt was known as a great teacher of the art of observation. “Imagine you are a fly,” he told the students, speaking of a gothic statue, “and you creep across the figure. Describe the path of this fly over all the ridges and furrows of the garment.”⁹ He inculcated close visual analysis, pursued with a “sharp, discriminating eye,” through exercises in connoisseurship that continued to be a dominant practice in art history departments into the late twentieth century, where I learned variations on it in several different classes.¹⁰ Most notable was a course in Gupta art, the classic art of India in the fourth to sixth centuries. In each session we assigned dates and provenances to figures, mostly Buddhas or Bodhivistas, which stemmed from three main geographical centers in

northern India. Although I knew no Indian language, and never even looked for these places on a map, I found that with a little practice, I was soon able not only to attribute a provenance to each sculpture, and to assign it a date within about a ten-year range, I could do the same for the people I encountered on the way to class. At the time, I thought of the entire enterprise as a meaningless parlor game. The game involved the establishment of parameters for types, followed by a search for these types within a set of sculptures.

The forms of Mathura, I learned, were volumetric and detailed, while those of Sarnath were abstract, linear and refined. To find the types did not in itself tell one anything interesting about the sculptures, and the ability to assign provenance and dates in the fifth century to living people suggested that it might not be reliable even as a form of connoisseurship. At least, I thought, the game was harmless. On further reflection, maybe it was not. Goldschmidt's ability to spot "types" enabled him to show the photographer in the prisoner of war camps what to do. He accompanied the photographer as he would have had the photographic subject been a Romanesque church. Just as Goldschmidt knew which sculptural plinths or miniatures to photograph or draw, so he could enter a room of people and spot the "typical" ones. When he asked to meet Africans from Benin, he was not wondering whether Nigerian artistic sensibilities had changed in the four centuries since the sculptures were created, but rather surely trying to combine the practice of anthropology and art history by seeking formal relationships between present-day people and the sculptures made by their ancestors.

Art history and anthropology shared a great deal in these early years. These new disciplines were both in danger of being mistaken for dilettantism.¹¹ They turned to similar tools and techniques to give them a scientific basis. Examination and comparison were important to both disciplines, because they shared an investigative method based on comparison and close visual analysis. Furthermore, if the methods of the two disciplines seem the same, it is no accident; for their goals were the same. Both art historian and anthropologist wished to explain origins, and having done so, to explain change. The point of Goldschmidt's exercises in connoisseurship was to understand "whether a work originates in a unitary conception or whether it is imitative or jumbled together."¹² Goldschmidt analyzes Romanesque ivories:

The first group corresponds to Mozarabic manuscripts ... from the end of the tenth century. ... The figures are very flat in relief and very crudely

drawn. The heads are egg formed, pointed below, with a flat cranium mostly seen frontally, sometimes in sharp profile, seldom slightly turned. The nose is made of two parallel lines. The second, however, from the middle of the eleventh century, is much more developed in its individual forms. The heads have completely changed. The hair no longer sits like a flat cap on the cranium, but frames the face, which in contrast to earlier appears more in half profile. The nose is aquiline, the mouth has strongly plastic lips, the groove between cheek and mouth is strongly hollowed out, the eyes are deeply drilled out, the hair often has a corrugated look or is sharply subdivided diagonally.¹³ (See Figs. 2 and 3)

Goldschmidt attributes this style to influence from the cloisters of Catalonia, especially from Ripoll, where the richly illustrated bibles of Farfa and Rosas were made in the first half of the eleventh century.¹⁴ Most styles, at least the good ones, were such hybrids. Anthropologists often felt similarly. Leo Frobenius writes the following description of a drawing of a “Höriger Mischling aus Igli (Gusfanatal)”:

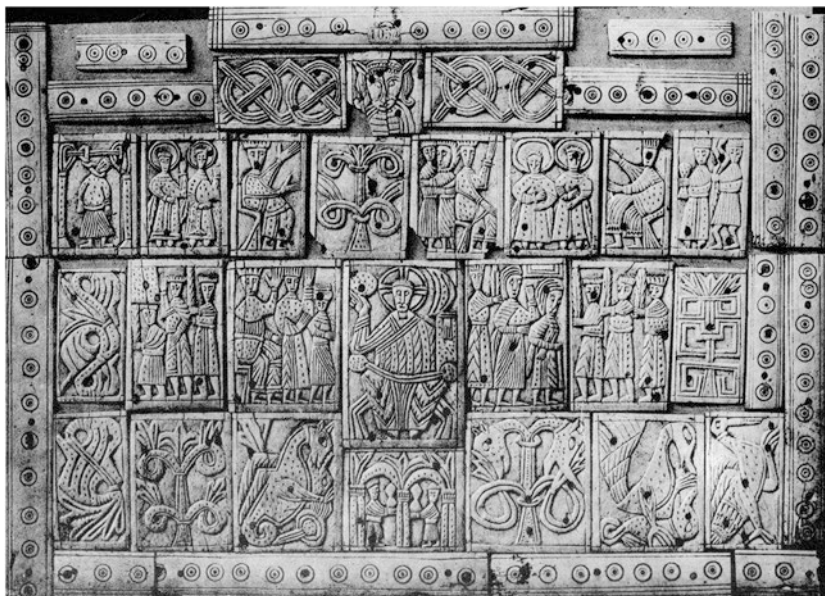


Fig. 2 From Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen* (Berlin, [1914]–1926)



Fig. 3 From Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen*

The head is large for an African of his stature; the face broad, the forehead over the eyes springs forward, not arched like young negroes. The nose is clear cut and not swelling. The eyes are relatively close together and smaller than negro eyes usually are. The skin color is brown, but not very dark ... The hands are light, ... One must conclude that [the hair] is rather more wavy than frizzy. What we have here is probably one of those oasis mixtures, as from Arab, Fulbe and Negroes from the interior.¹⁵ (See Fig. 4).

Concerning photographs of Moroccan and Sudanese prisoners, another anthropologist, Felix von Luschan, writes,

Such types, however, have been mixing along the whole northern rim of Africa for millenia, in that continual lighter blood has seeped through to the darker tribes, and not seldom also Negro blood into the lighter Berbers and

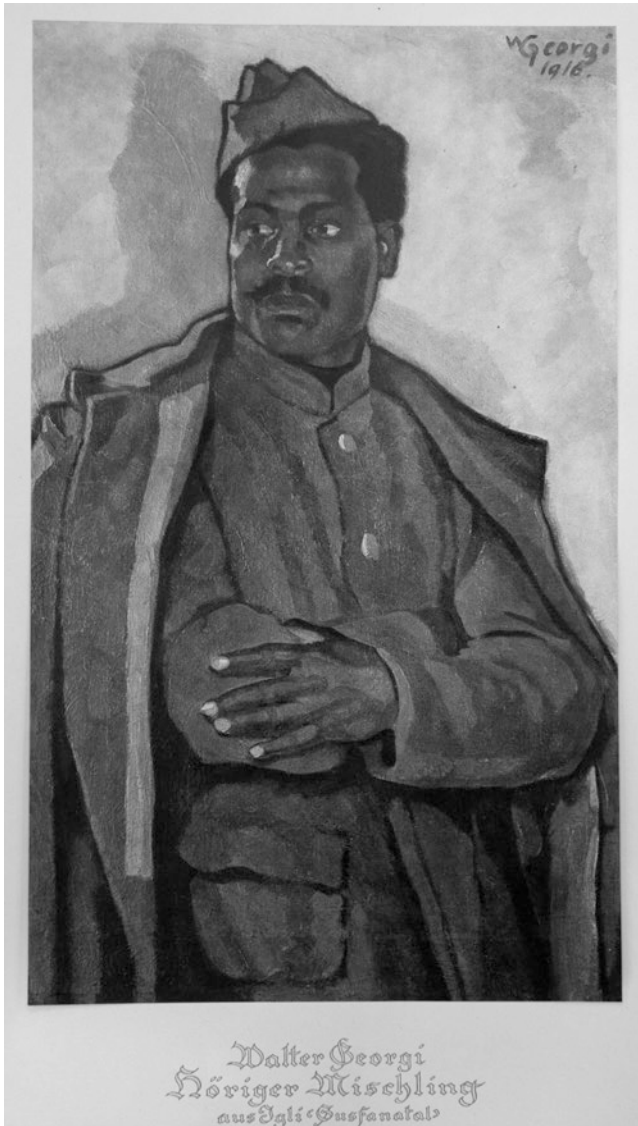
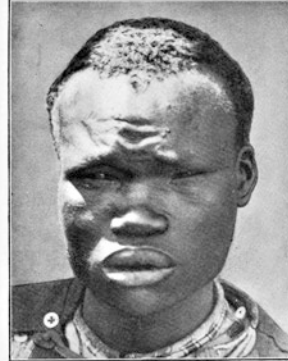


Fig. 4 Walter Georgi, *Höriger Mischling*, 1916. From Leo Frobenius, ed., *Deutschlands Gegner im Weltkriege* (1920)

Neuere Versuche von schematischen Einteilungen der Menschen lassen aus drei „archimorphe“ Stammrassen, einer schwarzen, einer weißen und einer gelben, „protomorphe“ Standsvölker und „metamorphe“ Wandervölker hervorgehen; aber auch diese Versuche sind nicht einwandfrei und vielleicht auch nicht immer mit der wünschenswerten Vorsicht durchgeführt. So berührt es peinlich, wenn da einmal ein und dasselbe Völkchen unter zwei verschiedenen Namen in zwei ganz verschiedene Gruppen verlegt wird oder wenn ein andermal so weit voneinander entfernt stehende Völker wie Perser und Guandien in eine gemeinsame Gruppe gebracht werden, oder wenn wir in einer anderen Gruppe Syrer und Araber vereinigt finden, die zwar dieselbe Sprache reden, aber somatisch nicht viel miteinander zu tun haben.

Inzwischen wollen wir also an der Lehre von der absoluten Einheit des Menschengeschlechtes festhalten, auch wenn in vielen einzelnen Fällen die Art des Zusammenhangs noch nicht völlig geklärt ist. Gerade von der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit in den Gefangenlagern können wir da noch eine große Summe von Belehrung erwarten, ebenso wie auch die 100 Tafeln von Struck nicht immer nur als künstlerische Leistung bewundert werden, sondern vielfach auch anthropologisches Interesse erwecken dürfen. Ein es aber möchte ich am Schlusse dieser Einführung noch hervorheben und betonen, wie verkehrt es wäre, unsere farbigen Gegner von vornherein als minderwertig zu verachten. Schon in dem amtlichen Werke unseres großen Generalstabs über den Aufstand der Serere werden diese ganz ausdrücklich als ebenbürtige Gegner bezeichnet und auch



89. Berber aus Marokko, durchaus europäisch aussehend, also so „unafrizänisch“ wie nur möglich.
 90. Sudanese aus dem Quellgebiete des weißen Nil. v. Luschan phot. Die weißigen Lippen und die sehr breite röhrlückige Nase sind defensiver typisch.

jetzt sehen wir, wie in zahlreichen Briefen aus den Schützengräben die soldatischen Tugenden der Farbigen rückhaltlos anerkannt werden. Aber auch moralisch stehen diese vielfach höher, als manche unserer weißen Feinde oder als manche „Neutrale“. Als Anthropologe vollends muß ich mit dem Geständnis schließen, daß die Stunden, die ich in unseren Gefangenlagern habe verbringen dürfen, für mich ebenso angenehm und ebenso lehrreich waren, als irgendwelche auf Reisen in Übersee und daß ich von dem persönlichen Verkehr mit vielen unserer Gefangenen nur durchaus freundliche Erinnerungen zurückbehalten habe.

Fig. 5 From Felix Luschan, “Introduction,” Hermann Struck, *Kriegsgefangene*, 1916

Arabs. The many different mixtures are self-explanatory. Wonderful, and only comprehensible in Mendel’s sense is the fact that any pure forms still exist.¹⁶ (Fig. 5).

Behind these descriptions were serious debates about origins: stylistic origins, origins of the species, origins of the human race. Did the races all develop from the same roots, differentiated in subtle ways? Or did they have different origins, separate creations? Can x be transformed into y ?

Did it take an infusion of *z* to change it? If the light-skinned Berbers can morph into dark-skinned Africans, then they must have a common ancestor, and all men are brothers.

As the last phrase suggests, Luschan drew social consequences from his conviction that the object of his study, the members of humankind, related to one another across societies and geographical boundaries. Indeed, in the same essay, he celebrated the unity of humankind.¹⁷ The art historian Goldschmidt, for his turn, used his visual analysis to support the significance of cross-cultural artistic fertilization.¹⁸

THE CULTURE OF OBSERVATION

It is not surprising that art history and anthropology shared the same methods and seemed to elicit the same results. Both of them derived their methods and aims from the harder sciences of the nineteenth century. Art history's specialized mode of perception arose in response to the natural sciences. Comparative anatomy was usually the science one had in mind, and the techniques those of visual analysis, description, and classification.

The development of scientific methods in art history is often traced to Giovanni Morelli, who studied comparative anatomy before he became an art connoisseur. He compared the connoisseur's knowledge to that of the anatomist, the botanist and the zoologist, who must be able to "distinguish a fig from a pumpkin at a glance, or the young lion from the domestic cat."¹⁹

The work of art seemed perhaps particularly close to natural observation, because, in Morelli's discussion of the drawings and paintings by Italian Renaissance artists, he ignored those characteristics of works of art that we would identify as artistic treatments of the subject, such as the brush strokes or chiaroscuro used to depict earlobes or hands, in favor of earlobes and hands themselves, as though the choice of models, not artistic interpretation, differentiated the artists. Class biases often informed discussions of hands that were "bony, bloated and spongy" or "coarse(r) and brawny."²⁰ Some painters used more refined models once they entered a higher society.

In his Florentine period, especially in the "Madonna di casa Tempi" (Munich), the "Madonna del Granduca" (Pitti), the "Madonna del Cardellino" (Uffizi), the "Madonna" belonging to Lord Cowper at Panshanger, the portraits of Maddalena Doni and the so-called "Donna

gravida” in the Pitti, &c., the metacarpus is broad and flat, the fingers somewhat lifeless, and the whole hand has rather a homely and commonplace character. After 1509, when Raphael came into contact with a higher class of society in Rome, his treatment of the hand became more refined—as in his cartoon for the “School of Athens” in the Ambrosiana at Milan—till gradually he attained to the elegant, aristocratic form seen in the “Madonna di casa d’Alba,” the “Madona della Seggiola,” the “Galatea,” &c.²¹

The quotation suggests that, like the method that I was taught to apply to Gupta art, Morelli could have applied his method as easily to people as to works of art.

Morelli’s frequent reference to botany and anatomy as a point of comparison suggests the relationship between his connoisseurship and the method he learned as a scientist, in association with other scientists. He quotes, in his *Italian Painters*, from a biography of one such associate, Louis Agassiz, a famous Swiss scientist with whom Morelli traveled to study glaciers. Agassiz classified fossil fish, and developed a theory that related the varieties of humankind to the varieties of animal life in the areas that they originally inhabited. He later moved to the United States, where at Harvard University he founded a museum and a field station for marine studies, educated a generation of American scientists, published a series of lectures that explained his scientific method, and continued his classifications of fish, mollusks and coral reefs.²² His students left reports of his extraordinary teaching methods, most of which he had probably developed in Europe. Morelli quotes from one of these accounts, according to which Agassiz’s teaching centered on observation:

Observation and comparison being in his opinion the intellectual tools most indispensable to the naturalist, his first lesson was in *looking*. He gave no assistance; he simply left his student with the specimen, telling him to use his eyes diligently, and report upon what he saw. . . . His students still retain amusing reminiscences of their despair when thus confronted with their single specimen; no aid to be had from outside until they had wrung from it the secret of its structure. But all of them have recognized the fact that this one lesson in looking, which forced them to such careful scrutiny of the object before them, influenced all their subsequent habits of observation, whatever field they might choose for their special subject of study.²³

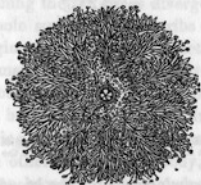
In the canonical story, Agassiz demanded that his student “look at your fish.” There are variations, but the gist is that the student is given a single

specimen of a fish in a tin pan, and told to look at it without reading or consulting any experts on fish, and to “find out what you can without damaging the specimen.”²⁴ When he is ready, he should report what he sees. The fish is unsavory; the student is “sickened by the stench of old alcohol”; he has trouble taking care of it.²⁵ In some versions it occurs to the student to draw the fish, which earns him a measure of approval.²⁶ Whenever the student feels ready, at the end of the day or in a week, depending on the version (the nauseating odor sometimes plays into the story here), he spends an hour telling his teacher what he knows. Agassiz listens, but then sends his student back with a stern warning to look at his fish. The student discards his first notes, and another week or so of ten-hour days spent staring at the fish ensues. At the end of the story, the student returns with something that the teacher is at last ready to hear. The student has learned to look.

Alois Riegl always considered himself a disciple of his teacher at the University of Vienna, Moritz Thausing, rather than Morelli, but he inherited at least the scientific culture of the gaze through Thausing from Morelli.²⁷ In doing so, however, he picked up less the method than the concern for close observation itself and, most significantly, the results, that is, a concern for formal systems and the importance of visualizing them. Riegl’s more sophisticated notion of representation, however, brought him closer to Agassiz than to Morelli. Morelli’s specimens were representational, and perhaps for this reason were difficult to differentiate from the objects—hands—that they represented. Representation, however, was not the overriding principle of the specimens studied by Riegl and Agassiz. Ornaments, after all, were not exactly pictures of anything, and works of nature do not represent anything beside themselves.²⁸

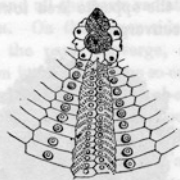
A sea urchin does not represent a starfish (Figs. 6 and 7). But Agassiz, in his *Methods of Study in Natural History*, shows how by manipulating the structural parts, the research scientist can conceptually transform all echinoderms into one another. The spherical sea urchin, he explains, has a “mouth” with five surrounding parts that act as jaws, each one with a tooth in the center. The plates, which are important to locomotion, continue around until, at the other, “aboral” side, they terminate in five “eyes.” If the spaces between the plates were infinitely expandable, one could imagine pulling and twisting each set of plates around itself so that instead of five narrow plates, the creature would have five arms, each of them terminating in an eye. Using imagination and powers of observation, in other words, it is possible to transform a sea urchin conceptually into a starfish,

much as possible in these papers, make use of the unfamiliar terms oral and ab-oral regions, to indicate the mouth with the parts diverging from it and the opposite area towards which all these parts converge.*



Sea-Urchin seen from the oral side, showing the zones with the spines and the suckers; for the ab-oral side, on the summit of which the zones unite, see the wood-cut on the next page, which shows a portion of that region.

water-tubes which are their locomotive appendages. For this reason these narrower zones are

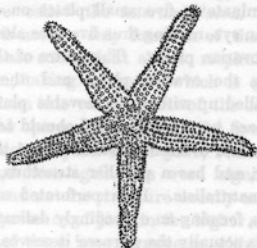


Portion of Sea-Urchin representing one narrow zone with a part of the broad zones on either side and the ab-oral area on the summit.

called the *ambulacra*, while the broader zones intervening between them and supporting the spines are called the *interambulacra*. Motion,

Fig. 6 Illustrations of sea urchins. From Louis Agassiz, *Methods of Study in Natural History* (1863)

may be stretched out indefinitely; then split the five broad zones along the centre, and draw them down to the same level with the mouth, carrying the ovarian plates between them. We have



Star-Fish from the ab-oral side.

it, and lies between them. The adjoining wood-cut represents a single ray of a Star-Fish,



One arm of Star-Fish from the oral side.

then a star; just as, dividing, for instance, the peel of an orange into five segments, left, of

drawn from what we call its lower or oral side. Along the centre of every such ray, diverging

Fig. 7 Illustrations of starfish. From Agassiz, *Methods of Study*

thus establishing a relationship between the two.²⁹ Hence the scientific utility of close observation. The concept, if not the transformational exercise, was surely understood also by the anthropologist studying the transmission of human physical traits from one group to another.

Riegl proceeded similarly to Agassiz to make his point about the significance of the lotus ornament (Figs. 8–11). His use of schematic drawings to trace such features as the droplet, and the “crowning fan of leaves,” from

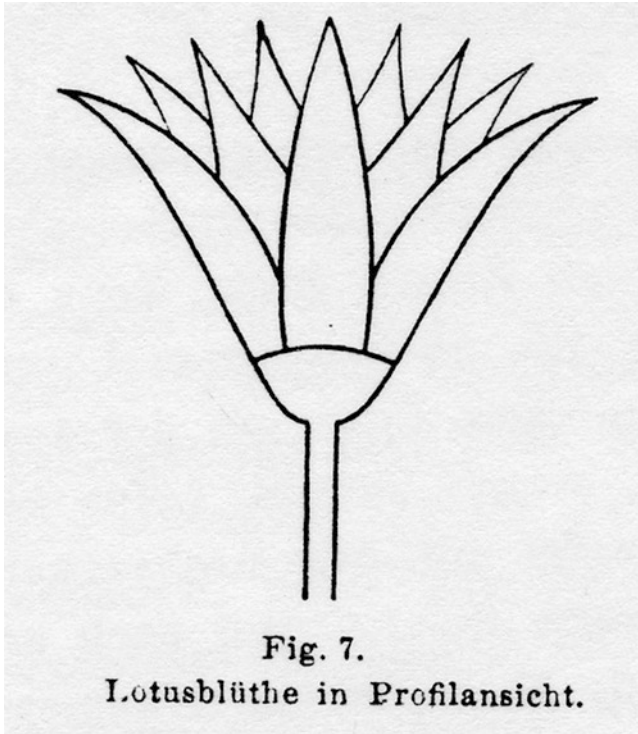


Fig. 7.
Lotusblüthe in Profilsicht.

Fig. 8 From Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen* (1893)

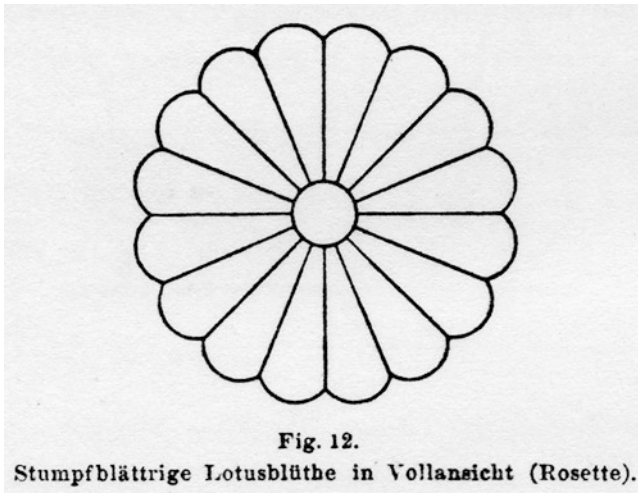


Fig. 12.
Stumpfblättrige Lotusblüthe in Vollansicht (Rosette).

Fig. 9 From Riegl, *Stilfragen* (1893)

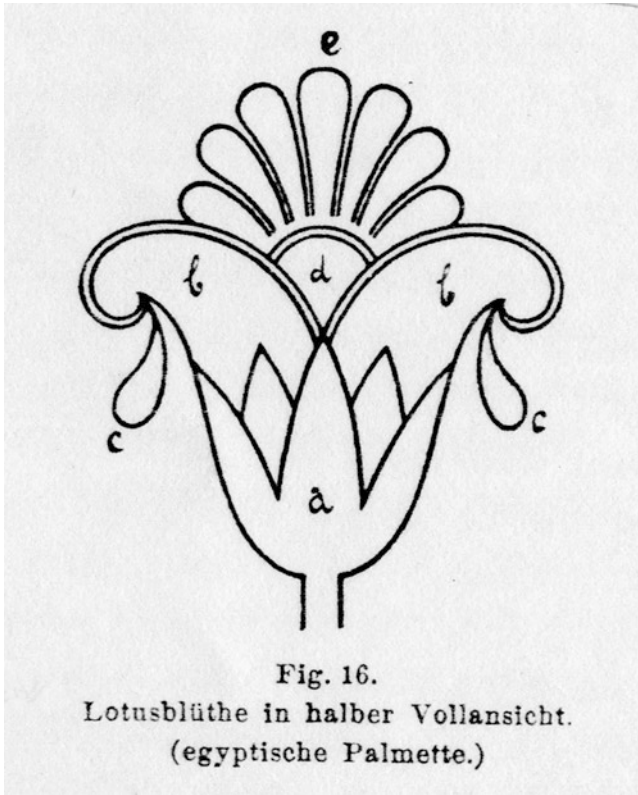


Fig. 10 From Riegl, *Stilfragen* (1893)

the lotus to the palmette and finally to the Greek acanthus vine or the arabesque resembled the classificatory efforts of scientists such as Agassiz.³⁰ Like Agassiz, he identified a class, in this instance a class of ornament that originated in various views of the Egyptian lotus. To do so he disassembled the ornament, as Agassiz did with his creatures, into components, or views, and then put the components together differently. His famous work *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (1893) can be considered an essay in classification of a species of ornament.³¹

Agassiz did not regard the differences he traced as adaptive in either a strict or a loose Darwinian sense. Starfish were not improvements on sea

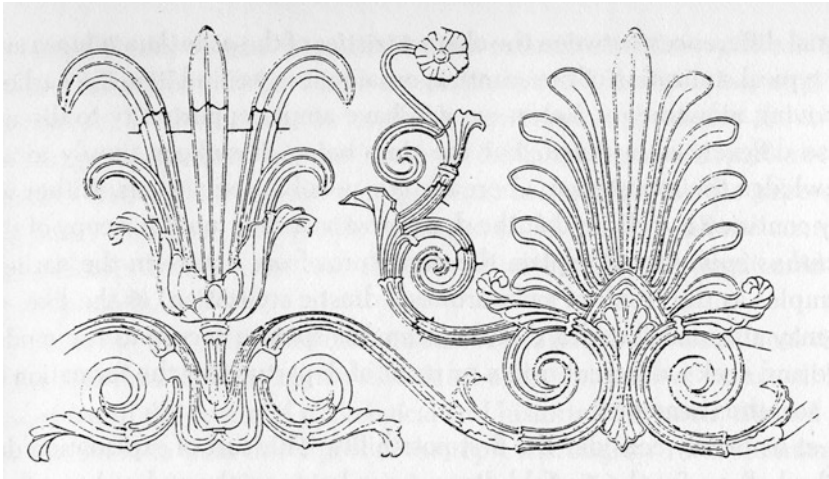


Fig. 11 Acanthus ornament. From Riegl, *Stilfragen* (1893)

urchins, and he did not think that one of these animals evolved into the other. Their differences exemplified the order and variety of God's creation. He objected to the theory of evolution, which he called the theory of "transmutation," because he thought there was "a repulsive poverty in this material explanation, that is contradicted by the intellectual grandeur of the universe."³² In the twenty-first century one might call him a proponent of "intelligent design." Riegl, less antagonistic than Agassiz to evolution, traced what he called "development" in design and did not hold Darwin responsible for the excesses of "Darwinism." He resembled Agassiz, however, in his distrust of the "materialist" idea that ascribed changes in design to adaptation to material necessity.³³ While Riegl's view of diversity in design was more "evolutionary" than that of Agassiz, therefore, he thought, like Agassiz, that design enjoyed an intellectual, not a materialistic, evolution. The forms of Riegl's plant ornaments fulfilled functions, just as did Darwin's successive animal forms, but they were design functions. His 1893 work *Stilfragen* argued that successive versions of the palmette filled and represented surfaces better.³⁴ Insofar as Agassiz aimed at revealing the "intelligence" of God, rather than the material process of adaptation, Riegl's use of the term "Kunstwollen" in *Stilfragen* remained close to Agassiz's spirit. For Riegl, (human) "intelligence" caused forms to evolve.

Were they ever tempted to turn their classificatory skills on people? Agassiz, once in the United States, had a set of seven daguerreotypes made for him, of slave fathers and their daughters. While what he intended to do with them is uncertain, he is known to have been disturbed by his first sight of Africans, and he is supposed to have wished to use these images for the purpose of demonstrating the inferiority of the race.³⁵ Indeed his conviction that separate creation accounted for the different varieties of man could be used to support racism, although Agassiz himself did not do so. The photographs remained unused. As for Riegl, he tried to trace his schemata to the concerns and “worldviews” of peoples, even though he did not concern himself with the appearance of the holders of these worldviews. The stereotypes he held of some races and ethnic groups evolved over the course of his career, but they consistently tended to place Italians and peoples of the Middle East in a disadvantageous light. He was known to characterize both groups as egoistic and focused on domination, which translated artistically as compositional subordination. “Germanic” peoples could sometimes be the beneficiaries of these comparisons, although he preferred a combination of sources.³⁶ These judgments were not based on close observation of the people, but of work he associated with them. Probably the most disturbing comparison, between “Indo-Germanic” and “Orientalizing” tendencies, is found in an essay that focuses on the Mycenaean “Vapheio Cups,” where, however, he still acknowledged the necessity of stylistic mixtures.³⁷ Furthermore, he did not publish this essay, perhaps in accord with his better judgment.

From Agassiz’s starfish and sea urchins to Goldschmidt’s prisoners of war and Riegl’s foliated ornament, the people themselves—or animals, or even ornaments—were never actually the basis of any arguments. The types described by anthropologist, scientist, and art historian were all depictions: Agassiz and Riegl used line drawings; anthropologists used photographs and drawings (Fig. 12). Their tools and techniques involved travel and observation, and the compilation of visual archives and notes. While Agassiz collected samples, and taught from them, and art historians built up the collections of museums, the arguments themselves could only be made from reproductions.

Officially, neither discipline trusted photographs. Scale is difficult to ascertain in photographs, as anyone knows who has looked at a projected slide of a small cameo, or studied a large fresco in a book. Anthropologists, too, had reservations about scale, because they depended on accurate measurements that were difficult to take even from subjects in the flesh.³⁸

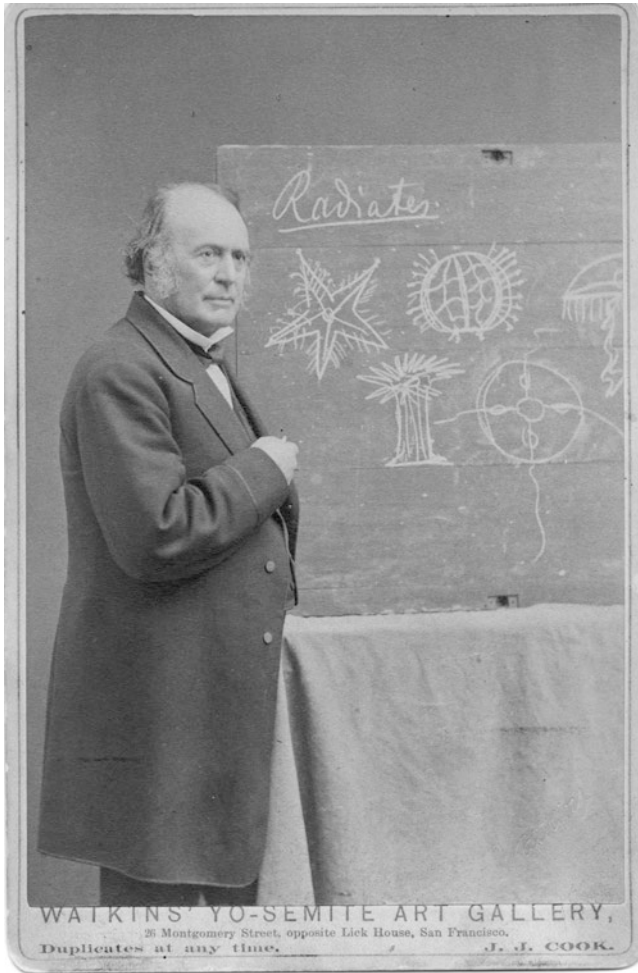


Fig. 12 Photograph of Louis Agassiz drawing radiates, 1872. From the archives of the Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University

Furthermore, photographic representations were difficult to control. As Goldschmidt put it, the photograph can show “naturally not everything, and to be sure not the most essential thing, which can only be grasped through study of the original.”³⁹ In Goldschmidt’s day, art historians

continued to learn the skill of drawing and make extensive use of it. Goldschmidt had worked in his student days as a draughtsman on art historical expeditions.⁴⁰ The anthropologist Gustav Fritsch wrote that drawings represent “in a clear manner many of the parts that in the photograph, are more difficult to see.”⁴¹ Anthropologists employed artists for their representations as well, and used drawings as well as photographs in their work in the prisoner of war camps. Nevertheless, photography was increasingly important to both fields, and compilation of a photographic archive was not optional. With an archive, scholars could study works in their absence, and compare them with one another.

But depictions are interpretations. The concentration on origins, shared by all of these disciplines, made such arguments seem worthwhile. People themselves are not the basis of Luschan’s argument either. The types he describes are depictions, not people, just as are the drawings in manuscripts described by Goldschmidt. In one example, Luschan’s man of “lighter blood” is depicted in three-quarter view and a steady gaze, in the style of Victorian portraiture, while the African with more “negro blood” is treated in the style of a so-called “Meßbild.” Furthermore, the whiter man is treated to soft and even lighting, while the black man, like many of the photographs Luschan uses (and that he often took himself), is lit harshly. His eyes appear sunken, his nose and lips stand out, like an animal in the headlights. Despite Luschan’s belief in the brotherhood of all humankind, he used differing photographic styles to enhance the differences between people. In contrast, Goldschmidt’s photographer did not avail himself of either style. Rather, he lit his subjects like statues, trying to illuminate them evenly, making all the detail clearly visible. In other words, apart from their subjects, the representations of prisoners in the camps created by Luschan and Goldschmidt would themselves be good candidates for the kind of visual analysis that Goldschmidt practiced on manuscript illuminations.

The same is true, of course, for drawings, which were often used in place of photographs because of the greater capability of a drawing to emphasize the relevant features and deemphasize others. When anthropologists used drawings, they issued instructions such as “make the African’s hair more frizzy.”⁴² The theories of observation, then, do not call for pure observation *of* the objects of study but for drawing *from* things, sometimes visually, in charcoal or ink on paper, but also sometimes using words, conjecturally or descriptively. Even Riegl’s drawings in *Stilfragen* are schema that make the metamorphosis of the ornaments he analyzed convincing. Close looking is a practice that seeks to draw the classification from the

individual by sorting through all its details for the salient ones. The fly crawls over many things that will not appear in the final drawing.

The assumption behind any classification is that it has a meaning. It signifies provenance or chronology or characterizes an artist, place, or frame of mind. The classification guides the representation and the representation in turn guides classification, be it a drawing that picks out the “salient” points or a photograph lit to show other characteristics. It follows, however, that what makes it possible to practice formal analysis on a variety of subjects is the tendency to confuse one’s representation, which is an argument, with the represented object about which one is arguing. Once one has taken a photograph or made a drawing, one would think that formal analysis would escape such confusion precisely because of its basis in close looking. If you are looking, how can you mistake a photograph for a person? It is easy, because what is analyzed is not an object, but rather a schema derived from an object. To confuse such a schema with reality causes mistakes in science and faulty attributions and can even feed racism.

The possible entanglement of formal analysis in racism is a dramatic and even deadly example of the pitfalls of formal analysis, but the limitations of formal analysis transcend this particular case. Yet we understand our visual objects of study by means of these schemata. Can we salvage them, along with the close observation that gives rise to them? If classification and drawing inform one another, then perhaps they could best be seen, rather than as text and illustration, as partners in a discourse. Once they are seen as in conversation, then “close looking” becomes a process of illustration, while drawing and photographing are recognized as forms of speech. The words and pictures in our texts exchange places in our scholarly discourses, and scholars can be seen as those who communicate in drawings, photographs and words.

NOTES

1. This essay incorporates parts of two other essays, each of which were intended as contributions to discourses different from that of the other. United here, they speak to yet a different discussion. Margaret Olin, “Jews among the Peoples: Visual Archives in German Prisoner of War Camps during the Great War,” in *Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones*, ed. M. Sheer and R. Johler (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010), pp. 255–278; Margaret Olin, “‘Look at Your Fish’: Science, Modernism, and

- Alois Riegl's Formal Analysis," in *German Art History and "Scientific" Thought: Beyond Formalism*, ed. Daniel Adler and Mitchell Frank (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).
2. Wilhelm Doegen, ed., *Unter fremden Völkern: Eine neue Völkerkunde* (Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1925), p. 9. For more on this project, see Britta Lange, "Ein Archiv von Stimmen: Kriegsgefangene unter ethnografischer Beobachtung," in *Original/Ton. Zur Mediengeschichte des O-Tons*, ed. Harun Maye, Cornelius Reiber and Nikolaus Wegmann (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 2007), pp. 317–341.
 3. Doegen, *Unter fremden Völkern*, p. 16. The identification card of one such prisoner, Josef Klemmer, of Estonia, is illustrated in Bredekamp, Brüning and Weber, ed., *Theater der Natur und Kunst*, 2:124. fig. 8/37b.
 4. The archive is now in Humboldt University. For its history, see Susanne Ziegler, "Die akustischen Sammlungen: Historische Tondokumente im Phonogramm-Archiv und im Lautarchiv," in *Theater der Natur und Kunst*, vol. 1: *Essays: Wunderkammern des Wissens*, ed. Horst Bredekamp, Jochen Brüning and Cornelia Weber, Exhibition Catalogue, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Berlin: Henschel, 2000), pp. 197–208. See also the website of the Berliner Lautarchiv: <http://publicus.culture.hu-berlin.de/lautarchiv/geschichte.htm>.
 5. Doegen, *Unter fremden Völkern*, p. 6.
 6. On Goldschmidt, see Margaret Olin, "Adolph Goldschmidt: Another Jewish Art History for the Education of Mankind?" in *Adolph Goldschmidt (1863–1944): Normal Art History im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Heinrich Dilly and Gunnar Brands (Weimar: VDG, 2007), pp. 397–411, as well as other essays in the volume, and works cited in the bibliography.
 7. Adolph Goldschmidt, *Adolph Goldschmidt, 1863–1944: Lebenserinnerungen*, ed. Marie Roosen-Runge-Mollwo (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1989), p. 192. Since the book Goldschmidt mentions discusses the conditions of the camps themselves, it is probably Wilhelm Doegen, *Kriegsgefangene Völker*, vol. 1: *Der Kriegsgefangenen Haltung und Schicksal in Deutschland* (Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1921), which is illustrated mainly with views of the camp and photographs of prisoners engaged in activities. In its preface (p. v), Doegen thanks Goldschmidt and Herr Gerdes.

8. Goldschmidt mentioned the difficulties involved in persuading the Sikh prisoners to remove their turbans. Goldschmidt, *Adolph Goldschmidt*, p. 190.
9. Quoted in Elizabeth Sears, "Eye Training: Goldschmidt/Wölfflin," in Brands and Dilly, eds., *Adolph Goldschmidt (1863–1944): Normal Art History im 20. Jahrhundert* (Weimar: VDG, 2007), pp. 275–294. The quotation is on p. 290.
10. The quotation is from Goldschmidt, "Kunstgeschichte," in *Aus Fünzig Jahren deutscher Wissenschaft: Die Entwicklung ihrer Fachgebiete in Einzeldarstellungen*, ed. Gustav Abb (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1930), p. 193.
11. Abb, *Aus Fünzig Jahren*, pp. 192–193; Andrew Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 118–119.
12. Goldschmidt, "Kunstgeschichte," p. 193.
13. Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Romanischen Zeit, XI–XIII. Jahrhundert*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1926; reprint ed. Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1975), pp. 1–2.
14. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpture*, pp. 1–2.
15. Leo Frobenius, "Höriger Mischling aus Igli (Gusfanatal)," in *Deutschlands Gegner im Weltkrieg*, ed. Leo Frobenius (Berlin-Grunewald: Verlagsanstalt Hermann Klemm, [1920]), p. 198.
16. Felix von Luschan, "Einführung in die Grundfragen der Anthropologie," in Struck, *Kriegsgefangene: Hundert Steinzeichnungen* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1916), p. 60.
17. Von Luschan, "Einführung in die Grundfragen der Anthropologie," p. 27.
18. On this issue, see Olin, "Adolph Goldschmidt: Another Jewish Art History for the Education of Mankind?"
19. Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of their Works*, transl. Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes (London: John Murray, 1892), pp. 5–6.
20. Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Masters in German Galleries*, transl. Louise M. Richter (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), p. 192.
21. Morelli, *Italian Painters*, pp. 78–79.
22. Agassiz accomplished the classification of fossil fish while still in Europe. His underlying assumption of the relationship between man and his geographical origin recalls Morelli's insistence that the art connoisseur trod the very soil on which the art was created.

- On Agassiz, see E. Lurie, *Louis Agassiz: A Life in Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
23. Morelli, *Italian Painters*, p. 74, n. 1, quoted from Jules Marcou, *Life, Letters and Works of Louis Agassiz* (New York, London: Macmillan, 1896), 2:566. The passage also occurs in Lane Cooper, *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher: Illustrative Extracts on his Method of Instruction*, 1917, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Comstock, 1945), pp. 32–33, where it is identified as stemming from E. C. Agassiz, *Louis Agassiz, his Life and Correspondence* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1885), pp. 564ff. Unless otherwise identified, all of the anecdotes related in what follows are from Cooper’s book. Probably the most colorful of these stories is the memoir of Samuel H. Scudder, Cooper, *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher*, pp. 55–61.
 24. Cooper, *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher*, p. 41.
 25. Lurie, *Louis Agassiz*, p. 240. On the alcohol, see also Cooper, *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher*, pp. 41, 56–67.
 26. Cooper, *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher*, p. 58.
 27. Riegl mentions Morelli briefly in the notes for two of his courses, using his pen name Lermolieff. See Alois Riegl, “Geschichte der deutschen Kunst,” course offered winter semester, 1892–1893, Riegl *Nachlaß*, Kollegen Heft II (1): Sächsische Kunst, S6; “Kunstgeschichte des Barockzeitalters,” winter semester 1894–95, Riegl *Nachlaß*, Kollegen Heft IV (1), XVIII. Jahrhundert, 81. Riegl’s *Nachlaß* is located in the Institute for Art History, the University of Vienna.
 28. In this particular, the concept of an ornament as an organism, my interpretation might be reconciled with an argument made by Christopher Wood, in which an ornament is seen first and foremost as a “wrought thing.” See Christopher Wood, “Riegl’s *make*,” *Res* 46 (2004): 155–172.
 29. This exposition comes from Louis Agassiz, *Methods of Study in Natural History* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), pp. 209–217.
 30. Riegl, *Stilfragen*, pp. 59, 333.
 31. Translated as: Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations For a History of Ornament*, transl. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
 32. Agassiz, *Methods of Study in Natural History*, p. iv. He declared himself willing, however, to be convinced that evolution was part of God’s plan, and some have maintained that, toward the end of his life,

- he was. See also Peter Bebergal, "With Agassiz, Darwin, and God in a Collection's Inner Sanctum," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 36 (2008); T. F. Glick, ed., *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Edward Lurie, "Louis Agassiz and the Idea of Evolution," *Victorian Studies* 3 (1959): 87–108.
33. Riegl, *Stilfragen*, vi.
 34. Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1992), pp. 75–81.
 35. Brian Wallis, "Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes," *American Art* 9 (1995): 39–60; Melissa Banta, *A Curious and Ingenious Art: Reflections on Daguerreotypes at Harvard* (Iowa City: Published for Harvard University Library by University of Iowa Press, 2000), pp. 42–51.
 36. See Margaret Olin, "Alois Riegl: The Late Roman Empire in the Late Habsburg Empire," in *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, *Austrian Studies* 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 107–120.
 37. Alois Riegl, "The Place of the Vapheio Cups in the History of Art," in *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, ed. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 2000), pp. 105–129.
 38. Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, pp. 164–165.
 39. Goldschmidt, "Kunstgeschichte," p. 195.
 40. Goldschmidt, *Adolph Goldschmidt*, illustrates several examples of Goldschmidt's drawings. Franz Wickhoff, Meyer Schapiro and many other art historians have been known to draw as part of their scholarship.
 41. Quoted in Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, p. 99.
 42. Andrew D. Evans, "Capturing Race: Anthropology and Photography in German and Austrian Prisoner-of-War Camps during World War I," in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 250, 235.

Max Grunwald and the Formation of Jewish Folkloristics: Another Perspective on Race in German-Speaking *Volkskunde*

Dani Schrire

In the history of the connection between the study of folklore and the concept of race, 1946 is often seen as a turning point.¹ In that year, Heinz Maus, a critical-Marxist sociologist, published an essay entitled, “Zur Situation der deutschen Volkskunde” (On the situation of German *Volkskunde*). Maus targeted the Nazification of German *Volkskunde* by pointing to what he saw as the essentially corrupt ideas of *Volk* and *Volksggeist* that underlay the discipline, which was mixed with what he called “the pseudo-mythology of blood and soil.”² His essay shook German folklorists, who first responded by constructing a narrative of two

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Volkskunden: a fascist one and a scientific one.³ However, the younger generation of German folklorists that emerged in the 1960s took a much more radical view of its disciplinary past, examining the affinities between the concepts of *Volk* and *Rasse* in a process that culminated in a series of conferences and books on Nazi *Volkskunde* during the 1980s.⁴ Many German-speaking departments eventually changed their names in order to avoid the word *Volk* in words such as *Volkskunde*, instead adopting names such as Europäische Ethnologie, Kulturanthropologie, or Empirische Kulturwissenschaft (though the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde has kept its original name).⁵ This postwar disciplinary history, along with the racial history of folklore studies, is well known to practitioners of the field, whether from Germany or elsewhere.⁶

The primary question I would like to engage here is a historiographic one: How should one tell the history of the concepts of folk and of race within folklore studies? One common narrative in this regard is that of the downfall, followed by the reformed rebirth, of folklore studies: in other words a downfall from a narrow nationalist-fascist discipline that had at a certain point in time leaned on racial ideas, followed by the discipline's engagement with its past and, ultimately, a transformation into a multicultural, anti-essentialist field. A more nuanced narrative is offered by Bernd Jürgen Warneken, who points to the original emergence of *Volkskunde* as a broad discipline that engaged with universal ideas of humankind; the transformation of the field into a narrowly nationalist discipline engaged with "pure races"; and finally, after confronting its past, the discipline's "return" to universal moral ideas.⁷ These two alternative narratives take two different views of the relation between German *Volkskunde* and German Jewish folklorists: the former narrative tends to emphasize the exclusion of Jews from the (narrowly national) German scholarly discourse, while the latter emphasizes the important role Jewish scholars played in the formation of the discipline in German-speaking countries, before they were gradually excluded from the much narrower discipline *Volkskunde* turned into when racial thought dominated German folkloristic discourse.⁸

The relation between *Volkskunde* and the social sciences in Germany is particularly instructive, given the very early attack on *Volkskunde* by Maus, a sociologist. Thus, Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, writing on the history of *Volkskunde*, notes in her chapter on Nazi *Volkskunde* that while *Volkskunde* and sociology grew closer in the 1920s, they then went in very different directions during the Nazi period: "Sociology in the old sense practically ceased to exist. This was not only because of the large number

of Jewish scholars in the field ... but also because of the critical analysis of social reality as a scholarly subject."⁹ Might such perspectives on the history of *Volkskunde* and its position vis-à-vis sociology and concepts of *Rasse* and *Volk* change once we have scrutinized the history of Jewish (German) folkloristics? What kind of conceptual map might we arrive at if we examine the history of *Volkskunde* by looking at Jewish *Volkskunde* as more than just a peripheral phenomenon on some imagined margin of German *Volkskunde*?

In what follows, I focus especially on Max Grunwald (1871–1953),¹⁰ who in most reviews of the history of Jewish folkloristics is considered to be the father of the field.¹¹ Grunwald's scholarly activity in Germany and Austria brought him into contact with other leading folklorists in Europe; by focusing on him, therefore, we will also be able to learn about the broader folkloristic conceptual debates of the beginning of the twentieth century. I should emphasize from the outset that in my view, folklore studies was in the service of more than just nation-building: it simultaneously served regional causes, ethnic identity production and universal science.¹² However, in contrast to the manner in which *Volk* and *Rasse* were bundled together in the work of some folklorists, for Grunwald they stood in contradiction to one another.

One way of engaging with Grunwald is to treat him as an exceptional case, as someone who was ahead of his time.¹³ I do sympathize somewhat with such sentiments, which elevate Grunwald's status, especially in comparison to some of his contemporaries, but I fear that such a narrative universalizes certain disciplinary histories while at the same time provincializing Grunwald's folkloristic enterprise: What would make Nazi folklorists more appropriate than Grunwald for telling the history of the relationship between folk and race?

I think it is problematic to present a unified disciplinary history that relies on amplifying certain voices as true representatives of the discipline while considering other voices as merely background noise. In this sense, my view is similar to that presented by Warneken concerning the emergence of folklore studies in Germany, because he breaks up some dichotomous formulations concerning the relation between Jewish folkloristics and German *Volkskunde*. As a folklorist based in Israel myself, I have no intention of looking at Grunwald only as part of a Jewish-Israeli folkloristic sphere: he wrote mostly in German and his field is as much a part of the history of German *Volkskunde* as it is a part of Jewish folkloristics; similarly, he is also as much a part of the discourse concerning the history of

European ethnology as he is a part of the discourse regarding the history of Israeli folklore studies. Thus, my engagement with Grunwald is not meant as an attempt to normalize the discipline by focusing on a newly chosen preeminent folklorist. Rather, I find in Grunwald a figure who can challenge claims for a single disciplinary history, opening up broader understandings concerning the relation between *Volk* and *Rasse*.

In fact, in 1946, the same year that Maus attacked German *Volkskunde*, Grunwald also reflected on the history of his own enterprise, but he told a very different story than Maus, pointing to other failures than those Maus mentioned. Grunwald's narrative appeared on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, when he was asked to contribute an autobiographical piece to the jubilee issue of the Hebrew journal *Edoth*. I shall return to this memoir later in this essay as I come back to the historiographic dilemmas with which I began. In what follows I will mostly address the emergence of Jewish folklore studies in German-speaking spheres, discussing the various ways in which folklorists related to the concepts of *Volk* and *Rasse* in conjunction with the field. Since folklore studies and specifically Grunwald's enterprise are part and parcel of the humanities, I will also point to some conceptual relations to the social sciences that emerge from Grunwald's scholarly engagements, in ways that may destabilize some of the aforementioned formulations.

THE EMERGENCE OF JEWISH FOLKLORISTICS

It is difficult to point to a single moment when a science of Jewish folklore appeared. The first book that related to Jewish *Volkskunde* in a comprehensive way was Richard Andree's *Volkskunde der Juden*, which appeared in 1881.¹⁴ Andree's work predates by a few years what Warneken considered to be the formative years of German *Volkskunde*, the years in which the discipline grew, through its universalist concerns, prior to involving itself in a much narrower and at times racial discourse. One may rightly question whether Andree's work can even truly be labeled as a work of *Volkskunde*, since it was a work by an ethnologist engaged with "others." At that time the differences between *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde* (ethnology/anthropology) were not clearly demarcated. Thus, although Andree contributed many articles to the leading German folklore journal of that time, the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, his Jewish work leaned heavily on demographics and resembles what might today be considered the work of a social scientist.¹⁵ What is important for our concerns is that in this

monograph, Andree depicts Jews as a racial group unchanged through time and space, describing the traditions of Jews living in different places as part of the make-up of a unified Jewish subject. His engagement with different Jewish communities is followed by general observations.¹⁶ For an ethnographer-geographer such as Andree, it was important to link a *Volk* with a corresponding territory, which made the Jewish case problematic. But racial traits succeeded where geography failed; this was a case of blood (*Blut*) rather than soil (*Boden*). Consequently, his demographic survey totaled world Jewry in 1880 at 6,139,662, a number that excluded the Jews of Ethiopia (the “Falashas”), who were explicitly not counted by Andree (in his racial categorization, they were “pseudo-Jews”).

A few years after the appearance of Andree’s book, Grunwald (born in Upper Silesia) graduated from the Breslau rabbinical seminary. He then moved to Hamburg, where he was appointed as a rabbi and soon established contacts with key figures in the Jewish community there, establishing a committee for folklore (Das Comité der Henry Jones Loge für jüdische Volkskunde) in 1896. This committee called for the collection of Jewish folklore through a folkloristic survey, which was sent to various scholars, Jewish organizations and Jewish newspapers in November 1896. In the survey’s introductory remarks, Andree’s work is mentioned, along with two other books, as a bibliographic introduction to the subject of Jewish folklore.¹⁷ By 1898, the committee had developed into the Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde (Society for Jewish Folklore), whose journal, *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde*, Grunwald edited almost without interruption for the next thirty years.

In the first issue of *Mitteilungen*, Grunwald presented a much more comprehensive bibliography, which included travel writings and various works on Jewish folklore.¹⁸ This list also referred to Andree’s book, but it was the only work that Grunwald advised his readers to use with caution. This is not surprising, as Grunwald, in the same issue, developed a clear concept of a Jewish *Volk* that denied any racial categorizations and refrained from demographic categorization.¹⁹ Using “internal” criteria rather than these “external” ones to define the Jewish *Volk*, he identified a very loose common denominator: in his conception, all Jews—including the Falasha, he emphasizes—are united in their longing for Zion and their observance of basic religious rituals.²⁰ (The inclusion of the so-called Falasha Jews was an obvious response to Andree’s racial account.²¹) Grunwald’s conception of the Jewish *Volk* was not only connected to a longing for a lost land, however; it was also manifested in many concrete lands. *Boden*, soil, was decisive for him; *Blut*, blood, was irrelevant.

The first issues of *Mitteilungen* were devoted to constructing a stable basis for Grunwald's newly formed science. Much of the material published came from feedback to the aforementioned survey. This work involved little analysis and was based mostly on the publication of folkloric material from various places, divided according to themes: nomenclature, proverbs and so forth. This editorial style was also common in the folkloristic publications of other societies that formed at the same time; in fact, it was also very common in the publications of one of Grunwald's harshest critics, Friedrich S. Krauss, whose journal *Am Urquel/Der Urquell* was published in the 1890s in Vienna.²² Krauss brought together ample folkloric material, organized according to various surveys he composed. However, although Krauss was himself Jewish and published much folklore that was collected from various Jewish communities, he opposed the idea of "Jewish folklore," which contradicted his vision of a comparative science of humankind in toto. Needless to say, Krauss also completely rejected racial discourse; he was against *Blut* but he was also, to a great degree, against *Boden*.²³

Grunwald tried to negotiate between Andree's risky "racial" *Volkskunde* and Krauss's "global folklore," which endangered Grunwald's conception of the Jewish subject. The narrow middle space that he was navigating is reflected in *Mitteilungen*, which gradually started presenting articles in such a way that each related to one narrow aspect of Jewish folklore, typically connected to a specific text or to Jews from a designated region (for example, the Jews of Yemen or the Jews of Russia). This editorial structure had become clearly visible by 1902. By offering thematic readings of ancient texts (for example, "the ant in Hebrew literature") and relating to Jewish regional folklore, Grunwald could speak for a Jewish *Volk* as simultaneously both a singularity and a multiplicity. In other words, in Grunwald's editorial style, the Jewish *Volk* was structured as a multiplicity in relation to its contemporary state, in articles relating to specific regions, but as a singularity in the articles that focused on texts related to the Jewish *Volk* of bygone days.

Although Grunwald's agenda became apparent only gradually, his regional leanings can be identified from the outset: in the first issue of *Mitteilungen*, Grunwald acknowledged the founding members of the Society for Jewish Folklore, referring to key figures in Jewish folklore (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) as well as a professor of philology and folklore at the Free University of Brussels, Eugène Monseur.²⁴ Monseur's name also comes up once again in Grunwald's 1946 autobiographical memoir.

The fact that a non-Jew took an active role in forming a society for Jewish folklore is intriguing, and it is instructive for anyone eager to understand Grunwald's formulation of the Jewish *Volk*. This is also an indication of the status of the folklore studies of that time, which, as Warneken notes in his essay, combined regional, national and global concerns. Indeed, Monseur's view of folklore undermines the assumption that folklore was a national science per se, for he was a dedicated Wallonian who studied Wallonian folklore; it was tremendously important to him to demonstrate that folklore was not national but, rather, a product of regions.²⁵ In the favorable review of Grunwald's journal that Monseur published in his *Bulletin de folklore*, he referred to Grunwald's enterprise as an example of a non-national folklore, maintaining that there is no such thing as Jewish national folklore, just as there is no "French folklore." What made sense to Monseur was to speak of Slavic Jewish folklore, German Jewish folklore, Wallonian folklore, Provençal folklore and so forth.²⁶ Grunwald shared some of these regional assumptions.

While it was important for Grunwald to point to shared Jewish origins and common religious bonding, he also, at the same time, stressed the way in which each Jewish group developed separately in each territory, as a product of its environment. Not surprisingly, Grunwald's definition had little appeal to Zionists, some of whom held essentialist ideas based on race.²⁷ What Grunwald's politics were based on was strengthening Jewish emancipation.²⁸ This orientation was manifested in Grunwald's journal, in articles that sketched different Jewish customs and traditions organized by region for such groups as Yemenite Jews, the Jews of Hamburg, the Jews of Provence or Caucasian Jews. This included an engagement with the material culture that was unique to each region, like the wooden synagogues of Poland.²⁹

RASSE, VOLK, NATION

In the years before World War I and, even more so, after the war was over, Grunwald discussed questions of race in a much more pronounced manner. His most explicit engagement with the concepts of *Rasse* and *Volk* was in his essay "Rasse, Volk, Nation," first published in *Die Wahrheit* in 1922 and republished as a long article in his *Jahrbuch für jüdische Volkskunde*.³⁰ Grunwald begins the essay with a critical survey of the literature on Jews and race by Jewish scholars, who used racial formulations for different ends: from Karl Kautsky, who used them as part of a

Marxist outlook, in which Jews partake in the struggle of the proletariat, to Ignaz Zollschan, who used them for Zionist political purposes.³¹

The article is extremely polemical in its tone. Grunwald uses a variety of anti-racist arguments: ontological, epistemological, ethical and political. First, relying on a range of works,³² he doubts the existence of race as a category. Moreover, he demonstrates how Jews have always been mixed with other groups, going back to biblical times and continuing after the destruction of the Second Temple. Second, he demonstrates how Jews are confused with non-Jews all the time, thus pointing to the impossibility of identifying stable Jewish characteristics (a stability that Andree, for example, took for granted).³³ Third, he shows how race was used to bolster preconceived judgments that served various ends, noting, as an example, the way it was used by cotton tycoons in promoting Black slavery in America. Last, he argues that race discourse undermines the most precious achievement of the enlightenment: civil emancipation.

Particularly relevant here is the intersection of *Rasse* with *Volk* and *Nation* (as well as *Staat*). For Grunwald, *Rasse* does not amount to anything. He calls it many names: “pseudoscience,” “lies,” “house of cards,” “a refuge for Jewish hatred” and so on. *Nation* is a political term: a group of people who associate with one another in creating a *Staat*, based on civil duties and rights in a defined territory. For Grunwald, Jews were a part of many different nations and as such, they could find themselves at war with each other, each defending their precious national homelands. Unlike what it is for some Zionists, *Nation* for Grunwald is not a given; it is assumed in order to achieve common, collective goals. Political Zionism, he maintains, was one possibility; even though it seemed to him far out of reach, he could envisage the idea, so long as it did not jeopardize the right of Jews to belong to other nations.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Jews as a *Volk* are the most difficult to define. According to Grunwald, the Jewish *Volk* evolved in biblical times as a category based on the land of Israel, on a common Canaanite language and on the state (the Kingdom of David), all united under a monotheistic belief. One enters the Jewish *Volk* through circumcision, the only external feature of Jewishness. It should be noted that for Andree, circumcision is not a uniquely Jewish trait, as it is practiced all over the world. But for Grunwald Jewish circumcision is unique in that it marks a chosen *Volk* alliance, in ways that are similar to the alliance with a modern state. Circumcision as the basis for an alliance with a folk contradicts the idea of a racial alliance. Aside from circumcision, however, Jewishness for Grunwald is mostly

defined by internal criteria: the Jews are a religious community that has always looked to Palestine, wherever they go and however their unique culture develops in the many different lands in which they live. Culture, Grunwald stresses, grows from the native soil. He gives as an example the Sephardic Jews, who despite their forced expulsion from Spain remain attached to their Spanish motherland, acknowledging its centrality in developing their folk culture. In short, the Jewish *Volk* was initially formed by its alliance with circumcision and the land of Zion; after the destruction of the temple, it was continued through religious observance, a memory of Zion and the impact of different environments, that is, the different motherlands in which Jews lived. His discourse made explicit use of essentialist metaphors and a *völkisch* language that referred to the soil.³⁴

As the 1920s came to a close, Grunwald retired from his work as a rabbi and moved with his wife to the peaceful spa town of Baden bei Wien. What should have been a quiet later life turned out very differently, however, when after the Anschluss of Austria in 1938, Grunwald emigrated to Jerusalem, living for fifteen years, almost forgotten, in exile in Zion.³⁵ There he was quite removed from the key discussions that took place in the folkloristic world in Palestine/Israel.³⁶ Meanwhile, in the world he had left behind, Nazi ideology reigned, driven by views similar to those of Richard Andree half a century before: Jews were conceptualized as a homogenous “racial” group, with no attachment to any particular environment. Much worse, unlike Andree, who with his “objective” tone refrained from making explicit normative claims, Nazi ideology called for the elimination of the Jewish “race” from whatever places it might exist. Nazi folklorists such as Matthes Ziegler took over folklore studies, which were now grounded in concepts of race.³⁷ Indeed, the brutal fate of European Jewry made Grunwald’s conception of *Volk* absolutely irrelevant, as *Blut*, blood, dominated the fate of Jews and *Boden*, soil, was irreversibly pulled from under their feet in almost every part of Europe.

A RETROSPECTIVE FROM 1946

When Grunwald began to write his autobiographical memoir in 1946 (as part of the celebrations for his seventy-fifth birthday, as mentioned above), the deracialization of folklore had just begun in Germany and its former territories. In the aftermath of the Shoah, however, that mattered little, when Grunwald’s worst fears had already materialized in ways he could never have anticipated. The memoir (which was mentioned in the

beginning of this chapter) is titled, captivatingly, “Folklore and Me.” The very personal title delivers what it promises, as Grunwald openly reveals his feelings, mentioning, for example, his wife Margarethe, who died in 1938 (“she was the source of all my joy”). The first section of the memoir runs through the names of many who had an impact on Grunwald’s life: two women he encountered in Hamburg, who inspired him to study folklore; Bismarck, whom he had the privilege to interview (“he was the most famous personality I encountered in my entire life”); and a few dozen scholars, the mention of whom testifies to Grunwald’s diverse interests and friendships. Yet the triumphant tone changes in the second section, where Grunwald bitterly discusses his intellectual duel with Werner Sombart, which says a great deal about the connections among race, *Volkskunde* and sociology.

Grunwald’s clash with Sombart took place in Vienna in 1912, following a lecture Sombart gave in front of a Jewish audience there. In his “Jews and Capitalism,” which had appeared a year earlier, in 1911, Sombart conceptualized Jews in racial terms: according to him, Jews remained a “pure” race despite their being scattered (*zerstreut*) or dispersed (*verbreitet*) all over the world.³⁸ For Sombart, Jews were wanderers, with no commitment to any specific lands. In other words, while portraying Jews as racially stable over time, he simultaneously saw them as flexible with regard to space. Grunwald’s approach could not have been more opposed to Sombart’s, for he eagerly pointed out the different habitations of Jews in many parts of the world, where they were committed to their geographical locations. What for Sombart was stable (race) was unstable for Grunwald, and what Sombart saw as flexible (attachment to the land) was taken as relatively stable by Grunwald. Sombart taught for some years at Grunwald’s alma mater, the University of Breslau, and based much of his work on the work of German Jewish scholars, some of whom were very active at the University of Breslau and the rabbinical seminary connected to it. In fact, he even used some of Grunwald’s work, but presented it in ways that supported his own deductive claims (as Grunwald writes in his 1946 memoir, with alarm, “he even quoted me”). To be sure, the intellectual contrasts between the two were coupled with deep personal feelings from Grunwald’s side. It is not clear what Sombart said when he visited Vienna in 1912, but Grunwald, who was a respected rabbi there, sent him a letter inviting him to answer some questions publicly. Sombart did not appear, and so Grunwald organized a public assembly at which he planned to denounce Sombart as an anti-Semite. He was following a tradition of

using Jewish scholarship to combat anti-Semitism.³⁹ In his 1946 essay, Grunwald returns to these events, bitterly recounting how he was mocked by a Jewish nationalist crowd that interrupted his speech and ridiculed him in their newspapers.

Why would Grunwald have been referring to demons of the past in his birthday celebrations, a year after the end of the Shoah? Why bother telling his Hebrew audience about his long-ago clash with a sociologist and economist who had died a few years earlier? Clearly, in 1946 Grunwald would have been much more concerned with the atrocities that had been visited on the Jewish community than with Sombart. But one has to realize that some of Sombart's ideas had been followed by key Zionists: his book *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert* was translated into Hebrew by David Green, the first book Green, who later changed his name to David Ben-Gurion, ever published.⁴⁰ Ben-Gurion was a follower of Dov Ber Borochev, one of the central political ideologues of the Poaley Zion movement (the forerunner of the Israeli Labor party), and Borochov's economic ideas concerning Jews echoed parts of Sombart's thesis. In fact, Borochov had followed the Grunwald–Sombart clash in Vienna closely, taking sides against Grunwald's liberal "bourgeois" politics.⁴¹ Borochov and Ben-Gurion favored Sombart's economic thesis, and perhaps they could tolerate his racial thinking. By returning to this clash in 1946, Grunwald may have been trying to reclaim his dignity; by then everyone would have had to acknowledge that he had foreseen the danger in a racial sociologist such as Sombart, a long time before Sombart joined the Nazis.

A RETROSPECTIVE FROM 2016

While the history of the Jewish social sciences demonstrates the ample use that key demographers and sociologists have made of the concept of race, Jewish folklorists who engaged with the Jewish folk/*Volk* rarely employed racial categories in their thought. With that in mind, it is important to look at two exceptions, two Jewish folklorists who used race in their writings quite extensively, namely Joseph Jacobs and Samuel Weissenberg. John Efron has extensively mapped their racial thinking.⁴² However, their contribution to the formation and growth of Jewish folklore as a field of scholarship—in terms of setting agendas, developing concepts, contributing to debates and building institutions—was minor at best. To my knowledge, they are absent from the many reviews of the field, which

may well attest to their marginality in its history. Jacobs was indeed an important figure in other fields of Jewish studies; he was active mainly in Anglo-American spheres and was one of the luminaries of British folklore, even serving as president of the London-based Folklore Society.⁴³ His main influence was on the development of British folklore studies, and he hardly contributed to the development of Jewish folklore; notably, he did not partake in Grunwald's enterprise. Moreover, although he wrote extensively on Jews in racial ways, that work was separate from his folkloristic interests, which were directed towards diverse topics such as Irish and Indian folklore. Samuel Weissenberg, from Elizavetgrad, who obtained his medical training in Germany, similarly engaged, in some of his studies, with racial questions. As Efron shows, Weissenberg's ethnographies also related to questions of culture and folklore. Grunwald, who was not interested in Weissenberg's racial work, did publish some of his non-racial work, involving cultural observations about the life of Jews in Eastern Europe and beyond, in *Mitteilungen*.

If we leave Germany and investigate the development of Jewish folklore elsewhere, we find, again, that race does not serve as an important working concept. The study of Jewish folklore in Russia had little to do with Grunwald's work, as Jews in the Russian Empire did not enjoy the kind of civil rights that Jews in Germany did. In other words, Russian Jews could not claim Russia as their nation, and the politics of emancipation were irrelevant to them. Jews in Russia were instead concerned with collective autonomous rights. And it was Jewish *spiritual* rejuvenation that S. An-sky was in search of when he led his ethnographic expedition to Volinya and Podolya (1912–13).⁴⁴ An-sky believed in a Jewish spiritual unity that was removed both from *Blut* and also, to a great extent, from concrete lands, that is, from *Boden*. As for Jewish folklore in Poland, it continued to develop after 1917 and focused mainly on Yiddish as a national language.⁴⁵ Neither in Russia nor Poland did race play a role in Jewish folkloristics.

At the time this large body of work arrived in Palestine, then, the discourse of Jewish folklore had rarely referred to racial ideas. Folklorists in Palestine and later in Israel either continued Grunwald's regional conception of Jewish culture as multiplicity or tried to make use of An-sky's ideas, viewing Jews as a spiritual singularity, by relating to the multiple manifestations of this spiritual force, referring to how it reunited in Israel. Zionist Labor Party leaders, in contrast, followed the melting-pot ideal, which meant that Jewish life had to conform to a single national culture; they transformed this essentialist ontological outlook, which had occasionally appeared in racial terms, into a national policy. In this context, the Shoah

could serve as a uniting symbol that justified the Zionist quest for an independent state, whereas its implications for the continuity of Grunwald's regional project were very different. This is evident in the work of Zionist folklorists such as Raphael Patai, who founded the Palestine Institute for Folklore and Ethnology in 1944. Patai, who studied at the rabbinical seminaries of Budapest and Breslau and obtained his PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (the first in the university's history), extended Grunwald's European quest for the Jewish folk to Jewish communities in Africa and Asia. Patai realized instinctively that the violent rupture in the life of Jews in many regions in Europe meant that Grunwald's folkloristic approach could not continue in the same way it had been developed before. Thus, in the programmatic agenda that he sets forth in the opening article of the journal *Edoth* (republished in English in 1946 in the *Journal of American Folklore*), he notes,

When coming next to sketch briefly the scope of a Jewish ethnological monograph, I have in mind an oriental Jewish community, and for this there are weighty reasons. First of all, only oriental Jewish communities are typical. ... Modern western civilization is a great leveling force, it absorbs cultural traits, or rather stamps them down into a uniform and continuous surface. ... In Eastern Europe and in smaller places remote from the cultural centers original Jewish culture was somewhat better preserved. I say was, because Naziism [sic!] and the war, even where they did not exterminate Jewry altogether, blotted out such remnants of specifically Jewish culture as still existed. Culture is to a great extent attached to the spot. When a few individuals or even small groups out of great communities have had to flee for their lives, only small fragments of the culture of these communities could be transplanted to their places of refuge.⁴⁶

Patai's essentialist ideas clearly continue many of Grunwald's assumptions concerning the impact environment has had on culture. His assertion that so-called Oriental Jewish communities are more "typical" is not based on racial claims (although Patai did not abstain from referring to race)⁴⁷ but stems instead from a view of Jewish culture as essentially tied to the Orient (that is, to an ur-environment).⁴⁸ One implication of Patai's continuation of Grunwald's regional legacy was that folklore was attributed to ethnicity, at the community level.⁴⁹

Eventually, by the time folklore studies were introduced to the Hebrew University by Dov Noy (a slow process that began in 1955), ethnicity had become a key sphere in which Jewish folklore was recognized. Patai, Noy and others based their work on a cultural evolutionary premise that was

connected to regions outside Israel.⁵⁰ Such an evolutionary way of thinking had nothing to do with concepts of race and was a continuation of the ideas proposed by Grunwald.

This trajectory in folkloristics can be contrasted with the history of Jewish sociology, beginning with “the father of Jewish sociology,” Arthur Ruppin, and continuing through the pioneering work of the Israeli sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt. Although Ruppin lived in Germany and Palestine and, in parallel with Grunwald, worked there on the Jews as *Volk* and as *Rasse*, there is a great difference between the work of Ruppin and of Grunwald. As scholars of Ruppin show, in referring to the Jewish *Volk*, he constantly relied on racial ideas.⁵¹ Ruppin saw the racial unity of the Jews as an asset to be protected. And relating back to our discussion above, Ruppin borrowed some of his ideas from Sombart.⁵² One of Ruppin’s important legacies was the idea that Jewish society should be unified into a single national entity. This legacy was taken further by Eisenstadt, who, although his work was *not* based on race, nevertheless referred to some of Sombart’s sociohistorical observations, including Sombart’s observations in his work on Jews.⁵³ In particular, Eisenstadt used a discourse of modernization and focused on processes of institutionalization that could support Zionist nation-building efforts that were based, as mentioned above, on melting-pot policies. At the same time, in his capacity as head of the department of sociology at Hebrew University, he marginalized folklore and cultural anthropology, with their emphasis on multiplicity. Eisenstadt and his fellow sociologists “stressed the importance of an analytic approach relevant to all immigrants.”⁵⁴ Ethnographic disciplines such as ethnomusicology, anthropology and folklore that celebrated the differences between Jewish communities (and thus continued many of Grunwald’s assumptions) were not integrated into Israeli universities until the 1960s and 1970s.

* * *

I am still debating how best to tell the story of the relation between folk and race in folklore studies. I began by referring to Maus, a German sociologist, and his critique of German *Volkskunde* as a science that he saw as based, in its very essence, on racial concepts. I then brought in Grunwald, a German (Jewish) folklorist, and his anti-racial folkloristic enterprise. Then I looked briefly at how Jewish folklore was practiced in other parts of Europe, namely Eastern Europe, where for other reasons Jewish folklore did not involve the concept of race at all. And finally, I

followed Grunwald's legacy through some of the folkloristic work carried out in Palestine/Israel. As we have seen throughout this short essay, folklorists have stood in opposition to social scientists and their various racial categorizations. In fact, the first work that I mentioned that referred to Jewish *Volkskunde*, namely Richard Andree's book, was the only important work bearing the title "*Volkskunde*" that relied on the concept of race. Jewish folklore, in fact, developed in opposition to Andree's work.

When we examine the relation of folk to race by focusing on Jewish folkloristics, we are confronted with many inconsistencies in connection with the leading narratives in German *Volkskunde*: folklorists who rejected race as a category and promoted visions of cultural multiplicity stood in opposition to the sociological views of Jews as a singular race or nation (views that were promoted by Sombart and Ruppin and, in different ways, by key Labor Party Zionists such as Borochof and Ben-Gurion, as well as by Eisenstadt). A narrative of Grunwald and his rejection of race as a category calls for much more nuance than is offered by the narratives of downfall and rebirth. Despite my attempts to explain some of Grunwald's motivations here, it seems to me that if we wish to understand the relation between such key terms, our understanding of disciplinary histories should afford more room for relative perspectives on the history of the various disciplinary traditions in folklore studies, engaging with the various dialogues that take place within the discipline as well as with neighboring disciplines that concern themselves with explaining cultures.

NOTES

1. I have deliberately chosen to use the German terms *Volk* and *Volkskunde*, as well as the English terms "folk" and "folklore," in an inconsistent manner, as a reflection of the view I express in this essay. The history of these terms is extremely complex, with the English words being used in the German language, in some contexts, to denote something different from what American folklorists mean when they use the same words; see Peter Tokofsky, "Folk-Lore and Volks-Kunde: Compounding Compounds," *Journal of Folklore Research* 33, no. 3 (1996): 207–211. In general, folkloristics is called different things in different languages; in many cases local languages are used. This causes many discrepancies that stem from the ways in which folklore studies have been institutionalized and conceptualized in different national and

- regional settings, as Herskovits points out: Melville J. Herskovits, "Folklore after a Hundred Years: A Problem in Redefinition," *The Journal of American Folklore* 59, no. 232 (1946): 89–100.
2. "Die Pseudo-Mythologie von Blut und Boden": Heinz Maus, "Zur Situation der deutschen Volkskunde," *Die Internationale Revue Umschau* 1 (1946): 351. Maus, a devoted Marxist, was one of the few students of the Frankfurt School who remained in Germany through the war.
 3. One such narrative was constructed by Will-Erich Peuckert, whose folkloristic position was discussed by Fenske: Michaela Fenske, "The Undoing of an Encyclopedia: Knowledge Practices within German Folklore Studies after World War II," *Journal of Folklore Research* 47 (2010): 51–78.
 4. Maus's essay marks the beginning of German *Volkskunde*'s process of coming to terms with the past ("*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*"), which culminated in Lixfeld and Dow's books on Nazi *Volkskunde*: James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld, eds., *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline: Folklore in the Third Reich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Hannjost Lixfeld, *Folklore and Fascism: The Reich Institute for German Volkskunde*, transl. James R. Dow (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). The *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* within *Volkskunde* is discussed by Stein: Mary Beth Stein, "Coming to Terms with the Past: The Depiction of 'Volkskunde' in the Third Reich since 1945," *Journal of Folklore Research* 24, no. 2 (1987): 157–185.
 5. This process began in the 1960s; the first name-change was that of the Institute for *Volkskunde* of the University of Tübingen. See Gottfried Korff, "Namenwechsel als Paradigmenwechsel? Die Umbenennung des Faches Volkskunde an deutschen Universitäten als Versuch einer 'Entnationalisierung,'" in *Fünfzig Jahre danach: Zur Nachgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Sigrid Weigel and Birgit Erdle (Zurich: vdf, Hochschulverlag an der ETH Zürich, 1996), pp. 403–434. For a much broader context for this renaming process and for the development of the multifaceted post-1945 *Volkskunde*, see Regina Bendix, "From Volkskunde to the 'Field of Many Names': Folklore Studies in German-Speaking Europe since 1945," in *A Companion to Folklore*, ed. Regina Bendix and Galit Hasan-Rokem (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

6. In fact, there were also discussions about changing the name of the discipline in the United States, with arguments that included references to the field's German Nazi history. In discussing such a potential change in the United States, Regina Bendix commented that "Volkskunde was a major player in Nazi Germany because the discipline's ideology of uncovering and preserving a pure folk heritage fueled and sustained the Nazis' racist programs. ... Although less problematic as a name for a field than folklore, Volkskunde will forever be associated with the völkisch ideology of the Nazis: no matter how much rehabilitation the discipline undergoes, the name will always carry this connotation." See Regina Bendix, "Of Names, Professional Identities, and Disciplinary Futures," *The Journal of American Folklore* 111, no. 441 (1998): 240.
7. Bernd Jürgen Warneken, "'Völkisch nicht beschränkte Volkskunde': Eine Erinnerung an die Gründungsphase des Fachs vor 100 Jahren," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 95 (1999): 169–196. Warneken has recently claimed that German *Volkskunde* in its formative years was much more international in its orientation than Germany's European ethnology has been in the last twenty years; see Bernd Jürgen Warneken, "Der zähe Mythos von der Nationalborniertheit der frühen Volkskunde (1890–1914)," in *Mobilitäten: Europa in Bewegung als Herausforderung kulturanalytischer Forschung*, ed. Reinhard Johler, Max Matter and Sabine Zinn-Thomas (Münster, Waxmann Verlag, 2011), pp. 310–316.
8. On this particular issue, Warneken challenges some of the assertions made by Christoph Daxelmüller, who has written numerous works on the history of Jewish folklore in the German-speaking sphere. While Daxelmüller maintains that Jewish folklore developed as a separate enterprise in Germany, because Jewish folklorists and Jewish folklore were systematically excluded from German folkloristic institutions, Warneken points out the numerous Jewish scholars who were active in the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* and other folkloristic institutions in the German-speaking sphere.
9. Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann and Andreas C. Bimmer, *Einführung in die Volkskunde/Europäische Ethnologie*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1985), p. 111: "Die Soziologie alten Sinnes hörte praktisch auf zu existieren. Das lag nicht nur an dem hohen jüdischen

- Bestandteil der Fachvertreter ... sondern an der kritischen Analyse der gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit als wissenschaftlichem Gegenstande der Soziologie.”
10. For Grunwald, see Christoph Daxelmüller, “Max Grunwald and the Origin and Conditions of Jewish Folklore at Hamburg,” in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1988), pp. 73–80; Christoph Daxelmüller, “Jüdische Volkskunde in Deutschland zwischen Assimilation und neuer Identität,” in *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Wolfgang Jacobeit, Hannjost Lixfeld and Olaf Bockhora (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), pp. 87–114; Christoph Daxelmüller, “Jewish Popular Culture in the Research Perspective of European Ethnology,” *Ethnologia Europaea* 16 (1986): 97–116; Christoph Daxelmüller, “Nazi Conceptions of Culture and the Erasure of Jewish Folklore,” in *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline*, ed. Dow and Lixfeld, pp. 69–86; Christoph Daxelmüller, “Die deutschsprachige Volkskunde und die Juden. Zur Geschichte und den Folgen einer kulturellen Ausklammerung,” *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 83 (1987): 1–20; Christoph Daxelmüller, “Volkskultur und nationales Bewußtsein. Jüdische Volkskunde und ihr Einfluß auf die Gesellschaft der Jahrhundertwende,” *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* N.S. 12 (1989): 133–146; Christine Schatz, “‘Angewandte Volkskunde’—Die ‘Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde’ in Hamburg,” *Vokus. Volkskundlich-Kulturwissenschaftliche Schriften* 14, nos. 1–2 (2004): 121–134; Barbara Staudinger, “Der kategorisierende Blick der ‘Jüdischen Volkskunde’: Die volkskundliche Wissenschaft und das ‘Jüdische,’” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 113 (2010): 525–541.
 11. Grunwald’s activities mark the beginning of the official history of Jewish folklore studies; see Dov Noy, “Introduction: Eighty Years of Jewish Folkloristics. Achievements and Tasks,” in *Studies in Jewish Folklore: Proceedings of a Regional Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies Held at the Spertus College of Judaica, Chicago, May 1–3, 1977*, ed. Frank Talmage (Cambridge, Mass.: The Association, 1980), pp. 1–11; Galit Hasan-Rokem, “Jewish Folklore and Ethnography,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 956–974.

12. This view lies in contrast to many studies that emphasize folklore's national bias, including William A. Wilson, *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976); Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).
13. Such a view is presented in some of Daxellmüller's works on Grunwald, including his last such publication: Christoph Daxelmüller, "Hamburg, Wien, Jerusalem. Max Grunwald und die Entwicklung der jüdischen Volkskunde zur Kulturwissenschaft 1898 bis 1938," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 113 (2010): 375–393.
14. Richard Andree, *Zur Volkskunde der Juden* (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen und Klasing, 1881).
15. In her table of "The Breakdown of the 'Jewish Question' into Scientific Disciplines before 1900," Lipphardt lists Andree as a geologist. Veronika Lipphardt, *Biologie der Juden: Jüdische Wissenschaftler über "Rasse" und Vererbung 1900–1935* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2008), pp. 53–54. Andree's multiple disciplinary affiliations were not unusual for his time.
16. For a brief discussion of Andree, see Mitchell B. Hart, "Picturing Jews: Iconography and Racial Science," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 11 (1995): 159–175; John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 21–22.
17. A copy of this (blank) survey was retrieved from the archive of the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde in Basel (file name: "Jüdische Volkskunde"). The other two works mentioned are Moritz Güdmann's *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens* (1880–88), an important work by a notable scholar of Jewish folklore, and Johann Jakob Schudt's *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten* (1714), a well-known work by a Christian Hebraist that Yaacov Deutsch considers a polemical ethnography: Yaacov Deutsch, "'Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten': Ethnography in Early Modern Frankfurt," in *The Frankfurt Judengasse: Jewish Life in an Early Modern German City*, ed. Fritz Backhaus et al. (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), pp. 73–84.
18. Max Grunwald, "Einleitung," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* 1 (1898): 3–15.
19. This is pointed out in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Problems in the Early History of Jewish Folkloristics," in *Proceedings of the*

- Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: The World Union of Jewish Studies, 1989), pp. 21–32.
20. Grunwald, “Einleitung.”
 21. Another example of this kind of intertextuality is Grunwald’s article on “The Jews as Anchormen and Seafarers,” in which he demonstrates the history of Jewish seafaring and the competence of Jews in serving the German navy: Max Grunwald, *Juden als Rheder und Seefahrer* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1902). Grunwald’s argument may be interpreted as a clear response to Andree’s claim that the Jews were incapable of being ship captains: Andree, *Zur Volkskunde Der Juden*, p. 80. Todd Samuel Presner, on the other hand, in analyzing Grunwald’s article, consistently refers to Grunwald as a Zionist and to this piece as the manifestation of a Hegelian understanding of the nation and history: Todd Samuel Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (London: Routledge, 2007), chap. 5. Although the term “Zionism” had a much broader meaning at the beginning of the twentieth century than it does today, I find Presner’s claims to be speculative at best. Grunwald actually expressed explicit anti-Hegelian ideas and, despite his sympathies with many of the Zionists’ claims, his work followed a very different political agenda. Presner goes so far as to pair Grunwald with Sombart in their production of “theories of Jewish world-historical power” (172). In fact, however, as I demonstrate in what follows, Sombart’s views stand in sharp contrast to Grunwald’s. “The Jews as Anchormen and Seafarers” was part of Grunwald’s emancipation politics, in which, writing from the harbor city of Hamburg, he demonstrated that Jews not only shared the land with their fellow (but non-Jewish) Germans but also had the ability to contribute to German *sea* voyages.
 22. On Krauss, see Christoph Daxelmüller, “Friedrich Salomo Krauss (Salomon Friedrich Kraus[s]) (1859–1938),” in *Völkische Wissenschaft: Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Wolfgang Jacobeit, Hannjost Lixfeld and Olaf Bockhora (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), pp. 87–114; Bernd Jürgen Warneken, “Negative Assimilation. Der Volkskundler und Ethnologe Friedrich Salomo Krauss,” in “... das Flüstern eines leisen Wehens ...”: *Beiträge zu Kultur und Lebenswelt europäischer Juden. Festschrift für Utz Jeggle*, ed. Freddy Raphael (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2001).

23. As Warneken notes, Krauss stopped writing to the leading German journal of folklore, the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, after it published an anti-Semitic review of a book that discussed blood superstitions, ritual murder and blood rites. While the reviewer referred to the “*israelitisches Volk*” and not to a “*Rasse*,” his comments crossed the line for Krauss. Warneken, “Völkisch nicht beschränkte Volkskunde,” pp. 193–194.
24. Max Grunwald, “Vorwort,” *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* 1 (1898): 1.
25. For Monseur, see *Nouvelle Biographie Nationale* (Brussels: Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique, 1988); Thierry Denoël, ed., *Le Nouveau Dictionnaire Des Belges*, 2nd ed. (Brussels: Le cri, 1992); Corinne Godefroid, “Le Congrès wallon de 1905: définir la Wallonie,” in *Liège et l’Exposition universelle de 1905*, ed. Christine Renardy (Brussels: Fonds Mercator, 2005), p. 227.
26. Eugène Monseur, “Revue des Livres (Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde),” *Bulletin de Folklore* 3 (1898): 1.
27. Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, pp. 123–174.
28. Politically, Grunwald was heavily influenced by his father-in-law, the Jewish-Austrian nationalist Joseph Samuel Bloch, who had a vision of a civic Austrian nation comprised of many ethnicities (including a Jewish one). On Bloch, see Ian Reifowitz, *Imagining an Austrian Nation: Joseph Samuel Bloch and the Search for a Supraethnic Austrian Identity, 1846–1918* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2003). In fact, in his books on the Jews of Vienna, it is Bloch (rather than Herzl) that Grunwald refers to as Vienna’s first Zionist. Max Grunwald, *Vienna* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1936).
29. Alois Breier, Max Eisler and Max Grunwald, *Holzsynagogen in Polen* (Vienna: Hoffmann, 1934).
30. Max Grunwald, “Rasse, Volk, Nation,” *Jahrbuch für jüdische Volkskunde* (1924): 307–343.
31. For a discussion of Zollschan, see Sander L. Gilman, “Smart Jews in Fin-de-siècle Vienna: ‘Hybrids’ and the Anxiety about Jewish Superior Intelligence—Hofmannsthal and Wittgenstein,” *Modernism/Modernity* 3.2 (1996): 45–58.
32. Grunwald does not present these works systematically. However, he does refer to Felix von Luschan, *Völker, Rassen, Sprachen* (Berlin: Welt-Verlag, 1922).

33. See also Efron's chapter on German race science that formulated the Jew as an essential other: Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, pp. 13–32.
34. In his concluding remarks on the Jewish *Volk*, for example, Grunwald writes, "Nicht Blutgemeinschaft, sondern Zellenverwandtschaft, nicht historische, sondern geographische Zusammenhänge, nicht Erdgeruch, sondern Bodenerzeugnisse schmieden somit eine Menschengruppe zu einer Einheit zusammen, die jedem Heimatgenossen, jedem Landsmann das gleiche Anrecht auf den heimatlichen Boden gibt. Vor der Heimat sind alle gleich, auf die auf dieser gemeinsamen physischen Grundlage erwachsenen Kultur hat jeder der gleichen Scholle Entsprungene gerechten Anspruch. Der Antisemitismus, die Ausschließung des Heimatgenossen ist hienach ebenso wie Kastengeist und soziale Gegensätzlichkeit, nicht allein etwas Unreligiöses, Unmoralisches und Widernünftiges, sondern etwas Widernatürliches." (It is not a community of blood, but a cellular kinship, not historical, but geographical connections, not the smell of the earth but the yield of the soil that thus forge a group of people together into a unit and that give every compatriot, every fellow countryman the same right to the native soil. All are equal before the homeland, every one who has sprouted from the same piece of earth has a just claim to the culture that has developed on this shared physical foundation. Anti-Semitism, the exclusion of the compatriot, is therefore, just like a sense of caste or social divisions, not just irreligious, immoral and against reason, but also unnatural.) Grunwald, "Rasse, Volk, Nation," p. 342.
35. Evelyn Adunka, *Exil in Der Heimat: Über Die Österreicher in Israel* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2002), pp. 93–104. Daxelmüller's assessment is similar to Adunka's: that Grunwald would have been happier staying in Baden bei Wien, rather than living in Jerusalem: Daxelmüller, "Hamburg, Wien, Jerusalem."
36. Two groups of folklorists were active in Palestine: the Yeda Am society in Tel Aviv and the Palestine Institute for Folklore and Ethnology in Jerusalem. Members of the Tel Aviv society followed the work of Jewish folklorists in Russia and Poland, An-sky in particular (see later mentions in this chapter). In general, they perceived Jewish culture as a spiritual singularity. Their activity was deeply motivated by the loss of the Shoah, and Grunwald's

regional, anti-racist *Volkskunde* had little relevance to their project. The Jerusalem Institute was led by Raphael Patai. Grunwald was more connected to that group: he served as one of the four presidents of the Institute, showing that Patai wanted to follow in Grunwald's scholarly footsteps. Indeed, Cecil Roth sees in Patai's Institute the heir to Grunwald's Society: Cecil Roth, "Folklore of the Ghetto," *Folklore* 59, no. 2 (1948): 75–83.

37. Matthes Ziegler, *Volkskunde auf rassischer Grundlage* (Munich: Hoheneichen-Verlag [Eher], 1939).
38. Werner Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1911).
39. Here again Grunwald was following in the footsteps of his father-in-law, Bloch, who was renowned for having rebuked Rohling in public, forcing him to leave his professorship in Prague. For the Rohling affair and the use of Jewish scholarship to combat anti-Semitism, see Nils H. Roemer, *Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Between History and Faith* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).
40. Shabtai Tevet, *Kin'at David: Ha'yey David Ben-Gurion*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1976), pp. 167 [Hebrew].
41. Dov Ber Borocho, *Ktavim*, ed. Leib Levite and Daniel Ben-Nahum, transl. Matityahu Avidav, vol. 3 (Tel Aviv: Ha'Kibutz Ha'Me'uhad and Sifriyat Ha'Po'alim, 1966), pp. 303–306 [Hebrew].
42. Efron devotes a chapter to each: Efron, *Defenders of the Race*.
43. For Jacobs' folkloristic work see Richard M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Simon Rabinovitch, "Jews, Englishmen and Folklorists: The Scholarship of Joseph Jacobs and Moses Gaster," in *The "Jew" in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, ed. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 113–130.
44. In the history of Jewish folkloristics, An-sky is perhaps better known than Grunwald, especially for leading the ethnographic expedition. An-sky saw a united Jewish spirit and so his work was based on careful selection, elevating certain cultural manifestations to the status of true examples of what the Jewish spirit is; his expedition served this outlook. For An-sky's folkloristic work, see David Roskies, "S. Ansky and the Paradigm of Return," in *The Uses of*

Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), pp. 243–260; Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *The Worlds of S. An-sky. A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Haya Bar-Itzhak, *Pioneers of Jewish Ethnography and Folkloristics in Eastern Europe*, transl. Lenn Schramm (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2010); Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-Sky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Samuel Spinner, “Salvaging Lives, Saving Culture: An-sky’s Literary Ethnography in the First World War,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 113 (2010): 543–567; Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pales of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011). An-sky was influenced by Weissenberg in forming the Jewish Museum in Petersburg: Benyamin Lukin, “‘An Academy Where Folklore Will Be Studied’: An-sky and the Jewish Museum,” in *The Worlds of S. An-sky*, ed. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 281–306.

45. See in particular Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation: The Jewish Folklorists of Poland* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003); Bar-Itzhak, *Pioneers of Jewish Ethnography*.
46. Raphael Patai, “Problems and Tasks of Jewish Folklore and Ethnology,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 59, no. 231 (1946): 34.
47. Patai made references to race in the very same article. These referred to the work of the sociologist Arthur Ruppin and to the work of the German Jewish ethnologist Erich Brauer, whose PhD thesis in Leipzig contributed to the so-called Hamitic thesis. Patai mentions race also in relation to the work of Franz Boas. In fact, Patai suggested continuing the work Boas had carried out among immigrants to the United States by using Jerusalem as a laboratory for a similar engagement. All in all, Patai was inconsistent in his view of race at this stage of his career. Under the influence of Boasian four-field anthropology, Patai discussed racial issues as part of the field of physical anthropology and with no connection to folklore. For a discussion of Brauer’s work, see Vered Madar and Dani Schrire, “From Leipzig to Jerusalem: Erich Brauer: A Jewish Ethnographer in Search of a Field,” *Nabaraim. Journal of German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History* 8 (2014): 91–119.

48. In this respect, Patai was more consistent than Grunwald, because Grunwald could not put too much emphasis on the impact of what I am calling the ur-environment, as that would have reinforced the opposition to Jewish claims to be part of Europe. Instead, Grunwald focused on the common *longing* for Zion.
49. Patai's journal, *Edoth*, was translated into English as "Communities," though today it would be translated as "Ethnic Communities." Patai's formulation of a community (*eda*) was shaped by the approach of the German Jewish ethnologist Erich Brauer (mentioned above) and Sephardic intellectuals in Jerusalem as well as through his contacts with American Boasians. See Schrire, "Raphael Patai, Jewish Folklore, Comparative Folkloristics, and American Anthropology," *Journal of Folklore Research* 47, no. 1–2 (2010): 7–43.
50. Alan Dundes has pointed to the devolutionary premise in folklore studies, including claims that there is an urgent need to collect folklore "before it disappears." William Wilson, in response, refers to the evolutionary premise that underlies much of folklore studies (mentioning the case of Finland). Alan Dundes, "The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 6, no. 1 (1969): 5–19; William A. Wilson, "The Evolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory and the 'Finnish Method,'" *Western Folklore* 35, no. 4 (1976): 241–249. In the present case, one notices both premises at work as, on the one hand, folklore matures and develops in each region but, on the other hand, in the face of the reality of the melting pot in the young state of Israel, folklorists feared that unique folklores would disappear and urged the collection of those folklores before it was too late. Needless to say, that essentialist view concealed what was rarely expressed: that Jewish folklore in many parts of Eastern Europe had already disappeared.
51. This is shown in the work of both Amos Morris-Reich and Etan Bloom. Although they differ in their interpretation of Ruppin's racial ideas, they both point to various affinities between Ruppin's racial thinking and that of Hans F. K. Günther, the Nazi theoretician of the "Nordic race" whom Ruppin met in person: Amos Morris-Reich, "Arthur Ruppin's Concept of Race," *Israel Studies* 11, no. 2 (2006): 1–30; Etan Bloom, "What 'The Father' Had in Mind? Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), Cultural Identity, Weltanschauung and Action," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007): 330–349. One should add that Eugen Fehrle, a professor who led

- the “forgotten” *Volkskunde* of Heidelberg, was highly influenced by Günther’s work. According to Peter Assion, “Fehrle was one of the first to introduce ‘the concept of race’ into *Volkskunde*” in the early 1920s; he was also the editor of the journal *Volk und Rasse*: Peter Assion, “Eugen Fehrle and ‘the Mythos of Our Folk,’” in *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline*, ed. Dow and Lixfeld, pp. 112–134.
52. Bloom, “What ‘The Father’ Had in Mind?” pp. 334, 339. Likewise, Sombart also quoted Ruppin (along with many other Jewish scholars, including Grunwald).
 53. Thus, Eisenstadt refers to Sombart’s claims regarding Jewish economic innovation after the expulsion from Spain. Eisenstadt does not refer to Sombart’s racial ideas, of course, but nevertheless he finds Sombart’s generalizations to have merit and to be of use for his own ideas regarding Jewish civilization: Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Explorations in Jewish Historical Experience: The Civilizational Dimension* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 41.
 54. Esther Hertzog et al., *Perspectives on Israeli Anthropology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), p. 4.

Racism and Anti-Semitism in the German Political Economy: The Example of Carl Schmitt's 1936 Berlin Conference "Jewry in Jurisprudence"

Nicolas Berg

INTRODUCTION

In October 1936, more than a hundred economists, legal scholars and psychologists met in Berlin at a gathering organized by Hans Frank (1900–46) and Carl Schmitt (1888–1985). The stated aim of this conference, which took place over a period of several days, in an atmosphere of unprecedented intellectual brutality, was to discuss, under the speciously neutral-sounding title of "Jewry in Jurisprudence" (*Das Judentum in der Rechtswissenschaft*), the supposedly necessary struggle in the humanities and social sciences to combat "Jewish dialectics" and "Jewish camouflage" and "falsifications." The broader goal of this gathering of German academics was to liberate the universities from what the academics termed the "spell cast by Jewish intellect (*jüdischer Geist*)" and to define what

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they called “German science” as a counter-model, making this “German science” the standard for assessing all science and scholarship.¹

I would like to take a look at this conference, which is one of the clearest examples of what has elsewhere been called “academic anti-Semitism”² but is still—in spite of its aftermath—relatively unknown in the scientific community of today. This event can serve as a point of departure for some thoughts on the relation between ideology and scholarship in Germany in the first half of the twentieth century. The conference, under the aegis of the Reich Group of Professors in the National Socialist Association of Lawyers (Reichsgruppe Hochschullehrer des Nationalsozialistischen Rechtswahrerbundes), was introduced by its organizers, summed up and later documented in several published booklets.³ I will look at several of the presentations that were given at the conference itself, especially the introductory and concluding talk by Carl Schmitt; the lecture by Klaus Wilhelm Rath (1902–81) on economics, entitled “Capitalist Economy and Jewish Economic Ethics”; and the paper by Norbert Gürke (1904–41) on international law. In conjunction with this, I want to briefly explore several traditions in economic thought originating in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which the presenters either espoused or distanced themselves from.⁴ I will then turn to what is probably the most important Nazi book on the relation between Jews and the economy, namely Peter-Heinz Seraphim’s (1902–79) *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum* (Jewry in Eastern Europe), published in 1938. In conclusion, I then present an evaluation of the book that in its entirety sought to provide a direct and contemporary answer to the 1936 conference, namely Hugo Sinzheimer’s (1875–1945) treatise *Jüdische Klassiker der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft* (Jewish Classics of German Jurisprudence), written in exile, published in Amsterdam in 1938, and republished in 1953.⁵ In this work, Sinzheimer, a Jewish scholar and a Social Democrat, gave a response to the double provocations offered by Schmitt and Frank’s Berlin conference, provocations to Sinzheimer not only as a professional colleague, because of Schmitt and Frank’s offensive rejection of the scientific ethos of the nineteenth century, but also as a Jew, because of the anti-Semitism that the conference had made into a major topic and blatantly celebrated. Sinzheimer, who was born in Worms, addressed his colleagues here as a Jew who was a *legal expert*, while speaking in equal measure to German society as a lawyer who was *Jewish*. His refutations in the matter at hand and his objections to the veritable “exorcism” of Jewish scholars, which the conference had raised as its envisioned goal, turned his reply into a treatise on the history of law and, concomitantly, a scientific and political rebuttal by an intellectual of

the use of the racist and anti-Semitic categories that the National Socialists had normalized into a new scientific counter-model.

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE: CARL SCHMITT AND HANS FRANK

The overall aim of the conference on “Jewry in Jurisprudence” was spelled out in the prefatory and concluding remarks to Booklet No. 1, entitled *German Jurisprudence in the Struggle against the Jewish Intellect*.⁶ The task of the conference was “to lay the foundation, by means of a joint scientific investigation of the influence of Jewry on German jurisprudence and economics, for further basic work on this central philosophical and concrete question in jurisprudence and economic science” (5). There was an express emphasis on the *scientific* and *scholarly* approach to be adopted in substantiating and analyzing the impact of the Jews in various branches or areas of jurisprudence and economics.⁷ These academics viewed themselves as being “engaged in the beginning of a difficult and necessary scientific task in the struggle to combat the claims to dominance of the Jewish character and Jewish *Geist*” (6).

The political elite of the nation was also present, in the person of Hans Frank, Reich Minister without Portfolio and, in the diction of the time, *Reichsrechtsführer* (Reich Law Leader). He opened the conference with an address in which he warned in general terms of the danger of the “intrusion of tendencies toward deracination” and proceeded, in his short remarks, to describe the antagonistic “intellectual struggle,” as he termed it, between German and Jewish conceptions of jurisprudence. He called on the German legal elite gathered there to create, develop and implement “a body of law from the prime elements of our German ethnic culture” (7–13). If we look today at this opening speech, it is striking that the basic distinction that it proposed was given no supporting foundation other than some general discursive symbolic representations and metaphors. In these he gave special emphasis to the notion that the epithet “Jewish” was best identified with some sort of pale “abstraction” devoid of concrete content. By contrast, “German” in this semantics was associated with the imagery of growth, authenticity and identity in form and content.

This anti-Semitic antinomy, which Hans Frank channeled into a call for the conference to become the springboard for a process of development which would bring about “the total end of Jewry within jurisprudence,” was reiterated in the opening address by Carl Schmitt, in which he introduced the presentations of his colleagues (14–17). He underscored several so-called “guiding principles” from Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* as providing the

theme for the conference, declaring “Jewish dialectics” to be the main problem besetting traditional jurisprudence and the legal sciences. Hitler’s book, Schmitt noted, had, however, already “said it all as regards the crystal-clear insight into Jewish character and artifice that we wish to present and illuminate here in detail in our papers.” The main thrust of his talk was that in the halls of academia, it was not enough to be satisfied solely with “emotional anti-Semitism and the general rejection of several especially obtrusive and unpleasant Jewish phenomena.” Instead, what was imperative was a “certainty grounded on knowledge” (14). However, he argued, this certainty could not be gained solely by recourse to conventional bourgeois science, since it was precisely that body of science which had for decades been “under the spell of the Jewish intellect” and outside Germany was still partially subject to that transfixing enchantment. He argued that a fight was necessary, and that “our scientific work” in Germany had to be integrated into that concerted struggle (14).

In his remarks, Schmitt went on to avow that the present challenge in law and jurisprudence, economics and political science was no longer to draft “racial legislation”; that had already been achieved in 1935. The challenge now remaining, in educating youth in the schools and at the university, was “to keep alive the awareness among the German people of the Jewish danger” (15). Schmitt continued: “We must liberate the German intellect from all Jewish falsifications,” including the “falsifications of the concept of *Geist*” (15). He stressed that for many years, indeed almost a century, Germany’s judges and lawyers-to-be had been schooled in the teachings of Jewish legal experts. The authoritative textbooks and commentaries in the most important fields of law had been authored by Jews; the most important periodicals in jurisprudence had been established and headed by them. He went on:

Only someone who has become aware of this intellectual power of Jewry, and who has recognized its full depth and scope, will be able to grasp what a liberation the victory of National Socialism signifies for the German intellect and German jurisprudence. (15–16)

Schmitt’s conclusion makes it clear that this victory had already led to very concrete demands on academic practice in the universities of the participants: “All legal writings by Jewish authors ... must in terms of library classification be placed without exception in a special section termed ‘Judaica’” (29). Schmitt states, very bluntly and brutally, that the Jews have never had anything but a “parasitic, strategic and commercial

relationship to the German tradition of knowledge"; this leads him to the conclusion that Jewish and non-Jewish opinions should not be mixed with each other but instead held strictly separated, because they cannot be considered to have the same value. Schmitt concludes that "a Jewish author has no authority for us, not even 'purely scholarly' authority" (29–30).

As Reich Law Leader, Schmitt also received a pledge from the conference participants (35) to "unreservedly further" four demands. First, in future scientific works and in students' term papers and theses, "Jewish authors" were to be cited "only with the explicit notation that these writers were Jews." Second, a basic bibliography would be prepared listing all Jewish authors in the fields of jurisprudence and economics. Third, it was imperative to separate writings by non-Jewish German authors from Jewish authors inside all the libraries and departmental collections in the faculties of law and political science. Fourth, there would be a "continuation of the cooperation between specialists in law and economics begun at this conference, engaging in research on the history of Jewry and its crimes and the penetration of Jewry into the life of the German people" (35).

THE EXORCISM OF JEWISH SCHOLARSHIP: NORBERT GÜRKE AND KLAUS WILHELM RATH

Among the presentations at the conference, I would like to call special attention to the paper by Norbert Gürke, entitled "The Influence of Jewish Theoreticians on German International Law."⁸ He took as his starting point "a Jewish line of thought in international law" (5), introducing in detail the first nineteenth-century Jewish teachers in the field of international law (8). Among others, he made mention of Wolfgang Wessely (1802–70) from Prague and Heinrich Bernhard Oppenheim (1819–80), who had published his *System des Völkerrechts* (Systematic international law) in 1845 (with a second edition in 1866) and was the first professor of international law in German-speaking lands. But Gürke dubbed Oppenheim a "rabble-rousing journalist" (8). Abraham Adolf Fischhof (1816–93), who published in the fields of nationality law and international law (*Zur Reduktion der kontinentalen Heere, Towards a reduction of the continental armies*, 1879) and Ernst Traugott Rubo (1834–95), an expert on criminal and international law from Berlin, were also presented by Gürke as the "beginning of the end." His conclusion was that pacifism and international law had been a mode of "protection for the Jews" smuggled into jurisprudence by Jewish academic stealth (23). In his conclusion, he warned about the looming danger of a "Jewish world order" (26).

Along with Gürke's comments, it was in particular the lecture by the Nazi economist Klaus Wilhelm Rath, entitled simply "Jewry and Economics," that cast the shadow of the racism of their time over the economics of earlier eras.⁹ Rath was a specialist in "competition" in the insurance industry and the author of works on power and economy (1933), history and economy (1937) and a book on *Imperialism, Folk Economy, and the Threat to the European Order Proposed by England's Economic Plutocracy* (1940). Building on books by Werner Sombart, Rath proceeded from an assumed nexus between the "capitalist economy and Jewish commercialism" (5–7): "The influence of Jewry on economics is bound up with the development of the capitalist economy" (5).¹⁰ Characteristic of this nexus, in his view, was the "abstract superordination of capital" brought into Europe by the Jews, which had destroyed all the "bonds" and "communal orders of the economy" (5). In analogous fashion, he argued that Jews had also taken possession of the theory of economics, first outside the universities and then gradually inside them as well, through the acquisition of professorial chairs. Rath charged that they were now attempting to establish a "pure doctrine of so-called 'economic laws,' abstract valorizations uncoupled from any connection to a folk community" (6). He considered David Ricardo, whom he referred to repeatedly as "the Jew Ricardo" (12, 17, 45), as the founder of the modern economic approach that had also helped Smith's liberalism to achieve its first real scientific maturity. In addition, Rath noted that with Ricardo, a "long-standing practice in economic life burst free from the stage of mere practical exercise, elevated to the stage of a theoretical system" (7). Economics then became theory and thus dependent on the standpoint of a "business run along the lines of the stock market" (6). Rath also espoused the thesis of the "Judaization" of the Austrian school of the theory of marginal utility, which he called an "incontrovertible fact," noting that the background of its founder Carl Menger, born in Galicia, remained a "matter of controversy" (9).

Rath's paper on what he termed the "false Jewish influence in economics" ended with the statement that an economics that wished to break free from Jewish influence necessarily had to be opposed to David Ricardo. By contrast, the positive ideal was to engage in economics as part of the "political economy":

Economy, as one of the forms of the challenge of shared human life in society, becomes serviceable to the politically decisive forces when natural self-sufficiency is abolished. Under the influence of mercantilism, it becomes

an administrative science of the state. Under the impact of liberalism, it becomes society, and in connection with the rise of the masses, it becomes the science of popular economics, so-called *Volkswirtschaft*. (11)

Rath closed his presentation with the hope that the era of an economics “whose contours are also comprehensible to the German people” would soon arrive in Germany.

THE “JEWISH SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM”: WERNER SOMBART AND PETER-HEINZ SERAPHIM

In the ideology of the conference, as exemplified in the general theorizing of Hans Frank and Carl Schmitt and the economic resentments of Norbert Gürke and Klaus Wilhelm Rath, the core of all criticisms of the Jews and of their purported influence was an invisible point of reference, namely intellect, or “*Geist*.”¹¹ In his book *Händler und Helden* (1915), Werner Sombart had already, with Hegel and Herder in mind, understood the concept of *Geist* to include the question of the “spirit of the people,” the *Volksgeist*.¹² In the same period, Reinhard Buchwald suggested starting a new branch of scholarship dedicated to the “collective character” of the German nation and people (*Wissenschaft vom deutschen Nationalcharakter*).¹³ But Sombart was finally more interested in exploring who was responsible for the invention of modern capitalism. He popularized the linkage among the terms “Jewry,” “capitalism” and “*Geist*” in his 1911 study *The Jews and Economic Life*, a book in which he coined an epithet for the economic style of his era, dubbing it “coagulated Jewish intellect” (“geronnener Judengeist”).¹⁴ This book triggered a broad debate that still reverberates today.¹⁵ In his book *Der Bourgeois* (1915), subtitled “On the Intellectual History of Modern Economic Man” (a tome of over 500 pages),¹⁶ Sombart developed the thesis of the “capitalist intellect” or “capitalist *Geist*.” In the very first sentence of his foreword, in his explanation of the concept of the “capitalist *Geist*,” he summed up his intentions: “This book seeks to describe how the *Geist* of our era became what it is today by presenting a genesis of the representative agent of this *Geist*, the bourgeois.” He later stated that this investigation had then developed into an “analysis and critique of our zeitgeist.” His interest centered on the “spirit of enterprise,” the “spirit of the bourgeois,” and the histories of its national development. As sources for his topic, Sombart also used the collective propensities of peoples, investigating the link between religion and economic style.

Sombart's analysis of capitalism and his theory of the economy, grounded in part in comparative folk psychology,¹⁷ were always very controversial and remain so to this day. On the one hand, he was later praised for having "discovered the capitalist *Geist*,"¹⁸ even though other scholars, such as the historian Georg von Below, still considered the real nature of this *kapitalistischer Geist* to be "very unclear" at the end of the 1920s.¹⁹ On the other hand, Sombart's equating of capitalism and Jewry via the term "*Geist*" enjoyed wide currency. Max Scheler, for one, gave it an exceptionally drastic formulation, writing at the beginning of World War I that the end of the capitalist spirit would not come until the "dying out of the German Jews."²⁰ In 1919, Scheler noted in his "ideological definition" (as he called it) of the phenomenon that in his view, capitalism had nothing to do with the antagonism of "poor" vs. "rich," that is, nothing to do with relations of property, because both a poor man and a rich man, an owner and the unpropertied class, could possess the "capitalist *Geist*."²¹

The young economist Peter-Heinz Seraphim took Scheler's ideas quite seriously in the book he published in 1938, during the Third Reich. Unlike Sombart earlier, who had looked to Western Europe, Seraphim in his 700-page tome *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum* did not investigate the influence of "wealthy Jews" on the development of capitalism and its impact on the history of the emancipation of the Jews. Rather, he explored the poor, including the very most poverty-stricken, Jews in Poland, Galicia and Russia, although without abandoning Sombart's fundamental thesis. In Seraphim's analysis, capitalism was also the common widespread economic form of these *Luftmenschen*, who engaged in peddling, begging and petty commerce.²² With the method and scope of his study, the author thus placed himself within a time-honored tradition of scholarship, seeking to supplement Sombart's basic thesis by the specific addition of the Eastern European dimension. In Sombart's work the obvious discrepancy between the author's claim to strict scientific objectivity and his evident resentment of and clichés about Jews was already a structural feature. This was all the more the case for Seraphim, despite the fact that the author and his contemporary readers repeatedly stressed that this was commendable basic research in economic history and social sciences.

With this book, Seraphim emerged on the academic stage overnight as one of National Socialist Germany's specialists on Jewish economic history and questions regarding demography in Poland, Russia and southeastern Europe. The author, who had earned a doctorate in the early 1920s, defined his focal theme as the "comprehensive sociological investigation

of the Jewish problem in Eastern Europe.” He wrote the book in just two years, acquiring a basic knowledge of Yiddish and obtaining financial support from German institutions for several months of study and work in archives in Eastern Europe. Only a few years after its publication, he was appointed full professor of economics and demography at the University of Greifswald. Starting in 1941, he was closely associated with the National Socialist Institute for Research on the Jewish Question, editing its monthly *Der Weltkampf*; Seraphim’s “research project on the Jews” had thus garnered him the highest academic honors and kudos in Nazi Germany. Earlier, the project had been energetically promoted by Theodor Oberländer, an agrarian scientist, economist and head of the Institute for Eastern European Economy at the Albertina in Königsberg, where Seraphim first taught. After publication, contemporary reviewers praised the “indispensable contemporary, practical quality” of the book and its character as a useful “handbook on the question of Eastern Jewry” (Josef Sommerfeldt). Only one review accused the author of having proceeded too much along “positivistic/nonpolitical” lines in his approach to the topic under discussion.²³

Even though it does not represent the general tenor of the reactions to the book, the fact that there was even one critique during the Nazi period of the book as “overly positivistic” is nonetheless astonishing. Just take, for example, Seraphim’s closing plea to “remove” the Jewish population from public and economic life in Eastern Europe, a call he develops in his final chapter. It is neither nonpolitical positivism nor mere lip service when he writes here about the “racial inferiority” of the Jews. This goes much further than any simple religiously motivated anti-Semitism might venture. But the supposed antagonism between economics and demography on the one hand and National Socialist ideology on the other continues to characterize discussion of the book even beyond 1945, because it was written for the most part in the tone of a highly objective empirical study. Only those who looked primarily at this feature could possibly have accused the author of nonpolitical scientific objectivity and criticized his purported excessive positivism. A closer reading reveals the book’s obvious ideological slant.

I would like to look once more at the problem raised by the ostensible contradiction between ideology and academic scholarship (*Wissenschaft*) in the theses advanced by Schmitt, Gürke, Rath, Sombart, Seraphim and so many others. In so doing, we must recall the general ideological, propagandistic character of their writings and speeches, which were nonetheless

written in the genre of objective scholarship. In repeated phrases, the authors underlined their scientific expertise and the fact that they were providing a mere “empirical investigation” of the facts, distant from any political implications or conclusions one might draw from the study. Siegfried Passarge, a geographer and an exponent of “geopolitics” in Germany between the 1920s and the 1940s, writes in the introduction of his 1929 publication *Das Judentum als landschaftskundlich-ethnologisches Problem* that the book follows a “purely scholarly point of view” and that it was written “without any personal or individual feelings.”²⁴ If they called on readers and audiences to engage in the struggle, these authors did it under the guise of science. Yet in the perception of the authors mentioned here, this was actually no contradiction. They conceived of their theses as “counter-books” and “polemic tractates” against the Jews, and that was for them indisputable. Right from the start, their studies were constructed as academic works designed to illustrate the “enormous danger” for the peoples and nations of Europe, and most especially Germany, arising from “the existence of these Jewish groups in the population,” as Seraphim, for example, phrased it in an exposé in 1936, the year of the conference I have detailed here.²⁵ All of their studies were deemed “praiseworthy” by National Socialists precisely because they were scientific, not in spite of it. They had a function that was different from direct political agitation. The statistics, diagrams and photos in their studies seemed to be in keeping with that aim, which imbued them with a patina of objectivity.²⁶

The fundamental thesis informing Schmitt’s conception of the conference, Rath’s and Gürke’s presentations there and Seraphim’s book was strikingly typical of National Socialist intellectual production. These scholars intended their initiatives and empirical studies to provide substantive material as a way to excise the “Jewish *Geist*” from German science and the broader world. Thus, Nazi jurisprudence, political science and economics served the thesis of the political imperative to combat the ostensible position of power occupied by the Jews in Europe, based, in the view of these academics, on a false and dangerous historical development. Again and again, these authors struck the drums of political admonition and national self-defense, in spite of the fact that their discourse was otherwise often assiduously scientific and seemingly impersonal. None of them avoided value judgments. All propagated anti-Americanism, anti-Bolshevism, antagonism to metropolitan life and, naturally, anti-Semitism, perceived in their ideology as a struggle forced upon the Germans by the Jews, a battle for supremacy of the intellect, of *Geist*. The distinctive feature of

this academic anti-Semitism can be seen precisely in the synthetic linkage forged between scholarship on the one hand and nationalistic activism and racism on the other. This can be seen, among other places, in the common polemical bibliographic practice of listing Simon Dubnow, Arthur Ruppin and other Jewish authors with a telltale “J” in obtrusive brackets.

HUGO SINZHEIMER’S 1938 RECANONIZATION TREATISE

Otto Sinzheimer vehemently opposed the attempt, which was taken to extremes at the 1936 conference, to elevate hostilities against Jews to a legal-historical norm. Carl Schmitt and Hans Frank had declared the nineteenth-century contributions of the Jews to jurisprudence and economics to be an injurious and destructive element that had to be cleansed from the German tradition of science, considering their books to partake of a so-called “Jewish mentality,”²⁷ a mentality that Schmitt and Frank sought to countermand with the basic principles of their new, anti-Jewish science. Sinzheimer turned this inversion right side up again: he responded to the demolition of the canon by recanonizing the scholars who had fallen from grace, rescuing their honor. In the very first sentence of the foreword to his book, he explained the title, *Jüdische Klassiker der Rechtswissenschaft*, which, as he noted, would have to attract the attention of anyone “who had previously been accustomed to judging scientific thinkers by the value of their achievements, not their provenance” (1, repeated 244). This explanatory comment expressed his certainty that the title he had chosen would have been inconceivable for a scientific book before the Nazi era. He argued that it could only be justified as a means to correct an injustice, as the restoration of a scientific standard. He began with extensive quotations from Hans Frank and Carl Schmitt’s convention speeches, whose hostile slogans and catchphrases he then countered, in the main section of his treatise, by presenting a gallery of portraits of German-Jewish scholars, restricting himself to a symbolic twelve examples out of the multitude of possibilities. These twelve included the philosopher of law and statehood Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802–61) from Würzburg; the commercial law expert Levin Goldschmidt (1829–97), born in Danzig; and Otto Lenel (1849–1935), originally from Mannheim, who later taught Roman and civil law in Leipzig, Marburg, Strasbourg and Freiburg. Sinzheimer also referred to the sociologist of law Eugen Ehrlich (1862–1922), who became a full professor in Czernowitz in 1897, and finally to Eduard von Simson (1810–99), born in Königsberg, who in 1848/49 became Speaker

of the German National Assembly and in 1879 was appointed President of the German Imperial Court of Justice.

Sinzheimer's intention, as he repeatedly noted, was to recall and reinterpret "the facts" (5, 237, 244 *et passim*) of the "share" or "influence" of Jewish scholars in the history of German legal science, a circumstance that Schmitt and Frank had denounced as a scandal. He described the twelve scholars in terms of their universal historical importance and their deep connection with the German-speaking educational tradition. He stressed the qualities of these legal experts that were commonly not regarded as "typically Jewish," emphasizing their close ties with their times and the many friendships they had with non-Jewish contemporaries. Thus, in the case of Friedrich Julius Stahl, for example, he mentioned Stahl's friendship with the Brothers Grimm and underscored his role as a trailblazer who prepared the way for Bismarck (47, 49). He also praised Stahl's conservative "institutionalism" (26) and, more generally, his understanding of the world, while stressing his distance from abstract legal principles and his early personal "experience" in discovering and reading Hegel, which Stahl then expanded into a fundamental critique of Hegel's philosophy (10, 17): Stahl "saw the world around him enveloped in flame. It was crucial to defend it against the 'destructive' tendencies of the time, the revolutionarism and relativism of the nineteenth century." Stahl had "stood in the very front line in the battle for German unity" (47), Sinzheimer noted, "a Jew ... who set over against the system of dissolution ... a system of positive construction, evincing a rare coherence and linguistic power" (22). Sinzheimer went on to laud Goldschmidt's "magnum opus" (52), the *Universalgeschichte des Handelsrechts*, as a work "unparalleled in German literature" since it presented "commercial law not as the product of a single historical period and a single people but rather as the fruit of global historical cooperation" (52, 238). Sinzheimer characterized Otto Lenel and Eduard von Simson as possessing an intimate expertise on Goethe (and, in Simson's case, an actual acquaintance with the poet!) (103, 234–235). He argued that for Simson, his veneration of Goethe was in fact his very life principle: "The deepest source of his own personal life was grounded in Goethe" (234). Sinzheimer considered all of the scholars he had chosen to have been "very closely intertwined with German intellectual history" (243).

The closing words of Sinzheimer's encyclopedic and exemplary selection of Jewish legal scholars makes it clear that his concern was not limited to simply restoring "the memory of the dead masters" (7) and preserving

their memory in a “pure,” unadulterated form (7). His book was so directly intended as a reply to and refutation of Carl Schmitt that it thematized “the inner ethos and disposition [*Gesinnung*] of the individual thinkers, not just their theoretical contribution to knowledge” (6):

If we ask what the Jewish influence on German jurisprudence actually comprised, then we have to place that impact within the context of the history of ideas from which it sprang and in which it was active. Only then can we discern the real significance of the Jewish part in the construction of German jurisprudence and whether or not it was creative. (6–7)

His statement at the book’s close was unequivocal:

The “Jewish influence” in German jurisprudence did not come from the outside. Rather it sprang and came into being from within. If one looks at the origins of the Jews’ scientific activity during the period of civil emancipation, what one sees is not the influence of the Jewish intellect on German scientific work but rather precisely the opposite: the intensive impact of the German intellect on Jewish scientific work. (237)

The noteworthy feature of Sinzheimer’s intervention consisted in the fact that it was also a form of homage to the scientific milieu in which the scholarly biographies that he sketched became what they were: contributions to enlightenment and to general progress in science and not something beholden to particular “Jewish” interests. The purpose of his book, as Sinzheimer summed it up, corresponded with that of the colleagues whose careers he had described: it was concerned with “general” interests (7), it had been written “for the sake of enlightenment” (8), which is “not just a historical event of the eighteenth century” but “an eternal concern of humanity” (8). In other words, his conclusion was that the supposedly “specific Jewish intellect” (or *Geist*) was neither “specific” nor “Jewish” but, rather, scientific (244). “The Jewish oeuvre is in truth an indissoluble component of German science” (239). Sinzheimer repeatedly emphasized that the insights and findings of Jewish legal experts did not flow into German legal thought from the “outside” but sprouted, instead, “from within,” from the “innermost core” (49). The talk of an “intrusion” of Jewish thinking was in fact the reversal of the truth. On this chord Sinzheimer closed his book, and from today’s perspective we can add nothing more: it was “the German intellect” that “was the foundation of the ‘Jewish influence’” (237), and “whoever blasphemes this work,

imprecates not just the soil from which it springs but likewise all the work that has proceeded from it, applying and developing it ever further. He does not execrate the Jew but rather reviles himself” (239). Therefore, a form of “scientific thinking” that refuses to grasp this does not actually damage the reputation of the Jews at all but, rather, harms “the prestige of German science” itself (240).

NOTES

1. Amos Morris-Reich, “Argumentative Patterns and Epistemic Considerations: Responses to Anti-Semitism in the Conceptual History of Social Science,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100 (2010): 454–482; Nicolas Berg, “Völkische Wissenschaft und Antisemitismus: Was bedeutet die Formel ‘Jüdischer Geist’ um 1900?” in *Völkische Wissenschaften und Politikberatung im 20. Jahrhundert. Expertise und “Neuordnung” Europas*, ed. Michael Fahlbusch and Ingo Haar (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), pp. 39–61; Dirk Rupnow, “Rasse und Geist. Antijüdische Wissenschaft, Definitionen und Diagnosen des ‘Jüdischen’ im ‘Dritten Reich,’” *Zeitgeschichte* 34 (2007): 4–24.
2. Karen Schönwälder, “Akademischer Antisemitismus. Die deutschen Historiker in der NS-Zeit,” *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 1 (1992): 200–229, esp. 209–217. The rapid and diverse development of this branch of research was recently summed up in a handbook of the sciences of ethnicity and race: Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften. Personen—Institutionen—Forschungsprogramme—Stiftungen* (Munich: Saur, 2008).
3. *Das Judentum in der Rechtswissenschaft. Ansprachen, Vorträge und Ergebnisse der Tagung der Reichsgruppe Hochschullehrer des NSRB. am 3. und 4. Oktober 1936* (Berlin: Deutscher Rechtsverlag, n.d.) (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig, Sign.: 1936 B 4642-1); on the conference, see Hasso Hofmann, “Die deutsche Rechtswissenschaft im Kampf gegen den jüdischen Geist,” in *Geschichte und Kultur des Judentums. Eine Vorlesungsreihe an der Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg*, ed. Karlheinz Müller and Klaus Wittstadt (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1988), pp. 223–240; Reinhard Mehring, *Pathetisches Denken. Carl Schmitts Denkweg am Leitfaden Hegels* (Berlin: Ducker & Humblot, 1989), pp. 101ff.;

- Bernd Rüthers, *Carl Schmitt im Dritten Reich. Wissenschaft als Zeitgeist-Verstärkung?* 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 1990); Alfons Motschenbacher, *Katechon oder Grossinquisitor? Eine Studie zu Inhalt und Struktur der Politischen Theologie Carl Schmitts* (Marburg: Tectum, 2000), p. 154 ff.; Otmar Jung, "Der literarische Judenstern. Die Indizierung der 'jüdischen' Rechtsliteratur im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 54 (2006): 25–59.
4. Hauke Janssen, *Nationalökonomie und Nationalsozialismus. Die deutsche Wirtschaftslehre in den dreißiger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 4th rev. ed (Marburg: Metropolis, 2012); Raphael Gross, *Carl Schmitt and the Jews: The "Jewish Question," the Holocaust, and German Legal Theory*, transl. Joel Golb, foreword by Peter C. Caldwell (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 2007); Dirk Rupnow, *"Judenforschung" im "Dritten Reich." Wissenschaft zwischen Politik, Propaganda und Ideologie* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011).
 5. Hugo Sinzheimer, *Jüdische Klassiker der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1953; first published in Amsterdam: Hertzberger, 1938). The foreword is dated "August 1937"; in the preface written in 1953, Franz Böhm characterized the conference as a piece of "naked slanderous propaganda," denigrated its participants as "thinkers of amorality" (xx) and called the minutes of their meeting a drastic document of the "depravation of science and legal thought" (xix); even "the ideologues of inhumanity," Böhm wrote, had "in their writings before 1933 decidedly rejected even hinting at these delusional ideas of the government and the party that were so basely hateful and at such a shameful level" (xix). Another text, comparable to Sinzheimer's but written before the conference, which bids to rescue the honor of Jewish economists is Ernst Noam, "Volkswirtschaft und Soziologie," in *Juden im deutschen Kulturbereich. Ein Sammelwerk*, ed. Siegmund Kaznelson with a foreword by Richard Willstätter, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1962), p. 705 (first published in 1934; a second edition, with a foreword by Robert Weltsch, appeared in 1959). On Sinzheimer, see Susanne Knorre, *Soziale Selbstbestimmung und individuelle Verantwortung. Hugo Sinzheimer (1875–1945). Eine politische Biographie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1991); Achim Seifert, "Die Rechtssoziologie von Hugo Sinzheimer: Eine Annäherung,"

- in *Menschenrechte und Solidarität im internationalen Diskurs. Festschrift für Armin Höland*, ed. Wolfgang Kohte and Nadine Absenger (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015), pp. 411–430.
6. *Das Judentum in der Rechtswissenschaft* (see note 3); further quotes from and references to this book are indicated in the following by the relevant page numbers in parentheses.
 7. Nicolas Berg and Dirk Rupnow, eds., “Judenforschung”—*Zwischen Wissenschaft und Ideologie*, in *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook 5* (2006) [special issue]; Alan Steinweis, *Studying the Jew. Scholarly Antisemitism in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).
 8. Norbert Gürke, “Der Einfluß jüdischer Theoretiker auf die deutsche Völkerrechtslehre,” in *Das Judentum in der Rechtswissenschaft*. (see note 3).
 9. Klaus Wilhelm Rath, “Judentum und Wirtschaftswissenschaft,” in *Das Judentum in der Rechtswissenschaft*; see also Wilhelm Müller, *Judentum und Wissenschaft* (Leipzig: Fritsch, 1936; a much longer second edition appeared in 1944); and August Bock, *Völkisches Denken—Volks-Wirtschaft* (Berlin: private publ., 1935). Bock wrote that the overall aim of the German “Volks-Wirtschaft” (he always spelled it with a hyphen) was the connection of the people to the soil (“Bodenverbundenheit des deutschen Volkes”) (7).
 10. “Daß jüdisches Händlertum für diese moderne Wirtschaftsform besondere Eignungen aufweist und deshalb außerordentliche Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten erhält, ist ein bekanntes Ergebnis der wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen Forschung und mit erdrückendem Material belegt.” (There is overwhelming evidence to show that Jewish commercialism is particularly suited to this modern kind of economy and therefore receives exceptional opportunities for advancement in it, and this is a well-known result of research in economic history) (p. 5).
 11. On the Hegelian tradition of the concept, see Gilbert Ryle, *Der Begriff des Geistes* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015; Engl. orig.: *The Concept of Mind*, 1949).
 12. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden. Patriotische Besinnungen* (Munich/Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1915); see also Werner Sombart, “Was ist deutsch?” in Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus* (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Buchholz & Weisswange, 1934), pp. 122–160: “Die Volksart, wie wir sie kennen gelernt haben bei unserem deutschen Volke, ist ein Vielfaches, sie stammt aus dem

- Blute und aus der Geschichte und wandert mit dem Volke und wandelt sich mit seinem Schicksal. ... Der Volkgeist ist das Erziehungsmittel zur Hochzüchtung der Art” (Our way of life, as we have learned it from our German people, has multiple aspects; it comes from blood and history, migrates with the people, and changes with its fate. ... The spirit of the people is the educational instrument for the cultivation of the species) (154).
13. Reinhard Buchwald, *Die Wissenschaft vom deutschen Nationalcharakter. Sechs Aufsätze* (Jena: Diederichs, 1917).
 14. Werner Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (München and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1911), p. 40.
 15. Economic and theoretical debates on capitalism are discussed in Nicolas Berg, ed., *Kapitalismusdebatten um 1900. Über antisemitisierende Semantiken des Jüdischen* (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2011).
 16. Werner Sombart, *Der Bourgeois. Zur Geistesgeschichte des modernen Wirtschaftsmenschen* (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker & Humbolt, 1913).
 17. On the history of comparative folk psychology (*Völkerpsychologie*), see the seminal study of Eno Beuchelt, *Ideengeschichte der Völkerpsychologie* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1974); Egbert Klautke, *The Mind of the Nation. Völkerpsychologie in Germany, 1851–1955* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2013); Nicolas Berg, “Völkerpsychologie,” in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*. Im Auftrag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, ed. Dan Diner, vol. 6 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2015), pp. 291–296.
 18. Josef Kulischer, *Allgemeine Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 2 vols. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1928 and 1929), vol. 2, p. 407.
 19. Georg v. Below, *Probleme der Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Eine Einführung in das Studium der Wirtschaftswissenschaft* (Berlin: Mohr, 1927), p. 433.
 20. Max Scheler, “Die Zukunft des Kapitalismus” (1914), in Scheler, *Die Zukunft des Kapitalismus und andere Aufsätze* (Munich: Francke, 1979), p. 73.
 21. Max Scheler (1919), in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. IV, p. 642, quoted in Ralf Becker, Christian Bermes and Heinz Leonardy, eds., *Die Bildung der Gesellschaft. Schelers Sozialphilosophie im Kontext* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), p. 212.

22. Peter-Heinz Seraphim, *Das Judentum im osteuropäischen Raum* (Essen: Essener Verlagsanstalt, 1938), p. 222. On Seraphim and his book, see Hans-Christian Petersen, *Bevölkerungsökonomie—Ostforschung—Politik. Eine biographische Studie zu Peter-Heinz Seraphim (1902–1979)* (Osnabrück: fibre, 2007); on the concept of the “Jewish luftmensch,” see Nicolas Berg, *Luftmenschen. Zur Geschichte einer Metapher*, second ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).
23. Josef Sommerfeldt in *Die Burg* 2 (1941), quoted in Petersen, *Bevölkerungsökonomie*, p. 169; the critical review, which was anonymous and had no title, appeared in *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 30 (1940), p. 383.
24. Siegfried Passarge, *Das Judentum als landschaftskundlich-ethnologisches Problem* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1929), pp. 5ff.; on Passarge’s work, see Mechthild Rößler, “Wissenschaft und Lebensraum.” *Geographische Ostforschung im Nationalsozialismus. Ein Beitrag zur Disziplinengeschichte der Geographie* (Berlin: Reimer, 1990), pp. 34–50; Gerhard Sandner, “Zusammenhänge zwischen wissenschaftlichem Dissens, politischem Kontext und antisemitischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Geographie 1918–1945: Siegfried Passarge und Alfred Philippson,” in *Philippson-Gedächtnis-Kolloquium*, ed. Eckert Ehlers (Bonn: Dümmler, 1990), pp. 35–49; Nicolas Berg, “Landschaftskunde und Wirtschaftsgeographie: Akademischer Antisemitismus im Werk Siegfried Passarges in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren,” *Flusser Studies* 14 (2012), ed. Rainer Guldin (<http://www.flusserstudies.net/archive/flusser-studies-14-november-2012>).
25. Petersen, *Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, p. 121; on the concept of scholarship in the Nazi period, see Dirk Rupnow, “‘Pseudowissenschaft’ als Argument und Ausrede. Antijüdische Wissenschaft im ‘Dritten Reich’ und ihre Nachgeschichte,” in *Pseudowissenschaft. Konzeptionen von Nichtwissenschaftlichkeit in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, ed. Dirk Rupnow et al. (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2008), pp. 279–307; Jan Eckel, “Herrschaft und Legitimation,” in Eckel, *Geist der Zeit. Deutsche Geisteswissenschaften seit 1870* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), pp. 52–88; Ingo Haar, “‘Kämpfende Wissenschaft’. Entstehung und Niedergang der völkischen Wissenschaft im Wechsel der Systeme,” in *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Winfried Schulze and Otto G. Oexle (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1999), pp. 215–240.

26. In 1939, the director of the Ethnic German Research Councils (Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften), Emil Meynen, called statistical material a “suitable tool” in the “fight for national traditions” (*Volkstumskampf*); see Petersen, *Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, p. 344.
27. Sinzheimer, *Jüdische Klassiker der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft*, p. 5 (further quotes from and references to this book are indicated in the following by the relevant page numbers in parentheses).

Translated from the German by Bill Templer

Theogony as Ethnogeny: Race and Religion in Friedrich Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology

George S. Williamson

At the outset of his 1842 lectures on philosophy of mythology, Friedrich Schelling acknowledged to his Berlin audience that they had every right to expect an explanation of “the title under which these lectures are announced.”¹ After all, the notion that mythology belonged, like ethics, art and nature, within the purview of *philosophy* was hardly obvious, even in an era that had witnessed a series of high-profile scholarly debates concerning the origins of pagan mythology and the existence of myths in the Bible. But Schelling's goal in these lectures was not merely to intervene in the debates over mythology or to provide a survey of its history (though he did both), but also to use the problem of mythology as a path into his ambitious, complex and notoriously difficult “positive philosophy”—a system that elicited mostly bewilderment and contempt when it was first expounded but that over the next century exercised a powerful, if subterranean influence, on a wide range of intellectuals, including

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Friedrich Nietzsche, Franz Rosenzweig, Paul Tillich, Martin Heidegger and Georges Bataille.² In the last twenty years, interest in Schelling's late philosophy of mythology has begun to expand beyond a small circle of (mostly German-speaking) philosophers to include a broader range of scholars in the humanities. In particular, scholars influenced by post-structuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis have found anticipations of their positions in Schelling's efforts to develop a philosophical alternative to Hegelian logocentrism.³

Despite the fruitfulness of these new approaches, they have largely overlooked Schelling's engagement with the category of race, which he deployed as part of his speculations on the relationship between mythology, language and nationality among the world's peoples.⁴ This oversight stands out given recent interest in the role of racism and racialized thinking in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel.⁵ The reason for it may lie in the lack of English-language translations for many of Schelling's later works, as well as a certain reluctance among philosophers to deal with a troubling aspect of his thought that might in any case be seen as outside the proper purview of philosophy. Further complicating matters is the fact that Schelling never treated the topic of race systematically; instead, his thoughts on race, lineage and nationhood are scattered throughout the thousand-odd pages of his posthumously published lectures on the philosophy of mythology. Nonetheless, the category of "race" played a critical role in Schelling's late philosophy, as it served to define the workings of religious consciousness in history and the close relationship between the human psyche and the natural world.

SCHELLING AND THE SCHOLARLY DEBATE ON MYTHOLOGY

Although Schelling's philosophy of mythology had ramifications for a wide range of issues, it is perhaps most easily approached by locating it within the long-running scholarly debate concerning the origin and nature of ancient mythology. During and immediately after the Renaissance, students of classical mythology had typically interpreted the ancient gods allegorically, treating them as encoding higher truths of philosophy or religion. Beginning in the eighteenth century, however, writers influenced by European travel literature on Asia and the Americas came to see the myths of the ancient world as manifestations of a primitive, limited mindset that could only express its knowledge of the world through stories of fantastic beings. The Göttingen philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne suggested that

early peoples suffered from a “poverty of language,” which forced them to rely on personification and narrative when conveying their ideas about nature and the cosmos. On this basis, he concluded that Greek mythology was neither a poetic invention, nor allegory, nor the work of priestly deceit but rather the necessary product of an early stage of human civilization. While Johann Gottfried Herder agreed with Heyne that mythology was peculiar to a primitive stage of culture, he viewed it as more than just a deficient form of philosophizing. Instead, he treated myth as the repository of the poetry, religion, and customs of a people in the childhood of its history, as well as the guarantor of its future civic and national life. As an 18-year-old seminary student, Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854) joined in these debates with a 1793 essay on “mythical philosophy,” citing as examples the Greek story of Prometheus and the biblical account of the Garden of Eden.⁶ Far from being an inferior means of communication, as Heyne had implied, Schelling suggested that mythical philosophy had the ability to convey truths that were inaccessible to a purely abstract or rationalist mode of expression.

The writings of the young Schelling testify to the significant inflation in German intellectual culture of the concept “mythology,” which by the 1790s had come to be seen as a cultural “middle point” that undergirded artistic, religious and political life in ancient Greece and was decidedly lacking in the fragmented modern world.⁷ In the aftermath of the French Revolution, Schelling, along with his friends Hegel and Hölderlin, leveraged this understanding of “mythology” to envision a radical transformation of the existing order. In their call for a “new mythology,” which they articulated at various times between 1796 and 1802, they signaled their desire for a set of symbols and narratives that would provide the foundation for aesthetic and political renewal in Europe.⁸ In doing so, they broke from Enlightenment traditions of rationalism, absolutism and a limited public sphere and instead embraced a vision of republican political harmony that was modeled on the Greek *polis* but expanded to incorporate the universalizing impulses of Christianity and the philosophical insights of post-Kantian idealism. Indeed, Schelling suggested in various places that his own *Naturphilosophie*, in which he attempted to demonstrate the spiritual dimensions of the natural world, might eventually provide the symbols of this “new mythology.”

Within a few years, however, the rise of Napoleon and the spread of warfare into the heart of Germany had effected a major shift in Schelling’s thought. He retreated from the project of a “new mythology” and what

he now regarded as the Spinozist implications of his early philosophy and began instead to emphasize the fallenness of creation and the need for redemption through the Christian revelation. An early sign of this shift can be seen in the essay *Philosophie und Religion* (1804), in which Schelling confronted the difficulty of explaining the transition from a God who was unconditioned and absolute to a world that was manifestly imperfect and conditioned.⁹ Over the next two decades, Schelling would dedicate himself to working out the proper relationship of God and the world, as well as the appropriate roles for philosophy and religion in explaining it.

By the time Schelling began lecturing on the philosophy of mythology in 1828, the debate over the origin and nature of the world's mythologies had divided scholars into several competing camps.¹⁰ The "Orientalist" position was epitomized by the Heidelberg philologist Friedrich Creuzer, whose four-volume *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1st ed. 1810–12) emphasized the similarities of ancient Greek, Indian, Persian and Egyptian mythologies, both to each other and to certain core narratives of the Christian religion.¹¹ Creuzer explained these similarities by positing an original monotheism that contained the true revelation and that was preserved by a class of priests, who wandered from India to Egypt, Anatolia and, eventually, Greece, spreading their teachings wherever they went.¹² Over time, this doctrine became corrupted and the original monotheism degenerated into a series of polytheistic mythologies, which formed the basis for the Homeric epics. But the esoteric teaching was preserved in the mystery cults of Dionysus and Demeter, which spoke of a suffering god who served as the mediator between creator and creation. This notion of a suffering god foreshadowed the emergence of Christianity, which wedded the original monotheist doctrine to an ethical philosophy that was higher and more sublime than anything found in the ancient world.

Creuzer's derivation of Greek mythology from India, Egypt and the Near East was a characteristic expression of the "Oriental Renaissance" that paralleled and competed with the Philhellenism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹³ Since the 1770s, new translations and transcriptions of Indian and Middle Eastern religious and philosophical texts (such as the Zend-Avesta, the Bhagavad Gītā and the Vedas) as well as developments in historical linguistics (which suggested the fundamental relatedness of Sanskrit, German and Greek) helped drive a veritable comparativist frenzy, including a search for an original language and an original mythology that usually led scholars back to the Orient. In addition, however, Creuzer's project can be located in a tradition of *philosophia perennis*

that had roots in Renaissance Neoplatonism and which was revived in the eighteenth century by Charles Dupuis, author of *Origine de tous les cultes* (1794).¹⁴ Nonetheless, the *Symbolik* was characterized by a piety and religiosity completely foreign to Dupuis (who dedicated his work to the National Convention). Indeed, Creuzer seemed to revel in precisely those aspects of the ancient liturgy and religious practice that the *philosophes* had found bizarre or perverse. In this respect the *Symbolik* can be seen as a characteristic expression of late Romanticism, which only added to the controversy surrounding it.

Creuzer was opposed by a group of “Philhellenists” who emphasized the autochthonous nature of Greek mythology. The loudest voice in this camp was that of the poet and philologist Johann Heinrich Voss, whose 1781 translation of the *Odyssey* had influenced an entire generation of Graecophiles. In his two-volume *Antisymbolik* (1824–26), Voss rejected Creuzer’s derivation of the Greek pantheon from the gods of Egypt and India, which he derided as ugly and misshapen, as well as Creuzer’s emphasis on the mysteries, which he saw as the product of late antiquity’s descent into mysticism and superstition. Instead, Voss reaffirmed the essentially humanistic and poetic qualities of Greek mythology, which he traced back to the individual genius of Homer and Hesiod.¹⁵ A less polemical critique of Creuzer could be found in the writings of the Göttingen philologist Karl Otfried Müller. While Müller accepted that mythology had a strong religious component, he maintained that the Greek myths were rooted in local beliefs, local customs and local geography.¹⁶ In particular, Müller stressed the importance of the Doric tribes, whose cult of their “national” god Apollo was strong enough not only to displace the nature-worship of the indigenous Pelagians but also to fend off any competing cultural impulses from Egypt and the Orient.

In the dispute over the *Symbolik*, Schelling tended to favor Creuzer, whom he regarded as a kindred spirit and friend. Many aspects of Creuzer’s theory, including his stress on the role of the mystery cults in Greek religious life, built on impulses in Schelling’s philosophical writings, notably *Philosophie und Religion*.¹⁷ In turn, Schelling was influenced by Creuzer’s emphasis on the religious dimensions of the world’s mythologies, their ability to elicit bizarre and seemingly immoral ritual practices, their structural similarities and their common roots in a monotheism that was subsequently shattered or distorted. “Friedrich Creuzer,” Schelling declared, “has raised the *originally* religious meaning of mythology to a historical fact no longer to be contradicted.”¹⁸ Meanwhile, he rejected as nonsense

the notion, associated with Voss, that the ancients were willing to take “accidental fictions, in which there was nothing universal and necessary, and to hold and revere them as gods.”¹⁹

Despite Schelling’s affinity for Creuzer, his philosophy of mythology deviated from the *Symbolik* in several important respects. First, while Creuzer’s account of ancient mythology proceeded largely without reference to the Bible, Schelling made a concerted effort to bring the pagan mythological tradition in line with the content of the Hebrew Bible. There was ample precedent for such a move. The Dutch scholar Gerhard Vossius, for example, had attempted in *De Theologia Gentili* (1641) to demonstrate that all pagan gods were based on historical figures from the Bible.²⁰ Schelling, however, treated the Bible more as a reminiscence of “mythological facts” than as a chronological record of “historical facts,” a move that allowed him to take a “freer view, and above all one more independent of the written documents of revelation.”²¹ So while Schelling insisted that a primordial revelation lay behind the Hebrew religion, he refused to identify this revelation with the Mosaic texts themselves. Still, Schelling often went to extraordinary lengths to extract a historical kernel from even the most fabulous passages in the Bible. As shall be seen below, Schelling’s repeated appeals to biblical authority would have significant implications for his articulation of the relationship between race and religion in the ancient world.

Schelling also took issue with the *Symbolik*’s historical logic, which he derided as “superficial.” In his view, Creuzer’s decision to make the history of mythology contingent on the actions of a handful of wandering priests was inconsistent with a truly scientific approach to the subject and in any case overlooked the organic connections between mythology and the mental life of a people.²² According to Schelling, mythology was so integral to the existence of the *Volk* that it was simply impossible to conceive of one without the other.²³ For that reason he rejected the suggestion that a people could import gods and myths from a foreign land and implement them like so many “school plans, textbooks, or catechisms.”²⁴ Nor could the development of mythology be made dependent on such accidental factors as the travel destinations of itinerant clergy. Mythology was rather “a *necessary* process that passes through all of humanity and in which every people has its specific place and role.”²⁵ The forces driving this process were largely unconscious and ultimately reflected the hidden powers at the very heart of creation.

It was Schelling's insistence on the inner necessity of mythology that led him to the "tautegorical" interpretation of mythology, according to which mythology, when conceived as "theogony" or the history of gods, was neither a distortion of human events nor an allegory of some higher truth. Instead, mythology *was itself true*. Clearly Schelling was not suggesting that there were gods lounging around on Mount Olympus, drinking nectar and waiting to interfere in the lives of mortals, but he was making two other, rather extraordinary claims. First, he insisted on the absolute reality of the gods for those caught up in the mythological consciousness. "To mythology the gods are actually existing essences, gods that are not something *else*, do not *mean* something else, but rather *mean* only what they are."²⁶ For Schelling, only the tautegorical interpretation allowed mythology to be understood in all of its religious seriousness, that is, as a phenomenon that fully occupied the psyches of the ancient peoples. It alone was able to explain their willingness to burn their own children on a sacrificial altar, to prostitute their women in the name of a god and to undertake other acts that were utterly inexplicable by the modern standards of morality.

Second, Schelling's tautegorical interpretation was premised on the notion that the theogonic process found in mythology was conditioned by fundamental processes operating in all of nature, which had their origin in God himself. Much of Schelling's later philosophy turned on a system of three "potencies," which described the moments in the divine will that culminated in God's free creation of the world. This history of the potencies was recapitulated at two levels: first, within nature, which ascended from inorganic matter to the human species, and, second, within the theogonic process and the different stages of the mythological consciousness. The identity of the potencies and the theogonic process was what made mythology literally "true."

The contents of the [theogonic] process are not merely *imagined* potencies but rather the *potencies themselves*—which create consciousness and which create nature (because consciousness is only the end of nature) and for this reason are also actual powers. The mythological process does not have to do with natural *objects*, but rather with the pure creating potencies whose original product is consciousness itself.²⁷

As this statement shows, unpacking Schelling's theory of mythology and, as we shall see, its notion of race, involves making sense of his theory of

the potencies. While space does not allow for a full elaboration of this theory, the following section will highlight some of its most important components, contrasting Schelling's position with that of his major rival G. W. F. Hegel.

HEGEL, SCHELLING AND THE THEORY OF POTENCIES

Like Schelling, Hegel felt compelled to come to terms with the diversity of human religious experience while mediating the relationship between philosophy and Christian revelation. The core of his approach was outlined in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and then developed at much greater length in his lecture series on the philosophy of religion, which he delivered four times between 1821 and 1831.²⁸ Yet ultimately Hegel subsumed both myth and revelation under the larger category of "representation" (*Vorstellung*), maintaining that their true content could only be grasped philosophically by means of the "concept" (*Begriff*). In other words, religious narratives and symbols were necessary but imperfect forms for conveying rational ideas, whose content only became fully manifest once humanity had reached a properly (Hegelian) philosophical standpoint. This theory accorded well with Hegel's vision of history as the progressive self-revelation of a rational absolute. To be sure, this unfolding was a dialectical rather than linear process, such that reason incorporated even the apparently irrational (in art, religion etc.) through the logic of sublation. But Hegel's philosophy still resembled a kind of *Bildungsroman*, in which reason overcomes a series of hurdles before reaching a mature state of free self-consciousness.

Much of Schelling's late philosophy can be seen as a rejoinder to Hegel's version of idealism.²⁹ In particular, while Hegel stressed the workings of a rational absolute in the phenomena of nature, religion and history, Schelling highlighted the significance of the irrational, pointing to those aspects of the world that seemed unruly, even chaotic.³⁰ Nature, in particular, offered numerous examples of beings that corresponded in no way to our sense of order or divine purpose. "What is the purpose," he asked hypothetically,

of these forms of animals, which look to us in part fantastic, in part monstrous, in whose being, by which for the most part no goal can be divined, we would not *believe* if we did not see them before our eyes? What purpose in general is there in the great unseemliness in the actions of animals? What purpose in general is there in this entire corporeal world?³¹

So it was also in mythology. Schelling argued that the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient world that seemed abhorrent by present-day standards proceeded not from error or deceit but rather from the same necessity that had given rise to the aberrations of the natural world. All of this suggested that there was a principle of chaos, unruliness, even evil in the world that had been operating from earliest times and that humanity had only gradually overcome.

Schelling's emphasis on the presence of the monstrous in both nature and the human psyche paralleled the ongoing speculations in his later philosophy concerning the nature of freedom and the origin of evil, a project he first articulated in *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809). In Schelling's view, the Hegelian account of history as a logical unfolding of the absolute left no room for real freedom since it failed to account adequately for the human capacity to do good or evil. It was Schelling's search for an adequate philosophical account of freedom and spontaneity that led him to posit the existence of an "unruly" or "irrational" principle within the very ground of human consciousness. When humanity was in union with God, this principle existed in the mind as a subordinate power, but when humanity rebelled, defied God's rational law and attempted to become independent, the unruly principle came to the fore, resulting in madness. Yet it was precisely this "madness" that had allowed human beings to break from the divine order and to take their first steps toward autonomy and, eventually, freedom.

In positing an "unruly" principle as the ground of both nature and human spirit, Schelling was also making an argument about the nature of God. Rejecting what he saw as the faceless absolute of the Hegelian system, Schelling insisted that God be seen as a free "personality." And for this God to be truly free, it was necessary that it be defined in such a way that it was not confined to the realm of logical necessity. Thus Schelling defined God in terms of will, which he posited as the first principle of being or simply "primordial being."³² These speculations on divine freedom also tied into the long-standing theological problem of how a good God could create beings with the capacity to do evil or, to use Schelling's language, who possessed the unruly principle at the ground of their consciousness. Schelling could only conclude that the "irrational ground" that in humans came to oppose God was also somehow contained within God, or was "that within God which is not he himself."³³ The notion of an irrational or unruly element within God helped to explain not only the emergence of an autonomous creation and creatures but also their eventual struggle for independence from God and the consequences of that struggle for

nature and history. At the same time, it reinforced Schelling's contention that the sole means to restore the lost harmony was through the intervention of an outside power, namely through the revealed personality of the Christian God.

It was in order to describe the underlying principles of God, nature and human religious consciousness that Schelling developed his controversial theory of "potencies." The potencies are probably best understood as a series of moments in the will/being (keeping in mind Schelling's dictum "Wollen ist Urseyn"). Before the beginning of time the potencies existed in a state of quiescence in God, but they also contained within them the basis for the creation of a separate world. The first potency or A^1 is the pure principle of possibility, which Schelling compared to Aristotle's "material cause." The second potency or A^2 is the principle of order or specification, which corresponds to Aristotle's "formal cause." The third potency or A^3 is the highest, "spiritual" principle and as such mediates between A^1 and A^2 . A^3 is the pure self-limiting will or "that which should be" (*das sein sollende*) and corresponds to the Aristotelian "final cause" or "purpose."

As described thus far, the potencies constituted what Schelling called a "figure of being" or, in the words of Edward Beach, a "blueprint for all that conceivably might be" that still lacked "the specificity of material presence and individuality."³⁴ The creation of a separate world, independent from God, occurs when the principle of materiality or A^1 rejects its subordinate status and attempts to acquire determinate being, in effect claiming the role of A^3 for itself. At this point, A^1 is transformed into what Schelling called the "B" potency. The B potency is the same irrational or unruly element that Schelling saw as the prerequisite for autonomy. At this early moment, however, it attempts to exclude the other two potencies and to reign alone. Thus Schelling labeled B the "excluding power" or "that which should not be" (*das nicht sein sollende*). In his view, the material world began as chaos, and it required the further movement of the potencies to restore a sense of harmony and order to nature. Likewise, the theogonic process began at the moment the human race lapsed from primordial monotheism into irrationality, materiality and chaos. The history of mythology, on this view, was the story of the efforts of A^1 , A^2 and A^3 to restore order and to lay the groundwork for the revelation of that divine personality that is prior to even the potencies themselves. In order to denote this last aspect of God, Schelling used the term A^0 .

From this brief description, it should be possible to see the very distinctive flavor of Schelling's late philosophy when compared with that of

Hegel. Where Hegel emphasized the convergence of freedom and reason, Schelling highlighted the ambiguities of freedom and its connections to madness and the irrational. Likewise, where Hegel understood human history in terms of a rational concept, Schelling stressed the existence of unconscious and irrational forces that left much of the pre-Christian world in a bound or conditioned state, prisoners to unmerciful deities and unable, on their own, to establish a just and harmonious political order. Mythology, Schelling insisted, “originated in conditions that are not comparable with those of present-day consciousness and which can be comprehended only insofar as one is willing to go beyond it.”³⁵ By devoting a massive series of lectures to mythology, Schelling hoped to highlight the significance of that “pre-historical” epoch that Hegel had largely excluded from his philosophy of history. And by turning the focus away from political structures, by desacralizing the state as it were, he sought to understand the religious, psychological and even physiological origin of the world’s peoples and their mythologies, an agenda that led him to the problem of “race.”

NATIONS, RACES AND THE FALL

For Schelling, the similarities among the various mythologies of the world were such that their inner connection had to be taken as a “great and irrefutable fact.” This was not the similarity of “original to copy,” however, but rather a similarity of “consanguinity” and thus evidence of common descent.³⁶ On this basis, Schelling concluded that in the beginning the human race was united in a kind of primordial horde. At this earliest stage of human existence, there were no mythologies, only a primordial monotheism powerful enough to hold the mass of humanity together and to keep it confined to a single portion of the earth. This primeval unity was eventually destroyed by the rebellion in human consciousness of the first potency and its transformation from A¹ to B, a moment that coincided with the first stirrings of the human will. This event, memorialized in the Greek myth of the rape of Persephone and the biblical story of the Fall, set in motion the “theogonic process,” that is, the procession of gods/potencies that formed the actual content of mythology.

For Schelling, the transition from this primordial monotheism to mythology was the condition and cause of the emergence of nations or, to use his terminology, “theogony” produced “ethnogeny.”³⁷ After all, one could not speak of a Greek as “Greek” or an Egyptian as “Egyptian”

if one took away their mythology, since it was only through mythology that one became Greek or Egyptian.³⁸ A nation's "mythology is not determined for it by its history, but rather, conversely, its history is determined for it through its mythology; or, rather, this mythology does not *determine*: it *is* itself the fate of history, its lot, fallen to it from the very beginning."³⁹ Mythology dictated a nation's language, its laws, political forms, religious practices and even its mode of economic production. To buttress this argument, Schelling devoted considerable time to explaining how the nomadic practices of the ancient Arabs corresponded to their worship of the stars, or how the farming techniques of the Egyptian corresponded to their understanding of the relationship between the gods Osiris and Typhon.

But this was not all, for Schelling also maintained that mythology determined a people's physical characteristics. Rather than racial diversity being the *cause* of the origins of the peoples, as some writers had suggested, it was instead an *aftereffect* of a primarily mental (*geistig*) or psychological process. Schelling sought to explain this relationship by citing the connection in more recent times between religious upheavals and physical maladies.

For it is obvious to recall the experience that even in individual cases a complete spiritual rigidity also holds back certain physical developments and that, contrariwise, a great spiritual movement also calls forth certain physical developments and anomalies, just as the number and complication of illnesses have increased with the multiplicity of spiritual developments and just as—in accordance with the observation that in the life of the individual an illness that has been overcome can often be indicative of a deep spiritual transformation—new sicknesses arising in powerful forms appear as parallel symptoms of great spiritual emancipations.⁴⁰

When extended out to the level of entire peoples, it was possible to see how spiritual transformations could give rise to large-scale physical transformations.⁴¹ Thus it was to be expected that a people's racial characteristics might follow from its religious orientation.

At the primordial stage, Schelling argued, the process of racialization (*Raßenprozess*) was kept in check by humanity's adherence to a common deity. This spiritual force restricted the species to one geographical location and "did not let come into effect what is contained within it, i.e., the seeds [*Keime*] of physical developments diverging asunder."⁴² What caused

humanity to leave this primordial state was a deep and profound “spiritual crisis,” which “had to be of the deepest importance and have taken place in the very ground of human consciousness, if it was to be powerful enough to enable or impact a heretofore united humanity so that it disintegrated itself.”⁴³ It was this spiritual crisis that gave rise to the various peoples and races and dispersed them across the continents. But whereas the “nations” (*Völker*) among them (who included the Greeks, Indians and Egyptians) were able to salvage a “partial unity,” a common language and, eventually, the civil institutions needed to preserve themselves, the true *Raßen* (a term Schelling applied to Black Africans, American Indians, South Sea Islanders [“Malays”] and the Mongols of Asia) had been cast into a state of disintegration so profound that they were deprived of even the possibility of a common life.⁴⁴ In essence, the “races” had lost contact with the potencies, those elements of the will that were the basis of both religion and history, and slipped into a state of consciousness similar to that of animals. For Schelling, therefore, “race” (*Raße*) was not simply a matter of skin color, but also an extreme state of physical and moral degeneration, which had actually been overcome by certain groups within the Mongol, Malay, African and American lineages (*Geschlechter*).⁴⁵

In many respects, Schelling’s understanding of race paralleled that found in Immanuel Kant’s “Of the Different Races of Human Beings” (1775), in which Kant attempted to explain the origin of the many races out of a common humanity. “The human being was destined for all climates and for every soil,” Kant wrote:

Consequently, various seeds [*Keime*] and natural predispositions had to lie ready in him to be on occasion either unfolded or restrained, so that he would become suited to his place in the world and over the course of the generations would appear to be as it were native to and made for that place.⁴⁶

In this scheme, contact with particularly hot or cold regions of the earth caused the “germs” to unfold, awakening certain tendencies and permanently “suffocating” others.⁴⁷ In general, Kant regarded race as a degenerative process that was most pronounced among African Blacks and North American Indians and virtually non-existent among White Europeans, whose temperate climate and thus bodily appearance most approximated that of humanity at its origins.

Many of Kant’s assumptions regarding race and the “races” found their way into Henrik Steffens’s two-volume *Anthropologie* (1822).⁴⁸

A close friend of Schelling and an early enthusiast of his *Naturphilosophie*, Steffens sought in his later work to reconcile his scholarly commitments with an increasingly conservative form of Lutheran Protestantism. In *Anthropologie*, he did so by anchoring his discussion of race within an explicitly Christian narrative of redemption.⁴⁹ In particular, Steffens argued that it was original sin that brought about the process of racialization, which he saw less as a means to adopt to new climates than as a consequence of humanity's expulsion from its paradise in the Asian "mid-point" of the world.⁵⁰ The cause of this expulsion was "reflection," that is, a sort of selfishness of reason that pulled humanity out of its original harmony with nature. Yet different groups of people ended up at different distances from the center and those who had fallen furthest were most subject to the process of deformation (*Verbildung*) or racialization. "All peoples, insofar as they have distanced themselves from the seat of their common origin, lose spiritual capacities in the same measure that their bodily degeneration increases."⁵¹ Sharpening a distinction implied but not made explicit in Kant, Steffens designated as "races" only the distant Malaysian, Mongolians, Africans and North Americans, while the Greeks and Germans were considered "historical peoples."⁵²

In his *Anthropologie*, Steffens also sought to demonstrate a parallel between the physical formation of the human being and the history of the earth's surface. Original sin, he argued, had resulted not only in the expulsion of humanity from paradise but also in a series of geological "revolutions" that left behind territories with climates and landscapes that were barely suitable for human habitation.⁵³ It was to these inhospitable regions, where nature itself had turned hostile, that the "races" were banished. Thus the Papua New-Guinea peoples, whom Steffens regarded as the most degenerate of the races, lived on a chain of islands notable for their ongoing volcanic activity. In addition, Steffens drew out the connection between the physical "deformation" of the races and their moral and spiritual degeneration. He rejected the suggestion, proffered by Denis Diderot and Georg Forster among others, that the indigenous peoples of Africa, the Americas and Polynesia be seen as "noble savages," characterizing them instead as subject to a base sensuality. These *Raçon* had lost all memory of the original paradise—a memory that the "historical peoples" held in their myths and sacred writings—and lived an existence bound to a perpetual present.⁵⁴ With no recollection of the past and no hope for the future, they were bereft of any notion of salvation, except that which might be brought to them by European missionaries.

In his own speculations on race, Schelling relied on both the historical framework and the empirical data (such as it was) that he found in Kant and Steffens's writings on race. Indeed, it was likely Steffens's *Anthropologie* that drew Schelling's attention to a group of Paraguayan Indians who, according to the Spanish explorer Felix de Azara, possessed no religion at all.⁵⁵ Based on the information in Azara, Schelling maintained that these races existed in a condition of almost complete lawlessness, living for the most part in units no larger than the family. There was no common language amongst them—instead, it varied from village to village, even from hut to hut—and what language they did have consisted of “nasal and gargle tones.” But mostly they showed a disinclination to speak, “so that when they have business with someone who is a hundred paces before them, they never call, but rather run to fetch them.”⁵⁶ According to Steffens, these Indians had given themselves over wholly to their sexual instincts, while otherwise existing in a kind of listless stupidity (*Stumpfsinnigkeit*) that made them indifferent to all but their most immediate needs and terrified of everything and everyone around them.⁵⁷

It was among these peoples, Schelling argued, that the racialization process had reached its outward limit, as these groups degenerated into a state of “unculture” and “animal coarseness.”

They seem to me only the tragic result of precisely that crisis from out of which the rest of mankind saved the *ground* of all human consciousness, while this ground was fully lost for them. They are the still living testimony of the completed, utterly unrestrained dissolution: the entire curse of the dispersion has been realized in them—actually they are, properly, the flock that grazes without shepherd: and, without becoming a people, they were annihilated in just the crisis that gave the peoples determinate being.⁵⁸

These Indians had lost all connection to tradition or even any sense of memory or a past. To Schelling, it was inconceivable that such a decline could be caused by purely political, outward events. Instead, these races represented that portion of the original humanity “in which all consciousness of unity has really perished.”⁵⁹ Unable to recover from the primal trauma, abandoned by even the first potency, they had sunk to a level far below that of primordial humanity.

Such traits could be found not only among American Indians, Schelling noted, but also in the “pure black tribes” living in Africa beyond the Nile River. According to missionary accounts, some of these races had “vegetated” undisturbed for thousands of years in the tropical wilderness

without coming into contact with the religious ideas of either Asia or Europe. And although they were surrounded by the wonders of nature, including unparalleled views of the sun, moon and stars, they still lacked any notion of God or even a “vague inkling of this type.”⁶⁰ Here Schelling took explicit aim at the theory of “natural religion,” according to which humans were capable of arriving at a knowledge of God and the moral law simply by dint of reason or common sense. Schelling insisted instead that religion originated from an innate knowledge of God (a *notitia Dei insita*) that was grounded in the harmony of the potencies. For the peoples most subject to the *Raçaenprocess*, however, this knowledge had all but disappeared. As a result, they were left in such spiritual darkness that it was impossible to detect in them a soul that had been in contact with God.⁶¹

Although such races could no longer be found in Europe, some memory of them was preserved in Greek mythology. In the *Odyssey*, Homer described the cyclopes as

lawless brutes, who trust so to the everlasting gods that they never plant with their own hands or plow the soil. ... They have no meeting place for council, no laws either, no, up on the mountain peaks they live in arching caverns—each a law to himself, ruling his wives and children, not a care in the world for any neighbor.⁶²

This, Schelling argued, was a reference to races in pre-Homeric Greece that had moved in the direction of the Paraguayan Indians described by Azara: “as foreign amongst themselves as animals” and lacking any sense of community or solidarity.⁶³ Still, the cyclopes had at least demonstrated a modicum of culture: Homer reported that their caves had been built out and fitted with shelves and storage. In this sense, they remained a transitional type, somewhere between the “races” and the “historical peoples” but destined nonetheless to be swept away once the Greek nation stepped onto the stage.

These speculations on the survival and disappearance of ancient populations had implications for the history of human migration. Schelling argued that the dispersion of the various peoples across the globe had served not only to populate the earth’s continents, but also to protect them from the consequences of the spiritual, psychological and physical divergences that had given rise to the various races and nations. It was well known, he contended, that bringing together groups of individuals from geographically distant territories often led to an increase in the incidences

of plague and disease, typically with dire consequences for one population or the other. But when not just populations but entire peoples collided, it was possible that such physical incompatibilities reflected underlying spiritual differences.

Relevant here is the rapid extinction of all savages in contact with Europeans, before whom all nations appear destined to vanish if not protected by their countless numbers, like the Indians and Chinese, or through climate, like the Negroes.⁶⁴ Since the settling of the English in Van Diemen's Land the entire indigenous population has been extinguished. It is similar in New South Wales. It is as if the higher and freer development of the European nations became deadly for all other nations.⁶⁵

In this remarkable passage, Schelling blended out the violence of European colonialism by treating the disappearance of these peoples as a result of the triumph of a "higher and freer" European spirit over those non-Europeans abandoned by both God and history.⁶⁶ In this scheme, the genocide of peoples was recast as a natural disaster, which could be viewed from afar with a sense of melancholy but not of responsibility, whether individual or collective. At the core of this argument was Schelling's idiosyncratic conception of the "higher and freer" European spirit, which he grounded not in a notion of law or rights, but in the theogonic process itself.

THE THEOGONIC PROCESS (I): RELATIVE MONOTHEISM

In his philosophy of mythology, Schelling attempted to explain the emergence of the various nations and races of the ancient world on the basis of a "theogonic process" that began in response to the "crisis" caused by the rebellion of the first potency. Prior to this moment, humanity existed in a kind of unconscious union with God. According to Schelling, this was "the absolutely prehistorical time," when "there is no progression and thus no history, like the individual in whose life yesterday is like today and today like yesterday."⁶⁷ But the rebellion of the first potency and the initiation of the theogonic process did not incline in the first instance to polytheism but rather to "relative monotheism," "relative" because it was based solely on a knowledge of the B potency. At this very early point in human history, Schelling argued, it was still possible for humanity to "venerate the true God in the one God," to find an echo of the trinitarian God in the worship of the first potency.⁶⁸ But this was made impossible by the

gradual emergence into consciousness of the second potency (A^2), which was experienced as the coming of a second god, whose arrival immediately sowed doubt about the power of the first god. According to Schelling, the suspicion that the first god was neither singular nor all-powerful, that it might eventually be superseded, was reflected in the biblical descriptions of Jehovah as “*the* eternal and singular God,” an epithet that implied the existence of other, competing gods.⁶⁹

Evidence of this shift in humanity’s relationship to the first potency could be found at many points in the Bible. For example, Genesis contains a genealogy from Adam to Noah that many standard English translations refer to as “the book of the *generations* of Adam” (italics mine) but which Schelling translated as “the book of the human race” (here Schelling used the term *Geschlecht*, a term that can be translated variously as generation, lineage or race but that does not have the biological connotations of the word *Race*).⁷⁰ Based on his reading of this passage, Schelling concluded that the first two generations of the human species (those of Adam and Seth) believed unquestioningly that the first god was the true God, but by the third generation the arrival of a second god had undermined that certainty. This transition left its mark on language, as God came to be referred to as “Jehovah” rather than “Elohim,” and also on the physical constitution of later generations, who were sicker, weaker and notably more short-lived than their ancestors. Schelling contended that this marked the beginning of a “second human race.”⁷¹

By dividing the immediate descendants of Adam into two separate “races” (*Geschlechter*) and by emphasizing the physical-biological implications of this division, Schelling was able to explain a puzzling passage in the sixth chapter of Genesis, which described the “sons of *God*” who “looked upon the beautiful daughters of *men* and took them as wives, from whence emerged the giants.”⁷² Presumably these giants were destroyed in the flood, an event that for Schelling marked the boundary limit of two ages, that of “the still superhumanly powerful race and that of the race now entirely become human and devoted to the human, but just for this reason also the race resigning itself to polytheism.”⁷³ Echoes of these events could also be found in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, which describes the Titans as a middle race between the first gods Uranus and Kronos and the anthropomorphic gods like Zeus and Neptune. Like the biblical giants, the Titans would be destroyed, though not in a flood but in their battle with the Olympians.

After the flood, Noah emerged as the “patriarch of a new human race, which no longer lives in shelters but rather establishes permanent residences, sows the soil, becomes the nations, but for just this reason falls

prey to polytheism as an inevitable transition no longer to be checked.”⁷⁴ Yet not all of Noah’s descendants followed the “path of the peoples.” The Abrahamites, who were descended from Noah through his son Shem, continued to worship the first God, which they knew through revelation as the true God. They did not become a true people (*Volk*) but remained a “race” or “lineage” (*Geschlecht*), separating themselves off from the rest of the nations and even considering themselves to be a non-people (*Nicht-Volk*) in comparison with the “Gentiles.” Like other populations who remained true to the first god, the Hebrews adapted no permanent residence but lived nomadically, which meant they were slow to adopt agriculture or any firm idea of property.

The first field, which Abraham purchased from the Hittites, who did have property, was intended for burial in the earth. So only the dead attained rest. The living are foreigners on the earth, never settled. The time of their life, as a dying Jacob expressed it, is the time of their pilgrimage.⁷⁵

Without a notion of property, the Hebrews were unable to develop a civil law, a constitution, or indeed any of the institutions of government. According to Schelling, only people who possessed themselves could be considered capable of possessing something else. But those who lived under the reign of the “B” potency were eternally subject to a foreign power and thus unfree.

Although many peoples remained bound to the first potency, only the Israelites were granted a revelation of the true God. Abraham, Schelling argued, knew the true god in the form of the first god, but he also had an inkling that the true god was yet to arrive. Thus Jehovah’s promises to Abraham point toward the future.

To him who is not now a nation, it is promised that he shall become a great and powerful nation, indeed all nations of the earth shall be blessed by him, for in *him* lay the future of the monotheism through which in the future all presently dispersed and separated nations shall again be united. ... As Abraham must believe in this promised greatness of his nation, so he also believes in the future religion, which will sublimate the principle under which he is caught and this faith is reckoned to him as the complete religion.⁷⁶

Abraham is thus rightly seen as a prophet, because he saw beyond the relative monotheism of his own day to a future, liberating religion. By contrast, the Mosaic Law was a “yoke” laid on the Hebrew people in order to bind it to the relative one god (the B potency). “The Mosaic religious law

is nothing other than relative monotheism, as it alone, in a certain time, was able to maintain itself in actuality, preserve itself, in contrast to the heathens encroaching from all sides.”⁷⁷ Its value, Schelling argued, lay in serving as a material ground for the emergence of Christianity.

In one sense, Schelling was simply recapitulating a familiar Christian theological argument that divided the Hebrew religion between a backward-looking law and the future-oriented prophets. At the same time, however, his theory of relative monotheism can be seen as anticipating the arguments of Friedrich Max Müller and Ernst Renan about the limited and incomplete nature of Semitic monotheism. Indeed, Max Müller, who coined the term “henotheism” to contrast Semitic monotheism with Christian (trinitarian) monotheism, knew Schelling’s late philosophy well, having studied with him privately during his student years in Berlin.⁷⁸ The parallels do not stop there, however. For while it was true that both Müller and Renan emphasized the role of language in dividing the Semitic peoples from the Indo-European peoples, both ultimately trace the origins of that linguistic divide to religious “instinct.” And here, too, they were anticipated by Schelling.

By the 1840s, comparative linguists like Franz Bopp had established the basic contrast between the “Semitic” languages and those languages they designated Indo-European or “Japhetic,” a terminology they derived from the biblical account of Noah and his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, from whom “the whole earth was peopled” (Genesis 9:18).⁷⁹ According to Schelling, however, this linguistic division had its roots in a religious division. While the descendants of Shem remained closest to the relative monotheism (of the first potency), the descendants of Japheth came to embrace polytheism (predicated on the arrival of the second potency). Both the Semitic and “Japhetic” languages had overcome the monosyllabism that had dominated the human race in the time before the separation of peoples and the confusion of languages at Babel. But the Semitic languages, in their disyllabism, preserved a memory of the original monosyllabism, whereas the Japhetic languages like German, Sanskrit and Greek had completely overcome this power and were entirely polysyllabic.⁸⁰ In this way, Schelling countered the suggestion, put forth by Franz Bopp and Friedrich Schlegel, that Sanskrit was older than Hebrew and the other Semitic languages. At the same time, he was able to align the history of languages with his understanding of the theogonic process, in which relative monotheism preceded and formed the ground for polytheism.

Schelling's theory of relative monotheism not only provided a way to reinscribe a Christian supersessionist narrative within the history of mythology: it also contained a validation of polytheism as a religious principle and, ultimately, as a historical principle.

Polytheism was decreed over humanity not in order to destroy the true *One* but rather to destroy the one-sided *One*, a merely relative monotheism. Nonetheless, despite the appearance to the contrary, ... polytheism was truly a transition to the better, to the liberation of mankind from a power in itself beneficent, but one that was stifling their freedom and repressing their development and thereby the highest knowledge.⁸¹

For Schelling, this historical scheme marked a real advance over the viewpoint of Creuzer, Friedrich Schlegel and others who argued that humanity had once possessed a complete knowledge of God only to lose it. Moreover, it suggested that the mythological process itself had enabled humanity to overcome its initial lapse into fear, ignorance and captivity, a decline that was still manifest in the phenomenon of "race."

THE THEOGONIC PROCESS (2): OVERCOMING RACE

The meaning of mythology, Schelling insisted repeatedly, could only be grasped if one looked beyond its individual moments and considered its overall trajectory, its totality. In order to drive this point home, he compared the history of mythology with the pathology of a disease. "The mythological process is a phenomenon of ... complete course, much like a sickness in the physical world, which takes its regular and natural course, overcoming itself and restoring itself to health through a necessary striving."⁸² Like a sick person, humanity at the onset of the theogonic process found itself captive to an alien force that left it weakened, scattered and incapacitated. Gradually, however, it was able to overcome this alien power and establish the conditions for a free relationship to the divine powers that lay at the root of both material creation and human consciousness.

Schelling's resort to such medical metaphors was quite intentional, for in his view mythology was driven by the same forces (the potencies) that animated nature itself. "Nothing in mythology is taken from nature. Rather, the nature process repeats itself as a theogonic process within consciousness."⁸³ This parallelism between nature and mythology not only explained the ancient pagans' predilection for nature imagery in their

mythology, but also the close connections between pagan religious life and sexuality. Indeed, while many scholars sought to extract a sublime philosophical doctrine from the religions of antiquity, Schelling repeatedly pointed to the often shocking rituals they inspired. During the festival of the goddess Mylitta, for example, Babylonian women were required to prostitute themselves to the first stranger who threw a coin into their lap. This practice was not to be explained away as a product of oriental “salaciousness” (*Wollust*): instead, it reflected the predominance in the Babylonian consciousness of a god (the first potency) that was losing power and becoming feminine and thus giving way (or giving in) to the second god (the second potency).⁸⁴ Thus these rituals were not signs of simple immorality or degeneracy. Instead, they emerged from an inner psychological necessity whose determining factor was the mythological process itself.

Just as the theogonic process shaped the sexual practices associated with the world’s religions, it was also capable, according to Schelling, of determining physical appearances. India, for example, possessed a polytheism in which all three potencies were present at some level, but in which the “formal” potency A² predominated over the “material” potency A¹. For this reason, the Indians, especially those in the upper castes, tended to emphasize the importance of the soul at the expense of the body, which was reflected in their readiness to accept death.

Even the bodily appearance of the Indian shows an easy separability, the escape of the potencies, whose cooperation sustains material life: they are constantly on the verge of separating. If the Mongol indicates a consciousness that is sunk deep into the corporeal, with its roots deep in the material, through the conformation of his skull and his whole body, then the physiognomy of the Indian indicates the ascendancy of the soul.⁸⁵

Schelling identified a similar racial differentiation within Indian society itself, which was split between the light-skinned (and ideally oriented) Brahmins and the dark-skinned (and materially oriented) untouchables.⁸⁶ It was the untouchables, in particular, who gravitated toward worship of the lingam, a ritual object combining male and female genitalia, which they associated with the first, material god.⁸⁷

While the disparate religious orientations among the Indians led to a variety of physical or racial effects, the Egyptians seemed in their history to have triumphed over race itself. The Egyptians, Schelling argued,

were an example of a people in which the racial difference was overcome. Or into what is that negroid race with curly-wool hair and black skin supposed to have disappeared, that race that Herodotus still saw in Egypt and which someone there must have pointed out to him as the oldest ...?⁸⁸

This was a reference to a passage in the *History* in which Herodotus referred to a population near the Black Sea as Egyptian, because they were “dark-skinned and woolly-haired.”⁸⁹ Schelling returned to this idea elsewhere in the lectures, noting the gradations of race among the African populations from those in the Congo with “deformed and apelike” faces and bodies to those, like the “Kaffirs and Abyssinians,” who had left the realm of blackness altogether. Based on Herodotus and the observations of contemporary observers, Schelling insisted that a “negro type” lay at the basis of the “Egyptian type,” which had raised itself so far above its roots that the former now seemed merely a caricature of the latter.⁹⁰ Thus, Schelling fully accepted the blackness of the ancient Egyptians, as well as their key role in the history of mythology (they were one of three nations, along with the Indians and the Greeks, who possessed a full-fledged polytheistic system). Yet he did so in a way that actually reinforced the importance of physical characteristics (including both skin color and cranial structure) as marks of spiritual and intellectual development.⁹¹

Like mythology, race was a process that had afflicted all of humanity to varying degrees but that could eventually be overcome. Thus, while Schelling agreed with Kant and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach that the Europeans should not be considered a race, he departed from them when he suggested that the “nobler part of mankind is not that which remained entirely free of it but rather only that which conquered it and precisely thereby elevated itself to higher spirituality.”⁹² Given these assumptions, it was only natural that Schelling would see the theogonic process reaching its pinnacle in Greece. Since Winckelmann the corporeal beauty of the Greeks had been seen as the foundation of their artistic and religious life, which centered on a set of bright (white) deities who were represented in human form rather than as animals or fantastic multi-armed beings. At the same time, Schelling made it clear by omitting discussion of the Roman, Germanic and Scandinavian mythologies (which he dismissed as irrelevant) that Greece was meant to stand for Europe as a whole.

Schelling dwelled little on race in his discussion of the Greeks (his conviction of their physical superiority could be taken as assumed), focusing instead on their relationship to the theogonic process. For Schelling,

Greek mythology embodied the free supremacy of the formal potency over the material potency, which paved the way for the arrival of the third spiritual potency. Because of this, he argued, the Greeks enjoyed a freer relationship to the material of their mythology than their predecessors, which helped to explain the poetic quality of their representations of the gods. The Greeks also possessed a much clearer sense of the total sweep of the theogonic process than had been possible among earlier peoples. Echoing the Hegelian owl of Minerva, Schelling suggested that the theogonic process only became fully transparent once it was it had reached its conclusion, which was why Hesiod's *Theogony* could be used as a guide to its earliest phases. At the same time, an intimation of the end of mythology was built into Greek religious life in the form of the Eleusinian mysteries, which foretold the arrival of Dionysus Iakchos, who was represented as a child in the arms of the virgin Persephone. For Schelling, Iakchos was the third potency, who would harmonize the first two potencies and restore the unconscious trinitarian monotheism at the level consciousness and freedom.

This was as far as the theogonic process could go, however, for the true revelation of God was only possible through the historical personality of Jesus Christ.

The mythological representations contain concepts, whose *truth*, whose true shape and essence, is first given in the New Testament. Because as paganism ... is only a *naturally* self-produced Christianity, so is Judaism only the undeveloped Christianity. The same personality that appeared to the nations, i.e., the pagans, as savior and redeemer, is the *messiah* of the Old Testament ... In this sense, the truth of mythology is revealed completely through Christianity. The messiah of the Old Testament could first appear as a merely represented personality, but the result has shown that he was a real being, who at the end of the process really *appeared*.⁹³

Whereas the theogonic process could create the conditions for a restoration of the potencies, only revelation could make known the divine personality A^0 , who was prior to the potencies themselves and who had set them in motion. True monotheism, Schelling insisted, was premised on an encounter with God at the level of both reason and revelation. The highest calling of philosophy was to prepare the intellectual ground for the triumph of this Christian revelation and for the union of Protestantism, Catholicism and Orthodoxy in a coming "Johannine age."

While this was an optimistic vision of the Christian reconciliation in an era of intense confessional conflict, the omission of Judaism is striking.

While Schelling had granted the Hebrews a special status in the theogonic process as bearers of knowledge of the true God, he made it clear that the arrival of the Christian revelation marked the end of Judaism's historical mission, while implying that modern Jews, if they hoped to be part of the future, had no choice but to convert to Christianity. A half century later, Franz Rosenzweig attempted to reenvision Schelling's Johannine religion as issuing not just from a union of the churches but a conversion (by emancipated Jews) of the "pagan within the Christian," a proposal that made some sense within the Schellingian system but that Schelling himself would no doubt have rejected.⁹⁴

Yet even more troubling was Schelling's attitude toward slavery. Toward the end of his speculations on race, he raised the question, as if someone in the audience were on the verge of posing it, of whether his insistence on the vast differences between the "higher" and "lower" races (*Geschlechter*) of the human species could be taken as a scholarly justification of slavery and the slave trade. His answer was a clear, if qualified, yes:

It is better, I say, to declare it quite openly. It is our conviction that it is impossible that it was with an evil, misanthropic spirit that Las Casas set down the thought in his works that the strong African race should be used to exploit the newly discovered silver and gold mines rather than the weak Americans. This thought did not, however, result in Negro slavery, because these unfortunates already had slavery at home and indeed in the most horrible form. But it did have as a consequence the export of Negroes, which a benevolent spirit might see as the only way to snatch away that abandoned human race [*Menschengeschlecht*] from the most horrible barbarism and wrest many of the souls that were almost lost to salvation from eternal death.⁹⁵

For Schelling, there seemed little prospect that by themselves the African peoples would progress out of their state; on the other hand, individual Africans had been capable of great achievements when placed in contact with Europeans. But while a transport of Africans to the New World might have been seen as an act of "divine providence," the corrupting influence of human hands had turned it, at least partly, into the very opposite.

This quandary led Schelling to pose a second question.

What was more humane, to apply the resources of a great world-conquering power in order to give the Negro transfer its true purpose? Or to forcefully prevent it, not without occasioning greater atrocities and even committing them, but also especially cutting off the sole path to salvation for thousands of basically human beings?⁹⁶

In other words, should Great Britain or France deploy its navy to shut down the slave trade once and for all, or should it implement a more humane version of the middle pass with the goal of evangelizing the African population? For Schelling, missionary efforts seemed to mark the great exception to the general rule that contact between the European and lesser races led automatically to the demise of the latter. Yet in this case the spiritual freedom of the Christian could only be purchased at the cost of physical servitude and slavery in the New World, though presumably a more humane slavery than that “most horrible form” of slavery they suffered from in Africa. In the end, Schelling avoided answering this question, on the grounds that it touched on “the practical and political side of the issue,” which belonged “neither to our office nor this place.”⁹⁷

Although Schelling’s comments on “race” were scattered and somewhat underdeveloped, they served as a crucial underpinning for his notion of the “theogonic process” and thus of his understanding of the relationship between religion, politics and the natural world. He was familiar with the relevant works by Kant, Blumenbach and Steffens and shared their obsessions with skin color, cranial structure and libidinal pathologies, while at the same time drawing on his own reading in the fields of ethnography, anthropology and phrenology. In addition, Schelling’s notion of “overcoming race” integrated corporeal structure into a Christian economy of salvation. Indeed, his theory seemed to anticipate Richard Wagner’s notion of racial redemption, which he presented in his Bayreuth writings of the 1880s and the music drama *Parsifal*. And yet one did not need to look ahead forty years to see the implications of Schelling’s thought on race, which justified colonialism and genocide as the inevitable consequence of the encounter between Europeans and non-European populations. Redemption, insofar as it was offered, took the form not just of conversion to Christianity but of slavery to a white master.

One of the leitmotifs of recent work on Schelling is his notion of the “indivisible remainder,” that is, that aspect of materiality in the world that cannot be subsumed into logical categories.⁹⁸ For Schelling, this could be seen as that residue of the B potency’s rebellion against the harmony of the potencies, which was never fully overcome. The ethnogonic counterparts to this indivisible remainder were the religionless races, which in Schelling’s scheme could either convert to a foreign religion or be extinguished but who on their own could never overcome the stain of their materiality and their fallenness. Like contemporary Jews, the “races” had no place in the coming Johannine era and yet their irritating, unruly presence disrupted

Schelling's intended narrative of Christian expectation and triumph. In this regard, Schelling's late philosophy was undone by the same insights that made it such a powerful alternative to Hegelianism but that led him to the racial thinking that is such an important, if oft-overlooked, aspect of his intellectual project.

NOTES

1. F. W. J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, transl. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselberger, forward by Jason M. Wirth (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), p. 7.
2. Else Freund, *Franz Rosenzweig's Philosophy of Existence: An Analysis of the Star of Redemption* [1933], transl. Stephen Weinstein and Robert Israel (Dordrecht: Springer, 1979); Rodolph Gasché, *Phenomenology and Phantasmagoria: On the Philosophy of Georges Bataille*, transl. Roland Végö (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).
3. See, e.g., Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993); Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters* (London: Verso, 1996); Jason Wirth, ed., *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). Particularly relevant for the present study is Edward Allen Beach's *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).
4. A major exception is Gianluca Solla's excellent study *Schatten der Freiheit: Schelling und die Politische Theologie des Eigennamens*, transl. Regina Maresch-Gugg (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1996), though Solla's analysis is oriented primarily toward Schelling's political thought and does not explore either the full range of Schelling's deployment of race or its sources in earlier writers. I briefly discuss this topic in "Gods, Titans, and Monsters: Philhellenism, Race, and Religion in Early Nineteenth-Century Mythography," in *The German Invention of Race*, ed. Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 147–165.
5. In a large literature, see Emmanuel Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," in *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment: Perspectives on Humanity*, ed. Katherine M. Faulk (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995); Robert

- Bernasconi, "Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race," in *Race: Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy*, ed. Bernasconi (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 11–36; Mark Larrimore, "Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of 'Races,'" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary Volume 25 (1999): 99–125; idem, "Race, Freedom, and the Fall in Steffens and Kant," in Eigen and Larrimore, eds., *The German Invention of Race*, pp. 91–120; Bernasconi, "Hegel at the Court of Ashanti," in *Hegel after Derrida*, ed. Stuart Barnett (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 41–63; Michael H. Hoffheimer, "Hegel, Race, Genocide," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 39 (2001): 35–62; Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).
6. Friedrich Schelling, "Ueber Mythen, historische Sagen und Philosopheme der ältesten Welt," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, 14 vols. (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1856–1861), vol. 1, 23. Henceforth Roman numerals will be used to denote volumes from this series.
 7. On the constructed nature of the category myth, see esp. Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). On mythology as middlepoint, see Jochen Fried, *Die Symbolik des Realen: Über alte und neue Mythologie in der Frühromantik* (Munich: Fink, 1985).
 8. On the new mythology, see George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); also Manfred Frank, *Vorlesungen über die neue Mythologie*, vol. 1, *Der kommende Gott* (Frankfurt a.M.: Surkamp, 1982).
 9. Friedrich Schelling, *Philosophie und Religion* (1804), in VI: 11–71.
 10. Schelling first held his lectures on *Philosophie der Mythologie* in Munich over three semesters (1828–29) and repeated the lectures a half dozen times up through 1845. A comparison of the available manuscripts shows that he continued to revise and rework his lectures, though without substantially revising the standpoint developed in 1828–29. On the various versions of these lectures, see the editor's introduction to Friedrich Schelling, *Philosophie der Mythologie in drei Vorlesungsnachschriften 1837/1842*, ed. Klaus Vieweg and Christian Danz, with Georgia Apostolopoulou

- (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1996), pp. 20–25. This article relies primarily on the text in *Schellings Sämmtliche Werke*, vols. XI and XII, which includes his Berlin lectures (1842, 1845–46) on “Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie,” “Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie” and “Philosophie der Mythologie.” I have also relied on Mason Richey and Markus Zisselberger’s recent English translation of the Historisch-Kritische Einleitung (see footnote 1).
11. Friedrich Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, 1st ed., 4 vols. (Leipzig and Darmstadt: Heyer and Leske, 1810–12). Creuzer published two other editions of this work (1819–21, 1837–43), each time expanding on his evidence and fundamental arguments.
 12. In the second edition of the *Symbolik* (1819–21), Creuzer relocated the site of the origin of mythology from India to Persia, following recent research on the Zend-Avesta. On this, see Suzanne Marchand, “Dating Zarathustra: Oriental Texts and the Problem of Persian Prehistory, 1700–1900,” *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* I (2016): 225–227.
 13. Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, transl. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); also Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
 14. On the tradition of *philosophia perennis* in this context see esp. Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 4–5, 62–63; also Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Philosophia Perennis: Historical Outlines of Western Spirituality in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004).
 15. Johann Heinrich Voss, *Antisymbolik*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1824–26).
 16. Karl Otfried Müller, *Geschichten hellenischer Stämme und Städte*, pt. 1, *Orchomenos und die Mínyer*, pt. 2, *Die Dorier*, 3 vols. (Breslau: Josef Max, 1820–24).
 17. See the discussion of the common origin of human culture, as well as of the role of the mysteries in ancient religion, in *Philosophie und Religion*, VI, 57–59 and 65–70.
 18. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 64 (XI, 89).
 19. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 278.

20. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 126 (XI, 179).
21. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 63 (XI, 87). Schelling described his approach as a “converse eumerism,” i.e., rather than tracing the gods to historical figures, he traced the historical figures in the Bible to stages in the history of mythology.
22. See Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 133 (XI, 191): “Where ... the contingent presuppositions and hypotheses stop, there begins science.”
23. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 48 (XI, 63) and pp. 68–69 (XI, 92–93); cf. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 161.
24. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 43 (XI, 56).
25. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 385.
26. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 136 (XI, 96).
27. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 144 (XI, 207).
28. A first edition of the lectures was published posthumously in 1832 by Philip Marheineke, followed by a second version in 1840. On the publication history of Hegel’s lectures, see Peter C. Hodgson’s editorial introduction to G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, One Volume Edition: The Lectures of 1827*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 8–9.
29. The following account of Schelling’s critique of Hegel and theory of potences draws heavily on Edward Allen Beach, *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling’s Philosophy of Mythology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).
30. Cf. Friedrich Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), transl. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), p. 29. “After the eternal act of self-revelation, everything in the world is, as we see it now, rule, order and form; but anarchy still lies in the ground, as if it could break through once again, and nowhere does it appear as if order and form were what is original but rather as if initial anarchy had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible base of reality in things, the indivisible remainder, that which the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding but rather remains eternally in the ground. The understanding is born in the genuine sense from that which is without understanding. Without this preceding darkness creatures have no reality; darkness is their necessary inheritance.”

31. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 154 (XI, 221). See also *Philosophie und Religion*, VI, 59: "The gradual deterioration of the earth is not only a universal legend of the ancient world [*Vormwelt*], but also a definite physical truth, as is the later emerging inclination of its axis. With the growing rigidity the power of the evil principle grew in equal measure, and the earlier identity with the son, which facilitated the more beautiful births of the earth, disappeared."
32. On the significance of this quote, see esp. Beach, *The Potencies of God(s)*, p. 84.
33. *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, VII, 359, cited in Beach, *The Potencies of God(s)*, p. 97.
34. Beach, *The Potencies of God(s)*, pp. 130–131.
35. Cf. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke* XII, 140: "This fact is however completely explainable when we assume that mythology emerged in conditions that allow no comparison with present-day consciousness and that one can understand only insofar as one dares to go beyond it."
36. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 46–47 (XI, 61–2).
37. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 91 (XI, 128).
38. Building on the political theory of Carl Schmitt, Gianluca Solla has identified a "tautological" logic in Schelling's definition of the nation (the nation is that which names itself as a nation, while excluding those who do not belong to it); *Schatten der Freiheit*, pp. 137–141.
39. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 49 (XI, 65).
40. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 73 (XI, 100), translation modified.
41. "We are simply too little used to recognizing as of universal meaning the principles by which the spontaneous religious movements of the human consciousness are determined—principles, which for that reason can, under certain circumstances, become causes of other, even physical effects." Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 78 (XI, 108).
42. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 73 (XI, 100).
43. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 73 (XI, 100), translation modified.
44. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 82 (XI, 114–115). Schelling insisted that "European mankind should not actually be called a race." Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 71 (XI, 198).

45. Schelling explicitly rejected J. F. Blumenbach's use of the term "Race" when speaking of the Malays as a whole, whom he considered a *Geschlecht* (XI, 506). In a slight departure from his earlier argument, Schelling would go on in lecture 21 to argue for the separate creation of the various "human lineages" (*Menschengeschlechter*), beginning with the Africans, followed by the Mongols, Americans and Malays, before arriving at the "highest" race (which included the Europeans, among others). In this scheme, Adam remained the symbolic father of the whole human species but not its biological father (XI, 504–513).
46. Immanuel Kant, "On the Different Races of Human Beings," transl. Holly Wilson and Günter Zoller, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Günter Zöllner and Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 90.
47. Kant, "On the Different Races," pp. 95–96.
48. Henrich Steffens, *Anthropologie*, 2 vols. (Breslau: Josef Max, 1822).
49. On the ambivalent distinctions between Kant and Steffens, see esp. Mark Larrimore, "Race, Freedom and the Fall in Steffens and Kant," in *The German Invention of Race*, Mark Larrimore and Sara Eigen (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 91–120.
50. Steffens makes the connection between sin and bodily deformation explicit: "Since the true idea of innocence is the inmost unification with nature, the holiest unity of nature and spirit, so the first, most original deviation, the sinful formation must also lead to a change in the bodily." *Anthropologie*, 2:417.
51. Henrich Steffens, *Anthropologie*, 2:411; cf. Larrimore, *The German Invention*, p. 95.
52. On this distinction, see Larrimore, *The German Invention*, p. 109.
53. Henrich Steffens, *Anthropologie*, 1:292–294 *et passim*; cf. Genesis 6:11: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence."
54. Henrich Steffens, *Anthropologie*, 2:426–427.
55. Felix de Azara, *Voyages dans l'Amérique méridionale depuis 1781 jusqu'en 1801*, 2 vols. (Paris: Dentu, 1809), 2:3: "Les ecclésiastiques y en ont ajouté une autre [fausseté], en disant que ces peuples avaient une religion. Persuadés, qu'il était impossible aux hommes de vivre sans en avoir une bonne ou mauvaise, et voyant

quelques figures dessinées ou gravées sur leurs pipes, les arcs, les bâtons et les poteries des Indiens, ils se figurèrent à l'instant que c'étaient leurs idoles, et les brûlèrent. Ces peuples emploient aujourd'hui encore les mêmes figures, mais ils ne font que pour amusement, car ils n'ont aucune religion."

56. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 82 (XI, 115).
57. Steffens, *Anthropologie*, 2:377–378.
58. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 80–81 (XI, 112).
59. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 81 (XI, 113).
60. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI:501.
61. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI:501.
62. Homer, *The Odyssey*, transl. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin, 1996), pp. 214–215 (9, lines 120–128); cf. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 83 (XI, 117). Schelling wrote an entire treatise on this topic: "Ueber den Alter kyklopischer Bauwerke in Griechenland" (IX, 336–352).
63. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 83–84 (XI, 117).
64. I have used the problematic English term "Negro" as a direct translation of the German "*Neger*" in order to highlight the negative and racist implications of the German word, and also to differentiate it from the word "black" (*schwarz*), which Schelling also uses to describe African populations.
65. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 71 (XI, 97).
66. On the history of the notion of "doomed races," see Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997).
67. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 163 (234).
68. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 104.
69. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 104–105.
70. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 105 (XI, 147); cf. Genesis 5:1, which the Revised Standard Version translates as follows: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God made man, he made him in the likeness of God."
71. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 105–106 (XI, 148–149).
72. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 106 (XI, 149); cf. XI, 511.
73. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 108 (XI, 152).
74. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 109 (XI, 154–155).
75. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 182.

76. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 120–121 (XI, 172).
77. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 121 (XI, 173).
78. On Renan and F. Max Müller, see especially Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, transl. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); on the relationship between Schelling and Max Müller, see also Williamson, *Longing*, p. 217.
79. On this, see especially Tuska Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008).
80. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 96 (XI, 135–136).
81. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 98–99 (XI, 139).
82. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, pp. 154–155 (XI, 223), translation altered. See also XII, 318: “The situation of the human consciousness in the age, especially of emerging paganism, the process in which the mythological representations generate themselves, is that of a sickness that follows a set course through successive crises, by which consciousness restores itself to its original health.”
83. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 425.
84. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 238–239.
85. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 572–573; cf. Schelling’s long discussion of American Indian skull shapes based largely on George Morton’s *Crania Americana: or, A comparative view of the skulls of various aboriginal nations of North and South America* (Philadelphia: Dobson, 1839), XI, 504–507. Schelling’s engagement with phrenology stands in contrast with Hegel, who rejected both phrenology and physiognomy in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, transl. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 185–210.
86. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 72 (XI, 99).
87. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 456.
88. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 72 (XI, 99).
89. Herodotus, *The History*, transl. David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 173 (book 2, §104).
90. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI, 503–504.
91. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI, 504; Schelling acknowledged the existence of higher and lower types within each of the major racial groupings, and named the Laplanders as a relatively degenerate type among the European race, whose lifestyle stood in stark con-

- trast to the mostly highly developed peoples of the Mongol race. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI, 504.
92. Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, p. 72 (XI, 98). On Kant's thesis of the permanence of race, see Bernasconi, "Who Invented the Concept of Race?" pp. 23–24.
93. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XII, 315–316.
94. Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 2nd ed., transl. William W. Hallo (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), p. 285.
95. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI, 513–514.
96. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI, 515.
97. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, XI, 515. On this entire passage and its relationship to Schelling's deconstruction of the philosophical category of "possibility," see Solla, *Schatten der Freiheit*, pp. 151–155.
98. See, e.g., Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder* (see note 3).

Race and Richard Wagner

Michael P. Steinberg

1

Daniel Barenboim and Zubin Mehta, the two conductors most closely associated with the Sisyphean effort to play Wagner in Israel, have consistently grounded their position in a modest, indeed minimalist, claim. The claim has to do with the education and knowledge of musicians. Symphonic musicians, they argue, must be expected to understand the historic and structural properties of the music they play, with an emphasis on the so-called classical canon from Bach to Schoenberg. Bach and Schoenberg can be considered the beginning and end of the classical tradition, which also constitutes, paradoxically, the arc of modernism in music. Between them, chronologically, only two composers can be considered fundamental to the development and transformation of symphonic music. These are Ludwig van Beethoven, whose symphonic palette and revolutionary consciousness “freed music,” according to a lasting sobriquet, and Richard Wagner, who claimed to inherit the Beethovenian paradigm by realizing its ultimate potential in the form of music drama. Beethoven remains the bedrock of global concert programming. Full-blown Wagner requires an opera stage, to be sure, but

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his work is equally present in the concert hall. Without Wagner, who is present everywhere but Israel, the history of music collapses into the black hole defined by his absence, both for the musicians and for their audiences.

The history of the Wagner taboo in Israel has been solidly chronicled in a recent survey by Na'ama Sheffi.¹ Never legislated (despite several propositions to the Knesset) but virtually universal in its application, the taboo postdates the Holocaust and Israeli independence. The Palestine Philharmonic, precursor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, played Wagner before the Second World War, perhaps most notably at its inaugural concert in Tel Aviv in December 1936 under the baton of Arturo Toscanini, who was as celebrated for his anti-fascism as he was for his music. The reasons for the taboo are well known but not accurately so. They are grounded without doubt in Wagner's authorship in 1850 of the scurrilous essay "Judaism in Music" (*Das Judentum in der Musik*) as well as in the multiple associations of his music and ideology with the Third Reich. They are equally grounded in the political uses of the Holocaust as a catalyst of national identity politics.

In the first two contexts, and despite their separation by almost a century, the problems of race and racism are indisputably present. Race and racism have to do with the body, and with the markings of the body as aspects of alleged capacity and inferiority. In "Judaism and Music," Wagner engages in the largely cultural anti-Semitism which claims that, as a mimetic and guest culture rather than an authentic and grounded one, Judaism and Jews can perform music but cannot compose it, originate it. The personal targets here are Giacomo Meyerbeer and Felix Mendelssohn, from both of whom Wagner learned much. The body in question here is mostly the body politic of the German nation, from which the Jews are thus excluded as authentic components. "Judaism in Music" is an essay, one of many that Wagner wrote during his decade of exile in Switzerland, when he lacked access to an opera house. The issue swells, and loses some focus, when the actual music dramas are invoked. There are no Jewish characters in the operas, with the clear but exotic exemption of Kundry in *Parsifal*. The principal debate in Wagner scholarship has to do with the Jewish *marking* of characters according to what Shulamit Volkov has felicitously called anti-Semitism as a cultural code. Thus, Alberich the scheming dwarf, Loge the crafty adviser to the gods, and Beckmesser the impotent critic who cannot compose are conceivably so marked. So are their alleged vocal types, as Marc Weiner has persuasively demonstrated in his study *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*. In every vocal type but especially in the

male voice, Wagner argued for a low, deep sonority rather than a high one (Wotan as a “high bass” is the exception). High tenor or baritone voices signified nervousness, instability and unmusicality—all potential allegories of Jewishness. Nevertheless, when Beckmesser is sung beautifully (say, by Hermann Prey), his music sounds quite wonderful—exploratory and modernist. And even if Alberich and Beckmesser are negatively marked as Jews, can it not be asserted that Lohengrin and Siegmund are so positively marked: Lohengrin, who comes from an unknown point of origin and will help society so long as his origins are not questioned; Siegmund, who comes from a race (*Geschlecht*)—the Volsungs—vilified by all? Here as elsewhere, Wagner would appear to deconstruct his own ideological assertions.

These are the issues and some of their difficulties. But my topic lies elsewhere. I want to begin with a hypothesis that the anxieties of race and racial thinking, in Wagner and more generally, amount to an anxiety about the sources and boundaries of the self. I want to argue next that Wagner’s musical-dramatic world, replete as it may be with racial thinking and even racist stereotyping, contains an equally powerful deconstructive element which displaces such ideology with a more convincing foray into critical and self-critical depths. (The self-criticism I refer to here emerges at the level of the work, not the man; in the music dramas, not in the essays.) Wagner’s musical, dramatic and critical depths are both experiential and analytical. If Beethoven freed music, Wagner took music into the depths of the unconscious, the forbidden dimension of the human psyche which artists recognized, so Sigmund Freud said, before he mapped it scientifically. The unconscious is dangerous. Wagner’s music is thus equally dangerous, for what it finds there, what it duplicates, what it handles critically. Wagner occupies both sides of modernism: the absolutist side, which in his case begins with the “absolute music” (Wagner coined the term) of Beethoven and metastasizes into fantasies of absolute myth and absolute culture; and the critical, deconstructive side which drives meaning and knowledge according to expectations of multiplicity and infinite variation. Finally, I want to suggest that the abiding Israeli taboo, understood as a surviving national consensus, can also be investigated as a symptom of anxiety about the national itself: the national self that wishes to equate the Israeli with the Jewish as authentic and equal marks of citizenship, despite the multiple historical and legal impediments to that desire, including the legal citizenship the non-Jewish Israelis who compose 20 percent of the population.

2

In early 2009 I was invited to join the production team on a joint new production of Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, to be produced by the Teatro alla Scala in Milan and the Berlin State Opera between 2010 and 2013: one opera per season, with full cycles planned for 2013, the year of the Wagner bicentennial. I eagerly accepted the invitation and my initiation to a third phase of my engagement with Richard Wagner: as a listener, as a scholar and now as a participant in the practical world of a performance project. Was I not now especially afraid, in the question posed to me by my friend Daniel Cohen, now a conductor with the Israeli Opera, that I would "lose my Jewish license"? Or would I rather have an opportunity to take part in thinking and rethinking the vexed "case of Wagner" with the result taking shape onstage? Specifically, I asked myself, would there be a way of rethinking the perennial and perennially vexed question of "Wagner and the Jews" in a way that might affect the stage and the audience experience of this production, however remotely or indirectly?

The production team for La Scala and Berlin is led by director Guy Cassiers, artistic director of the Toneelhuis Theater in Antwerp. The Toneelhuis does not offer repertory theater but concentrates rather on new works as well as dramatic adaptations of canonic literary works. Examples of the latter include a multi-evening adaptation of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and a new trilogy of Robert Musil's *Man without Qualities*. These examples suggest an immediate parallel to Wagner's four-part *Ring of the Nibelung*, both for their epic, serial modernism and for their explorations of human interiority in relation to worldly panoramas.

The Toneelhuis aesthetic places interiorities on the stage through a combination of actors' performances and a technical apparatus of projections and videos, some of which are either interactive with the actors or at least appear to be to the audience. The multimedia technical apparatus discloses itself straightforwardly; if a camera is at work onstage, its presence is evident. At the same time, the self-disclosure of the apparatus is not the goal. Technology is enlisted as a means of aesthetic and emotional knowledge. In these ways, the Toneelhuis aesthetic is at once fundamentally Wagnerian and anti-Wagnerian: Wagnerian in its implicit argument that contemporary multimedia performance inherits the ambitions of music drama and the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a genealogy proposed by Friedrich Kittler and others); anti-Wagnerian in the principle and practice

of technological self-disclosure and mediation. Here we can recall that Wagner's explicit disavowal of the disclosure of the means and machines of production, from the orchestra to the stage machinery, drew the special ire of Theodor Adorno.²

The realizations of *Das Rheingold* (premiered in May 2010 in Milan) and *Die Walküre* (December 2010) establish a firm record both of the production's innovative style and, at the same time, its relation to a long history of production styles and claims. The history of the work must take into account the history of its staged productions. Similarly, a new production exists in relation to its important predecessors, whether intentionally so or not.

The history of the *Ring* onstage, from the premieres of 1869 (*Das Rheingold*) and 1876 (the full *Ring*) to the present, reveals some basic paradigms and some fundamental differences. We might organize this history—like the *Ring* itself!—into four periods:

1. 1876–1944: mythistory
2. 1951–1975: myth
3. 1976–1980: history
4. 1980s–: neo-myth

The first period, from 1876 (the Bayreuth premiere of the full cycle) to 1944 (the year of the closure of Bayreuth in the context of war and total mobilization) involves the sense of the abiding validity of the “original” Bayreuth style and production, as supervised by Wagner himself and with his own stage directions written into the score. This style also retains the claim of music-drama, the *Ring* and their theorists (including Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*) in 1871 (i.e. the first edition, before the break with Wagner and the removal of “from the Spirit of Music” from the title!). That central claim is to reanimate the spirit of Greek tragedy as the modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*: capable not only of *telling* the national story but of actually *forming* a national consciousness adequate to the moment of German national and imperial emergence in 1870–71. Thus, the “original” Wagner style involves the fusion of myth and history, in other words the claim to inhabit a new moment of national cultural foundation that is itself simultaneous with the ability to *tell* the story of the nation. This is a naïve style (in Schiller's sense of the word); it contains no critical or self-critical perspective in relation to historical or other processes.

The reconstitution of German society after World War II and the “year zero” of 1945 found in many ways its core case in the politics of Bayreuth, which had served as a symbolic center of the Nazi regime. From its reopening in 1951, Bayreuth came to signify both the continuity of the past as well as the need for a total break from it. The break was announced from the stage by the so-called neo-Bayreuth style associated with Wieland Wagner. Wieland’s scenic style can be described as the focus on myth to the complete repression of history. Myth engages the deepest structures of human experience: its *invariant* elements, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has taught us, as distinct from its *variants*, which form the material of history.³ Myth without history thus avoids history’s specific traumas and crimes. Wieland Wagner’s neo-mythic style found a scholarly correlative in the Jungian *Ring* analysis of Robert Donington (*Wagner’s Ring and Its Symbols*, 1963). Wieland’s visual modernism was stunning and innovative. Without doubt it was visually challenging as well. But it was also fundamentally comforting and even conservative, as the scenic removal of history, and therefore of Wagner *from* history, allowed Bayreuth audiences (and their increasingly global counterparts) to disaggregate both Wagner and Wagner reception from the traumas and responsibilities of German history.

For this reason, it turned out to be Patrice Chéreau in 1976 rather than Wieland Wagner in the 1950s who generated the real Wagner revolution, despite the fact that this sea change, unlike the previous one, was not generated by a general political and human trauma. In his now legendary staging for the Bayreuth centennial, Chéreau recast the *Ring* as a historical epic of modern Germany from 1870 until ca. 1930, for example from the moment of unification and empire to the Weimar crisis and the rise of Nazism and its path to cataclysm and genocide. Chéreau’s scenic revolution found an essential partner in Pierre Boulez’s conducting, which cleaned, sharpened and clarified orchestral textures. Boulez’s musical intervention amounted also to a direct and explicit historical correction, as the players of the festival orchestra were instructed deliberately (and to their considerable irritation) not to play as they had been playing heretofore.

The Cassiers *Ring* explores how the globalized moment of 2010 continues to build on the Wagnerian vocabularies of 1870. Rather than stage an epic *in* 1870, as Chéreau had done, Cassiers stages an epic *about* 1870–2010, as told from the vantage point of now, the *Jetztzeit*, in Walter Benjamin’s term. Cassiers’s stage realizes this transhistorical dialogue

through a strongly conceived and very beautiful aesthetic. This aesthetic works from the double entendre of “projection,” as understood by Freud and others. On the one hand, projection is a photographic and cinematographic technology. An image is projected from a source onto a surface. A projection is also a psychic dynamic involving the externalization of inner experience and (in its symptomatic character) the displacement of the origins of emotions and symptoms onto a secondary, external source. Thus I can project onto you the responsibility for a problem that I have created—think of Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and beyond. I can also project into the past a problem of the present, the historian’s capacity we usually call the fallacy of anachronism but which in capable hands can amount to a highly refined dialogue with the past and its residues.

Based on this fundamental double meaning of projection, Cassiers’s *Ring* can be understood to explore the nature of interactivity in ways that involve but are by no means limited to contemporary visual technologies. Wagner’s *Ring* operates by projecting its massive material onto an audience. Wagner’s own architectural design of the Bayreuth Festival Theater works as a literal acoustic realization of such projection. The famous covered orchestra pit throws sound back toward the stage, where it blends with the voices to be re-projected toward the audience. And the audience works (if we can assume an active, listening audience to be working) by experiencing, examining and understanding both our reception of the work’s projections—in sound and sight—alongside the simultaneous counter-projection from our own inner lives back onto and into the work. This inner life will contain, among its unlimited archive, the history of our responses to Wagner and the *Ring*. Such histories are at once individual and collective. Audience members will possess their own biographical/aesthetic “maps,” which will place this important new traversal of the *Ring* in an historical emotional and aesthetic context. These contexts are bound to differ profoundly between the opera communities of Milan and Berlin.

The content of this dynamic of mutual projection will be varied. One key dimension will be the relation between the present moment and history and memory. History and memory and their relation to the fleeting present moment constitute a key theme of the *Ring* itself. The most important recent Wagner scholarship (especially the work of Carolyn Abbate and David Levin) has explored these issues by paying close attention to the relation between narration and action.⁴ Throughout the *Ring* action is constantly interrupted and reinterpreted, even proactively, by narration. Wotan’s monologue in Act 2 of *Die Walküre* is the most massive of these

interruptions but it is by no means the only one. (Famously, when the musicologist Alfred Lorenz tried, in the 1930s, to explicate every opera and every act of the *Ring* as a manifestation of sonata form, the one event he could not integrate into the model was Wotan's monologue.) Think (among others) of Loge and Erda in *Das Rheingold*; Siegmund followed by Sieglinde in *Walküre* Act 1; Mime in *Siegfried* ACT 1; the Norns in the *Götterdämmerung* prologue; and, finally, Siegfried's death scene in Act 3. Indeed, the psychological depths of the characters expand as they begin to possess a strong sense of the past, which can both inform and impede action.

Guy Cassiers's conception and aesthetic point to a new way of understanding history in relation to the present moment. So it would appear that we are once again in the realm of history, but with a new historical epistemology. Here I return to the ideas of projection and interactivity. These two related technical and aesthetic practices in fact enable the double dialectic of past and present: the one unfolding onstage and the one unfolding in the experience of the audience. In both cases, we have a constantly shifting relationship between the past and the present, between, on the one side, a past that is fixed and over but yet always variable in its reconstruction and, on the other, a present that is always vexed and tense in terms of the choices for action it presents and the outcomes for the future that it holds.

The psychoanalytic concept of projection is closely related to that of identification. In the context of staging, the movement from projection to identification brings the audience into the picture. With which situations and characters is the audience likely to identify? How is such identification encouraged by the production? And how do such patterns and encouragements differ over time as elements of production difference?

Das Rheingold begins with the theft of the gold by the Nibelung dwarf Alberich. In what we often refer to as "traditional" staging—a composite reference to the original Bayreuth production (1876 to 1936), to the drawings of Arthur Rackham, and to the colonizing aesthetic of Walt Disney's animated films—Alberich is a grotesque "other." In the context of the grotesque "other," generic academic discussions of Wagner and the *Ring* seem doomed often to hit the same turbulence on the question whether Alberich, along with his brother Mime and his cousins Loge and Beckmesser, are encoded with the speech and bodies of Jews. To say that they are so encoded is to argue that Wagner's undisputed anti-Semitism, most explicit in his essays and most famously in *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850), appears as well in his creative work, on which his genius and legitimacy fundamentally rest.

Indeed, these characters have performance styles and histories that key in to their potential ideological inflections. The more cartoon-like their physical attributes, the more “non-operatic” their vocal attributes, the more susceptible their portrayals are to stereotypical overlays, whether by directorial designation or by projection—or indeed by identification—on the part of the audience. Thus, Herbert von Karajan’s Beckmesser, Geraint Evans, never opened his voice in a celebrated recording of 1970; a decade later, Hermann Prey sang the role with vocal beauty, transforming both it and the entire opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, which is of course itself about the writing of songs. There was nothing remotely “Jewish” about Evans’s characterization of Beckmesser, but the associations were enabled by the performance’s non-vocality, by its inability (highly artificial in the context of Evans’s abilities) to make music. The inability to make music is of course the main invective of *Das Judentum in der Musik*. When, on the other hand, Patrice Chéreau directed Heinz Zednik’s Loge (Bayreuth, 1976–1980), the “Jewish” mannerisms of the characterization were clear: black garb, Moses Mendelssohn’s hunched back and a pronounced play of the hands among them. Zednik’s vocal *type* is that of a light tenor or *comprimario*, just the type most suited to the characterological and racial stereotype of a “Jewish” Loge. Zednik’s vocal *performance*, however, was distinctly lyrical and musical, much more Prey than Evans, to cite the discussion above of the character of Beckmesser. So the combinations and their possibilities are complex.

The scholarship on whether or not Wagner projects Jewish and therefore anti-Semitic characterizations onto his characters has largely limited itself to the discussion of stereotypes and the discussion of what are often assumed to be character roles, from Mime (no dispute), to Beckmesser and Loge, where there is room for substantial dispute. Anti-Semitic projection, however, is fundamentally different from Jewish identification. Wagner’s Jewish audiences have certainly caught the sting of the stereotyping in Alberich, Mime and, more subtly, in Loge. But, just as certainly, they have not identified with these characters. If they accepted the anti-Semitic stereotype, they are more likely to have identified with the producer of the stereotype, and thereby to connect these characters to their own ideas and projections of culturally inferior Eastern European Jewry. (In this regard, Sander Gilman brilliantly suggested that Richard Strauss’s portrayal of the Five Jews in his opera *Salome* was calculated to flatter not anti-Semites but German Jewish modernists in their disdain for the so-called *Ostjuden*.)⁵

3

Wagner's Jewish audiences identified with Siegmund. They named their sons after him. Siegmund's origins, like Lohengrin's, are noble but at the same time irrelevant to his position in the outside world; his heroism and his sensibility are self-produced, as is his personality in general. Siegmund is a character clearly dear to Richard Wagner. His music is beautiful of course, and so are his words. His *Stabreim* is built on Wagner's codified beautiful consonants, such as the *W* of *Winterstürme wichen den Wonnemond*. Siegmund's status thus incorporates the claims and the fragility of the blending of *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*.

Indeed, that inner identification continued past 1933. Ernst Bloch wrote that Siegmund and Sieglinde must be understood as refugees, as the love motive expresses a profound solitude. Siegmund, Bloch says, comports himself as the most lucid, the most free and the least conformist of all the heroes of the *Ring*, completely different from the "free" Siegfried, who remains content to follow ingenuously his own nature.⁶ But the plot thickens.

The incestuous union of Siegmund and Sieglinde that lies at the plot center of the *Ring* thus also places the *Ring* at the center of nineteenth-century familial and social networks. Siegmund in his unique psychological delicacy and complexity embodies precisely the complexity and vulnerability of a middle, transitional generation from family business to systemic capitalism. His life traces the cultural and political transition in mid-century Germany from liberal hope to violent betrayal. His personality marks the hope and defeat of a subjectivity combining inner life and ethical action. His music marks the same moment, the same hope and defeat.

The idea of Siegmund—Wotan's idea—is signaled by the sudden appearance of the so-called sword motif at the conclusion of *Das Rheingold*. The character Siegmund appears at the opening of *Die Walküre*. Were we to imagine the shape of the *Ring* as a concerto, then Siegmund enters the work in the position of the solo instrument. Here he resembles in the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*. But whereas Siegmund's entrance, like the Countess's, comes at the opening of the second part of a four-part structure, it carries additional privilege as the opening gesture in the first of three music dramas, as preceded by a prologue—the status Wagner accords explicitly to *Das Rheingold*.

In this first act of *Die Walküre*, Siegmund is granted exceptional privilege in the tuning of his own first-person voice—of his combination of

self-awareness and self-presentation. He is given permission, one might say, by music drama to construct carefully his own musical and psychological subjectivity. This “permission” can be understood as a gesture of temporary hospitality on the part of music drama, a parallel to the momentary hospitality granted by his hostile host, Hunding. Siegmund is both at the center of music drama and its guest. He finds his voice, through the course of the first act, through two sudden and conflicting engagements: with an erotic counterpart and with his paternal inheritance.

In his narrative to Sieglinde and Hunding, Siegmund recalls his wandering childhood with his father, whom he refers to as Wälse. Wälse and Son were pariahs to the social world. They intervened to impose justice. They had different values. They were, as Hunding states in growing agitation, “a wild breed [*ein wildes Geschlecht*],” hated by all.

Siegmund’s nobility, to Wagner’s eye and ear, seems clear enough. What is less clear is the content of Wagner’s identification with Siegmund. An initial element is a projection of the thwarted revolutionary: Siegmund and Richard as impeded heroes of the 1848 revolts and their agendas. More mysteriously, Wagner’s identification with Siegmund conjures the trope of the social pariah in its various symbolic manifestations. Wälse the Flying Dutchman, alias Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, has a son, whom he loves, trains, abandons and finally kills. The structure of Richard’s own fantasmatic relation of issues of paternity and filiation with relation to this cluster is rich. Wagner’s own biography involves anxiety about the biological paternity and abandonment, through death, by his father Wagner. It involves his anxiety about the paternity of his mother’s second husband, the actor Ludwig Geyer. Geyer was, technically, a mime. From mime to Mime—to the allegory of the false, Jewish father—the distance is small. Wagner suspected that Geyer was his father and that Geyer was Jewish, which he was not. There is the vexed musical filiation of two prominent composers of Wagner’s youth: Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, whom Wagner disowned in the wake of his sense of having been abandoned by them. Finally, there is Wagner the megalomaniac, identifying with Christ himself, the original and absolute Son abandoned by his Jewish father: the old God, to use Nietzsche’s label for Wotan. Wagner–Siegmund–Christ: the son trained, loved and killed by the Jewish father in the name of justice. (Not coincidentally, during the years of the initial sketches for the *Ring*, Wagner worked as well on a spoken drama called *Jesus of Nazareth*.)

This Jewish component of the Wagner’s symbolic investment in Siegmund brings up an important issue, an important reversal, in the history of nineteenth-century German Jewish relations and symbolic

constructions of Selves and Others. The loading of Siegmund with a Jewish fantasy brings out not the phantasmagorical construction of the Jew as Other, but the obverse, fantasy construction of the Jew as innermost, and most dangerous, Self. As we know, the fantasmatic “Other” becomes most threatening when it seems to embody the innermost and most repressed aspects of the Self.

Siegmund is thus the embodiment of a complicated and ambivalent Jewish fantasy. This fantasy is both philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic—two postures which also turn out to be more alike than different. Siegmund is a noble outsider and also, if we believe Fricka, a defiler of community and a seducer. He is a complicated character, and taking his name in vain can be treacherous.

The young Thomas Mann—aesthetically precocious and ideologically confused—fell headfirst into the maelstrom of *fin de siècle* fantasy of the Jewish Siegmund. In his 1905 story “The Blood of the Walsungs,” Mann portrayed a hard-working Teuton named Beckerath, a cultural philistine engaged to the highly refined Sieglinde Aarenhold, whose primary loyalty is to her twin brother: Siegmund. Beckerath is Hunding and Mann himself, and Sieglinde holds inevitably the position of Katia Pringsheim, twin sister of Klaus, Mann’s wife that same year, whose family were not pleased by this story. We should not be pleased with it either, because its equation of Jewishness with racial separateness and incest is so clear that it has no need to be explicit.

The story opens at an afternoon dinner chez Aarenhold, as Siegmund and Sieglinde ask Beckerath if he will permit brother and sister to attend a performance of *Die Walküre* that evening, as a last act of sibling intimacy before Sieglinde’s wedding. The two hear the performance alone in the family’s box. Mann then narrates the plot of *Die Walküre*, as witnessed by the twins:

Siegmund gave a moving account of the hatred and envy which had been the bane of his life and his strange father’s life, how their hall had been burnt, his sister carried off, how they had led in the forest a harried, persecuted, outlawed life; and how finally he had mysteriously lost his father as well. And then Siegmund sang the most painful thing of all: he told of his yearning for human beings, his longing and ceaseless loneliness. He sang of men and women, of friendship and love he had sometimes won, only to be thrust back again into the dark. A curse had lain upon him forever, he was marked by the brand of his strange origins.⁷

The erotic charge between Siegmund and Sieglinde Aarenhold increases through the performance, and when they return home, they not only consummate their love just like their Wagnerian models, but they do it on a bearskin. Mann closes the story with the observation that, in Siegmund's postcoital agitation, "for a second the marks of his race stood out strong upon his face." Racial Jewishness can no longer be concealed, Mann tells us, in the natural, bearskin state of incestuous sex.

Wagner's anti-Semitic stereotyping—contingent, as I mentioned earlier, on important casting and performance decisions—depends on a kind of *sonic racism*. Racial identity is more to be heard than seen, revealed by what you sound like more than by what you look like. This sonic racism may disappear in certain performances of Beckmesser and Loge. But it disappears *essentially* in the vocal writing for Siegmund. Vocally and physically, Siegmund is the outsider as insider. Identification with Siegmund means identification with ambiguity in general but most of all with this specific ambiguity of Germanness and Jewishness, *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*. Wagner is dangerous, at times because he inscribed racist stereotypes into his creative work. But he is also dangerous because of his invitation to his audiences to hear and to identify with profound ambiguities in psychological and moral as well as cultural and political positions. Identification with Siegmund means identification with ambiguity, which is dangerous for ideology. A different kind of danger, to be sure.

Siegmund's position corresponds to his voice, both as a metaphor of what he says and how he acts and as a series of sounds. His position is as a guest in a hostile house, but at home in his body and especially in his voice. Yet that "at homeness" in the voice, meaning both in what he says and how he sounds, cannot be communicated to a hostile listener, who will understand both the message and the means—the sound—as a mode of seduction.

4

Siegfried, the third evening of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, reveals a psychological work much less refined and ambiguous than was the case in *Die Walküre*. It is often referred to as the tetralogy's *scherzo*. A certain levity runs through it, no doubt supplied mostly by the boyish, guileless Siegfried himself. In reality, however, *Siegfried* is the darkest of the four works, both visually and emotionally. The settings and stage are unremittingly

and increasingly dark throughout, until mountain height and light burst into the scene in Act 3, Scene 3. Until that moment, we are deep in the forest: the German forest, which in both natural reality and folkloric tradition—think of the Brothers Grimm—is among the world’s densest and darkest. Siegmund and Sieglinde have both died here, without any shelter or protection. Siegfried has endured a miserable childhood here, sheltered only by Mime’s claustrophobic hut and malevolent surveillance. This is the setting of Act I and its central character, the dwarf Mime, Alberich’s less competent but no less conniving brother.

Siegfried’s real darkness resides in the lack of psychic depth and knowledge among virtually all its characters (the earth goddess Erda may be the only exception). Wotan, here called the Wanderer, is void of purpose and clarity. Siegfried possess none of the depth—or depth of ambiguity—of his father Siegmund. And Mime brings unavoidably the possibility of racial stereotyping to the center of the action. We are truly in the shadow of Greek tragedy, where the gods themselves have no knowledge, no understanding of the world. Where knowledge has gone dark, no one learns and no one teaches. Or, more accurately, the schools are bad and the education is worthless. There can be no good answers to bad questions, and Act I of *Siegfried* is all about bad questions: Mime’s to Wotan and then Wotan’s to Mime. Both of these bad teachers ratify Siegfried’s complaint to Mime about his bad education, about the lack of both teaching and learning (*lehren* and *lernen*) in this dreary home school:

Vieles lehrtest Du, Mime,
 Und manches lernt’ ich von Dir;
 Doch was Du am liebsten mich lehrtest,
 zu lernen gelang mir nie:
 wie ich Dich leiden könnt.

Siegfried appears to have inherited one attractive trait from his father here: a penchant for the letter ‘l.’ Remember?

Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond,—
 In mildem Lichte leuchtet der Lenz;—
 Auf linden Lüften leicht und lieblich,
 Wunder webend er sich wiegt ...

According to Wagner’s codes of consonant rhyme (*Stabreim*) and of allegedly musical and unmusical, pleasing and ugly consonants (Siegmund’s w’s and l’s versus Alberich’s hard g’s), Siegfried shows

here some unconscious potential for musicality and the knowledge it brings. This knowledge is both cognitive and—since it is born of the beauty of sound—sensual. It follows, then, that he will receive both cognitive and sensual education together, from Brünnhilde. But he, and we, have a long way to go before that happens (it will not come during this opera).

Following the aesthetic that matured decisively in the first two acts of *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* proceeds also by way of intimate conversations and pained recollections. First, Mime laments that he has know-how—technique (*techné*)—but no knowledge. He can make swords but cannot reforge *the* sword: Nothung, the weapon that shattered upon Siegmund's betrayal and murder. Mime the smith possesses the same limited abilities and Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn the composers, as portrayed in "Judaism in Music." They can function as technicians and imitators, but not as originators, let alone heroic ones.

Act 2 is set deeper in the forest, at the place even Wotan fears (according to the Valkyries): the dragon Fafner's pit. And the dark pass of Act 3 becomes the place of Wotan's final emotional and political defeat, first with Erda, then with Siegfried. At the terrifying black hole of Fafner's lair, Siegfried relaxes. He has no knowledge of the world and its dangers; he therefore has no fear. Siegfried is the character without fear and without knowledge. But at this moment in the *Ring*—the long day of the action of *Siegfried*, no one has knowledge. In Act 2, Scene 1, Wotan ("the Wanderer") declares to his enemy Alberich and the audience that he has come to look, not to act:

Zu schauen kam ich,
Nicht zu schaffen:
wer wehrt mir Wand'res Fahrt?

But we have no way of knowing whether he is sincere or not. Perhaps he has come to unnerve Mime and thus to free Siegfried; in other words to relaunch his original scheme of regaining the Ring without legally breaking his deal with Fafner, the survivor of the two brother giants. He does certainly succeed in unnerving Mime, driving him finally to state flat out to Siegfried that he intends to kill him. Wotan destabilizes Alberich as well, suggesting that Mime will be his only rival in winning the Ring from Fafner, as Siegfried has no knowledge of it or its power. Next, he awakens Fafner for no apparent reason, as he will also do with the far more interesting interlocutor Erda at the start of Act 3. Wotan appears to be Alberich's

equal in this scene, reduced to the same level of vulgarity and inefficacy. With the exception of one swelling phrase in which Valhalla is invoked, his music also betrays a state of deterioration. Whether Wagner is himself in control here or not remains also a question. He may be defanging the god's music along with the god himself—just as Shakespeare was capable of writing bad verse for characters as an indication of their over- or under-inflated status. But even the most fervent Wagnerites will usually admit that the music and music drama in *Siegfried* Act 2 suffer a considerable loss of momentum. The *Ring* seems to have required the 14-year break that delayed the composition of Act 3.

Fafner hasn't a clue what to do with the Ring, as he makes clear on awakening to Wotan and Alberich:

Ich lieg' und besitz':—
lasst mich schlafen!

Besitz is a virtual code word among German historians for the age of unification, empire building and rapid industrialization that marked the 1870s, the decade of Germany's *Gründerzeit* or take-off period, and the decade of the 1876 premiere in Bayreuth of *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* and the complete *Ring*. The slogan of the period was *Bildung und Besitz*: education and possession, or "to know and to own." But, as many scholars have argued, Jürgen Habermas perhaps most famously (in his classic book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*), the Germany of the *Gründerzeit* can be better understood in terms of the replacement of *Bildung* by *Besitz*: a shift in values in which capital outpaced culture as the society's most prized property. Thus the early decades of the nineteenth century stand as periods of experimental politics, embattled liberalism and cultural growth. *Bildung* becomes here the set of ideals bequeathed to the emerging bourgeoisie by the poets—Goethe above all—attaching the cultivation of the self to the building of society. The age of Siegmund, one might say. The decades around unification—the age of Siegfried—emphasize the consolidation and ever-more rigid intensification of national, industrial and imperial power. With this context in mind, both George Bernard Shaw and Patrice Chéreau placed the *Ring* into the decades of the German *Gründerzeit*. But Fafner—quite unlike the Krupps, Siemens and others—proves quite an incompetent industrial capitalist. In his ignorance and literal sleepiness, he only hoards, failing entirely to participate in the new political economy of take-off capitalization.

The midpoint of Act 2 comes as Siegfried muses in the forest about his lost mother and unhappy childhood with Mime. In some ways, this beautiful and mysterious moment at the act's center echoes the inner recollection and exploration of Wotan's Act 2 monologue in *Die Walküre*. Unlike Wotan, Siegfried possesses little interiority and little capacity for self-analysis. Where Wotan somehow peers into the black hole of his unconscious, Siegfried has little capacity to do so and his fearless personality suggests that there would be little unconscious material for him to find, in any case. The black hole of the unconscious is thus displaced into nature and scenery, into the hole in the earth now inhabited by Fafner. This scenic displacement of the unconscious reveals all of the characters in this act—including Wotan—to be cut off from their own inner lives and thus from the capacity for either self-knowledge or knowledge of the world. Siegfried kills Fafner without any consideration of the act while Fafner, rehumanized at the moment of death, dies nobly. Finally, Siegfried kills Mime with equal ignorance and insensitivity, though not without justification. Both acts of violence are banal; Siegfried kills, as Guy Cassiers observed in a pre-production discussion, like a child playing a video game.

Siegfried slays the dragon. But what is the dragon all about? Its terror lies in the mysteries of depth—what is invisible, what lies below, to borrow a phrase from Hollywood. Indeed, Hollywood's best recent version of the dragon is the great white shark in the film *Jaws* (1975). If you are swimming in shark-infested waters, it is reasonable to fear sharks. But if you are terrified by the movie, then you are not literally afraid of the shark (which is not real) but rather of what the shark represents: an attack from the impenetrable depths of your own person, from the unconscious. This is not fear but anxiety. Or rather, anxiety, as Freud argued, is fear without an object of fear, which turns into the fear of the self. Indeed, Wagner's dragon—unbeknownst to Siegfried himself—is invested with such power. That terror should be communicated to the audience, à la *Jaws*: not an easy task. It helps that Wagner's dragon is principally a musical idea, not a visual one. The chromatic, minor chord modulations that constitute the so-called dragon or Fafner motif resemble the so-called Ring motif itself (I say "so-called" because recent Wagner scholarship has tended to eschew the rigorous naming and mapping of the leitmotifs and their relations, arguing instead for a more fluid and formal logic to musical form and motivation).

These dragon sounds do return to haunt Siegfried, in a strong example of the return of a repressed memory at a moment of danger. They

return when Siegfried does learn fear—at the moment of his discovery of Brünnhilde. It is difficult to banish the idea that Wagner is inserting a musical joke here. But the point is really not that the lady is a dragon. It is, rather, that Siegfried begins to show signs of a sense of self, history, knowledge and anxiety at the moment of erotic discovery and its inscription of an unconscious. The elements shared by Brünnhilde and Fafner involve the descent into the unconscious and the pursuit and power of erotic knowledge. Eros then emerges as that aspect of the unconscious available to the mind and body, the foundation of the person's negotiation with the world.

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Is there any way out of this problem? The way out would be defined by what we might call a deliberate tone-deafness to sonic signals of cultural and indeed racial predicaments and prejudices. So far, as I am well aware, I have defined a problem which to many audiences may not exist—the problem of the sub-surface Jewish inflections of Siegmund as a character built out of sound. I therefore may be opening a debate on a solution that may appear unnecessary. But I don't think either is the case. If we admit to a potential Jewish inflection of Siegmund, this may prove embarrassing for audiences. Thus the production of a deliberate tone-deafness to the issue: proceeding by ignoring the problem. Some interesting analogues present themselves here.

One such analogue is some of Gustav Mahler's music, for example the third movement of the First Symphony. We know the debate as to whether this is "Jewish music." Once the question is posed, performance and listening choices become immediately vexed. Either we perform it with explicit Jewish inflections (Leonard Bernstein) and hear it as such, or we disapprove of such performances and find refuge in different, perhaps "non-Jewish" renditions (Klaus Tennstedt), which in turn can be heard as repressing the ethnic element. And then we have the enduring example of Herbert von Karajan, who wouldn't conduct the music at all because of its alleged Jewish sound. So the question is inescapable.

A second analogue is offered by contemporary work, at once theoretical and activist, on the question of racism in the United States and South Africa, where race is a function of skin color, and the current discourse of so-called "color-blindness." "Color-blindness" becomes a policy decision, a disavowal of race as a factor in rationalized considerations of

status and qualifications, as in affirmative action policies (or, rather, refusals thereof). However, as many contemporary theorists of race and race questions have recently been arguing, the general proposition of “color-blindness” becomes a suppression from both policy and discourse not of biological race itself but of the political realities of race and racism. Racism is thus preserved and indeed nurtured by other means, under the skin, so to speak. It hardly needs to be said how energized this new subcutaneous and indeed sub-discursive racism has become in the age of Barack Obama. Isn’t there an immediate problem in making the choice to be blind or deaf?

So the problem does not rest in the kind of essentializing parody in which Barack Obama is or is not black and Siegmund is or is not Jewish. The question is in the auras and inflections that inform our perception of these figures, in sight and sound, and our reception of the politics of inclusion and exclusion.

Finally, and in this context, I would like to hazard a perception of the problem in the context of the Wagner taboo in Israel. It would seem especially unfortunate and counterproductive that the voice of Siegmund should continue to be silent in Israel. Here I will take advantage of the current conference to conclude with a certain provocation. If the abiding Wagner taboo in Israel silences Siegmund, it is not a German, Wagnerian or indeed anti-Semitic voice that is being suppressed, but rather a certain Jewish voice and Jewish subject position. This subject position may be Siegmund’s, and in certain respects even Wagner’s. These subject positions are built on the ambiguities of Jewish identification. The Wagner taboo, whether intentionally, functionally or both, simplifies Wagner’s world.

NOTES

1. *The Ring of Myths: The Israelis, Wagner & the Nazis* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2000).
2. See Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, transl. R. Livingstone (London: Verso, 1981).
3. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979).
4. See Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); David J. Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen: The Dramaturgy of Disavowal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

5. Sander L. Gilman, "Strauss, the Pervert, and Avant Garde Opera of the Fin-de-siècle," *New German Critique* 43 (Spring 1988).
6. The remark is also cited by Patrice Chéreau in his memoir of his production of the *Ring* for the Bayreuth Festival. See Chéreau, *Lorsque Cinq Ans Seront Passés* (Toulouse: Éd. Ombres, 1994), p. 17.
7. Thomas Mann, "The Blood of the Walsungs," in *Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories*, transl. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage, 1954), p. 309.

The Concept of Race in Musicological Thought: From General Remarks to a Case Study of So-called Gypsy Music in European Culture

Anna G. Piotrowska

The current stereotypical yet quite persuasive image of the Gypsies and their music making—as shown, for example, in films by Tony Gatlif and Emir Kusturica and popular proverbs and anecdotes—results from nineteenth-century reinterpretations of the Gypsy people and their folklore, when a space was asserted for gypsyism, as if to compensate for the denial of a space for the Gypsies themselves, who had been subject to a number of discriminatory practices, including the politics of expulsion, prosecutions and enforced assimilation and housing. The social construct of gypsyism, which heavily affected the musical culture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was shaped under the influence of such significant intellectual modes as orientalism, racism and nationalism. In discourse on the Gypsies these notions are often intermingled, since there often seems to be a “lack of consensus between defining orientalism and

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racism,” with racial attitudes prone to being “translated into orientalist critiques.”¹ The musicologist Bennett Zon therefore advocates separating questions of race from the study of the Other in musical cultures. This is the perspective adopted in this chapter: accordingly, theories that orientalize Gypsy music, as an emanation of exoticism, are a slightly different type of approach to the question of how music performed by the Gypsies was perceived in European thought, and are not taken into consideration here.² Instead, the undeniable impact of racial identification on musicological writings, entailing the construction of theoretical frameworks, is briefly presented in the first part of this chapter and then followed by a detailed case study of the perception of music made by the Gypsies as immersed in racial categories.

RACE AND MUSIC: A SHORT OUTLINE OF MUTUAL LINKAGES

The European colonization of the world naturally entailed a rise in interest in exotic peoples along with their culture and music; at the same time, writers such as Julie Brown claim, “racial categories were primarily created by Europeans as a result of their contact with, and subordination of, non-European peoples.”³ The theoretical framework for the concept is traced back to the eighteenth century⁴ and to philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and David Hume as well as to natural scientists such as Carl von Linné and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who established five categories of human race. But in fact the word “race” first appeared in European languages around the thirteenth century, as a result of the presence of Arab Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. During the Spanish Reconquista, the word carried the same meaning as the Arabic word that it translated and was often used in medieval Spanish texts without carrying any prejudicial connotations,⁵ as “it remains logically true that belief in racial difference does not necessarily require endorsement of discrimination.”⁶ After a slow process of infiltration of the term into other European languages, beginning around the sixteenth century,⁷ race became a readily cited notion during the Enlightenment era. The scientific study of race began with a physician, Charles White from Manchester, and continued with another physician, Samuel Morton, the inventor of craniometrics. What we would nowadays call racial ideology was also disseminated by Voltaire, Jefferson and Gobineau, among others.

References to music were used in the construction of the concept of race by, among others, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who linked racial differentiation with music, claiming that nature itself was responsible for the formation of different races and music. Rousseau argued that music descended from language and could consequently be interpreted as a confirmation of the existence of racial differences.⁸ In his opinion, music, as an entity rooted in nature, reflected racial contrasts, especially in such forms as the German Romantic songs (*Lieder*), and the logic of this concept was convincing to Johann Gottfried Herder and other European collectors of folk songs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁹ But races had been described in relation to their abilities to produce music even earlier than that. Hume, for example, “speculated that Negroes were naturally inferior to whites because they never produced ... arts,”¹⁰ while Julien-Joseph Virey described music enjoyed by the “Negroes” as “rough,” stating that it “has no harmony, though they appreciate and feel it; it consists only in a few loud intonations, and cannot form a train of melodious modulations.”¹¹ He also asserted that “some words, without connexion, which they can sing with monotonous tone, and repeat again and again, amuse them for whole days together. Such songs, if they can be called so, prevent their being tired, their rhythm assuages their labors, and gives them strength anew.”¹² Blumenbach already considered a certain type of musicality as characteristic of the “Negroes,” who, he concluded, showed some “aptitude for music.”¹³

In the nineteenth century, under the influence of theories promoted by Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, the perception and representation of biological differences entered a phase marked by an evaluative aspect. Spencerian and Darwinian concepts both served as a “theoretical basis for the scientific discourse, stabilizing the identity of Self by affirming the otherness of the rest.”¹⁴ Within this ideological framework, John Hullah ventured to ask, “How can there be music acceptable to one cooperatively civilized people and altogether unacceptable—unintelligible even—to another?”¹⁵ The science of race thrived and its popularity soared in the post-Darwinian world; the adjective “racial,” appropriately charged with evaluative connotations, appeared in the English language in the 1860s.¹⁶ Around the same time, from 1869 to 1876, François Fétis (1784–1871) was publishing his book *Histoire générale de la musique*, in which he talked about the inferiority of music by the African race, establishing the tendency in the historiography of music to concentrate on the properties of races. Assuming the superiority of European music as his starting point, Fétis set

an example of representing musical cultures in a certain hierarchy; similar trends persisted in musicological thought well into the mid-twentieth century, as exemplified by synthetic histories of music such as Ernst Bücken's *Die Musik der Nationen* (1937).¹⁷

With time, preserving the quality of music became associated with preserving the racial purity of its creators. This trend could be seen particularly strongly in the German musicology of the Third Reich, but even in turn-of-the-century France there was already a preoccupation with racial thinking that resulted in theories that certain races (for example Aryans and Semites) were truly able to enjoy music while others were doomed to remain at the level of primitive music. As Jann Palser suggests, “the intellectual elite” at that time “supported ... classical values and ‘noble pursuits’ such as ‘pure beauty,’ perhaps because they were associated with the white race.”¹⁸

Racial purity certainly became an obsession for the Third Reich, where, from 1933 onwards, some musicologists helped to create new racial standards to be applied to the repertoire selected for public concerts and to the composers and genres that were preferred for radio broadcasts.¹⁹ These scholars played an important role in the reinterpretation of the entire musical past, as Michael Meyer writes.²⁰ But the actions undertaken to preserve the racial purity of German music were not only advocated by musicologists: they were energetically supported by German politicians. Joseph Goebbels, who was responsible for Germany's cultural politics during the Third Reich, went so far as to claim that “without Germany, without the great German masters, who with their stirring symphonies and operas captured the wonderful music of all peoples and all nations, world music would be unthinkable.”²¹

Most of the early twentieth-century musicological writings on race and music were rooted in late nineteenth-century theoretical sources dealing with the concept of race and were closely connected with Richard Wagner's famous pamphlet on the Jews in music. Hence, texts written during the Third Reich on the topic of race in music seem to fall into two main categories,²² the first oriented towards “the problem of forming Germanic or Nordic racial characteristics in music”²³ and the second focused exclusively on studies of the Jewish race. In research on so-called Jewish music, there was often no clear definition of the term, and decisions about whether to include or exclude music by particular Jewish composers were made based on the whims of the writer.²⁴ Generally, the Jews were considered as deprived of creative abilities, while not completely

denied “the capability of achieving skills of parroting as well as empathy,” which could result in the effect of a “surprisingly high artistic level.”²⁵ The Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg claimed that atonal music, which he considered a “diabolical deviation,” was mainly supported by “Jews [who] obey their race and must, as a consequence, try to destroy harmony, which is genetically foreign [to them].”²⁶ Jazz, which was also officially condemned,²⁷ was associated (for instance in the collective publication *Die Juden in Deutschland*, 1935) with entertainment and with “Jewish industry, ... not controlled by any scruples.”²⁸ Many musicologists of that time agreed with Hans Pfitzner, who claimed that it was necessary to fight against that “barbarian invasion backed up by the Jews.”²⁹ Their compositions were banned from public life (e.g. forbidden to be broadcast on the radio).³⁰ The peak of the association of race with music was reached in 1941, with the publication of the infamous *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* by Theo Stengel, including more than 8,000 names, listed in alphabetical order and classified into Jews and half-Jews.³¹

Advanced studies on the variety of manifestations of racial aspects in music led to the establishment of concrete methodologies of research. Some methods involved the analysis of the content of a given work, supposedly revealing the external dimensions of racial characteristics. In 1933, Hermann Matzke affirmed that in order to determine the features of any artistic work “that can be considered typical for different nations and races, the study of the piece should follow at least two paths: the first researching the external characteristics (and therefore the formal aspects) of the piece, and the second its internal, or spiritual, content.”³² Jón Leifs, an Icelandic composer, tried to track down the musical style of the Germanic race within Icelandic folk music following this rule, for instance.³³ Other methods considered the anthropological characteristics of composers as representatives of particular races. In 1932, Richard Eichenauer’s work *Musik und Rasse*, for example, presented composers from six different races, using a classification taken from Hans Günther’s 1929 book *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*.³⁴ This method was sometimes expanded, incorporating the composer’s entire (ideological) genealogy.

Not all German musicologists were convinced by these methods; some suspected that “comparative musicology floated between the words of academic rigour and amateur curiosity.”³⁵ Friedrich Blume, for example, who stressed the importance of codifying and formalizing the procedures of relating race and music, felt uncomfortable about the formation of general opinions on the basis of hunches and premonitions unsupported by

scientific evidence.³⁶ Similar opinions were expressed by other scholars at that time: Franz Boas, for one, feared that it was “difficult to obtain convincing results in regard to emotional reactions in different races. No satisfactory method has been devised.”³⁷ In 1937, on the other hand, Guido Walmann, recognizing the advantages of incorporating the doctrine of the ties between race and blood into the interpretation of history, wondered about whether musicology had adequately responded to this need and criticized what he saw as the field’s rare and insufficiently enthusiastic references to it in the past.³⁸

Within the rapidly developing field of ethnomusicology, issues of race and music became of special interest as a result of the increasing controversy associated with the relationship. Ethnomusicologists, however, argued that the concept of race was not relevant to their work: both Curt Sachs, in the 1940s, and John Blacking, 30 years later, questioned the heuristic importance of the term “race” as well as its general usefulness in describing musical phenomena. At the same time, theories still circulated (inspired by functionalist positions) on the role of music in determining collective or individual identification.³⁹ In the opinion of modern ethnomusicologists, “music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them.”⁴⁰ In the musicology of the second half of the twentieth century, texts devoted to music and race were reinterpreted with an emphasis on the arbitrary nature⁴¹ and the selectivity⁴² of classification. Therefore, in the so-called New Musicology, which grew vigorously starting in the 1980s, especially in Anglo-Saxon circles, new perspectives were adopted, among other things under the influence of Edward Said’s theory of orientalism. In 2000, *Music and the Racial Imagination*, edited by Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman, openly addressed the issues, probably for the first time within musicology, of the intersections between music and race as discussed within musicological thought,⁴³ proposing to look into a variety of questions concerning racial imagination in the musicological discourse. The influence of this book can be seen in a number of texts that followed it.⁴⁴ In 2006, an entire issue of *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* was dedicated to the relations between race and music. In one of the articles included in that issue, Derek B. Scott clearly states that “there is no such a thing as race. It may have a social reality but ... no sound scientific grounding whatsoever.”⁴⁵ Another milestone in the research on race and music was Julie Brown’s edited volume on *Western Music and Race* (2007), which focused on “discursive

entanglements between Western art music and race.”⁴⁶ But while these interventions and most of the musical literature seems to be preoccupied with linkages between race and Western music (both art music and popular music), these interrelations are also relevant with respect to other musical cultures, and the latest musicological thought is opening itself towards such globally oriented histories of music.⁴⁷

GYPSY MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF RACIAL DISCUSSIONS

Fascinated with the music played by the Gypsies, the Hungarian-born musician Franz Liszt published his work *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* in 1859: in other words only a few years after the 1850 appearance in print of Richard Wagner’s pamphlet *Das Judenthum in der Musik*, dealing with so-called Jewishness in music. Although Liszt had a genuine and well-documented interest, going back decades, in issues concerning the Gypsies and especially their music, it is symptomatic that it was after Wagner’s text had already become well known that Liszt decided to have his book published. This is a telling “coincidence,” if we consider that Liszt’s numerous encounters with Gypsies dated back to his childhood years, spent in Hungary, and were rekindled as early as approximately 1839, when the virtuoso revisited his homeland to perform as a pianist. And yet the outlook that Liszt presents on the issue of race in music in his book is different from that of Wagner (who happened to be Liszt’s son-in-law)⁴⁸; Liszt was in fact even accused of intellectual deficiency, at least in comparison with Wagner.⁴⁹

Liszt’s work, however, reflected the general atmosphere of the era quite well, with the category of race being used in various configurations and contexts. Although it made no obvious references, *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie* was an outgrowth of the scientific speculations of the second half of the nineteenth century on the concept of race. Liszt, with his intensive reading habits, presumably had a good understanding of these trends. Despite the common opinion of him as a mere “unthinking, finger-driven virtuoso,”⁵⁰ he read avidly in both French and German, kept up with the daily and scientific press, and subscribed to the *Revue scientifique*. According to Ben Arnold, “Liszt was at least aware of the scientific discoveries of Darwin and Wallace.”⁵¹ (The German explorer Gerhard Rohlfs attested to the fact that Liszt was familiar with Darwin’s *Descent of Man* and Alfred Wallace’s *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection*.⁵²)

The category of race appeared in the first edition of Liszt's book and was even more visible in the second, extended 1881 edition; it was associated with both the Gypsies and the Jews. Liszt could not but observe several similarities between the situations of the Gypsies and the Jews, both treated in European culture as representatives of oriental races.⁵³ But Liszt clearly differentiated the Gypsy and Jewish races, discussing this subject in the section of his book entitled "The Contrast with the Jews." His position towards the Jewish question was in fact similar to the one put forth by Wagner in his pamphlet,⁵⁴ presenting the Jews as a cruel yet subservient race.⁵⁵ However, Liszt also believed that the Jews were able to acquire the language (in this case the musical language) of the country where they lived,⁵⁶ while remaining incapable of creating genuine music and participating in the creation of valuable art. Wagner, similarly, wrote that "Jews have never had their art" and attributed to them a limited ability to compose, manifested only in "the ceremonial music of their Jehova rite."⁵⁷ Unfavorable opinions about Jews, appearing in the first edition of Liszt's book in 1859, were further elaborated on in the second edition, of 1881. At the time of its publication, the Jewish press reacted rapidly and quite sharply, and Liszt was accused of open anti-Semitism. Miksa Schütz, the music critic of the newspaper *Pesther Lloyd*, writing under the pseudonym Sagittarius, published a brochure entitled *Franz Liszt über die Juden* (1881) in which he depicted the composer as a racist.⁵⁸ Wagner himself, after reading Liszt's book, described his father-in-law as a real "Jew-baiter."⁵⁹

Whatever the composer's opinions (real or attributed)⁶⁰ on the Jews, however, it was his positive attitude towards Gypsies and Gypsy music that influenced many followers of his thought. In 1880, Carl Engel, whose methodology was influenced by E. B. Taylor's 1871 publication *Primitive Culture*,⁶¹ described Gypsies as living in hordes, away from the influences of civilization; he granted them such qualities as gaiety and sensitivity and assessed their musical culture as undistorted by the atmosphere of concert halls.⁶² Engel, also noticing the similarities between the Gypsy and Jewish races and treating them both as oriental races that managed against all odds to retain the unique character of their music, writes (perhaps even with a certain degree of admiration) that "there exists this resemblance between the two races, that the Jews as well as the Gypsies evince an extraordinary fondness for cultivating the musical art."⁶³

Béla Bartók, another author who wrote about the issue of so-called Gypsy music from a racial perspective, but in the early twentieth century,

was vividly interested in Liszt's opinions as a Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist.⁶⁴ He initially followed the path laid out by the canonical nineteenth-century works on race,⁶⁵ and his theoretical writings provided the main corpus of relevant positions for the rapidly developing field of ethnomusicology. For this discipline, "the issue of race was very much alive during this interim period,"⁶⁶ as music was seen as a phenomenon closely related to culture in general. Bartók, therefore, also referred directly and indirectly to such issues as ethnic and cultural roots, hybridity, the concept of the noble savage and the distinction between low and high art. In his later writings, he drew on Darwinism and the corruption and deviation implied in it. His studies, especially those published after World War I, aimed to synthesize his own research with claims that were formulated on the basis of comparative musicology. His works were published over the course of four decades (from 1904 to 1945) and applied a clear dualism to the discussion of almost all musical phenomena.⁶⁷ While in his earlier writings Bartók contrasted Gypsy music with Hungarian music, describing Gypsy music as lacking standards and identifying it with deformation and degeneration, in subsequent articles dealing with issues related to Gypsy music he applied this dualistic, evaluative pattern within Gypsy music itself, contrasting urban and rural Gypsy performance practices.

In the first of the two polarities just referred to, Bartók recognized music by Hungarian peasants as authentic Hungarian folk music while considering Gypsy music to be fake Hungarian folk music. His claim was that all that Gypsy musicians did was to perform and disseminate "real" Hungarian folk music and that, in the process of distributing it, they often deformed or even mutilated it. This point of view was heavily criticized by the now-forgotten German musicologist Heinrich Möller (1876–1957). The discussion between these two authors began when Möller published the twelfth volume, solely dedicated to Hungarian music, of his 14-volume anthology *Das Lied der Völker* (1931). Möller's collection was generally well received by the most illustrious musicologists of his time (such as Guido Adler and Hans Joachim Moser, who did, however, note minor problems in differentiating genres), scholars and writers (among others, Thomas Mann and Romain Rolland).⁶⁸ Bartók also familiarized himself with Möller's work; he had in fact eagerly anticipated it, expecting that the collection would help to verify his stereotyped beliefs about Hungarian music. However, the quality of Möller's work deeply dissatisfied Bartók, who publicly criticized it (the same year it was published) in the journal *Ethnographia*, claiming that Möller had presented nothing but an eerie

assemblage devoid of any logical plan,⁶⁹ a kind of “conglomeration that bewilders the uninitiated reader.”⁷⁰ Bartók pointed out such shortcomings of Möller’s collection as erroneously assigned dates and, even more important, a peculiar choice of material. He also raised the question of (in)appropriate piano accompaniments.⁷¹ But most strongly of all, Bartók attacked Möller’s statement, in the foreword to the anthology, in which he talked about the significant role played by Gypsy music in the creation of the Hungarian musical idiom and criticized those Hungarian folklorists who denied its importance in the development of Hungarian folk music. That was “possibly the most damning mistake of all in Bartók’s eyes.”⁷²

Möller did not take the criticism lightly and hit back against Bartók’s accusations, leading to an exchange of opinions between the two authors. Möller accused Bartók of representing Darwinism (as it was broadly understood) and of replicating the extremely biased and polarizing schema of the so-called “norm” (racial purity) and “deviation” (the distortion of that purity). According to Möller, Bartók used language teeming with allusions to such concepts as “degenerate” and “secondary” in writing about Gypsy music.⁷³ Bartók understood and described the process of transforming melodies and rhythms that could be seen in the Gypsies’ performances as a deliberate alteration and modification of Hungarian music. As early as 1911, in his article entitled “On Hungarian Music,” Bartók used rhetoric that clearly showed the traces of equating the concept of Gypsy music in Hungary with contamination and destruction. He defined the Gypsies as a “wandering people,” whose music was full of “melodic distortions”⁷⁴; in commenting on the performing manner of Gypsy musicians, Bartók resorted to pejorative terms suggesting that the Gypsies liked to “drum [their songs] into the ears of the Hungarian gentry.”⁷⁵ In 1914, furthermore, writing about the music of Romanian Gypsies, Bartók accused them of perversion and distortion: “Gypsies pervert melodies, change their rhythms to ‘gypsy’ rhythm, introduce among the people melodies heard in other regions and in the country seats of the gentry—in other words, they contaminate the style of genuine folk music.”⁷⁶ In 1921, Bartók again used similar language in commenting on Hungarian folk music, writing that Gypsy musicians deformed and destroyed the identity of the melodies they performed through their frequent use of rubato, unnecessary enrichment of the melodic lines, and abundant ornamentation. The British musicologist Gilbert Webb had actually expressed similar opinions at the end of the nineteenth century, talking about the racial characteristics of folk music and referring to Gypsy music as representative of Hungarian music

yet corrupted by redundant ornamentation.⁷⁷ But it was Bartók who adamantly insisted, again and again (including in international contexts), that Hungarian Gypsies merely performed Hungarian music and that what was commonly considered “Gypsy music” was a kind of (Gypsy) blemish on the healthy tissue of Hungarian music. Moreover, he found Gypsy music making—heavily dependent on the repetition of borrowed foreign patterns—to be devoid of any uniform character. He accused Gypsies of disrupting the inherent unity of the text and music of Hungarian songs by introducing the practice of purely instrumental performances, thus “losing” half of the material (i.e. the lyrics). In Bartók’s eyes, this manner of performing put the authenticity of Gypsy music into question.

It was not until 1942, however, that Bartók spoke explicitly about the issue of racial purity in music, in a paper on “Race Purity in Music” first published in the United States in *Modern Music*.⁷⁸ Considering the political situation, with the growing influence of Nazism in Europe forcing the emigration of many European composers, especially those of Jewish origin, to the United States, one would have expected a title like that to be followed by an article in which the composer clearly presented his views on the relations between race and music, as David Cooper notes.⁷⁹ Alas, Bartók remained “less than willing to clarify his position on the Nazi doctrine of race purity in his essay”⁸⁰ (in fact, prior to 1938, Bartók rarely if ever referred to the Nazi doctrine in his writings).⁸¹ A 1942 article by Bartók started with these words: “There is much talk these days, mostly for political reasons, about the purity and impurity of the human race, the usual implication being that purity of race should be preserved, even by means of prohibitive laws.”⁸² In the course of the paper, the composer avoided more direct statements that would have revealed his own opinions, excusing himself with his lack of thorough scientific knowledge about racial purity⁸³ and claiming that he did not feel authorized to speak on the issue. Yet he stressed that he was reserving the term “racial” to describe the music itself, not its creators,⁸⁴ thereby clearly distancing himself from the methodologies of Nazi musicology.⁸⁵

Bartók emphasized the peculiar nature of the impurity in music that resulted from the transfers of melodies and rhythms between the races, venturing to state that “racial impurity” should be perceived as “definitely beneficial.”⁸⁶ He claimed that interactions between different musical cultures (assigned to different races) invariably resulted in revitalization and diversification, preventing the stagnation and poverty of musical ideas. Having said that, however, Bartók did not give any specific

examples of this process, also leaving open the question of his own (perhaps changed?) attitude to the relationship between Hungarian and Gypsy music. Although he maintained that “contact with foreign material not only results in an exchange of melodies, but—and this is still more important—it gives an impulse to the development of new styles,”⁸⁷ in the same paragraph he determined that this kind of intercultural process posed a potential threat to the individuality of a given style. Some researchers, including Cooper, have drawn attention to this inconsistency in Bartók’s argument, even proposing that this discrepancy might in fact have constituted its very essence,⁸⁸ as if the composer had been unable to reason out his own standpoint on the issue in the light of his former opinions on Gypsy music. Addressing this problem, Julie Brown, believing that the category of hybridity played a crucial role in his thinking, proposes reading Bartók’s writings as a “catalogue of discursive features standard in any nineteenth-century book on natural history.”⁸⁹ Derek B. Scott, on the other hand, emphasizes that “despite the misgivings about racial purity and music,” Bartók truly “believed in cultural essences rather than cultural constructions.”⁹⁰

So, then, Bartók’s image of the Gypsy musician, initially constructed negatively as a musician who merely performed “distorted” Hungarian music (that was falsely defined by some as a true Gypsy repertoire), was subject to changes within Bartók’s own writings, beginning in 1931. That image evolved and became more favorable as the composer started to present the Gypsies as victims of the nobility’s whims and cravings. He became more inclined to see Gypsy musicians as abused by the upper classes, who simply treated them as goods at their disposal,⁹¹ hiring Gypsy bands to provide the accompaniment for parties, balls, sleigh rides and so on. The racial factor slowly disappeared from Bartók’s writings, eventually to be replaced by a more economically determined approach: according to Bartók, it was the economy that prompted Gypsy musicians to expand and take over the role formerly cherished by (often rural) Hungarian musicians.⁹² This change in Bartók’s attitude towards Gypsy music coincided with his discovery of the new musical hybrid that was imported American jazz, which replaced Gypsy music, at least to a certain degree, as the example of hybridity in music.⁹³

Bartók was not the only early twentieth-century writer who approached the music of the Gypsies from a racial standpoint. The intellectual climate of the period favored perceiving musical and racial issues together; Henry Cart de Lafontaine, for one, describing the music of the Gypsies in Spain in

1907, characterized them as a “weird race” and a “bizarre race,”⁹⁴ ardently supporting the idea that features characteristic of a given race find their reflection in its music. In 1925, the Polish composer Karol Szymanowski wrote that “creativity depends on the given individual’s race.”⁹⁵ A similar view was proposed in the same year by yet another writer, Albert T. Sinclair, who focused on Gypsy music and introduced the Gypsies as “outcasts and a despised race.”⁹⁶ In other musicological publications from the period, for example *Unter fremden Völkern. Eine neue Völkerkunde*, Gypsies were classified as non-European peoples.⁹⁷ In the following years, especially in German scientific literature, Gypsies were characterized as a race with an inborn inclination toward music.⁹⁸ While “the figure of the Gypsy musician was always associated with innate musicality,”⁹⁹ at the time of the Third Reich this seemingly innocent, or at least natural, factual statement carried much more meaning than first meets the eye, becoming in fact much more sinister.

Defining so-called Gypsy music has always proved problematic to researchers, and it continues to be so today. There are no reliable historical accounts confirming what kind of music Gypsies performed among themselves in the past, and the issue is further complicated by the migrant character of the Gypsies in earlier epochs and the musical interrelationships both among different Gypsy groups and between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. Unsurprisingly, attempts to explain the undeniably fascinating musical phenomenon that is known for short and rather imprecisely as Gypsy music have tended to result in theories and hypotheses complying with the dominant intellectual modes of the times in which they originated. The interpretation of Gypsies and their music making from a racial perspective is a telling testament to the truth of Derek B. Scott’s summation that “for more than two hundred years the fiction of race has confused us and distracted us.”¹⁰⁰

NOTES

1. Bennett Zon, “Disorienting Race. Humanizing the Musical Savage and the Rise of British Musicology,” *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 3, no. 1 (2006): 25–43; here 25, 26.
2. On various models of perceiving gypsyism in music, see Anna G. Piotrowska, *Gypsy Music in European Culture: From the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2013).

3. Julie Brown, "Introduction. Music, History, Trauma: Western Music and Race, 1883–1933," in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xiv–xxii; here xix.
4. Christopher M. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich: Linguistics, Racial Anthropology and Genetics in the Dialectic of Volk* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 21.
5. Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), p. 229.
6. Thomas A. Acton, "Scientific Racism, Popular Racism and the Discourse of the Gypsy Lore Society," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 7 (2015): 1187–1204; here 1190.
7. Ivan Hannford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 5.
8. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman, "Introduction," in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 1–56; here p. 14.
9. Pamela M. Potter, "The Concept of Race in German Musical Discourse," in Brown, ed., *Western Music and Race*, pp. 49–62; here p. 50.
10. Hannford, *Race*, p. 216.
11. Julien-Joseph Virey, *Natural History of the Negro Race*, transl. J. H. Geunebault (Charleston, South Carolina: D. J. Dowling, 1837). Reprinted in *Race: The Origins of an Idea, 1760–1850*, ed. Hannah Franziska Augstein (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. 176.
12. Virey, *Natural History of the Negro Race*, p. 169.
13. Hannford, *Race*, p. 211.
14. James Deaville, "Introduction," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 3, no. 1 (2006): ix–xiii; here x.
15. John Hullah, *The History of Modern Music* (London: Parker, Son and Bourn, 1862), p. 7.
16. Derek B. Scott, "In Search of Genetically Modified Music. Race and Musical Style in the Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 3, no. 1 (2006): 3–23; here 3.
17. Ernst Bücken, *Die Musik der Nationen* (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1937).

18. Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 661.
19. Heinz Pohle, *Der Rundfunk als Instrument der Politik. Zur Geschichte des deutschen Rundfunks von 1923/38* (Hamburg: Hans Bredow Institut, 1955), pp. 318–326.
20. Michael Meyer, “The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 4 (October 1975): 649–665; here 651.
21. Bogusław Drewniak, *Kultura w cieniu swastyki* [Culture in the Shadow of the Swastika] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1969), p. 10.
22. Andrzej Tuchowski, “Rasistowskie podstawy narodowosocjalistycznej myśli w muzyce” [The Racist Basis for National Socialist Thought on Music], *Muzyka* 43, no. 1 (1998): 41–64; here 47.
23. Tuchowski, “Rasistowskie podstawy,” p. 42.
24. Joachim Stutschewsky, *Mein Weg zur jüdischen musik* (Wien: Jibneh Musikverlag, 1935), p. 12 (“nicht um Musik von Juden, sondern um jüdische Musik”).
25. Jan Stęszewski, “*Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* z perspektywy współczesnej i polskiej” [*Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* in the Contemporary and Polish Perspective], in *Muzyka i Totalitaryzm* [Music and Totalitarianism], ed. Jabłoński Maciej and Janina Tatarska (Poznań: Ars Nova, 1996), pp. 47–60; here p. 50.
26. Alfred Rosenberg, *Gestaltung der Idee* (Munich: N.S.D.A.P. Verlag, 1940), p. 337.
27. Eugen Hadamovsky, the Third Reich’s chief radio production director, for example, banned the broadcasting of jazz in October 1935. Pohle, *Der Rundfunk als Instrument der Politik*, p. 321.
28. Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich. Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963), pp. 416–418.
29. Meyer, “The Nazi Musicologist,” p. 654.
30. Pohle, *Der Rundfunk als Instrument der Politik*, p. 325 (“Die Kompositionen von Neger[n], Juden, ‘jüdisch- versippten’ ... Personen wurden abgelehnt” [The compositions of Negroes, Jews, and Jewish-related ... persons were rejected]).
31. Theo Stengel, *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* (Berlin: Bernhard Hahnenfeld Verlag, 1941).
32. Tuchowski, “Rasistowskie podstawy,” p. 47.

33. Potter, "The Concept of Race," p. 57.
34. Richard Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (Munich: Lehmanns Verlag, 1932). Interestingly, Eichenauer was never trained as a musicologist.
35. Potter, "The Concept of Race," p. 55.
36. Meyer, "The Nazi Musicologist," p. 656.
37. Franz Boas, "Race and Progress," *Science*, no. 74 (1931). Reprinted in *Race, Language and Culture* (New York: The Free Press, 1940), p. 13.
38. Meyer, "The Nazi Musicologist," p. 656.
39. John Baily, "Music and the Afghan National Identity," in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music. The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes (Oxford: Berg, 1994), pp. 45–60; here pp. 47–48.
40. Martin Stokes, "Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music," in Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity, Identity and Music*, pp. 1–28; here p. 5.
41. Laura Desfor Edles, *Cultural Sociology in Practice* (London: Blackwell, 2002), p. 99.
42. James Clifford, *Writing Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 18–19.
43. Radano and Bohman, *Music and the Racial Imagination*.
44. See for example John D. Kerker, "'Of Me and of Mine': The Music of Racial Identity," in *The Poetics of National and Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 113–151.
45. Scott, "In Search of Genetically Modified Music," p. 3.
46. Brown, "Introduction," p. xv.
47. One example of this is the Balzan Musicology Project *Towards a Global History of Music*, directed by Reinhard Strohm.
48. Liszt's daughter married Wagner in 1870.
49. Ernest Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner* (London: Cassell, 1937), II:193.
50. Ben Arnold, "Liszt as Reader, Intellectual, and Musician," in *Liszt and His World. Proceedings of the International Liszt Conference held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University 20–23 May 1993*, ed. Michael Saffle (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), pp. 37–60; here p. 37.
51. Arnold, "Liszt as Reader," 45.
52. Konrad Guenther, *Gerhard Rohlf's: Lebensbild eines Afrikaforschers* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Fehsenfeld, 1912), pp. 304–307.

53. Even at the end of the seventeenth century, Johannes Christopherus Wagenseil argued that the Gypsies were simply disguised Jews (in his 1697 *Buch von der Meister-Singer holdseligen Kunst*). According to this theory, under the rule of their king Zundel in 1417, the Jews, accused of causing the plague by poisoning wells, tried to avoid the resulting persecution by hiding out in anticipation of better times; at the same time, they also adopted a new name, *Zigeuner*. According to Wagenseil, therefore, Gypsies were actually descended from German Jews. Tadeusz Pobożniak, *Cyganie* [Gypsies] (Cracow: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1972), p. 4. In the nineteenth century this hypothesis was widely known but denied: in a series of articles from 1880 about Gypsy music, Carl Engel quoted Wagenseil's tale only to dismiss it as preposterous, ridiculous and ignorant. Carl Engel, "The Music of the Gipsies (I)," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 21, no. 447 (May 1, 1880): 219–220 (this "curious assertion ... would be simply ridiculous did it not reveal a sad example of misery inflicted by ignorant and superstitious people").
54. Scott, "In Search of Genetically Modified Music," pp. 15–16.
55. Alan Walker, *The Weimar Years 1848–1861*, vol. 2 of *Franz Liszt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 388.
56. Richard Wagner, *Wagner on Music and Drama*, transl. A. Ashton Ellis (New York: Da Capo, 1964), p. 55 ("The Jew has never had an art of his own").
57. Wagner, *Wagner on Music*, p. 55.
58. Walker, *The Weimar Years*, p. 389.
59. Walker, *The Weimar Years*, p. 389.
60. The controversy around the real intentions and views of Liszt was due to the well-documented existence of objections concerning his authorship of *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie*. It was already obvious to many of Liszt's friends in 1859 that it was Liszt's close friend and collaborator Princess Caroline von Sayn-Wittgenstein who was responsible at least for the chapter on Israel (and it was also she who took on the task of preparing the second edition of the book for print in 1881). The princess had already had quite a bit of experience in drafting the texts that appeared under the composer's name (among other things, she prepared Liszt's *Life of Chopin*, a new edition of which appeared in 1879). Soon voices began to appear, among others that of Hans von

Bülów, saying that Princess von Sayn-Wittgenstein should be credited not just with one chapter but in fact with the entire contents of *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie*. Many friends in Liszt's circle, knowing about the work on the book from behind the scenes, understood that the composer, who was very discreet about his relationship with the princess, wanted to be similarly discreet about the details of their collaboration on the book.

61. Zon, "Disorienting Race," pp. 37–38.
62. Carl Engel, "The Music of the Gipsies (II)," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 21, no. 450: 389–391; here 391.
63. Engel, "The Music of the Gipsies (I)," p. 220.
64. Katie Trumpener, "Béla Bartók and the Rise of Comparative Ethnomusicology: Nationalism, Race Purity, and the Legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire," in Radano and Bohlman, eds., *Music and the Racial Imagination*, pp. 403–434; here p. 406 ("fueled partly by racism").
65. Julie Brown, "Bartók, the Gypsies, and Hybridity in Music," in *Western Music and Its Others. Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 119–142; here p. 122.
66. Brown, "Introduction," p. xvi.
67. Bence Szabolcsi, *Béla Bartók. Weg und Werk. Schriften und Briefe* (Budapest: Corvina Verlag, 1972), pp. 363–378.
68. László Vikárius, "Bartók contra Möller or a Hidden Scholarly ars poetica," *The Musical Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 43–71; here 46.
69. Béla Bartók, "Gypsy Music or Hungarian Music?" *The Musical Quarterly* 33 (1947): 240–257; here 243.
70. Bartók, "Gypsy Music," p. 244.
71. Bartók, "Gypsy Music," p. 244.
72. David Malvinni, *The Gypsy Caravan: From Real Roma to Imaginary Gypsies in Western Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 150–151.
73. Béla Bartók and Heinrich Möller, "The Bartók–Möller Polemical Interchange," in *Béla Bartók Studies in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 142–157; here pp. 153–154.

74. Béla Bartók, "On Hungarian Music," in Suchoff, ed., *Béla Bartók Studies*, pp. 301–303; here p. 301.
75. Bartók, "On Hungarian Music," p. 30.
76. Béla Bartók, "Observations on Rumanian Folk Music," in *Béla Bartók Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), pp. 195–200; here p. 198.
77. Gilbert Webb, "The Foundations of National Music," *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 17th session (1890–91): 113–135; here 129.
78. It was also published in 1944 in *Horizon*, no. 10: 403–406.
79. David Cooper, "Béla Bartók and the Question of Race Purity in Music," in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism. Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), pp. 16–32; here p. 23.
80. Cooper, "Béla Bartók," p. 23.
81. János Breuer, "Bartók and the Third Reich," *Hungarian Quarterly* 36, no. 140 (1995): 134–140; here 135.
82. Béla Bartók, "Race Purity in Music," *Horizon* 10 (1944): 403–406; here 403.
83. Bartók, "Race Purity," p. 403: "Those who champion this or that issue of the question have probably studied the subject thoroughly (at least, they should have done so), spending many years examining the available published material or gathering data by personal investigation. Not having done that, perhaps I cannot support either side, [and] may even lack the right to do so."
84. Bartók, "Race Purity," p. 404: "I apply the word racial here to the music itself, and not to the individuals creating, preserving or performing the music."
85. In the Third Reich at that time it was the racial anthropologist Robert Ritter who specialized in issues connected with the Gypsies. He "classified the Gypsy population on a scale from 'pure Gypsy' to non-Gypsy, concluding that the vast majority were racially mixed, known as 'ZM' or *Zigeunermischling*." Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich*, p. 160.
86. Bartók, "Race Purity," p. 405.
87. Bartók, "Race Purity," p. 405.
88. Cooper, "Béla Bartók and the Question of Race Purity," p. 24.

89. Brown, "Bartók, the Gypsies, and Hybridity in Music," p. 122.
90. Scott, "In Search of Genetically Modified Music," p. 16.
91. Judith Frigyesi, *Béla Bartók and the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 60.
92. However, Michael Banton proves that race can be also viewed in connection with such categories as class and economy. Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
93. Suchoff, *Béla Bartók Studies*, p. 207.
94. Henry Cart de Lafontaine, "Spanish Music," in *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 34th session (1907–08): 25–45; here 32.
95. Karol Szymanowski, "Zagadnienie ludowości w stosunku do muzyki współczesnej" [The Problem of Folk in Relation to Contemporary Music], in *Pisma muzyczne* [Writings on Music], vol. 1 of *Pisma* [Writings], ed. Kornel Michałowski (Cracow: PWM, 1984), pp. 169–172; here p. 172.
96. Albert T. Sinclair, "Gypsy and Oriental Music," *The Journal of American Folklore* 20, no. 76 (January–March 1907): 16–32; here 28.
97. Ernst Lewy, "Die Zigeuner," in *Unter fremden Völkern. Eine neue Völkerkunde*, ed. Wilhelm Doegen (Berlin: Otto Stollberg, 1925), pp. 167–176.
98. Gerhard Stein, "Zur Physiologic und Anthropologie der Zigeuner in Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, no. 22 (1941): 74–113.
99. Brian Currid, "'Gypsy Violins' and 'Hot Rhythms': Race, Popular Music and Governmentality," in Brown, *Western Music and Race*, pp. 37–48; here p. 39.
100. Scott, "In Search of Genetically Modified Music," p. 22.

On Racial Thinking and the Problem of “Oriental” Prehistory

Suzanne Marchand

This essay investigates a subject that has been addressed by many others: the contributions made to “scientific” racial thinking by oriental philology.¹ All of these studies have enriched our understanding of the development of racial “science,” illustrating in abundant and convincing detail that humanists, as well as evolutionary biologists and anthropologists, helped to shape the European prejudices that underlay imperialism abroad and anti-Semitism at home. But most of them have left unexplained or vague the internal, *scholarly* reasons many philologists turned to race as a category of analysis; the presumption is generally that during the period of Europe’s most aggressive imperialist activity (ca. 1830–1914) external and especially political motivations drove even the most liberal and tolerant of men (and a few women) to turn to racial analysis. I do not dispute that this was case. But I also believe that these sorts of analyses leave out some of the fundamental forces which drove “orientalists”² to do their work, and it makes it very hard to differentiate the work of someone like Martin Haug, who devoted his (never lucrative) career to advocating the deep antiquity of Persian monotheism from that of his contemporary Lord Canning, governor general of India (1858–62) whose amateur photography project formed the starting point for major, government-sponsored works of racialized anthropometry.³

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Among the extra-political forces which shaped nineteenth-century orientalism I would highlight religion, both as the motivator that inclined many to join the field as *the* main subject of interest for most scholarly orientalists. Religious interests and objectives had always been central for those who learned “oriental” languages, Jesuit missionaries and Lutheran Christian humanists alike. We should not forget that for scholars of oriental languages and cultures, their main job since at least the Reformation had been to assist in the interpretation of the Old Testament, often in the service of one or another sectarian reading. This meant, however, that long before scientific racism reared its head, orientalists had worked extensively to understand and explain a text which was itself the major Christian, Jewish and Muslim source for the history of the human race. For centuries this material was mined extensively in the hopes of obtaining information (or bragging rights, as the case might be) on the earliest history of “nations,” or, as the semantics of the time allowed, “races.” In his excellent *The Forging of Races*, Colin Kidd puts it well: “Old Testament genealogy,” he argues, “was the essential point of departure for understanding the races, linguistic groups, ethnicities and nations of the world.”⁴ As Kidd maintains, there was sufficient material here—especially in Genesis 10, which details Noah’s family tree—to fuel many a racialized history, though there were also countervailing passages—such as Genesis 1:26–28, in which God makes *one* Adam and Eve in his own image—which proclaimed the unity of the human race. But to understand why this material would be enrolled into specifically nineteenth-century forms of racism we need also to understand how and why scholarly orientalists came to use race not just as a descriptor of lineages (as in, the race of the Levites or the Argives), but as a surrogate means of historical analysis. Racial thought was, I will argue, useful for oriental philologists, helping Indologists in particular to convince their modern audiences that their work was relevant to “our” history. Perhaps even more importantly linguists and theologians hoped that racialized histories might help them to overcome otherwise intractable puzzles in Near Eastern chronology and answer a burning question: Which people created the first true religion?

This problem (behind which so many smaller ones are concealed) had, of course, absorbed European scholars and iconoclasts for a very long time, but became even more acute from the seventeenth century forward. Christians, by way of the Old Testament, had always known that their religion was indebted to the cultures and even the cults of the Near East (of which Judaism was one). They knew very well that Abraham came

from Ur, that the Babylonian, Persian and Egyptian Empires had been formidable, and that the Magi came from Persia. The Church fathers, including Augustine, were well aware that Plato's ideas resembled those in the Gospel of John, and had to work hard to root out or accommodate texts and practices which were obviously pagan survivals, and to create a canon according to which Christianity's only real debts were to Judaism. Christian writers were fortunate that the ability to read hieroglyphics and cuneiform disappeared, and that those who could read Sanskrit, middle Persian, Chinese and even Greek were largely cut off from the West. But the great ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, in his early fourth-century attempt to prove the superiority of Christianity over paganism, *Preparation for the Gospel*, preserved numerous ancient oriental pagan testimonies, all of which posed problems for chronologies based on the Old Testament alone. And Renaissance scholars like Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin resurrected ancient esoteric texts, such as the Corpus Hermeticum and the Kabbalah, in which ancient "oriental" wisdom asserted its depth as well as its possible pre-biblical antiquity.⁵

After the Reformation, the ancient heresies and alternative chronologies got fresh airings, and European theologians, chronologers and astronomers worked back through Eusebius, the Hermetic texts and the Hellenistic writers. Rationalist philosophy, from Descartes to Spinoza to Bayle, ate away at both literal and allegorical readings of the scriptures. In the seventeenth century, new material flooded in, gathered by travelers, Jesuit missionaries and learned Jews, Socinians and devotees of esoterica, and complicating greatly the job of the chronologers. Travelers and polemicists, including anti-Catholic Protestants and defenders of toleration, pointed out the similarities between Christian and "heathen" rituals and beliefs. By the mid-eighteenth century, as the doctrine of inspiration withered and iconoclasts grew bolder in their attempts to "unveil" ancient truths, Christian scholars were faced with a very serious threat: that the Old Testament, in which Jesus's coming as the Messiah was foretold, would be claimed to have been borrowed or stolen from pagans, or that another culture, besides the ancient Israelites, could make an equal claim to have received God's special revelation.⁶ And that was the great danger that orientalist in the eighteenth century both sought to exacerbate, or to answer.

Some of these threats came from radical thinkers of the sort profiled recently by Jonathan Israel,⁷ inspired by Spinoza's challenges. Others came from missionaries, who encountered reports of China's great

antiquity, and who suggested, too, that Confucianism and Christian ideas showed so many similarities that they might both be linked to an “ancient theology,” one that predated Moses’ revelation to the Jews.⁸ There were, of course, Deists and radical readers of the *Treatise of the Three Imposters* who equated God with Nature, and insisted that all cults were merely tricks designed to dazzle and enslave the ignorant masses. The *Treatise* also claimed that the Old Testament stories were derived from Greek myths, and that the most exalted Jewish and Christian concepts were pilfered from Plato, or perhaps from Zarathustra. On top of these obviously radical texts, there were some new earth histories too, such as Benoit de Maillet’s *Telliamed* of 1748, in which an Oriental sage, privy to Egyptian wisdom, claims the earth to be two billion years old. The next year, the natural historian George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, diminished this date to a mere 75,000 years—but this was still enough to warrant the intervention of the censors, who made Buffon recant.⁹ Most of these publications, including Spinoza’s works, were censored and/or only available to a very small readership. But many more moderate universal histories, antiquarian studies of the ancient Near East, annotated biblical translations and surveys of world religions were also available by this time, produced by men and a few women convinced that it was their duty to reconcile faith and reason, scripture and scientific truth, something that characterized in particular English, German, Swiss and Dutch liberal Protestant theologians.¹⁰

Biblical chronology, then, was already under pressure, and liberal theologians were well aware of the dangers and the attractions of filling in the gaps between the Creation and God’s revelation to the Jews, something Jacob Bryant tried to do in the 1760s by developing what Thomas Trautmann has called “the Mosaic ethnology.”¹¹ But things were about to get much worse, thanks in part to scholars who had learned oriental languages, and especially languages other than Hebrew, and who began to separate themselves from the theological faculties. In the 1760s, the first works of some of England’s Indiaphiles began to report on the great age of the Vedas, without (as had earlier missionaries) having as their object the replacing or subverting of Indian paganism. In 1765–71, J. Z. Holwell offered a highly favorable account of Indian beliefs and customs, based on translations from an ancient text he called the *Chartah Bhade Shastah* (but which he had lost during the Seven Years War);¹² according to Holwell, this original text demonstrated that there had been a primeval revelation, of which Hinduism preserved truths in their most authentic

and pure form, while the Hebrew version was "clogged with too many incomprehensible difficulties to gain our belief."¹³ The French scholar Hyacinthe Anquetil Duperron went Holwell one better by actually producing his ancient Persian religious text, the *Zend Avesta*, in 1771. In 1776, N. B. Halhed put forward a defense of Hindu world chronology, which suggested cycles of 4,320,000 years; two years later, a supposedly primeval Veda, known to Voltaire in manuscript since 1760, was published in France.¹⁴ Not just earth history, but oriental philology, was beginning to open up what Paolo Rossi long ago called "the dark abyss of time"¹⁵—and, critically for those with humanistic backgrounds, original, authentic texts were being produced which might well prove who the inventors of religion really were.

J. G. Herder, who was remarkably well informed about the latest developments both in oriental philology and in radical philosophy for a man who spent most of his time in Bückeburg, found the new material fascinating and compelling. He took very seriously challenges to the Bible's originality and integrity made by a wide range of radicals and critics, from Voltaire and Spinoza to Richard Simon and to Jean Astruc. But he was also well aware that Holwell's claims were shaky, and that Halhed's dates had been challenged; though he himself continued to think Anquetil's *Zend Avesta* authentic, he knew that William Jones had pronounced it a forgery. In an important essay of 1774, titled, telling, "The Oldest Document of Mankind," Herder identified an essential problem for those who wanted "scientific" proof for their alternative oriental histories: most of the new "documents" were very iffy or only hearsay; the radical literature and the earth histories still relied entirely on Eusebius and the Hellenistic authors. Thus, claims for oriental ur-antiquity did not rest on the direct, datable documents that would make conventional humanistic enterprises possible. "[H]ow do we know about these sects?" he asks.

We don't have their own books; though many have argued that they are written in such a language, with such a form of writing ... but we must content ourselves with information from foreign peoples, and how many and how many different sorts of them there are! We know them through Arabs Jews, Persian, and partly Egyptians and Greeks, from different times and in different periods of their decline; everyone sees them through the medium only of his own religion and philosophy; and since our literati, that is, stubble-collectors, can do nothing other than collect stubble; we have now got a mishmash and a shouting match, so that finally no one really knows, what is the whole thing about!¹⁶

Herder—who was at this point just leaving behind a more radical period in his life, and reengaging with Hamann’s mysticism, was himself eager to integrate the Old Testament into the poetic, religious and even mystical world of the ancient Orient—but he perceived very clearly that untangling the “mishmash” of claims, for Indian, Persian, Chinese or Egyptian priority, for example, and stopping the shouting match was impossible without some means of reliable arbitration (meaning scholars with good linguistic skills) and authentic, datable texts. Until that happened, “the oldest document of mankind” remained the Old Testament.¹⁷

Indeed, in the wake of Herder’s essay, in 1782, after years of whispering, Voltaire’s *Ezourvedam* was shown to be the work of a Jesuit missionary, and proponents of “oriental wisdom” were back to square one: they still didn’t have a text to stand on. But this makes the situation seem more comfortable than it was for defenders of the Bible (we shall henceforth omit from our consideration those who embraced natural origins for religion, as they represented not only a minority of scholars, but had lesser needs for oriental philology). Even if these texts had been shown to lack authenticity, all the signs seem to point to the likelihood that reliable documentation of Near (or Far) Eastern primeval wisdom would surface in the not too distant future. Jones’s own *Institutes of Manu* (1786) posed some new chronological challenges, contributing to a much older debate about the origins of Mosaic Law, and it seemed only a matter of time before hieroglyphics were deciphered, or a new Veda emerged. A further challenge came in the form of increasingly radical interpretations of the history of all religions. Indeed, both the Comte de Volney’s *Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires* (1791) and C. F. Dupuis’s *Origins du tous les cultes* (1795) argued that all myths and religions—perhaps including Christianity itself—had their origins in solar and astral events. The success of Dupuis’s book was so worrying that even the radical Joseph Priestly felt compelled to refute it, something he did by claiming, like Herder, that Dupuis was relying on secondhand sources, and that the ancient religion that looks most like Christianity, Zoroastrianism, “cannot with any certainty be traced higher than the reign of Darius Hystaspis,”¹⁸ meaning that it could not be discussed sensibly beyond what is said of it by the Old Testament and Herodotus.¹⁹

These debates of the 1770s through the 1790s increasingly turned on the contributions of orientalists, most of them religious men, but iconoclasts as well, men who wanted to widen knowledge of the extra-biblical Orient, in some cases to appreciate and understand the uniqueness of

Judaism and Christianity, and in other cases to diminish this uniqueness. Increasingly, it was to them that Europeans would have to look for definitive answers to this question. Only they could provide readings of authentic oriental texts, and, using internal evidence of various sorts, make a stab at their dates; only they could discover which ones were forgeries. Moreover, most of those we might call professional orientalists were employed as pastors or in university theological faculties—though many, like J. D. Michaelis, were making their bid to escape the long arm of the clerical establishment. *Pace* Edward Said, most took the trouble to learn the languages of the Orient because they had some sympathy for its ancient cultures and some sense that learning these languages would help them understand the Bible better; many wanted to fill in the gap between Creation and Revelation, and to do so with credible, authentic evidence. Many orientalists, too, were touched by Deism, or by some sort of anti-clericalism, making them eager critics of forms of Christianity they considered hidebound, ritualistic, exclusionary and militant, a sentiment that often expressed itself as a historicizing critique of the Old Testament, over and against a philosophically abstracted championing of the New.²⁰ Especially the German scholars cared very much about making their work *wissenschaftlich*. But they were also deeply committed to pursuing precisely the religious questions that were not likely to make for universal consensus. Their claims about the ancient past were often immediately identified as belonging to one or another sect, something that made their scientific *bona fides* especially difficult to establish, at the same time as their linguistic expertise was ever more in demand.

Pursuing a form of science that unavoidably enmeshed one in theological disputes was only one of the difficulties of being an orientalist in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One's colleagues also expected one to know, and be able to teach, not only the "core course," biblical exegesis, but also a wide array of related and unrelated languages. And the orientalists' much-envied models and rivals, the classicists, set a high standard for the admissibility of evidence, one that the available "oriental" texts often could not meet, even if Europeans had been willing to consider classical and non-classical sources equally trustworthy. Refereeing, not to mention stopping, the "shouting match" did not get much easier as time went on; despite decipherments and the spread of linguistic expertise, oriental texts remained difficult to date, and even massive influxes of new materials did not make the "who came first" question any easier to resolve.²¹

A major theoretical innovation was suggested by Friedrich Schlegel in 1808: What if one could use the languages themselves to date the culture at hand, and to map its migrations in prehistorical times?²² Schlegel's attempts to use etymologies and linguistic relationships suggested by William Jones to fill in historical blanks, accounting for the movements of peoples for whom no documents survived, proved revolutionary, in several ways. Shifting the emphasis to grammatical structures allowed Franz Bopp to map out a family tree of Indo-European nations; associating Indo-European, inflected languages with mental flexibility and natural diversity, and agglutinative languages with stubborn tenacity and lack of imagination would allow Ernest Renan to draw caricatured sketches of Aryans and Semites; claiming that the history of Sanskrit speakers was especially relevant to the Germanic peoples was vitally important to generations of nationalist and/or self-promoting Indologists. By actually learning and using Sanskrit, Schlegel seemed much more likely to open the way for a "scientific" response to the origins of religion question than did his contemporary Friedrich Creuzer, whose massive *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1810–12) drew precisely upon the Hellenistic sources. Thanks to Schlegel's work, and that of Bopp, which began to garner respect by the mid-1830s, orientalisists would increasingly turn to language itself—in Christian von Bunsen's words, "The greatest prehistorical fact"²³—to find the key to pushing back behind the Old Testament and the classical sources. Thanks to Schlegel and Bopp, too, Indo-European studies in Germany in particular would increasingly position itself as a part of "our" history, relevant also, in some way, to the origins of "our" religion.

After the 1830s German Indologists increasingly saw themselves as those best suited among the orientalisists to locate the origins of religion—and unlike Friedrich Schlegel (who remained a staunch critic of Indian polytheism), many began to subtly and not so subtly upgrade Vedic and ancient Persian religions. Why orientalisists who specialized in Semitic studies (for the fields now really began to diverge) did not seek so ardently to plunge backward into prehistory is a matter of speculation; I suspect that practitioners of this field, either more Judeophilic or more orthodox in their Christian beliefs, did not particularly *want* to find deeper Egyptian, Persian or Assyrian origins for Old Testament words, concepts or rituals. The Pentateuch already admitted there had been interactions between the Israelites and these other Near Eastern cultures, most of them unpleasant, and that was enough. Holding the orthodox view, shared by most Christians at the time, the Semitists did not need to play the "deeper

antiquity” card; that was prerogative of the Indo-Europeanist iconoclasts, at least until Assyriology came of age after about 1880. And play it the Indologists did, right through the rest of the nineteenth century, in the process pioneering new methods of reading and dating of sources that remained, for the most part, recalcitrant. These methods were both necessary—for massive amounts of original oriental material was now pouring into European libraries and museums—and controversial; by no means was the “shouting match” over. But they also, increasingly, involved the invocation of racial categories, which could be used, as Schlegel had done, to make the case for the relevance of Indological inquiries, or to get past the problem of datable documents, by projecting cultural histories backward from later, often literary sources.

Christian Lassen’s *Indische Altertumskunde* (5 vols., 1847–62) falls into the latter category. Lassen, like his younger contemporary Max Müller, an iconoclastic Protestant linguist, tried to turn the poetry of the *Mahabharata*—the oldest fragments of which probably date to the fourth century BCE, but the epic is thought to refer to much earlier events—into history by extracting its religious terminology, and then projecting these terms backward into deep time, to identify the moment when the Aryan nation had taken form. Importantly, he was trying to use indigenous terms to create an ethnic history, pulling out a definition of Arjavarta, “the precinct of the Arja or the noble men, the people of good breeding,” and contrasting it to another textually based definition of the Mlek’ha, “the barbarians and despisers of the holy law.” Thus, he speculates, the Arja must at some early date have been “that part of the Indian people to whom the Brahmanical law was given”; subsequently, the term took on economic and physiological connotations.²⁴ Lassen, in my view, was actually trying to make an anti-imperialist statement about India, at the same time as he was shaping an Enlightened prehistory for a kind of Deist Christianity. He believed that he was wresting a great national prehistory of the Indian *Volk* from texts that non-orientalists insisted were merely poetry, or pagan fanaticism; mapping the history of the Aryan race was, to his mind, a progressive act and a contribution to science and universal toleration, over and against conservative “Semitism” and Eurocentrism. The linking of language to ongoing discussions of the diffusion of ethnic groups was to Lassen a means to escape the late dates and difficulties of his literary sources, as well as a means to exalt “his” group over others—though he explicitly argued that the term Aryan should not be applied to other members of the Indogerman language family.²⁵

Lassen also thought that he was offering a scholarly, if not objective, treatment of what most Europeans believed to be fetishism or fanaticism. Like many another Indologist at the mid-century—including Gobineau, Eugene Burnouf and Max Müller—Lassen thought his un-curious, defensive and Eurocentric contemporaries failed to appreciate the richness, spirituality and depth of oriental “paganism.” Their attempts to upgrade Indo-European antiquity came at the cost of Semitic antiquity—something Stefan Arvidsson has rightly credited to their anti-clericalism, as well as prejudice against Jews and Muslims of their own day.²⁶ But these efforts were countered by the vast majority of Christian theologians, who continued to defend the Jews as *the* meaningful theological ancestors for Christians. We cannot forget the voluminous and vociferous opposition mounted to the claims of Renan and Max Müller; the young German Indologist Paul Deussen, too, incurred the wrath of the Prussian Cultural Minister by claiming Vedic wisdom to be equal or superior to that of Jesus, and was subsequently barred from lecturing on religious matters. Semitists who took too critical an approach to the Old Testament, such as Julius Wellhausen, William Robertson Smith, and Friedrich Delitzsch, too, were regularly pilloried for their orientalist challenges to orthodox readings of scripture. Orientalists, and especially Indologists, had established their right to offer “scientific” answers to the origins question, but it took a long time for the majority of scholars, not to mention laypersons, to be convinced that their conclusions might be both persuasive and palatable.²⁷

I would argue that a tipping point came in the 1860s and 1870s, during which time both hieroglyphic and cuneiform decipherments were perfected, and Zoroaster and the Buddha evolved from being considered chiefly mythical figures into historical ones.²⁸ And in 1871–72 two things happened which would greatly warm the hearts of those who had longed for the end of the ancient Israelites’ claim to have received the only true revelation: Julius Wellhausen definitively demonstrated that the Old Testament itself was a patchwork of different authors, composing at different times; and George Smith translated actual Assyrian tablets which proved that Berossus had not lied: the Assyrians had had a Flood and Creation story too, one that was uncomfortably similar to that of the book of Genesis. The Persian and Sanskrit specialist Martin Haug had recently suggested that the Gathas, the most ancient part of the Zend Avesta, might have been written by Zarathustra himself, whose life could not postdate 1200 BCE, making him perhaps a contemporary of Gilgamesh, and certainly a predecessor of Homer, Plato and Moses. Now Iranian and

Assyrian influences on the Old Testament could be hypothesized—though theologians like Hermann Gunkel and Wilhelm Bousset, who used the new orientalism to do this, were loudly decried by many of their fellows. Later texts, like the Hermetic corpus and the newly discovered Mandaean texts, could be read to find far more ancient oriental ideas lurking below their surfaces. The most ancient texts could be compared to find which ethnic or religious groups had conceived of the idea of the “Man-God,” or the Sabbath.²⁹ It became more and more possible to think well of oriental, and especially Aryan, pagans, and to believe that they, and not the Jews, might have been the inventors of the true, first or most pure forms of “our” religion. The combination of racial thinking, orientalist scholarship and critiques of Christian orthodoxies had made possible this revolutionary change in European thought.

I would like to conclude with a quotation from Max Müller, who contributed much to this revolution. In his Gifford Lectures on “Anthropological Religion” of 1891 Müller showed how Bopp’s findings had been turned into a key to open the locked door of the prehistorical ancient Orient:

If I were asked what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should say it was this simple etymological equation: Sanskrit-Dyaush-Pitar = Greek Zeus Pater = Latin Jupiter = Old Notre Tyr. Think what this equation implies! It implies not only that our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero spoke the same language as the people of India—this is a discovery which, however incredible it sounded at first, has long ceased to cause any surprise—but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven-Father. This lesson cannot be taught too often, for no one who has not fully learnt, marked, and inwardly digested it, can form a true idea of the light which it sheds on the ancient history of the Aryan race. Ancient history has become as completely changed by that one discovery as astronomy was by the Copernican heresy.³⁰

Müller fell in love with the natural and pristine language of the Rig Veda, in large part because he was convinced that etymology could be used as a quasi-historical method, and that the Rig Veda, as the oldest document of the Aryan race, might throw light on humankind’s religious and geographical origins. Let me remind you of the salient line in the quotation I just read: the linguistic equation

implies not only that our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero spoke the same language as the people of India ... but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme deity under exactly the same name.

This Copernican “revolution” (something he of course also knew from his long studies of Kant), in his view, made it possible for scholars to get beyond the old astronomy, or the “shouting match,” and start *our* history of religion with the ur-Aryans. We need not trust the Old Testament, or deal with its manifold chronological issues, anymore, and are free to generate a new history of at least some peoples’ religion by means of what one might call linguistic paleontology. Müller remained throughout his life a Protestant believer in a kind of prehistorical natural Revelation to all humankind, and did, in the 1870s, distance himself from the more egregiously racist association of “Aryan” languages and “Aryan” racial phenotypes. But we might well ask why he did not worry a bit more that his Copernican heresy was leaving aside the prehistories of many *other* peoples. Perhaps he could never fully map the pathways by which a universal Eden gave way to a partial, racialized one, and as a product of the age of positivism, felt uncomfortable speculating about the transition. In any event, he did his bit—including overseeing the publication of the hugely popular 50-volume collection, *Sacred Books of the East*—to displace the Old Testament, and to force the Semites to share with the ur-Aryans the glory of having laid the foundations for European Christianity.³¹

Yet Herder’s “shouting match” was not over, in part, because in the generation after Müller, there were many Semitist-racists, including Friedrich Delitzsch and Archibald Sayce, as well as Indologist-racists, including Paul de Lagarde, and Leopold von Schroeder.³² All of these men, too, continued to be deeply and passionately interested in the question of the origins of religion, but did not flinch, as did Müller, when it came to associating physiological and linguistic forms of racism. They were the products of a tradition that since Friedrich Schlegel had been pushing forward a kind of linguistic, and often racial, speculative prehistory as a substitute for direct, datable testimony—though, with the possible exception of Lagarde, they would, I think, have resisted handing over this tradition to unlettered zealots who simply wanted to kill people.³³ And, once the killing discredited the racism, it was possible for scholars to sift back through the tradition, and to chart other roads out of the methodological and textual “mishmash.” I do not have space here to make the case for the ways in

which the methods of Bopp and Lassen, and the publications of Müller and George Smith, enabled other scholars who eschewed racial thought and the quest for a single origin and answer from making quieter critiques of some forms of Eurocentrism. In the end, we can say that oriental philology's response to the problem of Near Eastern chronology resulted in the pioneering of innovative means to push beyond the difficulties inherent in their source materials, in ways that unlocked both racialized and prejudicial prehistories, but also opened for us a wider and broader set of religious and cultural histories of humankind.

NOTES

1. Most famous here is Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). But there are many other studies, most but not all focusing on articulations of the concept of Aryanism. Some of the most subtle and interesting here are: Stefan Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols: Indo-European Mythology as Ideology and Science*, transl. Sonia Wichmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Tuska Benes, *In Babel's Shadow: Language, Philology and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008); Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, transl. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).
2. Here I will define orientalists not as all of those who wrote about the Orient, but as the nineteenth century defined the term: as scholars of Asia who had mastered at least one “oriental” language.
3. On Haug, see “Dating Zarathustra: The Problem of Persian Prehistory, 1700–1900,” *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 1 (2016): 235–240; Pascale Rabault-Feuerhahn, *L'archive des origines: Sankrit, Philologie, Anthropologie dans l'Allemagne du XIX siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), pp. 340–344. Zarathustra; on Canning and *The People of India* see Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 117–119.
4. Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 21.

5. Here see Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); See D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteen to the Eighteenth Centuries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972).
6. Here, see especially Anthony Grafton and Daniel Rosenberg, *Cartographies of Time: A History of the Timeline* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), chapters 1–4; Dmitri Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Martin Mulso, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002); Guy Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); Daniel Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
7. See Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
8. See Walker, *The Ancient Theology*, pp. 200–203; also David Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1985).
9. Jack Repcheck, *The Man Who Found Time: James Hutton and the Discovery of the Earth's Antiquity* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), pp. 99–100; see here also Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*.
10. See here Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
11. Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, pp. 42–61.
12. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, pp. 30–33.
13. Holwell quoted in Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, p. 70.
14. For the history of this strange document, see Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (College Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp. 380–403.
15. Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time: The History of the Earth and the History of Nations from Hooke to Vico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
16. Herder, “Die älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts,” part 1, in idem, *Herders Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, 33 vols., vol. 6 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1879–1913), pp. 448–449.

17. It should be noted that Herder’s view of the sort of “document” the Old Testament provided was a strange, mystical and numerological one. For a more extensive discussion of this essay, see Suzanne Marchand, “Where does History Begin? J. G. Herder and the Problem of Near Eastern Chronology in the Age of Enlightenment,” in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 2 (2014): 157–175.
18. Joseph Priestley, *A Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other Ancient Nations with Remarks on M. Dupuis’ Origins of All Religions* (Northumberland: A Kennedy, 1799), p. 324.
19. For the deep implications of the date of Zarathustra, see Suzanne Marchand, “Dating Zarathustra: The Problem of Persian Prehistory, 1700–1900,” *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 1 (2016): 203–245.
20. Cf. Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); also H. J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1956).
21. See here Marchand, “Dating Zarathustra,” pp. 229–242; and Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race and Scholarship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 212–292.
22. This is part of the endeavor in his “Sprache und Weisheit der Inder,” though of course he is also trying to improve German poetry, to defend Christianity’s historical truth against Kantian rationalism, and to decenter the Greeks in the interests of promoting a Germanic, Christian cultural history of humankind. See Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 53–65.
23. Bunsen, *Ägyptens Stelle in der Weltgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg/Gotha, 1845), p. 20.
24. Lassen, *Indische Altertumskunde*, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1847), pp. 5–7.
25. Lassen, *Indische Altertumskunde*, 1:9, note 1.
26. Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols*, pp. 66–90.
27. On Deussen and also problems of Wellhausen and Delitzsch see Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 302–311, 178–185, 196–202, 249–255.

28. In the 1850s and 1860s, Martin Haug's work on the Zend Avesta had shown that at least some fragments of the text could be attributed directly to Zarathustra, a religious leader Haug confidently dated to 1200 at the latest, putting him well before Moses. On Buddha, see Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 270–279.
29. New versions of the Treatise of the Three Imposters circulated; one, published in 1910, was titled: *Moses, Jesus Paulus: Drei Varianten des babylonischen Gottmenschen Gilgamesh: Eine Anklage und ein Appell* (Frankfurt a.M.: Neuer Franfurter Verlag, 3rd ed., 1910). It was written, predictably, by a German Assyriologist (Peter Jensen) who believed he had definitively shown that Gilgamesh came first, and that the “God men” who came afterward were clever—but in no way divine—thieves.
30. Müller, *Anthropological Religion* (London, 1891), p. 92.
31. Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 246–253.
32. See Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 292–332.
33. On Lagarde see Ulrich Sieg, *Germany's Prophet: Paul de Lagarde and the Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*, transl. Linda Marianiello (Watham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013).

“Nordics” and “Hamites”: Joseph Deniker and the Rise (and Fall) of Scientific Racism

Nigel Eltringham

Recognized as the Party’s ideologist, [Alfred Rosenberg] developed and spread Nazi doctrines in the newspapers *Voelkischer Beobachter* and *NS Monatshefte*, which he edited, and in the numerous books he wrote. His book, *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, had a circulation of over a million copies.

Judgement of Alfred Rosenberg before the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of German Major War Criminals October 1, 1946.¹

Recently, I told someone who came to brag to me that he belonged to the P.L. [the Parti Libéral associated with Rwandan Tutsi]. I told him ... your home is in Ethiopia, that we will send you by the Nyabarongo so you can get there quickly.

Extract from a speech given by Léon Mugesera on November 22, 1992, cited in a Canadian Supreme Court decision in December 2005 allowing Mugesera’s deportation.²

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Two genocide judgements separated by 59 years. No historical account of either genocide can avoid reference to racist propaganda. In Nazi Germany, the notion of the “Aryan”/“Nordic” would be central to anti-Semitic propaganda.³ In Rwanda, the notion of the alien “Hamite,” once used to legitimate Tutsi rule in Rwanda (see below) would reappear in Rwanda from 1990 onwards to emphasize the alterity of the Tutsi minority, the January/February 1992 edition of *Kangura Magazine* claiming that a genocide of the “Bantu” (Hutu) had been planned and “consciously orchestrated by the Hamites, thirsty for blood.” Less prominent in accounts of these genocides is the fact that the two terms, “Nordic” and “Hamite,” are linked by the work of the French anthropologist Joseph Deniker (1852–1918). Although Deniker defined racial “types,” he asserted that race was solely a matter of physical characteristics rather than intellect or character.⁴

Others, however, appropriated Deniker’s “races” and associated them with intellectual disposition. Regarding East Africa, the British anthropologist Charles Seligman (1873–1940)⁵ described the “Hamites” in the following way:

Apart from relatively late Semitic influence ... the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites ... who are Caucasians, i.e. belong to the same great branch of mankind as almost all Europeans.⁶ The incoming Hamites were pastoral “Europeans”—arriving wave after wave—better armed as well as quicker witted than the dark agricultural Negroes.⁷

Seligman indicates that he had adopted the term “Hamite” from the Italian anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi (1841–1936). Sergi had adopted the “Hamite” from Deniker’s 1889 article.

In parallel to Seligman’s addition of racial superiority to Deniker’s “Hamite,” American lawyer Madison Grant (1865–1937) would speak of the “Nordic” as “the white man *par excellence*.”⁸ Grant had adopted the notion of the “Nordic” race from the American economist William Z. Ripley (1867–1941) who had, in turn, adopted “Nordic” from Deniker. In turn, Alfred Rosenberg (1893–1946), the Nazi party’s chief racial theorist, would eschew “Aryan” (the term used by his hero, the English writer Houston Stewart Chamberlin) in favor of “Nordic” to describe the “master race.”

This chapter begins with a discussion of the evolution of the “Hamitic” myth which predates Deniker’s work. Having established the protean nature of the “Hamite” (being transformed from a justification for slavery of Black Africans to a celebration of “civilization” and then to a reason for extermination), the chapter will then explore Deniker’s work in detail and how the “Nordic” and “Hamite” were appropriated and distorted in the context of the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide.

THE “CURSE OF HAM”

Edith Sanders⁹ notes that Seligman’s definitive assertion (“the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites”)¹⁰ masks the complex evolution of the term “Hamite” which, “like a chameleon changes its colour to reflect the changing light.” Before the “Hamite” was used to designate “civilization” it was used to justify the slavery of Black Africans.

David Goldenberg demonstrates that the “Curse of Ham,” the belief that the Black African, as a descendant of Ham, bore Noah’s curse of servitude, can be found in European and North American writing from the sixteenth century until recent times.¹¹ However, such a belief required significant distortion of the biblical story. In Genesis 9:18–27, following the flood which has destroyed all humankind save Noah and his sons, Noah is drunk and naked. While his sons Shem and Japheth cover Noah, his other son, Ham sees his father’s nakedness. On awaking and discovering what Ham has done, Noah curses Ham’s son, “Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.” There is, however, no reference to a *physiological* malediction, that Canaan would be “black.” Furthermore, Goldenberg¹² notes that negative portrayals of Africans are absent from the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) in which the term “Kush” refers to East Africa (south of Egypt) and South-West Arabia and that the key description of the *African* Kushites *as a people* (Isaiah, 18:1–2) is positive and skin color is *never* mentioned in descriptions of individual Kushites.¹³ It appears that, “Ethnicity and colour were apparently not relevant in determining the image of these people.”¹⁴ Similarly, although the color black was used as a metaphor for evil in late antiquity, there is no indication that this translated to antipathy toward Black Africans.¹⁵ No link between skin color and slavery is made in Jewish sources of antiquity and late antiquity, nor in early Christian sources.¹⁶

How did this view of Black Africans in biblical and, to an extent, postbiblical writings, become transformed in to a perspective in which (1) not only was Ham cursed with slavery, but also with being Black; and (2), contrary to

the biblical account, it was not Canaan, but his father Ham who was cursed? As regards the first question, Goldenberg¹⁷ demonstrates that, contrary to a persistent assumption, the Hebrew name Ham is not related to a Hebrew or Semitic word meaning “dark,” “black,” or “heat” (this confusion emerged from the loss of a graphical distinction when Hebrew was put into written form).¹⁸ Furthermore, to make the link between skin color and slavery would not only be contrary to Genesis 9:18–27, but to the fact that of Ham’s four sons, Kush, Mizraim (Egypt), Put and Canaan (Genesis, 10:6), the first three sons are considered by the Hebrew Bible as the ancestors of various African peoples, whereas Canaan is the ancestor of *non-Black* Canaanites.

As David Goldenberg¹⁹ notes, the only way to reconcile Canaan’s “non-Blackness” with African servitude was to shift the curse of slavery from Canaan onto his father, Ham, the biblical ancestor of the Kushites.²⁰ In Near Eastern texts from the seventh century CE onwards, therefore, it is Ham who replaces Canaan as the recipient of Noah’s curse.²¹ The fact that this shift occurred in a Near Eastern context in which Black Africans were becoming increasingly identified as slaves was decisive.²² As the Black slave trade moved to England and then North America, the “Curse of Ham” also moved, its clear contradiction of scripture resolved by the “fact that Blacks were enslaved.”²³

THE HAMITIC “MYTH”/“HYPOTHESIS”

Having been the subject of one distortion (introducing “blackness” and shifting servitude from Canaan to Ham), the “Hamite” would then undergo another transformation as the basis for all “civilization” in Africa. Sanders²⁴ notes that the archaeologists and other “scientists” who arrived in the wake of Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 concluded that “the Egyptians were Negroids ... originators of the oldest civilization of the West.” A debate ensued regarding whether the ancient Egyptians were Black.²⁵ One response was to conveniently “recall” that Egyptians were, according to the Bible, descendants of Mizraim, son of Ham, and that the curse of servitude (associated with Blackness) had, *after all*, only been placed on Canaan. Thus, “the Egyptians emerged as Hamites, Caucasoid, uncursed and capable of high civilization.”²⁶ Where once descendants of Ham had been cursed with servitude, “Hamites” now emerged as the opposite of Black Africans.

Gatsinzi Basaninyenzi²⁷ demonstrates how in nineteenth-century travelogues, especially those by Richard F. Burton (1821–90)²⁸ and John Hanning Speke (1827–89)²⁹ the Hima of Uganda (and by extension the Tutsi of Rwanda) were racialized as “Ethiopian immigrants.” Burton in

The Lake Regions of Central Africa (1860) describes the Hima (which he calls Wahuma) in the following terms:

The people of Karagwah ... are divided into two orders—Wahuma and Wanyambo—who seem to bear to each other the relation of patron and client, patrician and plebeian. The Wahuma comprises the rich, who sometimes possess 1000 head of cattle, and the warriors, a militia paid in the milk of cows ... The Wanyambo ... are, it is said, treated by the nobles as slaves. The men of Karagwah are a tall stout race, doubtless from the effect of pure mountain air and animal food.³⁰

Burton³¹ also states that “The country of Karagwah is at present the headquarters of the Watosi, a pastoral people who are scattered throughout these lake Regions” (“Watosi” is a Swahili version of Watutsi).³² Burton reports that the Watosi “refuse to carry loads, to cultivate the ground, or to sell one another”; that “they protect themselves by paying fees in cattle to their chiefs” and that “In appearance they are a tall, comely, and comparatively fair people.”³³

Burton designates “Karagwah, Uganda, and Untoro” as “The Northern Kingdoms” and states that “Informants agree in representing the northern races as superior in civilization and social constitution to the other tribes of Eastern and Central Africa.”³⁴ Burton, therefore, includes the Wahuma (Hima) and Watosi (Tutsi) when he describes the “northern races” in the following terms:

Their heads are of a superior cast; the regions where the reflective faculties and the moral sentiments, especially benevolence, are placed, rise high; the nose is more of the Caucasian type; the immoderate masticating apparatus, which gives to the negro and the lower negroid his peculiar aspect of animality, is greatly modified, and the expression of the countenance is soft, kindly, and not deficient in intelligence.³⁵

As Basaninyenzi notes, John Hanning Speke accompanied Burton on the two expeditions that provided material for *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*.³⁶ Reflecting the transfer, discussed above, of the curse of slavery from Canaan onto his father Ham in order to reconcile Canaan’s “non-Blackness” with African servitude,³⁷ Speke states in the introduction to *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1863) that “We should, when contemplating these sons of Noah, try and carry our mind back to the time when our poor older brother Ham was cursed by his father,

and condemned to be the slave of both Shem and Japheth.”³⁸ In other words, Speke did not employ the notion of “Hamites” as the opposite of Black Africans.³⁹ Speke did, however, consider the Wahūma (Hima) and, by extension, the Watutsi (Tutsi) to be immigrants:

I propose to state my theory of the ethnology of that part of Africa inhabited by the people collectively styled Wahūma—otherwise Gallas or Abyssinians ... It appears impossible to believe, judging from the physical appearance of the Wahūma that they can be of any other race than the semi-Shem-Hamitic of Ethiopia. ... [T]he government is in the hands of foreigners, who had invaded and took possession leaving the agricultural aborigines to till the ground.⁴⁰

Speke talks of the “Watusi [Tutsi], who are emigrants from Karagūé [Karagwe in the north west of contemporary Tanzania] of the same stock [as the Wahūma, who tend] their cattle all over Unyamuezi under the protection of the native negro chiefs.”⁴¹

Thirty years after Speke published his journal, the French explorer Lionel Declé (1859–1907),⁴² discussing his encounter with the “Watusi,” stated how he had been “very much struck by the extraordinary difference that is found between [the “Watusi”] and their Bantu neighbours” and that “the pure types have long thin faces with a long fine nose and a small mouth.” Regarding their hair (“a glossy black evenly spread all over the head and with but a slight curl in it”), Declé states that “it looks very like the hair of the Abyssinians,” and concludes that “they appear to me like a kind of connecting link between the Abyssinian and Bantu types.” Four years later, in *Three Years in Savage Africa* (1898), Declé elaborated on the provenance of the “Watusi” (“a variety of the Wahima tribe”):

These Watusi are a race absolutely distinct from the Bantu family among which they have settled, and, from their appearance, I should say that if they are not a branch of the Somali family, the two races must at least come from a common stock. Like the Somali they are slim in body, with fine extremities. They have a long, narrow face with the skin drawn tightly over it; the mouth is narrow, showing the teeth well when they speak; the nose is long and straight; the forehead high and the hair silky, undulating, and growing evenly over the head, not in bushy patches like the Bantus. Their demeanour is sober and most dignified; their colour is light brown. In fact, they so resemble the Somali, that when they see Somali they say, “Oh, these are our brothers!”⁴³

The impressionistic observations found in the travelogues of Burton, Speke and Declé were reflected in the writings of colonial authorities in Rwanda (German 1897–1916 and Belgian 1916 onwards). Encountering the unrepresentative Rwandan central court, colonial authorities erroneously assumed that the population was systematically divided into “self-evident” categories of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.⁴⁴ Given that some Tutsi (a minority) ruled over a majority, it was assumed they must possess incongruous martial skill and intelligence, which, when combined with the observation that the Tutsi at the central court possessed a different physiology to that of Hutu, was taken to indicate Tutsi provenance outside Rwanda.

1895 [Tutsi are] Hamitic Pastoralists [from] Ethiopia [who have subjugated a] tribe of Negro Bantus (Count von Götzen [German Governor]).⁴⁵ **1902** Their intelligent and delicate appearance, their love of money, their capacity to adapt to any situation seem to indicate a semitic-origin (Monsignor Le Roy [Missionary]).⁴⁶ **1902** The Batutsi ... are superb men, with fine and regular features, with something of the Aryan and the Semite (Léon Classe [Vicar Apostolic from 1927]).⁴⁷ **1903** We can see Caucasian skulls and beautiful Greek profiles side-by-side with Semitic and even Jewish features (Joannes van den Burgt [Missionary]).⁴⁸

Stable, written histories were required by the Belgian authorities (and Roman Catholic Church) if the distorted image of Rwanda as a “healthy hierarchy of races”⁴⁹ was to be internalized. Such a project also suited “élite Tutsi” as a means to (re)legitimate within the accentuated stratification of colonial rule.⁵⁰ Thus, the Tutsi historian, Aléxis Kagame (1912–81) maintained “the Tutsi” had Ethiopian/Hamitic origins,⁵¹ a perspective then repeated by Kagame’s protégé, the Belgian anthropologist Jacques Maquet, who prefers “Ethiopians” to “Hamites,” because the former is more emphatically racial because it is “not burdened with linguistic connotations.”⁵²

The presentation of the Tutsi as “Hamites” was to be a central element in the 1950s as Hutu élites demanded independence from Belgium and from Tutsi “foreigners.” On March 24, 1957, nine Hutu published the Bahutu Manifesto (Notes on the Social Aspect of the Racial Native Problem in Rwanda) which states,

At the heart of the problem is double colonialism: the Muhutu must suffer the domination of the hamite and the European ... [And if only] white-black colonialism is ended, this would leave in place the even worse colonialism of hamite over the Muhutu.⁵³

“Hamites,” which had previously functioned as a celebration of “civilization” (“the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites”),⁵⁴ were to be redeployed as a means to marginalize (Bahutu Manifesto of 1957) and massacre Tutsi (in 1963). The notion of Tutsi as “Hamites” was to reemerge again in the early 1990s as an element of anti-Tutsi rhetoric leading up to the genocide of April to July 1994 in which up to one million ethnic Tutsi were killed. As noted above, the January/February 1992 edition of *Kangura Magazine* (although only with a small circulation) claimed that a genocide of the “Bantu” had been planned and “consciously orchestrated by the Hamites, thirsty for blood,”⁵⁵ while the January 1994 edition of *Kangura* denounced the Tutsi as “invaders” who had “stolen the country.”⁵⁶ From having been the means to assert a “right to rule,” race in Rwanda was employed to marginalize (in 1957), massacre (in 1963)⁵⁷ and exterminate (in 1994).

CHARLES SELIGMAN

At the start of the colonial presence it appears that the impressionistic observations of explorers, colonial officers and missionaries consisted only of the assertion that Tutsi/Hima were “intellectually superior” and were immigrants to the Great Lakes Region, possibly from Ethiopia/Somalia. It was to be Charles Seligman, in an article published in 1913, who would ground these assertions in a coherent way by conjoining the “Egyptian Hamites” and the supposedly “Ethiopian” origin of the Hima/Tutsi by “locating” a *common* basis: *the* Hamite. Seligman writes that “buried beneath the present day cultures of North-Eastern and Eastern Africa” there were the “remains of [a culture] which presents such substantial affinities with that of ancient Egypt that there can be no legitimate objection to speaking of it as Hamitic.”⁵⁸ For Seligman, “Egyptian civilisation was only a special development” of a “Hamitic influence [that] was leavening dark Africa, perhaps for thousands of years before Egypt herself emerged.”⁵⁹ By pushing the ancestry of ancient Egyptians back on to his *explicitly* “non-Negro” “Hamites,” Seligman circumvented the debate concerning the “color” of the Egyptians *and* provided a common “non-Negro” explanation for what he considered incongruous civilization throughout Central/Eastern Africa.

A revised version of the 1913 article appears as a chapter (“Eastern Hamites”) in *Races of Africa* (four editions 1930, 1939, 1957, 1966). Seligman⁶⁰ begins his discussion of the “Eastern Hamites” with what he terms “pre-dynastic” or “proto-Egyptians” (before 3200 BCE), whom

he had earlier described as being “without the slightest suspicion of any Negro characteristics.”⁶¹ Relying principally on cranial measurements, Seligman concludes that the Beja, an ethnic group dwelling in parts of North Africa and the Horn of Africa, are the “present-day representatives of the proto-Egyptian stock.”⁶² Thus, the “Eastern Hamites comprise the ancient and modern Egyptians ... the Beja, the Berberines (Barbara or Nubians), the Galla, the Somali and Danakil, and, though mixed with Semites and Negroes, most Abyssinians.”⁶³

Seligman states that “Almost everywhere [the] Negro carries in his veins a greater or lesser proportion of Hamitic blood and has been influenced by Hamitic culture.”⁶⁴ He tries to recover “the social customs and religious beliefs of the early Hamite” by comparing the customs and beliefs of the Beja, ancient Egyptians and “the barbarous tribes and peoples of Africa [who] sprung from the mixture of the Hamite and Negro or [who were] affected culturally by Hamitic influence.”⁶⁵ Of these latter, Seligman talks of the “Half-Hamites” and “hamiticized Nilotes.”⁶⁶ He concludes that the “ideas and customs which are common to Hamites, half-Hamites and Nilotes ... show such a substantial agreement [that these peoples] either represent the descendents of that stock which gave rise to the proto-Egyptians or have been permeated by its influence.”⁶⁷ The either/or allows Seligman to talk of Central/East African Bantu-speaking tribes “in whose veins runs much Hamitic blood” *or* those “who are ruled by a foreign (Hamitic) aristocracy”⁶⁸ and thus, following Speke, to speak of the “Bahima of Ankole [a kingdom in the south-west of contemporary Uganda] who form the Hamitic aristocracy of a Bantu state.”⁶⁹

In *Races of Africa*, Seligman explicitly fuses race and superiority: “The Hamites were ... the great civilising force of black Africa,”⁷⁰ who were “quicker witted than the dark agricultural Negroes.”⁷¹ Similarly,

the Nilotes show no inconsiderable admixture with that foreign (Hamitic) blood which ran pure or almost pure in the veins of the predynastic Egyptians. ... If the actual socio-political conditions of the Nilotes be examined we find that development has taken place upon the same lines as [in Egypt, but that] Everywhere dulled by Negro blood this progress has reached different stages among the tribes ... the “drag” imposed by the large amount of Negro blood in the mixed Negro-Hamitic populations under consideration has varied in degree, and it is probably not an accident that the most advanced and stable socio-political organization existing among the Nilotes is to be found among the Shilluk [contemporary South Sudan], the people in whom the proportion of Hamitic blood is largest.⁷²

Seligman described how the “the Nilote owes his comelier features and better developed brain to invading Hamitic influence.”⁷³ Although Seligman does not reference any of the three travelogues (and employs “empirical” evidence in the form of cranial measurements and “ideas and customs”) the strident quality of Seligman’s assertions of “Hamitic” superiority and exogenous provenance are closely related to the impressionistic accounts of Burton, Speke and Declé.

JOSEPH DENIKER

Seligman⁷⁴ acknowledges that the group “Eastern Hamites” is drawn from the Italian anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi.⁷⁵ For Sergi, the three branches of “*Eurafrican*: *African*, *Mediterranean* and *Nordic*” emerged from a “great African stock.”⁷⁶ According to Sergi, this “stock” emerged from “*The Hamites*” whose origin is not only Africa⁷⁷ but, probably, “the great lakes” of Africa (contemporary Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi).⁷⁸ For Sergi, in contrast to Seligman, the “Hamites” traveled in the opposite direction. While Seligman was content to reproduce Sergi’s “Eastern/Northern Hamite” configuration, and even mention Sergi’s suggestion of an African origin⁷⁹ Seligman concludes that “the cradle-land of the Hamites, though generally considered to be Arabia, is unknown.”⁸⁰

What is more significant is Seligman’s apparent dependence on the work of Deniker.⁸¹ Whether Seligman consulted Deniker’s work directly or only through its reproduction in the work of Sergi, Seligman⁸² reproduces Deniker’s definition of the “Kushite-Hamites.” This is significant given that Seligman displays a completely different position regarding the relationship between “race,” intellectual ability and culture to that found in Deniker. Deniker’s classification of races is “based only on physical characteristics” so that race and “culture” are not coextensive.⁸³ Rather, he introduces a new term, “ethnic group,” to denote entities constituted by the combination of “language ... religion, and especially, social institutions.” Deniker insists that *race* (as physical characteristics) and “ethnic groups” are distinct.⁸⁴ For Deniker, ethnic groups were distinguishable “by their language, their mode of life, and their manners,” but that their formation involves the “blending of several distinct somatological units,” which are “‘theoretic types’ formed of an aggregation of physical characteristics.”⁸⁵

Although it has been argued that “ethnic groups” are in reality a synonym for “race” because by appearing “fixed, solid almost biological”⁸⁶

ethnic identity proclaims a pseudo-genetic quality akin to that associated with “race,”⁸⁷ Deniker was innovative in decoupling group identity, race and attendant notions of superiority/inferiority. Defining the study of “somatological characteristics of the genus *Homo*” as “*anthropology*” and the study of “ethnic characteristics” as “*ethnography*,”⁸⁸ Deniker, despite the book’s title, states that “The object of this book being the description of ethnical groups ... and of the races which compose them, the title of ‘Ethnography’ might fitly be given to it.”⁸⁹ More importantly, Deniker’s description of “Somatic/Morphological/Physiological Characters” is descriptive not evaluative, while “Ethnic Characters: Linguistic/Sociological” is applied non-judgmentally to *all* “peoples.”⁹⁰

Deniker locates what he calls the “Kushite-Hamites” according to physiological characteristics.⁹¹ It is that definition which is replicated by Seligman with the crucial addition of “civilising superiority” *absent* from Deniker’s work.⁹² This is made even more explicit in Deniker’s 1900 book where he modifies the definition slightly. The “race” remains the same: “The *Ethiopian* race ... preserved fairly pure among the Bejas,”⁹³ but, because he locates “‘ethnic groups’ or sociological units,” according to a mixed geographic-linguistic classification,⁹⁴ “The peoples speaking *Semitic* or *Hamitic* languages [include] the *Ethiopians* (Gallas, Bejas, Abyssinians).”⁹⁵ Here, Hamitic is only a linguistic feature of “ethnic groups,” it is not a “race.”

Judgments regarding the intellectual ability of “races” are not entirely absent from Deniker’s work. For example he says of “Africa” that “The primitive substratum of the population is formed of Negroes” and that on this was deposited the so-called “Hamitic element of European or Asiatic origin [which] perhaps has been transformed by interminglings with the Negroes, into a new race, analogous to the Ethiopian, with which we must probably connect the ancient Egyptians.”⁹⁶ At first sight, this position appears identical to Seligman (“the ‘drag’ imposed by the large amount of Negro blood in the mixed Negro-Hamitic populations”).⁹⁷ However, not only is Deniker speculative, but Seligman’s pure *non-Negro* “Hamitic Bejas” are, for Deniker, examples of the *Ethiopian* race, a “new race” born of a “so-called Hamitic element” and “Negroes.” So-called, because “Hamitic,” for Deniker, is only a linguistic feature of “ethnic groups” and not a “race.” Thus, and in direct contrast to Seligman’s 1913 article, Deniker states that “similarity of manners and customs ... do not yet give us the right to infer an affinity of race or language, and still less common origin.”⁹⁸

Most striking, Seligman's notion of "Hamitic superiority" is entirely absent from Deniker, for the simple fact that Deniker does not associate intellectual/"cultural" superiority with any of his "races" which are based *only* on "somatological characteristics," which are:

the differences in outer form [of] individuals [in contrast to] differences between ethnical groups [which] are the product of evolutions subject to other laws than those of biology [manifest in] linguistic, or social characteristics. The study of them is based on the grouping of individuals in societies.⁹⁹

Although Deniker employs "evolutionism" and talks of "Savage," "Semi-civilised" and "Civilised" peoples,¹⁰⁰ this division is not made according to race. Rather, "ethnic groups" differ "by the *degree* of culture" they possess¹⁰¹ and Deniker's sole criterion is writing.¹⁰² In terms of normative judgements concerning "civilization" (relevant to the travelogues discussed above),

It remains to speak of psychological characters ... of temperament and the different manifestations of mind ... it is almost impossible to treat these in the face of many contradictory facts ... Each traveller, each observer tends to judge in his own way a given people according to the nature of relations (pacific, hostile, etc.) which he has had with it. We are unable to affirm anything when we have once made up our minds to escape from the commonplace generalities that savages are wanting in foresight and general ideas, that they are cruel [etc.].¹⁰³

For Deniker, assertions of psychological aptitude (including "superiority") were subjective and idiosyncratic on the part of the observer.

As noted, Seligman's dependence in *Races of Africa* on Deniker's 1889 article (possibly indirectly via Sergi) is clear, although Deniker is not acknowledged. It is important to note that, unlike Seligman, Deniker makes no claims to "civilizing diffusion," because of the very fact that he associates no "intellectual" or "cultural" characteristics with "race." In contrast, for Seligman, "culture" implies the influence of an intellectually *superior* "race." Seligman's perspective was, therefore, according to our contemporary normative registers regarding the *notion* of race, a regression from Deniker and his strikingly contemporary notion of the "ethnic group" distinguishable "by their language, their mode of life, and their manners."

DENIKER AND THE “NORDIC”

The previous section demonstrated how Deniker’s notion of the “Hamite” was distorted. The same process can be seen in relation to Nazi race theory and Deniker’s notion of the Nordic. In his chief work *The Foundation of the Twentieth Century* Alfred Rosenberg, who drafted the 1935 Nuremberg Race Law, uses “Nordic” as a synonym for “Aryan.” Rosenberg was influenced by Mason Grant’s *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) who, in turn, had adopted the term “Nordic Race” from William Z. Ripley’s *The Races of Europe* (1899).¹⁰⁴ Ripley had, in turn, adopted “Nordic Race” from Deniker.¹⁰⁵

When the American economist William Z. Ripley first discusses the “Three European Races,” he dismisses authors who maintain there is only one European race by referring the reader to “the latest and most elaborate classification, that by Deniker” which he reproduces in the appendix of *The Races of Europe*.¹⁰⁶ Regarding the transition from identifying “traits” then “types” and finally “races,” Ripley also refers to Deniker’s classification.¹⁰⁷ The three “European Racial Types” used by Ripley are “Teutonic,” “Apline (Celtic)” and “Mediterranean” and he indicates that “Teutonic” is the term used by Deniker¹⁰⁸ (in reality, Deniker uses “*Nordique ou Kymri* (Scandinave)”).¹⁰⁹ Later Ripley notes that Deniker actually uses “Nordic” rather than “Teuton.”¹¹⁰ Despite this confusion, as noted in a review by Franz Boas,¹¹¹ Ripley is in agreement with Deniker in the way he asserts that “we should carefully distinguish between language, culture and physical type.”¹¹² Like Deniker, Ripley argues that while “it is not surprising to find theories of a corresponding inheritance of mental attributes in great favour ... it seems to be high time to call a halt when this ‘vulgar theory of race’ is made sponsor for nearly every conceivable form of social, political, or economic virtues or ills.”¹¹³ Regarding apparent statistical differences in intellectual ability, rates of divorce and suicide, Ripley argues that “It is not race but the physical and social environment that must be taken into account.”¹¹⁴

Madison Grant’s approach in *The Passing of the Great Race* (1918) is, however, very different. The phrase “Passing of the Great Race” refers to the deaths of the “Nordic” English officer class in World War I and, more generally, that World War I was a “civil war” between “Nordics,” that “All the states in the present world war have sent to the front their fighting Nordic elements and the loss of life now going on in Europe will fall more heavily on the blond giant.”¹¹⁵

In direct contrast to Ripley, Grant states that “There exists today a widespread and fatuous belief in the power of environment.”¹¹⁶ And yet, on the following page Grant (without referencing Ripley, although *Races of Europe* appears in the bibliography) reproduces Ripley’s three European races “Nordic,” “Mediterranean” and “Alpine” and Ripley’s somatological types in terms of head (long, round); eyes (blue, dark) and so on. In other words, Grant reproduces Deniker’s classification (via Ripley). And yet, Deniker’s careful distinction between race, culture and intellectual ability is entirely absent. For Grant both the “Mediterranean” and “Alpine” races are “western extensions of Asiatic subspecies” and cannot be considered as “exclusively European” in contrast to the “Nordic,” which is a “purely European type [that] has developed its physical characteristics and its civilization within the confines of that continent.”¹¹⁷ Nordics are, therefore, “the *Homo europæus*, the white man *par excellence*.”¹¹⁸ As a consequence, the “dominant class of Europe is everywhere of that blood.”¹¹⁹ In direct contrast to Ripley (and, of course, Deniker), Grant states that

Races vary intellectually and morally just as they do physically. Moral, intellectual and spiritual attributes are as persistent as physical characteristics and are transmitted substantially unchanged from generation to generation. These moral and physical characters are not limited to one race but given traits do occur with more frequency in one race than another. Each race differs in the relative proportion of what we may term good and bad strains. ... Mental, spiritual and moral traits are closely associated with the physical distinctions among the different European races.¹²⁰

While for Grant the “Mediterranean race” is “probably” superior to both “Nordics” and “Alpines” in terms of “intellectual attainments,” “Nordics” far excel the “Mediterranean race” in “literature and in scientific research and discovery.”¹²¹ Grant characterizes the “Nordics” as,

above all, of rulers, organizers and aristocrats. ... The Nordic race is domineering, individualistic, self-reliant and jealous of their personal freedom both in political and religious systems and as a result they are usually Protestants. Chivalry and knighthood and their still surviving but greatly impaired counterparts are peculiarly Nordic traits and feudalism, class distinctions and race pride among Europeans are traceable for the most part to the north.¹²²

Grant’s further comments that the “Nordic” have distinct similarities to the descriptions of the “Hamite” and Rwandan Tutsi in the colonial period. For example, the Normans (as Nordics) are

characterised by a tall, slender figure ... of proud bearing and with clearly marked features of classic Greek regularity. ... These latter day Normans are natural rulers and administrators and it is to this type that England largely owes her extraordinary ability to govern justly and firmly the lower races.¹²³

This reflects Joannes van den Burgt (Roman Catholic missionary in Rwanda at the start of the twentieth century) view that “We can see Caucasian skulls and beautiful Greek profiles side-by-side with Semitic and even Jewish features”¹²⁴ and “[the Tutsi] is a natural born leader, capable of extreme self-control and of calculated goodwill.”¹²⁵ Grant’s statement that “When the Nordics first enter the Mediterranean world their arrival is everywhere marked by a new and higher civilization”¹²⁶ parallels Seligman’s statement that the Hamite was the “civilising force of black Africa,”¹²⁷ while Grant’s comment that “[The Nordic’s] energy endures for several generations [in Mediterranean and Indian countries] and only dies away slowly as the northern blood becomes diluted and the impulse to strive fades”¹²⁸ reflects Seligman’s “the ‘drag’ imposed by the large amount of Negro blood in the mixed Negro-Hamitic populations.”¹²⁹

That Adolf Hitler wrote to Grant that *The Passing of the Great Race* “is my Bible” is sufficient to suggest that a trace, however small, of Deniker’s work (via Ripley and Grant) was present in Nazi ideology.¹³⁰ While a strong “Nordicist” movement emerged in Germany in the 1920s,¹³¹ it is clear that Alfred Rosenberg was most strongly influenced by Houston Stewart Chamberlin’s *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*.¹³² And yet, whereas Chamberlin uses the term “Aryan,” Rosenberg chooses to use the term “Nordic.” While speculative, Rosenberg’s decision to use the term “Nordic” rather than “Aryan” may have been influenced by Grant’s¹³³ argument in favor of “Nordic” because the name “Aryan race” must also be frankly discarded as a term of racial significance. It is to-day purely linguistic.¹³⁴ Whatever the case, Deniker’s “Nordic race” punctuates Rosenberg’s *Myth of the Twentieth Century*.

And there is a final twist. In describing the “swarms of [Nordic] warriors” spreading out around the globe having originated from a metaphorical “Atlantis” or a “Nordic, prehistoric culture-centre,” Rosenberg states in *Myth of the Twentieth Century* that “The ruling stratum of the ancient

Egyptians reveals significantly finer features than the subject people. These Hamites are apparently a crossbreed of the Atlanteans and the negroid aboriginal population.” For Rosenberg, “Hamites” and “Nordics” (both terms originating with Deniker) were, after all, one and the same.

SUMMARY

Two genocides, 50 years apart, both of which involved racial classification. In both cases, distinctions were employed (“Hamite” and “Nordic”) which can be traced to Joseph Deniker. And yet, Deniker’s key assertions were jettisoned along the way, that (1) race was only a matter of physical characteristics, that (2) intellectual ability could not be associated with race, and that (3) the mixed nature of social groups (which had developed according to their environment) should be understood as “ethnic groups.”

July 1950 marked a key moment in the history of “race” when an international group of anthropologists and sociologists (including Claude Lévi-Strauss, Morris Ginsberg and Ashley Montague) convened to draft the UNESCO declaration entitled “The Race Question.”¹³⁵ Although Deniker was not referenced, three of his key assertions were present: that “race” should be discarded in favor of “ethnic groups” (Art. 6); that “Whatever classification the anthropologist makes of man, he never includes mental characteristics as part of those classifications” (Art. 9); and that “the only characteristics which anthropologists can effectively use as a basis for classifications are physical and physiological” (Art. 15(1)).

NOTES

1. Alfred Rosenberg was sentenced to death by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (Major War Criminals, 1945–46) and executed by hanging for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
2. Léon Mugesera was vice-president of the Gisenyi *préfecture* section of the MRND(D), the Mouvement Révolutionnaire national pour le développement, the single party formed in 1975 by Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana. Mugesera fled Rwanda in 1993 because of an arrest warrant issued against him for inciting hatred. He was deported back to Rwanda in 2012 from Canada and was convicted by a Rwandan court in 2016 of genocide and crimes against humanity and given a life sentence.

3. Omar Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 91–142.
4. Joseph Deniker, “Essai d’une classification des races humaines, basée uniquement sur les caractères physiques,” *Bulletins de la Société d’anthropologie de Paris* 12 (1889): 322.
5. Although Seligman is often associated with the “Hamitic Hypothesis” in Rwanda, it must be noted that while Giuseppe Sergi (*The Mediterranean Races: A Study of the Origin of European Peoples* (London: Scott, 1901 [1897]), p. 41) placed the “Wahima and Watusi” in his “Eastern Hamitic Branch,” in *Races of Africa*, Charles Seligman (*Races of Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939 [1930]), p. 209) mentions Rwanda only once, when he states “other ‘Lacustrian’ [i.e. of the African Great Lakes region] tribes are the Waruanda [and the] Warundi,” although he adds, “it seems that all these tribes have a Hamitic (presumably Galla) element, brought in by the Bahima.”
6. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 96.
7. Charles Seligman, *Races of Africa*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966 [1930]), p. 100.
8. Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: Or the Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1918), p. 150.
9. Edith R. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective,” *The Journal of African History* 10 (1969): 531.
10. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 96.
11. David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 142ff., 176.
12. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 19.
13. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, pp. 29–40.
14. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 46.
15. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 196.
16. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 168.
17. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 149.
18. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 156.
19. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 7.
20. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, pp. 101–169.
21. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 164.

22. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, pp. 164–167, 31–38.
23. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, p. 177.
24. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis,” p. 525.
25. Herbert J. Foster, “The Ethnicity of the Ancient Egyptians,” *Journal of Black Studies* 5 (1974).
26. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis,” p. 527.
27. Gatsinzi Basaninyenzi, “‘Dark Faced Europeans’: The Nineteenth Century Colonial Travelogue and the Invention of the Hima Race,” in *Race and the Foundations of Knowledge: Cultural Amnesia in the Academy*, ed. J. Young and J. E. Braziel (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
28. Richard Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration* (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860).
29. John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1906 [1863]).
30. Burton, *The Lake Regions*, p. 996.
31. Burton, *The Lake Regions*, p. 398.
32. Jan Vansina, *Le Rwanda ancien: le royaume nyiginya* (Paris: Karthala, 2001), p. 52 n. 113.
33. Burton, *The Lake Regions*, p. 398.
34. Burton, *The Lake Regions*, p. 391.
35. Burton, *The Lake Regions*, p. 392.
36. Basaninyenzi, “Dark Faced Europeans,” 119.
37. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, pp. 101, 69.
38. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, p. 1.
39. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis.”
40. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, p. 201.
41. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, p. 204.
42. Lionel Declé, “The Watusi,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 23 (1894): 424.
43. Lionel Declé, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London: Methuen and Co., 1898), p. 330.
44. C. Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1988).
45. J.-P. Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” in *Au Coeur de l’Ethnie: ethnies, tribalisme et état en Afrique*, ed. J.-L. Amselle and E. M’Bokolo (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1985), pp. 129–165; here p. 135.

46. Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis, 1959–1994: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst, 1997 [1995]), p. 8.
47. Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” p. 137.
48. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 7.
49. Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” p. 145.
50. I. Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), p. 4.
51. A. Kagame, *Inganji Karinga*, 2 vols. (Kabgayi, 1959).
52. J.-J. Maquet, *The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda: A Study of Political Relations in a Central African Kingdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 12.
53. Fidele Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique* (Bruxelles: Centre de Recherche de d’Information Socio-Politiques, 1961), p. 22.
54. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 96.
55. J.-P. Chrétien ed. *Rwanda, les médias du génocide* (Paris: Karthala), p. 169.
56. J.-P. Chrétien ed., p. 118.
57. Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto, 2004), pp. 38–50.
58. Charles Seligman, “Some Aspects of the Hamitic Problem in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 43 (1913): 593.
59. H. H. Johnston et al., “A Survey of the Ethnography of Africa: And the Former Racial and Tribal Migrations in that Continent,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 43 (1913): 420.
60. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 99.
61. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 607.
62. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 610.
63. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 97.
64. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 31.
65. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” pp. 648–649.
66. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 595.
67. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 682.
68. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 657.
69. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 659.
70. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 8.
71. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 100.
72. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 679.

73. Johnston et al., "A Survey of the Ethnography of Africa," p. 419.
74. Seligman, "Some Aspects," p. 595.
75. Giuseppe Sergi, *Africa: Antopologia della Stirpa Camitica* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1897); Sergi, *The Mediterranean Races*.
76. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Races*, p. v.
77. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Races*, p. 40.
78. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Races*, p. 43.
79. Seligman, "Some Aspects," p. 595.
80. Seligman, "Some Aspects," p. 595.
81. Drake St. Clair, "Détruire le mythe chamitique, devoir des hommes cultivés," *Présence Africaine* 24–25 (1959): 217.
82. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, pp. 101–103.
83. Deniker, "Essai d'une classification," p. 322.
84. Deniker, "Essai d'une classification," p. 324.
85. Joseph Deniker, *The Races of Man: An Outline of Anthropology and Ethnography* (London: Walter Scott, 1900), pp. 8, 3.
86. Paul Gilroy, "There ain't no black in the Union Jack": *The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p. 39.
87. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, pp. 9–12; C. L. Brace, "On the Race Concept," *Current Anthropology* 5 (1964): 313.
88. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 9.
89. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 10.
90. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, pp. 12–279. See George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (London: Dent, 1978), p. 89. Although beyond the scope of this essay, there is a need to consider Deniker's place in the shift from a humanist/evolutionist notion of "culture" to the anthropological form found in the work of Franz Boas: F. Boas, "Human Faculty as Determined by Race," *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science* 43 (1894); F. Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," in *Race, Language and Culture*, ed. Boas (New York: Free Press, 1966 [1896]). George W. Stocking, "Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective," *American Anthropologist* 68 (1966).
91. "Frizzy hair → black skin, large depressed nose → rather brown skin, prominent nose → [*Race:*] Ethiopian ('which corresponds in part to the "Kushites" and "Hamites" of some authors')—tall height, straight or aquiline nose [*Type:*] Beja" and that "*beja* is the

synonym for the *Nubian, Ethiopian, Bisharin* ... to be found fairly pure among nomadic populations (Ababda, Hadendoa, Hamran, Djalín etc.) of the Nile valley, beyond the tropic of Cancer, as well as further south, among the Gallas.” Deniker, “Essai d’une classification,” pp. 326–331.

92. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, pp. 101–103.
93. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 288.
94. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 294.
95. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 296.
96. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 428.
97. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 679.
98. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 295.
99. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 9.
100. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 127.
101. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 124. This is in contrast to Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom, etc.* (London: John Murray, 1871), p. 1.
102. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 125.
103. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 121.
104. F. Boas, “Review of William Z. Ripley ‘The Races of Europe,’” in *Race, Language and Culture*, ed. Boas.
105. Deniker, “Essai d’une classification.”
106. William Z. Ripley, *The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1900), p. 103.
107. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, p. 105.
108. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, p. 121.
109. Deniker, “Essai d’une classification,” p. 326.
110. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, p. 128.
111. Boas, “Review of William Z. Ripley ‘The Races of Europe,’” p. 155.
112. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, p. 128.
113. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, p. 516.
114. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, p. 527.
115. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, pp. 230, 168, 73, 91 and 218. Grant argues that this is because “the Nordic element everywhere forms the fighting section of the community” (p. 196).
116. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 16.

117. For Grant (*The Passing of the Great Race*, pp. 167, 169, 73, 213) Sweden is the “centre of greatest purity” although the “Proto-Nordic type” evolved in the “forests and plains of eastern Germany, Poland and Russia” formed by the “rigorous selection of a long winter season.” Grant further states that “Only in Scandinavia and northwestern Germany does the Nordic race seem to maintain its full vigour,” with Denmark, Norway and Sweden being “as they have been for thousands of years, the chief nursery and broodland of the master race” (p. 210).
118. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 150.
119. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 62.
120. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 226.
121. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 229.
122. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 228.
123. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 207.
124. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 7.
125. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 6.
126. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 214.
127. Seligman, *Races of Africa*, p. 8.
128. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 215.
129. Seligman, “Some Aspects,” p. 679.
130. Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, p. 357.
131. Geoffrey G. Field, “Nordic Racism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38 (1977).
132. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (London: The Bodley Head, 1912); Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), pp. 12–13; Robert Pois, *Alfred Rosenberg: Selected Writings* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 14–23.
133. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 67.
134. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p. 242. In asking “to which of the three races can be assigned the honor of inventing, elaborating and introducing this most highly developed form of human speech,” Grant concludes that it was, of course, the Nordic (pp. 233, 241ff.). In the preface to *The Mediterranean Race*, Sergi vehemently rejects the conflation of his “Nordic” group with the “so-called Aryan races” (pp. vi–vii).
135. UNESCO, *The Race Question* (1950).

Phonocentrism and the Concept of *Volk*: The Case of Modern China

Christopher Hutton

INTRODUCTION

The focus in this essay is on “phonocentrism” as fundamental to vernacular nationalism, and as one of the primary elements of the modern concept of *Volk*. Phonocentrism treats speech, and the sounds of speech, as the fundamental mode of human expression when set against writing and other modes or “semiotic orders.” Phonocentric implies that the best or most natural writing system is one that represents (as far as possible) the properties of speech. This best system is generally equated with alphabetic writing. In political and ideological terms, phonocentrism implies that spoken language is, or should be, the most visible diagnostic of a people or *Volk*, that language as speech is reflective as well as constitutive of culture and worldview, and is essential to its sociopolitical manifestations.

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Phonocentrism does not imply that simply being fluent in a particular language makes one a member of the *Volk*; rather, it is the fact that one speaks a particular language as a *mother tongue*, with all the complex baggage that this concept brings with it, that serves as an identifying marker.¹

Broadly, the concept of *Volk* is defined as a relationship between four elements: language (mother tongue); culture or worldview; lineage, genealogy or kinship; and territory. The phonocentric concept of *Volk* can be traced from the biblical account of the settlement of the earth by the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japhet (Genesis 9–10), who were divided “after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations,” and the complex geographical, linguistic and spiritual attributes associated with them through medieval and then early modern theorizing.² The full political-ideological impact of this concept arises in its use by German theorists of *Volk* (Johann Gottfried von Herder, Johann Gottlieb Fichte), and subsequently within liberal-bourgeois nationalist movements of the nineteenth century. In the form of the idea of national self-determination, the *Volk* concept came of age with the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian, German and Ottoman Empires after World War I.³ In the course of the twentieth century, the *Volk* paradigm was co-opted and transformed within anti-colonial nationalism, building to a great extent on categories and boundaries created or reified under colonial rule. Analyses of post-colonial political tensions in Africa and Asia are often framed in terms of underlying *Volk* essences reemerging or struggling for territorial autonomy, linguistic rights or other forms of political recognition within what are perceived as the artificial states created by colonial boundary drawing.

The *Volk* concept was, in different ways, central both to Nazism and what might be termed the Communist world order, with the USSR at its center. For the Bolsheviks, the “nationality question” and the nature of this right to self-determination, including the vexed question of self-definition, was a key issue, both before and after the Russian Revolution of 1917. One fundamental problem was how to deal with smaller nationalities and whether the same set of policies should apply to these as to Belorussia, Transcaucasia and Ukraine.⁴ Language was central to Lenin’s vision of nationality⁵; Stalin’s definition of a people or nation as “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” reflected the mainstream European position.⁶ In laying out requirements for peoplehood Stalin criticized the Austrian Marxist Otto Bauer (1881–1938) for his inconsistency with

regard to the Jews. Bauer declared Jews to be a nation in spite of their lack of a common language.⁷ Following the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the concept of *Volk*, refracted through the colonial linguistics and anthropology of Asia, as well as Soviet nationality policy, played a central role in minority policy and the official classification of diversity, in particular the criterion of language.

THE PARADIGM OF *VOLK* AND ITS RIVALS

The framework provided by *Volk* can be set against two distinct paradigms of identity or "semiotic orders." The first is "textual-ritual," where the framework for understanding human society and human actions in relation to the social and cosmic order is provided by a set of sacred or institutionally validated texts, or by specialized ritual knowledge either written or oral, subject to interpretation by an elite class of scholar-administrators or priests. Hinduism as currently understood would constitute a textual-ritual order. Confucianism would be a further example, where entry to the scholar-elite was by examination, within an imperial-dynastic system which understood itself as "everything under heaven." The global Islamic community of believers (*ummah wahida*) can be understood as an ideal textual-ritual realm, which for its members transcends all secondary ethnic, linguistic and national ties. Textual-ritual orders are associated with the premodern, though modern nation states incorporate elements of public ritual, and are governed by written laws. A pure republic of citizens without secondary ethnic affiliation or any public consciousness of historical continuity of population, governed by a constitutional order, would be an (implausible) modern form of textual-ritual polity, though one can look at states such as France and Singapore for very partial adumbrations of this.

The second semiotic order is grounded in the physical human body. The body is understood to be marked by skin color or other salient somatic characteristics, generally identifiable with geographical region, which can be aggregated or represented at group level as "physical types," and are understood to be expressed in blood ties, kinship, lineage, race and so on. The human body is the starting point, rather than language, history, territory or nationality, or self-classification. In post-Enlightenment scientific discourse, human physical variation belonged to the discipline of anthropology (a term which, like "philology," has narrowed its meaning dramatically in the disciplinary regime of the modern university). The sub-discipline of anthropology concerned with human physical variation can

be termed racial anthropology (if the organizing category is race), or more generically, physical anthropology. Racial anthropology (race theory) in its modern sense is generally traced to late eighteenth century, where an emergent comparative anatomy met developments in the science of taxonomy (Carl Linnaeus) to produce the beginnings of the modern theory of race (Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Immanuel Kant).⁸ In their purest forms, these body-based approaches reject the logocentric element of textual-ritual culture and the criterial use of language in *Volk* discourse, in favor of visual or iconic assessments, often aggregated into more abstract categories through statistics. Modern genetics, and more recently the ability to analyze patterns of DNA transmission, move beyond the racial icon to explore what are conceptualized as deeper and more real sets of correlations and connections at the individual and the group level. This remains a contentious area.⁹

TENSIONS AND CONFUSIONS IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY IDENTITY THEORY

At the outset of the nineteenth century, a range of political and intellectual trends, in particular the reaction of German intellectuals to the Napoleonic conquest,¹⁰ led to the rise of “Romantic nationalism,” with the phonocentric concept of *Volk* at its heart. Yet as the nineteenth century progressed, the phonocentric criterion of language looked increasingly problematic, with the perception that migration, intermarriage, conquest, industrialization and urbanization were destabilizing or even destroying the links between ancestral identity and linguistic identity. The emergent professionalization of scholarship and the formation of autonomous academic disciplines, each with their own distinct methodology and terminology, created a series of parallel discourses (archeology, history, political science, psychology, anthropology, comparative linguistics, geography, racial anthropology and so on) which interacted with each other and with the concepts and categories used in the public sphere. By the 1870s it was academic orthodoxy that racial and linguistic criteria were to be distinguished in identity theorizing. But this rendered problematic the construction of coherent historical narratives based on *Volk* and any pretensions to a unified and definitive classification of human diversity. For example, there was uncertainty among colonial scholars and administrators over which criteria to use in labeling and classifying the population of India, summed up as a question of “philology versus ethnology.”¹¹

Classical nineteenth-century race theory in Europe should be understood as an intellectual and political heresy within the broader discourse of *Volk*. The effect of this heresy between about 1870 and World War I was that theories of identity were in a continual process of self-deconstruction. The holistic *Volk* model of identity was destabilized by race theory, but the intellectual consequences of this were uncertain, and the political prospects for the promotion of purely racially defined identities unclear. The political theory of *Volk* had never been never mono-dimensional, in the sense that it incorporated not only language but also lineage, culture, homeland and history, including reconstructed prehistory. By contrast, race theorists attempted to set up race, or a subset of bodily features (nose, skull shape), as a “supercriterion” or methodologically autonomous criterion of identity. While they never successfully broke the grip of the *Volk* paradigm on the politics of classification and popularly accepted or common-sense notions of national and group belonging, ideas of race and new notions of heredity succeeded in exposing the fragility, lack of definition and constructed nature of these identities, and in triggering the “race panic” that gripped important sections of the ruling class in the United States and Europe, including the administrators of empire, in the late nineteenth century. At the center of this panic was fear of, and ignorance about, so-called “miscegenation.”¹²

For European nationalism, this new paradigm of race represented a profound intellectual challenge, as well as a potential crisis of legitimation. Political race theory, in the guise of Nordicism, saw itself as offering an X-ray vision of the underlying racial realities, warning against the processes of mongrelization which modernity, urbanization, democracy and “liberal colonialism” were accelerating. The genealogical or lineage element of the *Volk* model remained, as did the idea of homeland, and the powerful notion that national culture was mirrored in language. The very concept of “a language” in Western understandings indexes group identity, and there was no possibility of a response in terms of a new concept of *Volk* understood purely as a linguistic community, that is, one purged of ideas of ancestry and race. The creation of the German Reich in 1871 was a triumph for a phonocentric understanding of *Volk* identity, but for racially minded critics Germany was at best a hybridized polity, an inauthentic empire. Vacher de Lapouge (1854–1936) proposed a descriptive law that distinguished between two unequal racial groupings within European populations: “In countries inhabited jointly by *Homo Europaeus* and *Homo Alpinus*, the former element possesses more than its proportionate share of wealth.”¹³

Lapouge had demonstrated to his satisfaction the “economic, and especially the commercial, superiority of Homo Europaeus.” In addition to class and geographical distribution, the dimension of confessional affiliation was also relevant: “Catholicism is characteristic of brachycephalic populations (France, South Germany, Austria, Poland), and Protestantism of dolichocephalic populations (England, Holland, Scandinavia, North Germany).”¹⁴

Many racially informed thinkers rejected trends in liberal or modernizing colonialism, which argued for the incorporation of colonized subjects into colonial administrations, albeit in generally subordinate positions, and proposed educational and other social policy reforms. One can speak in this context of a tradition of anti-colonial racism, exemplified by Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92), for whom the British Empire was an unsettlingly miscegenated and profoundly problematic form of political union.¹⁵ Deep in the psyche of the European governing class was the model of Aryan and Dravidian relations from India, with the Aryan or Nordic threatened by the racially inferior, but numerically superior, dark-skinned teeming masses. Germany or France, with their mix of superior and inferior races, posed in essence the same problem as the Imperial states. This same framework animated the virulent racism of figures like Madison Grant (1865–1937) in the United States.¹⁶

Further intellectual shocks followed around the turn of the century, with the increasing impact of Darwinism on sociopolitical ideologies, the founding of modern genetics and the rise of eugenics. The impact of Mendelian genetics destabilized the idea that racial classification operated at the individual and community level, and post-Mendelian races were understood as virtual constructs, to be found in a set of features that were shuffled and reshuffled in mixture with those of other races.¹⁷ The logic was clear: pure races existed only virtually, or in a remote past in human evolution. Hans F. K. Günther (1891–1968) for example conceded that almost all Germans were *Mischlinge*:

Racial anthropology is in the disagreeable position of having to pronounce the overwhelming majority of Europeans to be of mixed race, to be bastards. This renders it an awkward, disturbing science, making it something discomfoting in the manner of that exhortation to “know thyself.”¹⁸

Not only nation states were hybrid, according to race theory, but so also were most individuals.

WHY RACE?

A number of factors have come together to create a false opposition within the intellectual and political history of identity theorizing. That opposition is between what are perceived as “soft” theories—that is, those where language, culture or religion lie at the basis of individual and group identity—and “hard” theories, which rely on common descent, blood ties and race. In a common trope of exposition, a particular theorist or political position is interrogated so as to see whether it has crossed the line from a cultural or linguistic understanding of identity, which is deemed politically acceptable, to a racial one, based on blood ties, which is not. This line, however, in most cases is an artifact or fiction of the observer, derived from the last two centuries of political history and the catastrophic role that racial theories have played in politically organized violence. There is no fixed boundary against which one can diagnose what one scholar terms the “subtle slide from language to descent.”¹⁹ Language-based identities have always connoted at some level ideas about common descent. Within the mainstream European tradition there has been no theory of collective linguistic and cultural identity that has excluded considerations of genealogy and kinship.

One key underlying cause of this near-exclusive focus on race has been the reception of National Socialist thought within the English-speaking world, and in particular the mismatch between English “race” and German *Rasse*. Lacking the centrality of a term equivalent to *Volk*, English “race” has historically a much wider set of meanings than are suggested by the contemporary political use of the term. The English word “race” is now functioning in many contexts as an imagined synonym for German *Rasse*. Late nineteenth-century English writers, whatever their attitude to the definition and status of the term “Aryan,” use “Aryan race.”²⁰ Robert Ellis began his *The Armenian Origin of the Etruscans* with the statement, “The Indo-Germanic, or, to adopt the shorter and now well-established term, the Aryan race, may be divided into two great divisions”.²¹ R. W. M., applying the biblical or Mosaic framework, used Aryan as a synonym for “Japhetic”: “we proceed to inquire how the Japhetic or Aryan race became first settled in Europe, and in our island of Britain.”²² The term “Aryan people” was also widely used, either as an equivalent to “Aryan race” or to designate one its sub-branches. In the same article we can find both terms: “if Denmark had always been inhabited by the reasonable and progressive race of Aryans who now form the bulk of the population,

it might have been unassailable,” and “The Greeks in their great age are assumed to have been a purely Aryan people, speaking a language closely allied to Sanscrit.”²³ However, in German by far the most common usage is to pair *arisch* with *Volk*. The distinction between these two concepts (*Rasse* and *Volk*) was absolutely fundamental to German scholarship,²⁴ and this remained true into the Nazi era. The major irony is that the concept of “Aryan race,” which is misleadingly held to underlie Nazi ideology in popular English-language sources, is actually the translation equivalent of *arisches Volk*.²⁵

A second cause of the focus on race has been the dominance of the United States in post-1945 academic discourse about identity. Given the centrality of slavery to the history of the United States, and the importance of race in the postwar struggle for civil rights, it is unsurprising that the term has played—and continues to play—a central role in both the intellectual and socio-ideological debate and in public discourse. A third and related cause has been the rise of postcolonial analyses of the underlying intellectual framework of colonialism, often reading colonial identity politics through the prism of the European slave trade and theories of anthropological race. Anthropometrics has developed a sinister reputation, as if skull-measuring was an automatic prelude to genocide.

It is not the intention here to downplay the importance of ideas of race and racism (including anthropometrics) to colonialism, Nazism and the history of the United States, among many other countries. Yet one needs at least to look at the immediate historical context and the overall sociopolitical framework. A racial idea may serve a liberationist cause; a particular racial theory may be neutralized by the sociopolitical context. The rhetoric of freedom, equality and justice can be, and has been, mobilized for eliminationist policies. The assumption is widely made that “soft” theories of language and culture in their purest form do not connote ideas of shared genealogy, kinship and blood ties. Rather the core elements of the *Volk* ideology have been labeled, relabeled, shuffled, reconfigured and used in various ways as a normative frame. Jews and Gypsies (Roma and Sinti) were peoples who were seen to be anomalous in their lack of an autonomous and defined territory; further, their genealogy could be traced to outside of Europe. Jews lacked a common vernacular language or mother tongue, and the Gypsy as “pure type” had degenerated through racial mixing. In simplified terms, it was the anomalous status of these two groups with regard to the normative *Volk* model that created the difference on which race theory came to operate.²⁶

There is no mainstream body of scholarship which claims the history of race theory as its own, and thus race theory can serve as an unchallenged and convenient dumping ground for ideas which no contemporary discipline wishes to recognize as its own. The narrow focus on race, and the paradigm of racialization, arguably gets the historical process backwards.²⁷ Racialization at its most general is defined as “the attribution of social significance and meaning to phenotypical/genetic variation in all dimensions of social life.”²⁸ This framework frequently implies a hard–soft contrast between models of identity, that is, the soft discourses of culture, for example, the study of language, history, art, music, politics, economics, are at a certain historical point racialized by the hard, that is, biological (scientific) theory of race. This is also that point at which race theory is held to bite at the level of social policy.

Yet one could argue that it was racial anthropology that was co-opted by earlier discourses of *Volk*, national character, anti-Semitism and so on. Ideas that were already deeply rooted in the European tradition and its normative assumptions of the nature of *Volk* were adopted by, or applied to, the comparative anatomy and emerging physical anthropology of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. What is further assumed in this paradigm is that “hard policies follow from hard theories,” that is, that bio-essentialist concepts of human identity are implicated in the worst examples of state violence and genocide. A full discussion of this question lies outside this essay, but one can point for example to the centrality of the soft concept of social class (or “landlord”) to mass murder under Leninist one-party regimes. Any category or classification (language, religion, class, race etc.) can be hard if the political context is deemed by those in power to require it, and there exist means to reify, enact and enforce it.

The paradigm of racialization is therefore potentially misleading, in the sense that anti-Semitism comes into race theory from the paradigm of *Volk* with its assumptions of a normative relationship between language, culture, territory and lineage—against which the Diaspora Jew offends on all counts. The *Volk* paradigm as it existed before the rise of theories of anthropological race was permeated by hierarchical distinctions, such as between “barbarous” and “advanced” nations, and notions of purity of descent and transmission.²⁹ While we could read the example from Vacher de LaPouge (above) unproblematically as an example of racialization, it clearly reveals the dependency of racial anthropology on prior confessional, cultural and regional understandings of diversity. It is at best an oversimplification to suggest that soft (that is, “warm and fuzzy”) cultural

concepts are suddenly hardened by contact with the biological theory of race. Rather the paradigm of race further destabilized existing paradigms of identity, and heightened the sense that modernity and modern mass society were breaking down what were now imagined to have been organic totalities. In using the term racialization, we are implying that the toxic elements of a particular worldview are derived primarily from race theory, whereas it might be historically more informative to speak of the partial “*Volk*-ization” of comparative anatomy and physical anthropology.

Following World War II, racial theories of identity were marginalized, leaving the *Volk* model as the dominant paradigm. The term used was “ethnicity,” which moved into the center of public and scholarly debate, in effect papering over the cracks in the inherited complex of identity theorizing. The fear of being associated with Nazi ideology led paradoxically to the development of a cartoon-like simplification of what Nazi ideology entailed,³⁰ compressing it into the single concept of race, often accompanied by terms such as “Aryan,” “essentialist” or “biological.” This was wrongly assumed to provide a clear and unambiguous boundary.³¹

One important effect of the focus on race is a failure to grasp the centrality of the phonocentric *Volk* concept to global politics in the twentieth century and to the identity engineering undertaken by authoritarian states. While the idea of a science of race, in which individuals and groups are classified according to objective criteria identified from an external vantage point, is widely understood to be inseparable from political and social ideologies, the idea of classifying people by applying linguistic criteria is generally seen as objectively underwritten by the science of linguistics. Even if some boundaries are acknowledged to be fuzzy or indeterminate at the edges, this is attributed to contact or social changes such as assimilation, rather than to any deep theoretical problem with the intellectual paradigm itself. Discussing the classification of the peoples of India, the colonial anthropologist Ripley wrote that language was a much easier criterion to use than race (“ethnic type”): “while there are practically no mixed languages, there are hardly any pure races.”³² In more sophisticated form, this idea persists today. The Chinese language, apart from its relationships within the Sino-Tibetan language family, “does not appear to have any affinity with any other language” and has “no genetic connection” with Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese: “This statement relates to the original state of Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese when they first came into contact with Chinese some 1500 to 2000 years ago. Over the centuries, however these languages did borrow huge amounts of vocabulary from Chinese.”³³

That is to say, at some deep historical level, languages or language groups are autonomous pure types. If some affinity can be detected, then this must be within a higher order of grouping, that is, within a so-called “language family.” Language mixture is termed “borrowing”; mixed languages are classified as “creoles.” Though this framework is presented as a scientific one, it reflects a paradigm of identity, one in which a language is suffused with a unique (anachronistically attributed) ethnic essence. The distinction between genetic relationships and other processes perceived as historically contingent (borrowing, assimilation, mixing etc.) is one of the great ideological dogmas of modern linguistics, and directly analogous to ideas of purity in race theory.

PHONOCENTRISM AND WESTERN UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHINA

In very simple terms, the Western understanding of China reflects the rise and fall of particular paradigms of identity or semiotic orders, which are themselves bound up with channels of communication, and economic and political relationships. Early modern European writings on China identified it as the domain of the written character understood as a picture, offering an iconographic understanding of Chinese culture and civilization. China was the ultimate realm of the textual-ritual semiotic order, since it was dominated by the semiotics of writing, and it was frequently ascribed a foundational or original status among the world’s cultures.³⁴ China was frequently identified with the promise of a universal sign system for the representation of thought, free of the distorting effect of local and contingent sound. China thus potentially led the way to an ideal transparent and rational semiotic order. Early modern writers often placed China (or, alternatively, Egypt) at the center of world history, in accordance with the generally accepted Eastern origin of human civilization. For example, a tradition of associating biblical patriarchs with legendary Chinese emperors had wide currency in Jesuit writings and subsequent eighteenth-century British debates; and Chinese was, along with Hebrew, one of the candidates for the primitive, that is, primordial, language of humankind. The dominance of writing over speech, the autonomy of writing in relation to the spoken form, was seen as guaranteeing the semiotic stability of the realm. Given that writing was much more stable than speech, the Chinese character had preserved a window on the origins of humankind, perhaps even the primitive or original language of the world before Babel.³⁵

The rise of comparative philology and the Indo-European paradigm in the early nineteenth century had ultimately a number of major effects. First, it claimed priority for phonocentric evidence over other forms of historical knowledge in reconstructing human history and prehistory. In so doing, it realigned European thinking about the origins of civilization within a paradigm that stressed affinities between languages. The rise of a self-styled methodologically rigorous comparative and historical linguistics narrowed the horizon of identification, so as to radically exclude China and the Chinese language. The radical Otherness of the Chinese language and writing, which had been for some the key to its centrality in human history, now became a sign of alterity. No respectable scholar could doubt the relationships between Sanskrit, Persian, English, German, Celtic languages and so on, and equally only a crank or a biblically inspired universalist would attempt to show the links between English and Chinese,³⁶ or Celtic and Hebrew for that matter.³⁷ Further, it formalized a distinction between Aryan and Semitic languages and cultures, raising a whole complex of questions about the roots of European identity and framing a conflict between Pagan polytheism and Semitic monotheism. Eventually it triggered a crisis in the understanding of the *Volk* model, since the apparent racial difference between Indians and Europeans put into question the assertion of an identity within the Aryan or Indo-European framework.³⁸

By the late nineteenth century, linguistic methodology and its conventional groupings of language families put the Indo-European languages at the center both methodologically and ideologically: the Chinese language was entirely marginal to this model. Nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries frequently saw the Chinese character as an unnaturally petrified form of writing, and sought to provide an alphabetic (that is, phonocentric) basis for a dynamic, modern Christian China.³⁹ Viewed through the lens of phonocentrism, China was Babel, a chaos of spoken forms in an unnatural polity held together by an arcane and rigid writing system. The people of the picture, the Chinese, were perceived to be pathologically resistant to change. The liberation of China meant liberation from the written Chinese character. Political and social order could only be produced by the imposition of a standard national language order upon the unbounded spoken variety. For radical Protestant missionaries, nationalist modernizers and communist intellectuals, political liberation required a phonocentric revolution and implied the rejection of the Chinese character.⁴⁰ Western phonocentrism, realized in the concept of “mother tongue,” had a fundamental impact on the politics of language and statehood in East Asia. The

Japanese intellectual Uedo Kazutoshi, after studying in Berlin in the early 1890s, on his return to Japan adapted the “German Romantic concept of ‘*Muttersprache*’ ... as the internalized spirit of the nation.”⁴¹ A detailed study of the reception of the concept of mother tongue (*muttersprache*) in China has yet to be written.⁴²

THE TRIUMPH OF THE PHONOCENTRIC *VOLK* MODEL IN CHINA

The reception of race theory in China played a complex role in the transition from dynastic empire to modern state, a process in which traditional paradigms of self (“civilized”) and other (“barbarian”) and indigenous concepts of lineage adapted and transformed the Western concept.⁴³ Imported ideas of race theory threatened to destabilize the imagined modern national state towards which reformers were working, since it suggested that the ruling Manchu, and other distinct religious and ethno-cultural groups within the boundaries of the Qing Empire, were not “Chinese.” As in Europe, ideas of anthropological race radicalized politically by appealing to an emergent ethnic nationalism, but also proved problematic in terms of defining the underlying identity to which the new nation could appeal.⁴⁴

Yet it was the *Volk* paradigm, incorporating but also domesticating race theory, which emerged ultimately as much more profoundly influential. Linguistic description emerged as the central technology for the understanding and management of diversity in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), founded in 1949. As in other contexts, race theory proved intractable as a means of classification, and problematic as a framework for building a modern nation. In the PRC, ethnic minorities were termed nationalities (*minzu*), on the Soviet model of administrative rules classifying its diverse population. At the state level, a national spoken standard, *Putonghua*, was institutionalized, along with a Romanization system, *Pinyin*, which remains part of the educational and visual landscape of China today. Chinese characters were simplified, in part on phonocentric lines, though never abolished. However, official policy for decades was that Chinese characters would be abolished and replaced by a “phonemic script.”⁴⁵

The model of *Volk* and phonocentrism emerge as key elements of state building in China. The criterion of language became the primary tool for mapping China’s ethnic diversity. With the founding of the PRC, under

Soviet influence and guidance, the Chinese government embarked on a vast process of classification and registration. Linguistic identity became the primary criterion for identifying ethnic minorities, alongside other social-cultural and historical criteria elements of the *Volk* model. The largest category within the classification system of the PRC became that of “Han,” the so-called “ethnic Chinese.” This category draws on the *Volk* model, yet profound tensions remain between racial and linguistic concepts of identity and in the multiple meanings that correspond to the English term “Chinese.”

The Han identity is understood along classical *Volk* lines, and the various speech forms or varieties that are grouped under the “Chinese language” are understood within PRC official discourse and academic linguistics as dialects rather than independent languages.⁴⁶ Linguistic kinship is central to the creation of this modern Chinese *Volk* identity. One crucial difference with European identity politics is that the writing system is understood as abstracted from, or complementary to, phonocentrism. It provides the stable frame of reference within which the different varieties of Chinese are understood as varieties of the same language. The textual-ritual understanding of Chineseness (in the form of the branding of Confucius as fundamental to modern Chinese identity) is now also being promoted, in part because of a perceived gap in ideology created by the demise of Marxist-Leninism and Maoism. But logically this textual-ritual culture can only be the property of the Han, since by definition other ethnic minorities have their own autonomous cultures and worldviews.

There are 55 ethnic minorities recognized today in China, excluding the Han⁴⁷; significantly there is a similar number in Vietnam according to official categories, that is, 54, including the majority ethnic group, the ethnic Vietnamese or *Kinh* who make up 87 percent of the population.⁴⁸ The remarkable numerical equivalence of these two models suggests strong parallels in the sociopolitical, intellectual and ideological modalities, and their common origins in Soviet minority policy, rather than any given similarity on the ground between the two countries.

Academic models of affinity and kinship are always political, in the sense that they never proceed by inductive analysis, and always begin *in medias res*: there is always a prior social reality with which and against which such classifications proceed. But it is the social and political context that determines the control of definitional criteria and the significance and policy uptake of such analyses. In the case of the PRC, anthropologists and

linguists, in mapping China's ethnic diversity, were operating "an applied experimental anthropology":

Chinese anthropology under the new regime, therefore, can be adequately characterized as an applied experimental anthropology. There is here no distinction in principle between anthropology and politics, in so far as any practical application of anthropology comes to be politics, while simultaneously Marxist politics per se is based upon a clearly formulated sociological and economic theoretical view. Therefore anthropology in Marxist countries will come to be applied politics as well, it comes to be "social engineering" in the most proper sense of the word. Anthropology and politics cannot be separated at all. The goal of this gigantic laboratory experiment, in other words, is fixed beforehand; it is, then the task of anthropology to examine how this theoretical goal can be achieved without too great conflicts. If this cannot be achieved in the one way, it has to search for new political procedures providing more positive results.⁴⁹

The importance of this can be understood by comparing a linguistic map of China to one of India. In India, the phonocentric principle operates as a lower level of abstraction, and the impression is of a high degree of variation. It is India, rather than China, that is today conceived of as a kind of Babel. This "fact" about India can be viewed either positively, as representing dynamism in diversity, or negatively, as confusion and chaos. A "Welcome to India" website announces, "There are 1652 different languages in India and 350 are as major languages."⁵⁰ Yet India and China can plausibly be presented as equally complex in terms of language variation. Phonocentrism, and modern linguistic analysis, provides no objective criteria of sameness and difference at any level of description.⁵¹

A study using the criterion of "structural distance between languages as a proxy for extent of cultural difference" ranks India second in Asia in terms of "ethnic fractionalization," whereas China is ranked twenty-first.⁵² Frequently, huge sections of the linguistic map of China are represented by variants of a single variety, "Mandarin." This implies an underlying linguistic unity that is broken primarily by the east-central and southern Chinese dialects (the Wu, Yue, Min Nan, Hakka and other groups), and by the "minority nationalities" to the north, west and southwest (Tibetans, Uyghur, Mongolians, Zhuang etc.). There is after all a language called "Chinese" (*hanyu* or the language of the Han), but no language called "Indian." Unlike India, China has a single national standard, Putonghua,

and a standard script (the so-called simplified character set), which is elevated above all other regional varieties. In India, regionalism and pluralism, and the importance of English, mean that Hindi cannot claim this position. Likewise, on the sacred textual-ritual level, China is seen as having a much more unified culture, and indeed Confucius is now being promoted as its central figure. But these are differences in framing and metalanguage, and in the political culture of the two nations: they are not descriptive facts about *language*. Anthropologists and historians study the construction of minority identities in the PRC,⁵³ whereas linguists study minority languages as natural categories with inherent properties.⁵⁴

While ideas about a single “Chinese race” and shared blood also circulate within modern Chinese culture, this does not reflect modern theories of anthropological race (which would see the Han Chinese *Volk* as racially highly diverse), but rather the traditional genealogical biblical or *Volk* model. The idea of a Han identity, one encompassing all ethnic Chinese, reflects the triumph of an intellectually conservative phonocentric *Volk* model: “A non-Han people is by definition an ethnic group which uses a non-Han language,” or, in an important clarification, is “known to have used different, non-Han languages in the past.”⁵⁵ It is by far the world’s largest formally recognized ethnic category, with an approximate figure given of 1.16 billion. The fact that the PRC categories are linguistic and cultural is even made the basis of a global claim about how the West categorizes minorities by race:

In China, the minority populations are not usually thought of as races. In other words, they are not distinguished from one another solely on the basis of physical and anthropometric criteria, as they usually are in the West. The identification of Chinese minority populations depends to a much greater extent upon cultural and linguistic differences, which have been relatively persistent ...⁵⁶

Leaving aside the strange reification of the “West” here, it is hard to see how the claim about “persistent” can be substantiated, given that the question of what it is that is actually persisting requires identifying a group that is the bearer of the language and the culture. Phonocentric categories are, as ever, subject to anxieties about the reality of the underlying kinship ties. Under the headline “How the Han Chinese became biggest tribe,” an article from the official *People’s Daily* online explained how DNA research had demonstrated the underlying unity of this group. The

scientific conclusion was that “there was a clear Han lineage, determined by the males who initially came out of the north.”⁵⁷

Alongside powerful ideas of ethnic Han unity, there are also discourses that draw on more radical phonocentrism to promote regional Chinese *Volk* identities. Phonocentrism, like race theory, can also destabilize any construct or identity, since linguistic description offers possible models of affinity along a whole continuum from the micro-social up to aggregates in the millions. In 2010, speakers of one of the main Chinese varieties, Cantonese, protested about what they see as official indifference or even hostility to their culture and language. In this sense they are defending the language rights of the “Cantonese people,”⁵⁸ a concept quite alien to the official classification set which defines all ethnic Chinese as “Han.”

Speaking of Soviet nationality classifications, Hirsch writes, “Whereas during the 1920s much of the population did not recognize the term *natsional’nost* by the late 1930s it was no less familiar than the words for last name, address, and date of birth.”⁵⁹ The ethnic classification system becomes a self-fulfilling “history of the future.”⁶⁰ A social order is established in which “minority groups in contemporary China really do seem to identify themselves more or less in accordance with the minzu designations put forth by the 1954 team.”⁶¹ In the same way, linguistic descriptions mirror the official divisions between “Han” and “non-Han” languages.⁶² What is striking is how these categories emerge as autonomous descriptive realities for linguists. That these categories take on a complex reality is quite unsurprising in an authoritarian and centralizing one-party state, where, to quote Benedict Anderson’s weasel phrase, “a discreet coerciveness was sometimes necessary.”⁶³ In reality, the early years of the PRC were marked by high levels of state violence in minority-dominated areas. The south-western province of Guangxi was subject to the most dramatic identity engineering of all, with the creation of China’s largest minority, the Zhuang, currently with over 16 million members.⁶⁴ Reporting to Beijing on executions of “counter-revolutionaries” in Guangxi province in the period when this category was in formation, Luo Ruiqing, the Minister of Public Security, noted that 46,200 people had been executed since October 1950, a killing rate of 2.56 per thousand people: this was more than twice the quota mandated by Mao Zedong and one of the highest in the country.⁶⁵ In December 1952, the Western Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Prefecture was established. In 1957 the entire province of Guangxi was renamed the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

The focus on race theory as the primary source of sociopolitical and ideological pathologies is problematic. This is not because these pathologies are not to be found in race theory, but rather because we need to understand the interactions, tensions and overlaps between different paradigms or semiotic orders. In particular contexts, phonocentrism can be just as powerful as racial ideologies in creating ethnocentric or xenophobic models of identity, as in the engineering of the ethnic landscape in states influenced by the Soviet model (USSR, Vietnam and China). Phonocentrism as the key outer signs of *Volk* is reducible to a convenient semiotic system, one that allows for comparison and mapping independent of other social categories and forms of identity. In this way it provides a single, bird's-eye point of view from which to map diversity: alphabetic writing (and its technical-linguistic variants).

It would be instructive to compare the fate of racial classification systems with those elaborated by linguists within academic discourse. Whereas classification by race has been subject to sustained intellectual attack from a wide range of disciplines, the postulation of linguistic affinities has largely escaped mainstream skeptical attention. A full battery of intellectual weapons, drawn from both the natural sciences and the humanities (population genetics, social constructivism, postcolonial theory, Foucauldian discourse analysis, semiotics, philosophy of science, postmodernism), has been brought to bear in critique of the notion of racial types, yet none of this same critical scrutiny has been applied to the reifications implicit in language groupings. While it may be true that the discourse of race (and racism) has been formative of the identity politics of the United States, for example, much of the world's population lives within identity frameworks elaborated with reference to language, often engineered by linguists under European colonial regimes or as part of top-down state policies in Leninist states.

Contemporary linguists tend to pick and choose the political issues that are congenial to them, ignoring the centrality of linguistic description to colonial regimes and authoritarian polities in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But ultimately what matters is not the actual theory itself, whether it focuses on the body or language or religion, nor the continuity, authenticity or artificiality of the categories in question, but the way in which, at a particular historical moment, the theory makes visible or legible forms of difference, offers a narrative of group and individual

identity, and naturalizes itself in the emergent social order. The status of phonocentric categories remains a fundamental question within contemporary China.

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“The Creation of a Frustrated People”: Race, Education, the Teaching of History and South African Historiography in the Apartheid Era

Derek Charles Catsam

South African history is inextricably bound with the issue of race. As a consequence, the teaching of history and the development of South African historiography are both inseparable from the country’s racial past (and present). Almost inarguably no country’s humanities culture is as deeply tied to the concept and the manifestation of race as is South Africa’s.

Race and racism surely play a central role in the historiography of the United States, for example, with its history of slavery followed by Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement against it and the lingering and tenacious legacy of white supremacy that endures. But there are also vast areas of American historiography where race is not the primary, or even a particularly significant, category of analysis and debate. Race is, however, nearly impossible to escape in South African historical writing. Even those

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historians from a “radical school” of interpretation who saw economics as the preeminent force in South African history, and who embraced a Marxist or materialist approach to historical scholarship, in most cases did so with a full understanding that the outcome of this materialist struggle still played out along racial lines.

And while in the period after World War II “‘race’ slowly but surely lost much of its legitimacy as a cultural, political, and scientific category,”¹ the caveat is that such a trend played out just about everywhere save southern Africa, where Apartheid and formal structures of white supremacy reigned not only in South Africa until 1994 but also in South-West Africa/Namibia until 1990 and Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe until 1980 with their legacies enduring to the present day. For example even after the end of Apartheid rule and South Africa’s multiparty, multiracial elections in 1994, race and racism hardly ceased to be an important social reality, and thus these questions have continued to dominate the work of South Africa’s historians and historians of South Africa the world over as well as those from myriad other humanities and social-science disciplines.

In South Africa, at any rate, surrounding the word “race” with scare quotes to indicate, perhaps, that “race” is but a construct, would serve little purpose. For in South Africa (and just about anywhere that race has played a role) race may be a “construct” (most things if we honestly assess them are) but it has been a construct that has had tremendous power. Apartheid too was a construct, after all. This chapter will thus look at the development of South African historiography and to a lesser extent the teaching of history in universities and schools during the Apartheid era and will assess the state of both the historiography and the historical profession in the more than two decades since Nelson Mandela’s release.

Indeed, one need look no further than the university itself to get a sense of just how inextricably tied to race the humanities were throughout the Apartheid period in particular. Dr. Hendrick Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs in the first Apartheid government and the country’s third Apartheid Prime Minister, had opened debate on the Bantu Education Act in parliament with the following infamous statement of principles:

Racial relations cannot improve if the wrong type of education is given to the Natives. They cannot improve if the result of Native Education is the creation of frustrated people who as a result of the education they receive have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled immediately, when it creates people who are trained for professions not open

to them, when there are people who have received a form of cultural training which strengthens their desire for white-collar occupations to such an extent that there are more people than openings available. Therefore, good relations are spoiled when the correct education is not given ...

What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? What is the use of subjecting the Native child to a curriculum which in the first instance is traditionally European? I just want to remind Honourable Members that if the Native inside South Africa today in any kind of school in existence is being taught that he will live his life under a policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake.²

Verwoerd’s speech carried all of the hallmarks of Apartheid reasoning: self-justification and rationalization; ample use of the passive voice to deflect attention away from the causes of “Native” misery (e.g.: “which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled”); misdirected pity toward the victims of its laws; and simple racist cant. Verwoerd would in the future dismiss criticisms of the Apartheid edifice he had been so central in creating by trying to explain it away as nothing more than “a policy of good neighborliness.”³

The 1953 Bantu Education Act put Verwoerd’s principles into action. Bringing all schools in South Africa under government control, the law enabled the government to control selection of teachers, curriculum and the language of instruction, and established the ability to close schools “detrimental to the physical, mental and moral welfare of students,” which by and large meant those schools unwilling to adhere to Apartheid ideology. “Bantu” students were provided with an education befitting Verwoerd’s statement before parliament, which presupposed their fates to be to serve as drawers of water and hewers of wood. Most independent schools, including the many mission schools across the country, closed rather than submit to Verwoerd’s vision. Such schools had, in Verwoerd’s telling, “misled” the Natives “by showing them the green pastures of European society in which they are not allowed to graze.”⁴

Because the 1948 election and all that resulted from it looms so large in the history of South Africa it is sometimes difficult to convey that Apartheid was never inevitable. To be sure, segregation was a fact of life in pre-1948 South Africa and Africans (and Coloureds and Asians) clearly were allotted second-class status in the country. But segregation and Apartheid are not the same thing. And there were always other paths—rather than the rigidity and comprehensiveness of Apartheid there were always those, especially English-speaking, whites who believed that African uplift was possible.

The philosophy of uplift may have been paternalistic and even patronizing, but there is a vast chasm between paternalism and Apartheid.

In a speech at Eureka United Primary School on December 9, 1939 Dr. D. P. S. Adams, the school's manager, gave an address in which he "vigorously attacked the theory that the African is mentally inferior to the Caucasian man." Adams argued that intellect is a difficult thing to assess, but that "to prove equality was one thing, and to attempt to prove inferiority quite another," but that "measured by results, the cultivated African had proved himself quite capable of assimilating and using as much education as was given him" and that the future held great promise because "the African was not wholly introduced to the Caucasian system of education in South Africa."⁵ There is no need to read too much into isolated remarks from one white, English-speaking liberal speaking nearly a decade before the 1948 elections, but it is clear that within some circles education was seen as not only viable for Africans, but as a path to something resembling equality. And Mission Schools and their secular offshoots were seen as vital to this process. For this very reason, the Apartheid government tackled the dangerous autonomy of such institutions.

The first decade or so after the National Party victory in 1948 saw the implementation of Apartheid, every aspect of daily life and education was no exception. The example of Lovedale College, an elite missionary school for Africans located in the Transkei region of the Eastern Cape and the first high school in South Africa to admit black students, is illustrative of the deleterious effects of Apartheid encroachment on education. Known among its supporters and graduates as the "Eton of Africa," Lovedale had long been a training ground for the African elite and as the twentieth century progressed it increasingly produced African nationalists willing and able both intellectually and temperamentally to challenge racial dogma.⁶ It is no surprise, then, that the National Party government wanted to crack down on such schools.

In the 1950s the government implemented its "Bantu Education policy" which brought Apartheid to all schools, including the theretofore private mission schools. Central to government policy was the idea of "Christian National Education," which in the words of many critics "was not Christian, was not 'National' and not education," relying as it did on narrow conceptions of all three terms in ways that reflected the particular white supremacist leanings of Afrikaner Nationalists and relying on wholesale indoctrination.⁷ In the words of anti-Apartheid activist

and intellectual Ronald Segal, “This, we all cried out, was not education, the development of independent thinking, of individual personality. It was mass indoctrination, a ruthless assassination of personality that would make from South Africa at last a grave of the mind.”⁸ Education for Africans and other “non-whites” was to be for the sole purpose of instilling obedience and training laborers. Education for whites was to inculcate nationalism.⁹ All groups, it can be said, were victims of this policy, albeit not equally tragically or with equivalent consequences.

The liberation leader and future president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, was part of “the very last class [at Lovedale] to be allowed to follow the standard curriculum as white students.”¹⁰ In the years that followed the government engaged in willful “acts of destruction of work that had taken more than a century to build,” in the words of Govan Mbeki, the legendary struggle leader. In a short period of time Lovedale succumbed to “Bantu Education.” Officials saw to it that the school’s once respected library closed and, according to Govan Mbeki, students were “discouraged from reading outside their prescribed work.” In order to prevent students from fomenting rebellion, authorities forbade them “to stand in a group and engage in discussions” and the campus became overwhelmed with informers who reported to school officials from the government’s Department of Bantu Affairs.¹¹

The National Party did not succeed in crushing the spirit of rebellion among South Africa’s secondary students, and in fact its actions had the opposite effect. But if African nationalism bloomed under Apartheid, it is undeniable that the National Party was able to profoundly shift the nature of the education that students received. There would be no “Eton in Africa” under the Apartheid regime.

In 1959 the government continued its assault on education with the Orwellian-named “Extension of University Education Act.” One of the grim rules of thumb in South Africa is that Apartheid laws oftentimes did the opposite of what their names indicated. The Extension of University Education Act thus limited university education for the vast majority of South Africans by prohibiting “non-white” students from registering in the existing universities (with scant exceptions) without the permission of the Minister of Education, permission that was going to be only rarely and reluctantly granted.¹² The law called for separate universities, the so-called “bush colleges,” that would be given meager funding and provide narrow, often poor-quality education.¹³ The legislation would have been comical had it not been so serious. Or as Maurice Pope, a professor of

classics at the University of Cape Town put it in an article for *Africa South* in which he eviscerated the incoherence of the National Party's conceptions of "Bantu Education," "But when comedy becomes serious it turns to tragedy."¹⁴

Z. K. Matthews, the legendary educator and activist, had attended Lovedale and became the first African college graduate when he finished at Fort Hare in 1924. He went on to become a vitally formidable figure in South African academic circles and in 1954 he took over the position of acting principal of Fort Hare. Four years later he resigned (and in so doing forfeited his pension) after the government passed the University College of Fort Hare Transfer Bill that placed administration of the school under the Department of Native Affairs and rapidly stripped away any pretense of academic freedom.¹⁵

Prior to his resignation Matthews penned a scathing account for *Africa South* in which he condemned the very idea of "ethnic universities":

This system which has been built up in the past and is the fruit of the mature experience of persons who have been directly connected with the development of our universities, is, like so many other things, to be sacrificed on the altar of apartheid. Instead of the large measure of autonomy which is associated with other universities, the tribal universities are to be subjected to a rigid form of control by the government. The council, the principal, the senate, the professors and lecturers are all to be cribbed and confined in such a way as to convert the tribal universities into intellectual kraals, rather than places in which the spirit of free enquiry will prevail. Surely if the policy of apartheid or separate development is all that is claimed to be it ought to mean that within their separate university institutions the non-whites will have all the freedoms normally associated with university life in other societies, instead of being expected to work in an atmosphere of threats and compulsion. Why should the non-white universities not be placed under the direction of the Minister of Education, Arts and Science? There can be no doubt that the Department of Education, Arts and Science is more conversant with the problems of higher education, including higher education for Africans with which it has dealt since the consummation of Union, than the Department of Native Affairs.¹⁶

Matthews's befuddlement is for effect of course. He knew full well the extent of cynicism and foul intent of the architects of Apartheid education. He knew why the universities and their faculties had not been consulted. And he knew that the government was fully aware of what it was doing when it charged the Department of Native Affairs and not the Department

of Education, Arts and Science with overseeing Fort Hare and other ethnic universities.

As Matthews and others expected, Apartheid legislation inevitably led to the (further) politicization of higher education in South Africa, where not only the humanities, but the entire university system operated within the intermingled contexts of Afrikaner Nationalism and Apartheid white supremacy. Race thus became the *sine qua non* of academic life in South Africa and this was especially so in the humanities, where questions of politics, history, human rights, race, policy and development were most likely to be asked.¹⁷

Once the state had taken control of the educational process in primary and secondary schools it set its sites on the universities.¹⁸ Writing in *Africa South*, Ronald Segal excoriated the government’s early efforts to bring the universities to heel:

With the Bantu Education Act and the provincial language ordinances, Christian National Education is already part of our society, a malignant growth on the stricken mind of South Africa. And now this creeping death is to attack the universities. For what in the context of present government policy does the threatened enforcement of segregation on the liberal “mixed” universities ultimately mean? Only the annihilation of higher education in this country—the spawning of monster government academics in which Geography will not hobble beyond the Limpopo, in which History will deal with the apocalypse and the mission of the Afrikaner elect to govern South Africa, in which lecturers will be appointed for their blind loyalty to the government and students relentlessly disfigured into bigots and slaves.¹⁹

As Segal predicted, one of the grimmer ironies of government policy is that some of the country’s best English-medium universities, such as Rhodes University in Grahamstown, Johannesburg’s University of the Witwatersrand, the two campuses of the University of Natal and the University of Cape Town, suffered from the policies of Christian National Education, especially after 1960 and the Sharpeville Massacre when there was an exodus of liberal and radical white academics and Apartheid universities became anathema to academics from across the globe. It is also worth noting that there was always dissent within these universities in particular. The University of Cape Town came to be known as “Moscow on the Hill” because of its perceived radical politics and the fact that the buildings in the Rondebosch hillside had the customary red-tile roofs of Cape architecture.²⁰

The end result of all of these machinations of the Apartheid state was to create a country in which race was embedded so deeply into society, including the country's educational system, that by and large it became an ontological tool and not an epistemological one, which is to say that white South Africans, those with power, created a world where their racial suppositions were presupposed.²¹ As a result race ceased to be a central category in any official curriculum.

These peculiarities of the teaching of race extended to the universities that found themselves under the thumb of Bantu Education. In the words of Premesh Lal, the current director of the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape,

The reckoning with the apartheid state's new institutional arrangements diminished the history of race in the disciplines of the humanities. It also neglected understanding of how race was being figured through a mode of disciplinary reasoning and the institutional site of the black university. In their "own affairs" apartheid *raison d'être*, the newly established racial and ethnic universities often justified their existence by staking out a sphere of research about "community" that mostly extended the unwritten contract between the university and the state. And with it came a racialised conception of the human subject as "normal," but also one that was kept in its place.²²

It would require the combined work of the Soweto generation, of the ANC (and others who opposed the Apartheid state) in exile, and the denizens of what came to be known as "Robben Island University," or "Mandela University," to step away from that "place."

None of this is to say that race was not a central paradigm in South Africa—it was arguably *the* central paradigm—but rather that the government was effective in making their racial categories innate so that they were not contestable within the country's classrooms. Those who led the liberation struggle chafed against this system, most famously in the 1976 Soweto Uprising, which had its roots in student discontent over the imposition of Afrikaans as a teaching medium in the country's schools.²³ But perhaps tellingly even in those protests the country's racial dynamic came under assault only through the issue of language.²⁴ Race, and more to the point the country's racial policies, may have been the ultimate target but even the most effective protest movement to have emerged since the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre resulted in massive crackdowns that created a period

of seemingly unfettered Apartheid dominance only pursued that target from an oblique angle.

The encroachment of Apartheid into the South African university, its curriculum and its scholarship, continued from the mid-1950s onward. In the discipline of history it would be largely up to more than a generation of scholars and teachers based primarily in the United States and the United Kingdom, many of them South African expatriates, to push forward South African historiography.

South African historical scholarship has crested in waves, with, at the risk of creating mechanistic and thus false categories, four main schools dominating.²⁵ Colonial/“settler” historiography was the first and in some ways the most pernicious of these, as it elevated South African history to a white man’s history while reducing African history to one of barbarism. The responses to this colonial/settler history²⁶ were successive versions of “liberal historiography” that challenged the prevailing views. Amidst the ascendance of liberal historiography came a radical school of interpretation that placed economic, materialist and Marxist interpretations of South African history above simple racial interpretations (and thus served to revive rather than supplant liberal historiography in many real ways). Finally, there is the state of scholarship in post-Apartheid South Africa, which borrows generously from previous trends while trying to develop a new identity. It is this era that has seen serious questions of the state of the discipline of history in the modern university and yet the concomitant rise of a heritage industry in South Africa that has tried to present the past in an appealing and commoditized form.

Settler historiography owes a great debt to prevailing schools of thought that dominated views of the African continent into the twentieth century. Three men who were giants in their fields and in Western intellectual life generally embody the representation of Africa as a land without history, and thus as a land unworthy of attempting to understand. In the eighteenth century the Scottish philosopher David Hume said, “I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilised nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or in speculation. No ingenious manufacture among them, no arts, no sciences.” In the nineteenth century the German philosopher Hegel similarly dismissed Africa when he blithely asserted, “Africa is no historical part of the world.” In 1963 Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who ought to have known better, repeated this calumny

when he dismissed Africa as having “no history” but rather “the unedifying gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe.”²⁷

Hume and Hegel, if not Trevor-Roper, provide some of the intellectual foundations of Settler historiography, a swashbuckling version of the past in which Africans serve largely as props to bolster the heroism of the settler population, both English and Afrikaner. Colonial history relies not only on the myth of Africa as a land with no history, but on another myth that runs something like this—Blacks only arrived in the Southern part of Africa in the 1700s, right around the time that we settled here. Thus we have an equal claim on the land as they do. And since we settled it into farms and communities, since we civilized the land, it ought to be ours. It’s an elegant myth that fails only inasmuch as there is no truth to it.²⁸

Among the most prominent advocates of this “Settler School” of historiography, which incorporated both Afrikaans and English historians, professionals and especially a committed school of amateurs, were Afrikaner S. J. du Toit and English-speaking historians George McCall Theal and George E. Cory, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians whose work celebrated the pioneers and hailed the Great Trek and other exalted moments in the white settler mythology as being the defining moments in South African history. In these tales race is often conspicuous by its absence, in itself a racially driven decision that as much as anything serves as a reminder that we must heed E. H. Carr’s admonishment that “Before you study the history, study the historian” and “before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment.”²⁹ Where these historians did not ignore the realities of segregation they provided apologies or rationalizations for it. Both the historians and their historical and social environment dismissed Africans and their history while venerating their own. Afrikaner historians, meanwhile, used history as a pillar for the development of Afrikaner nationalism, showing the significance of the convergence of historical scholarship, ethnic and racial nationalism, religious faith, and politics.³⁰ Perhaps not surprisingly, these Afrikaner historians also served to ensure that Afrikaans-medium universities became ever-more deeply entrenched in Afrikaner Nationalism.³¹

Perhaps the most diverse, dominant and enduring school in South African historiography has been the “liberal school,” largely because the liberal school has proven to be the most protean, the most adaptable, and the most palatable to an outside world that as the twentieth century progressed saw itself as increasingly liberal. The early waves of the

liberal approach, embodied in W. M. Macmillen and his student C. W. de Kiewiet, took a critical approach to the grand settler narrative, and while the Black masses were occasionally on their radar, they saw the African population largely as victims and not as agents of their own history.³²

Later liberals, sometimes called “neo-liberals” or “liberal Africanists” both because they began to place South African history within the context of larger African history and because they began to integrate Africans into South African history, built on the earlier liberal tradition while at the same time placing Africans, and thus the myriad issues surrounding race relations in southern Africa, closer to the center of the story. This liberal historiography, embodied in the work of historians such as Leonard Thompson, Rodney Davenport, Monica Wilson, John Omer-Cooper among myriad others, subjected racial presuppositions to strict scrutiny and challenged prevailing racial hegemony in ways that transcended the academy. In so doing they also changed the academy itself.

From the liberals came the radicals, embodied first in the “elder statesmen” of this new revisionist school, Martin Legassick, Harold Wolpe, Stanley Trapido and Frederick Johnstone, who begat numerous other new challengers who emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and who were unafraid to challenge aggressively what they saw as the tepid liberal school. The radicals were even more aggressive when it came to exploring South Africa’s racial dynamic, and yet for them race and racism were merely manifestations of South Africa’s economic and class structure. As a result the liberal–radical divide dominated South African historiography into the 1980s even if many of their disagreements threw off more heat than the divide separating them ought to have kindled.

Many of these materialist historians embraced Marxism and helped drive South African historiography forward while at the same time revealing some of the flaws of theory- and thesis-driven history. After all, while economics—in particular the need for a large, exploitable labor pool—was certainly a major factor in the development of South Africa and the specific manifestations of both grand and especially petit Apartheid, that manifestation played itself out in explicitly racial terms. After all, even middle-class Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans were subject to Apartheid’s horrors and even the poorest whites were granted the ample privilege of skin color in the eras of segregation and Apartheid. Race, then, was the coin of the realm of South African race relations even if the radicals were correct in many of their larger assumptions and were willing to embrace the necessary, and yes radical, solutions to South Africa’s white supremacy.

Further, the radicals and other revisionists helped to invigorate South African social history, with Shula Marks and Belinda Bozzoli in particular at the forefront of this effort, and to push scholarship in numerous new methodological and thematic directions, vital contributions by any estimate. Indeed, many of these social historians and others often subsumed under the “radical” penumbra in fact did not particularly embrace structuralism as a prevailing explanatory paradigm, revealing the problematic nature of trying to subsume complex histories into even relatively broad categories.³³

From the liberal and radical schools—which, as time progressed, became less and less distinct, with these lines particularly blurred among those scholars working in the United States³⁴—came a synthesis that has prevailed since the last decade of Apartheid. But even as South African historiography has reached a stage of synthesis, the South African historical profession has fallen on hard times as South Africans, black and white, radical, liberal, conservative, *verligte* or *verkrampte* (Afrikaans terms that should remind us that Afrikaners were never a monolithic population), have seen history as increasingly less relevant to the needs of contemporary society even when understanding that history might be as necessary as ever. Too many South Africans, including the political class, have sought a watered-down, bastardized, simplified and commoditized useable past most often expressed through too-often anodyne “heritage” sites and the “Mandela-ization” of South African history, whereby the complex story of the liberation struggle and the end of Apartheid ends up being reduced to the sanitized biography of Nelson Mandela. This is especially frustrating to many historians who saw themselves as having played a role, however small, in helping fuel the substantial intellectual foundations for Apartheid’s downfall.

Part of the irony of the state of history and historical study in South Africa is just how much of South Africa’s historical production about South Africa still comes from whites with little end to this trend even after 1994. There are few black postgraduates in South Africa’s university graduate programs. Understandably, most South African students, Black, White, Coloured and Indian, see university as a path to careers that studying history does not initially seem to prepare them for. As a result the state of history as a profession in South Africa is suffering from decline. Perhaps South African historiographical development has something to say about these trends. In a review of the fifth edition of the quintessential representative of liberal historiography’s apex, Rodney Davenport and Christopher

Saunders’s *South Africa: A Modern History*, University of Leeds historian Andrew Thompson identifies the liberal school’s potential in the twenty-first century³⁵:

The liberal school’s concern for human agency, and its confidence in the power of individuals to mould their own environments, would seem particularly pertinent to South Africa’s present situation. As Desmond Tutu’s sobering forward to the book reminds us, the suffering of apartheid ultimately rose from deep-seated racial beliefs: some people in South Africa (who made the laws) convinced themselves that they were more human than others (for whom those laws were made). Racism was thus the responsibility of individuals, and should not be explained away by other social forces. This emphasis on individual responsibility is no less germane to the future. In view of the widely discussed dangers of one-party rule, and the blurring of boundaries between the ANC and the state, it is vital that the organs of democracy—community-based organizations, trade unions, municipal organizations—be kept alive in this part of the world. This, in turn, requires active and energetic citizenship and a strong sense of civic responsibility. If ever liberal historiography had something to say to South Africa, it is surely today.³⁶

Of equal importance, those many South Africans who do not see history as being relevant to their lives need to be able to understand why race still matters in South Africa. Many white South Africans are quick to dismiss the past as being over and to express their desire to move on, as if 1994 ended the bad old days and killed off their legacy. Shula Marks has on more than one occasion told the story of how, upon arriving back in South Africa in 1994, an immigration officer commented incredulously on her profession, “Historian? Historian? You can’t be an historian *now!* ... I mean in the New South Africa, we have to look to the future, not to the past.”³⁷ This mindset, which also helps explain the way conservative whites in particular were inclined to dismiss the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the 1990s, provides a sense of comfort akin to the Settler school of historiography. (It is perhaps worth pointing out that the TRC represented a vital moment not only in South African history, but in the ongoing understanding that we have of South African history; the TRC was, if it is not inappropriate to say as much, also a vital historiographical moment.³⁸) But this time rather than glorifying an imagined past to justify the present, the idea of shutting off the realities of history serves to allow the imagination that the past is somehow irrelevant

to the present, and in so doing to blame the ANC and the mass of Black South Africans for South Africa's present difficulties. The intertwining of race and the past thus continues apace in the New South Africa.

NOTES

1. Quoted from the call for papers for the "Race in the Humanities" Conference held at the University of Haifa in October 2010.
2. Quoted in Mervyn Shear, *WITS: A University in the Apartheid Era* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1996), pp. 20–21.
3. The relevant section of the speech in which Verwoerd uses this phrase can be found at South African History online: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/hendrik-verwoerd-defines-Apartheid> (accessed June 29, 2016).
4. See the essays in Peter Kalloway, ed., *Apartheid and Education* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), especially Christie and Collins, "Bantu Education: Apartheid Ideology and Labour Reproduction," and Tom Lodge, "The Parents' School Boycotts," as well as those in Kalloway, ed., *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened* (Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa, 2002); See also Pam Christie, *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa*, 2nd ed. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991). See also Brian Rose and Raymond Tunmer, *Documents in South African Education* (Johannesburg: AD Donker, 1975).
5. *Bantu World*, January 16, 1940.
6. On Lovedale see R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale: South Africa, 1824–1955* (Lovedale, South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1971). See also P. Christie, *Right to Learn* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991) and Peter Randall, *Little England on the Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982).
7. Ronald Segal, "Editorial: The Grave of the Mind," *Africa South* 1.2 (1957), in M. J. Daymond and Corinne Sandwith, eds., *Africa South: Viewpoints, 1956–1961* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011), p. 30.
8. Segal, "The Grave of the Mind," p. 31.
9. I. R. Hexham argues that Apartheid ideology was secondary to preserving Calvinist traditions in the development of Christian

- National Education, though he acknowledges that its development lent itself to Apartheid quite easily. I. R. Hexham, “Christian National Education as an Ideological Commitment,” *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 20 (1976): 111–120.
10. Mark Gevisser, *A Legacy of Liberation: Thabo Mbeki and the Future of the South African Dream* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), p. 51.
 11. Govan Mbeki, “The Rape of Lovedale,” *New Age*, July 30, 1959, p. 5. Also quoted in Gevisser, *A Legacy of Liberation*, p. 52.
 12. Keep in mind that university education in South Africa was already severely restricted even before the passage of the Extension of University Education Act. In 1954, for example, only 200 Africans, 414 “Asiatics” and 221 Coloured students attended the country’s eight white universities, and all 835 of these students attended only three universities—the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal and the University of the Witwatersrand. There were 19,651 white students at these eight universities, with the 835 non-white students being outnumbered by the 10,000 white students at the three universities with token mixed-race populations. See Muriel Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1955–1956* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1956), p. 203.
 13. In addition to sources in the previous footnote, see also Shear, *WITS*, p. 28; Graeme C. Moodie, “The State and Liberal Universities in South Africa, 1948–1990,” *Higher Education* 27, no. 1 (1994): 1–40; *The Open Universities in South Africa and Academic Freedom, 1957–1974* (Cape Town: Juta, 1974). Published on behalf of the Academic Freedom Committees of the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand; H. W. van der Merwe and David Welch, *The Future of the University in Southern Africa* (Claremont, South Africa: David Philip, 1977), parts III–IV.
 14. Maurice Pope, “Universities in Ethnasia,” *Africa South* 4.1 (October–December 1959), in Daymond and Sandwith, *Africa South*, p. 254.
 15. See Daymond’s and Sandwith’s introduction to Matthews’ article “Ethnic Universities,” *Africa South*, p. 74.
 16. Matthews, “Ethnic Universities,” *Africa South* 1.4 (July–September 1957), in Daymond and Sandwith, *Africa South*, pp. 78–79.

17. See M. A. Beale, "The Evolution of the Policy of University Apartheid," *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 44 (1992): 82–98; Graeme C. Moodie, "The State and the Liberal Universities in South Africa: 1948–1990," *Higher Education* 27, No. 1 (January 1994): 1–40; Edward I. Steinhart, "White Student Protests in South Africa: The Privileged Fight for Their Rights," *Africa Today* 19, no. 3, Black Perspectives on Africa (Summer 1972): 39–54; and Pramesh Lalu and Noeleen Murray, eds., *Becoming UWC: Reflections, Pathways, and Unmaking Apartheid's Legacy* (Bellville: Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape, 2012).
18. On the manifestation of Apartheid in the primary and secondary schools see Eleanor Hawarden, *Prejudice in the Classroom* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1965), and F. E. Auerbach, *The Power of Prejudice in the South African Classroom: An Enquiry into History Textbooks and Syllabuses in the Transvaal High Schools of South Africa* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1965).
19. Segal, "The Grave of the Mind," p. 35.
20. See, for example, Siona O'Connell, "UCT: A Campus at Odds with Itself," *Mail & Guardian*, September 8, 2014.
21. And where those suppositions were supplemented with waves of propaganda to the outside world. See, for example, J. E. Holloway, *Apartheid: A Challenge* (Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, 1964) and the several editions of the Information Service of South Africa, *Progress through Separate Development: South Africa in Peaceful Transition*.
22. Premesh Lalu, "Restless natives, native questions," *Mail & Guardian*, August 26, 2011.
23. On Soweto see Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Schoolchildren's Revolt that Shook Apartheid*, 40th anniversary ed. (London: Zed Books, 2016); see also Motsoko Pheko, "40 Years After: Understanding the Soweto Uprising," *Pambazuka News*, June 2016.
24. On the role of language see Hirson, "Language in Control and Resistance, the Education of a Black Community in South Africa," *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 28 (1981): 53–68.

25. The following treatments of South African historiography have been especially influential in my own thinking: Christopher Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988); Ken Smith, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988); Williams Beinart and Saul Dubow, eds., *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Paul Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation, and Apartheid* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2001); Adrian Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid: South Africa and World Politics* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Hans Erik Stolten, ed., *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007); Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South African History: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007); Iain R. Smith, “The Revolution in South African Historiography,” *History Today*, February 1, 1988; Sarah Nuttall, “City Forms and Writing the ‘Now’ in South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 4, special issue: Writing in Transition in South Africa: Fiction, History, Biography (2004): 731–748; Leonard Thompson, “The Study of South African History in the United States,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25, no. 1 (1992): 25–37; Andrew Bank, “The Great Debate and the Origins of South African Historiography,” *The Journal of African History* 38, no. 2 (1997): 261–281; Alan Cobby, “Does Social History Have a Future? The Ending of Apartheid and Recent Trends in South African Historiography,” *The Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3, special issue for Shula Marks (2001): 613–625; Stephen Ellis, “Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 43, no. 1 (2002): 1–26; Wessel Visser, “Trends in South African Historiography and the Present State of Historical Research,” Paper Presented at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, September 23, 2004 (copy in author’s possession); Richard Glotzer, “C. W. Kiewiet, Historian of Africa: African Studies and the American Post-War research University,” *Safundi: The Journal*

- of *African and American Studies* 10, no. 4 (2009): 419–448; and four essays from *African Historical Review* 39, no. 1 (2007), including Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “The Pasts and Future of African History: A Generational Inventory,” pp. 1–24; Gerrit J. Schutte, “The Place of Dutch Historians in South African Historiography,” pp. 25–40; Cynthis Kros, “Considering the Legacy of Radical/Social History in South Africa,” pp. 41–58; F. A. Mouton, “‘History, Historians, and Autobiography’: A South African Case Study,” pp. 59–79; Martin Legassick, “The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography,” *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 12 (1972): 1–33; and Bernard Magubane, “The Politics of History in South Africa,” United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, 1982, Duke University Special Collections Library, LeRoy T. Walker News Service Archive, “Africa: Countries,” Box 125, Folder “South Africa: History.”
26. These terms can be used interchangeably.
 27. See Derek Catsam, “Timbuktu and African History,” Foreign Policy Association, August 8, 2007, available at <http://africa.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2007/08/08/timbuktu-and-african-history/>.
 28. See Bernard Magubane, “The Politics of History in South Africa,” United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, 1982, and Judith Listowel, “When the Blacks First Came to South Africa,” *West Indian Digest* (June 1980): 21–23, both from Duke University Special Collections Library, LeRoy T. Walker News Service Archive, “Africa: Countries,” Box 125, Folder “South Africa: History.”
 29. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. 54.
 30. For just one example of the enduring power not only of the settler/colonial school of thought in terms of its very real consequences one need look no further than debates over primary and secondary school curricula that endured well into the 1980s. See Herman Giliomee, “New Focus for History,” *Eastern Province Herald*, September 12, 1986.
 31. F. A. Mouton, “Professor Leo Fouche, The History Department and the Afrikanerisation of the University of Pretoria,” *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 48 (1994): 92–101.
 32. On Kiewiet’s career see Glotzer, “C. W. de Kiewiet, Historian of Africa,” *passim*.

33. See Kros, “Considering the Legacy of Radical/Social History in South Africa,” *passim*.
34. See Thompson, “The Study of South African History in the United States,” especially pp. 30–32.
35. The review refers to Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 5th ed., 2000).
36. Andrew Thompson, “Pertinence of Liberal Historiography,” *The Journal of African History* 43, no. 1 (2002): 151–152.
37. Quoted in Cogley, “Does Social History Have a Future?” p. 617.
38. For my own take on the complexities of the TRC see Catsam, “Text, Lies, and Videotape: Truth and Reconciliation in the New South Africa,” *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas* 21, no. 1 (2004), issue theme: “Africa: Moving Forward into the New Millennium.”

Afterword

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This volume on the idea of race in the history of the humanities helps demolish one of the corrosive platitudes of modern education. For decades humanists relied and continue to rely on Victorian notions of a liberal education that privileged the humanities. Every educated person should have read Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy and Kafka, never mind Locke and Nietzsche. The reason to do so is that the humanities made you a “better” and a more “moral” person. Only that educated person who has had a liberal education counts as an educated human being.

Yet in the twenty-first century we live in a world where the very notion of education as training for a job has now become a common place. Liberal education, indeed the entire humanities, have come to be seen as a luxury. When the liberal President of the United States Barack Obama says that “folks can make a lot more ... with skilled manufacturing ... than they might with an art history degree,” and he is in *favor* of liberal education, we know we are in trouble. Obama was echoing conservative critics such as Peter Cohan, who wrote in *Forbes* (May 29, 2012) that “majors in zoology, anthropology, philosophy, art history and humanities” don’t stand much of a chance of getting jobs requiring a college degree. However, those with “nursing, teaching, accounting or computer science degrees”

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were among the most likely to find jobs. As Cohan notes, the humanities seem to provide useless skills as employers cannot “use the skills they’ve developed.” “Those who still wanted to study zoology, anthropology, philosophy, art history and humanities could read the books during their Starbucks barista work breaks.” The humanities are self-evidently a waste of everyone’s time and money. The new Republican Governor of Kentucky Matt Bevin declared at the end of January 2016, “There will be more incentives to electrical engineers than French literature majors. All the people in the world that want to study French literature can do so, they are just not going to be subsidized by the taxpayer.” Where has moral betterment gone? Or even better, where did it come from?

Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) had set the tone when he wrote that “culture, and the harmonious perfection of our whole being, and what we call totality, then become secondary matters” when other than the humanities come into play.¹ He sees such a shift as taking

the same narrow and partial view of humanity and its wants as the free religious communities take. Just as the free churches ... with their provincialism and want of centrality, make mere Hebraisers in religion, and not perfect men, so the university of Mr. Ezra Cornell, a really noble monument of his munificence, yet seems to rest on a provincial misconception of what culture truly is, and to be calculated to produce miners, or engineers, or architects, not sweetness and light.²

Ezra Cornell’s claim in founding Cornell University in 1865 that he would offer education to all in all subjects missed for Arnold the central problem of moral education:

Because to enable and stir up people to read their Bible and the newspapers, and to get a practical knowledge of their business, does not serve to the higher spiritual life of a nation so much as culture, truly conceived, serves; and a true conception of culture is ... just what America fails in.³

Pragmatic education does not aim for the moral higher goals of the humanities. Indeed Barak Obama comes to this conclusion in the twenty-first century.

Sigmund Freud bemoaned this in 1930, when after the horrors of World War I and the collapse of the Arnoldian notion of culture, he penned *Civilization and its Discontents*, acknowledging the loss of a transcendental culture of beauty, what Arnold called culture:

happiness in life is predominantly sought in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever beauty presents itself to our senses and our judgment—the beauty of human forms and gestures, of natural objects and landscapes and of artistic and even scientific creations. This aesthetic attitude to the goal of life offers little protection against the threat of suffering, but it can compensate for a great deal. The enjoyment of beauty has a peculiar, mildly intoxicating quality of feeling. Beauty has no obvious use; nor is there any clear cultural necessity for it. Yet civilization could not do without it. The science of aesthetics investigates the conditions under which things are felt as beautiful, but it has been unable to give any explanation of the nature and origin of beauty, and, as usually happens, lack of success is concealed beneath a flood of resounding and empty words.⁴

This absence of meaning, the hollowness of modern education, demanded a rethinking of the humanities.

This rethink took place not in Erza Cornell's America but in Adolf Hitler's Germany. The focus of this debate came to be the institutionalization of racism as part of a new pragmatics of education in the Third Reich. The present volume outlines the background and implications of such a shift. But its advocates saw themselves as rescuing the humanities for a New Age. The humanities, the liberal arts, could only have value serving the organic nature of the people. In writing about Nietzsche as part of a National Socialist ideology, Heinrich Härtele observed that

Any people that is in this sense a genuine *Volk* comprises a natural synthesis, an organic community of geopolitically, historically, biologically related men who are bound by a common destiny. A physical, psychological, spiritual, and intellectual community of people: a *Volk* is a community of people that is of one body, one soul, one spirit, and one mind. The National Socialist concept of the *Volk* conjoins the natural sciences and the humanities, feeling and fact, instinct and insight, experience and appraisal. The *Volk* is the most modern of political concepts.⁵

Modern it was, but as we have seen, it built upon older ideas of the humanities in which race *always* played a role.

The major thinkers of the Third Reich espoused such a resuscitation of the humanities. Thus the philosopher Arnold Gehlen, in his 1935, "Der Staat und die Philosophie," argued,

if the National Socialist movement that has given this *Volk* new impulses for life and a new ordering of its existence should conclude that the humanities (first and foremost the field of philosophy) are sciences that are innately

ours, that must be congruent with ourselves, then it would not seek to present philosophy with so-called new tasks but rather, on the contrary, would direct it to its own unique determination. But the task of philosophy certainly cannot be to approach out of nowhere the authentic, established positions that have been advanced, proved, and disseminated and to seek to determine whether they are true or false according to arbitrarily determined standards. Rather, once we have redefined that which is “most likely to be known,” this is what we must ultimately conclude: It is not only the *Volk* and the concrete order of living it gives itself (and in which it expresses as well as form itself as a *Volk*) that is the central point of all those philosophical endeavors to grasp the inherent matter of being; it is also the higher existential experience—both are necessary to enliven a philosophy that cannot be apolitical, just as it could not be unreligious in the thirteenth century. But it is only these experiences that allow for an internal organization of the vast and extremely heterogeneous array of traditional problems in philosophy: to formulate new problems that are actually relevant, to discard those that are void of content and have become conventional, and to reevaluate the meaning behind others that have long since been forgotten and cast them in a new light. And it is not the wholly false Hegelian doctrine according to which, over time, philosophy itself preserves and indeed resolves the thought patterns, solutions, inquiries, and results that leads us to the philosophy of German idealism; we have implied that the opposite is true—namely, that a rapid disintegration of the very culture of thought, a depletion of categories and even an extreme impoverishment of jargon, a completely incomprehensible degeneration of the very organ for higher and more profound thought processes and problems has emerged over the course of at least the past one hundred years. And these are the two factors which, in my way of thinking, render the philosophy of German idealism epochal: the fact that one is forced to excavate from these buried ruins the complex, multifaceted, manifold, and content-filled categories that are so essential to our self-understanding and that it was this philosophy that speaks not only to those who think but equally to human beings who act.⁶

Gehlen’s view hardened the notion that the humanities must serve a new purpose as it could simply be a sight for the exploration of culture, in Arnold’s sense, for its own sake.

Our postwar liberal arts, the academic humanities, evolved out of a contested world to acquire and then lose their primacy in defining what education must be. After the Holocaust, Hannah Arendt, in her “Crisis in Education” (1954) understood it clearly. Like Arnold, she too sees the problem as having a particularly American tone. “In America, one of its

most characteristic and suggestive aspects is the recurring crisis in education that, during the last decade at least, has become a political problem of the first magnitude, reported on almost daily in the newspapers.”⁷ Framing her views are the experiences of the Third Reich and the obeisance that education, especially the humanities, had to the authoritarian state.

The problem of education in the modern world lies in the fact that by its very nature it cannot forgo either authority or tradition, and yet must proceed in a world that is neither structured by authority nor held together by tradition. That means, however, that not just teachers and educators, but all of us, insofar as we live in one world together with our children and with young people, must take toward them an attitude radically different from the one we take toward one another. We must decisively divorce the realm of education from the others, most of all from the realm of public, political life, in order to apply to it alone a concept of authority and an attitude toward the past which are appropriate to it but have no general validity and must not claim a general validity in the world of grown-ups.⁸

Authority is the central problem of education, not merely culture. This tension is revealed in virtually every essay in this volume.

These essays provide a means of asking precisely the questions about the status of the humanities that we have lacked to date. They span the world of the humanities from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. By bracketing the world of the humanities through the lens of “race” and “race science” they make the humanities in all of its complexity transparent. Modern education still struggles with the implication of both the idea of a pure apolitical liberal arts (a very political position) or the yoking of the humanities to the goals of the state or capital or the *Volk*. We still work within the legacy of the world outlined in this volume.

NOTES

1. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1869), p. xvi.
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4. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, eds. and trans., James Strachey; Anna Freud; Carrie Lee Rothgeb; Angela

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5. Anson Rabinbach and Sander L. Gilman, eds., *The Third Reich Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), p. 302.
6. *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, p. 296.
7. Hannah Arendt, “The Crisis in Education,” in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), p. 188.
8. Hannah Arendt, p. 192.

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