

Origins of Racial Classification

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Senior Seminar 420

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December 15, 2009

## Origins of Racial Classification

Categorizing human beings by combining different subjective factors to create racial subgroups is a pervasive and ridiculous practice. Through the development of modern Western culture, human beings have relied on an emphasis of enlightenment through reason; the persistence, as well as the origins of, the concept of races as a legitimate group of subspecies, in defiance of this guiding principle, is overwhelming. The paradoxical relationship between the political, scientific, and religious aspects dominating modern Western civilizations suggests the unavoidable existence of a contradictory practice that serves as an antithesis to rational thought. Clearly there must be a long historical perversion of science, one where manipulations by Western politics and religion instill credibility through fear over reason. Beginning in the Renaissance, mankind has mistakenly, counterproductively categorized itself into nonexistent subspecies of race; through political and religious distortion of science, this practice was created in the eighteenth century — and has continued to be used unquestioned until this day.

The monumental scientific works that have been prominent in the continuation of the use of race as a human quantifier are found throughout the past several centuries. The Renaissance, a term adopted from the French word meaning “rebirth”, is often used to refer to a time period regarded as a benchmark in the development of the modern enlightened human species, occurring from the late fourteenth through the early sixteenth centuries in the second millennium *anno*

*domini*. It is important to distinguish between this Renaissance and an earlier Renaissance occurring in the twelfth century, one that has been recognized in popular history to a far briefer and newer extent. “Some would give up the word Renaissance altogether, as conveying false impressions of a sudden change and an original and distinct culture in the fifteenth century. The contrast of culture was not nearly so sharp as it seemed to the humanists and their modern followers.”<sup>1</sup> This historical preponderance of lauding the Renaissance of the fifteenth century while largely overlooking that of the twelfth century is the first of many examples that support history and science being distorted by political and religious entities in a way that contradicts the method of rational thought. Although historians apply specific dates to signify the beginning and end of periods encompassing broad human progression such as the Renaissance with rigidity, disregarding the slow and complex process of human development, the transition from the European Middle Ages to the Renaissance “is neither sudden nor noticeable at first.”<sup>2</sup>

Charles Homer Haskins, the groundbreaking historian and well-respected early twentieth century authority on the development in modern Western civilizations, attested to this earlier Renaissance by boldly proclaiming in 1927 that in regard to the Middle Ages, “the ignorance and superstitions of this age are contrasted with the enlightenment of the Renaissance, and the phrase ‘Dark Ages’

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Rodolfo Amedeo Lanciani, The Golden Days of the Renaissance in Rome: from the Pontificate of Julius II to that of Paul III (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1906), 2.

is extended to cover all that came between 476 and 1453.”<sup>3</sup> It is important to denote the significant developments that took place throughout the time leading up to the Renaissance that contributed to the shift in Western practices.

Haskins opened his acclaimed and influential work of 1927, entitled The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, by declaring that “The Middle Ages form a complex and varied as well a very considerable period of human history. Within their thousand years of time they include a large variety of peoples, institutions, and types of culture, illustrating many processes of historical development and containing the origins of many phases of modern civilization.”<sup>4</sup> Haskins’ theoretical proposition that human progression did not happen spontaneously, and without reliance on previous intellectual progressions and developments, may modernly appear as obviously, objectively, and universally true; however, earlier understandings of the significant historical shifts in human behavior were hindered by politically, and especially religiously, influenced and motivated notions of sudden, rapid change.

Writing primarily to an audience with little conception of the magnitude to which Haskins was attempting to ascribe this period’s often overlooked, substantial role in the development of the modern West, and by default what that implies about the general understanding of the time period’s history, he continues by definitively claiming the significant presence of a progressing human

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 4.

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enlightenment. “Contrasts of East and West, of the North and Mediterranean, of old and new, sacred and profane, ideal and actual, give life and color and movement to this period; both continuity and change are characteristic of the Middle Ages as indeed of all great epochs of history.”<sup>5</sup> The contradictions to enlightenment derived in the Renaissance, and still present in modern practice, are more easily understandable by this presentation of the progression of Western civilizations’ development as a broad, fluent, continuum.

Haskins goes on to further decry the practice of separating the Middle Ages from the Renaissance with unwavering absolutism, claiming that “this conception runs counter to ideas widely prevalent not only among the unlearned but among many who ought to know better. To these the Middle Ages are synonymous with all that is uniform, static, and unprogressive; ‘mediaeval’ is applied to anything outgrown.”<sup>6</sup> An understanding that the evolution of human thought toward reason, and subsequently enlightenment, arose from a smorgasbord of influences that developed over substantial periods of time in spite of, and influenced by, religious and political detractors, is pertinent to exploring the contradictory ideas within modern Western culture.

It is perplexing to try and understand or explain the pervasiveness of seemingly unenlightened practices until it is firmly established that these modern practices were adapted from not only earlier times, but the times that are being

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 4.

overlooked as inferior and unenlightened. It is crucial to consider that “within the (European) Middle Ages there were intellectual revivals whose influence was not lost to succeeding times, and which partook of the same character as the better known movement of the fifteenth century.”<sup>7</sup> The reason for establishing this progression toward a reverence of intellect in the fifteenth century is the resultant dictation that it maintained over the rise of Western civilizations. “The century following the Renaissance, which some consider the ‘Age of Scientific Revolution’, ‘The Age of Reason’, and medical science’s ‘Golden Age’, was burdened with evidence of the growth of scientific racism marring the emerging and increasingly influential ‘new science’. The sixteenth-century scientific explosion was sophisticated enough by modern standard to make legitimate contributions to the corpus of racial thought.”<sup>8</sup> This shift toward scientific reliance lent accreditation, and contributed to the origins of, a popular scientific theory of this time that is widely considered to have established, and given credence to, the eventual invention of the modern interpretation of humans as being classifiable into subspecies of race.

The Great “Chain of Being describes the Renaissance belief in a hierarchical universe ordained by God. Each link in the Chain was an individual species of being, creature, or object. Those links higher on the Chain possessed greater intellect, mobility, and capability than those lower on the Chain.

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 5.

<sup>8</sup> W. Michael Byrd and Linda A. Clayton, An American Health Dilemma: A Medical History of American Americans and the Problem of Race, Beginnings to 1900 (Routledge Press, 2000), 87.

Accordingly, the higher links had more authority over the lower.”<sup>9</sup> The language used is immediately striking due to the intertwining of unquestionable religious tenants with progressive, enlightened science. Another explanation offers that “among the most important continuities with the Classical period was the concept of the Great Chain of Being. Its major premise was that every existing thing in the universe had its place in a divinely planned hierarchical order. An object's place depended on the relative proportion of ‘spirit’ and ‘matter’ it contained.”<sup>10</sup> It is clear from this presentation of the concept that there is an enlightened theory contained within which serves the purpose of not only placing man inferior and subservient to God, yet it places all living things above all lifeless things, valuing anything exhibiting life over that which is inanimate.

The Great Chain of Being emphasizes a universal value to everything, one that is ordained by a non-negotiable existence of all things in the eyes of, and underneath, God. “At the bottom stood various types of inanimate objects, such as metals, stones, and the four elements. Higher up were members of the vegetative class, then animals, then humans, and then angels. At the very top was God.”<sup>11</sup> The specificity to which human beings are bound in a universal, immobile hierarchy strangely harkens to anachronistic practices, ones contradictory to the enlightened notion of equality that is displayed through the singular categorization of all human beings together.

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<sup>9</sup> K. Wheeler, “The Chain of Being: Tillyard in a Nutshell” (Carson Newman University, 2006), 1.

<sup>10</sup> L. Melani, “A Guide to the Study of Literature: A Companion Text for Core Studies 6, Landmarks of Literature” (English Department, Brooklyn College, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> L. Melani, “A Guide to the Study of Literature: A Companion Text for Core Studies 6, Landmarks of Literature” (English Department, Brooklyn College, 2009).

In the further explanation of the concept there seems to be a contradiction between the separation of species being what constitutes superiority, and the existence of different levels of “spirit” within each species. “Then within each of these large groups, there were other hierarchies; and it was believed that between the segments themselves, there was continuity.”<sup>12</sup> This allowance of there being superiority amongst members of the same original group in the concept serves as an opening for the creation of determinants for subspecies, and therefore the creation of racial classification. It is this aspect of the Great Chain of Being that generates questioning the justification of human beings’ purpose or capability to be inferior or subservient to another human being.

In order to rationalize the superiority of a human being in relation to another within the confines of this theory, it would have to be distorted, entailing the manipulation of both science and religion. “There is a notion that science can explain and justify political inequality. This makes scientific authority a powerful strategy for influencing public policy. If political inequality is seen as a natural consequence of biological inferiority, and biological inferiority can be demonstrated scientifically, it seems that rulers rule according to the laws of nature, not of man. Thus, rulers gave scientists the political task of demonstrating that biology determined their superiority and their subjects' inferiority.”<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>12</sup> L. Melani, “A Guide to the Study of Literature: A Companion Text for Core Studies 6, Landmarks of Literature” (English Department, Brooklyn College, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> A.C. Higgins, “Scientific Racism: A Review of the Science and Politics of Racial Research by William H. Tucker” (Univeristy of Buffalo, 2008).

result of this new reliance on science was not the achievement of absolute truths, but rather the perversion of the objectivity of science.

The Great Chain of Being is a concept that is not directly credited to one particular person; rather, it is regarded as a collective theory that influenced a variety of thinkers and scientists from the time of the Renaissance and beyond. Peter Suber of the Philosophy Department at Earlham College explains the concept through interpreting various works of three key Renaissance figures: French philosopher, mathematician and physicist René Descartes (1596-1650), Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), and German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716).<sup>14</sup> While Suber is attempting to assert his understanding of the concept as a philosophical argument for the existence and authority of God, his presentation presents evidence in itself. This method of teaching indicates not only the implementation of The Great Chain of Being as rationale in these works, signifying its widespread objective scientific acceptance, but also revealing its influence on the development of enlightened human thought.

The political and moral implications of The Great Chain of Being are interdependent, and serve to illustrate the importance of the concept as well as the immense difficulty involved in disobeying or discrediting it. “The belief in the (Great) Chain of Being meant that monarchy was ordained by God and inherent in the very structure of the universe. Rebellion was a sin not only against the state,

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Suber, “The Great Chain of Being” (Philosophy Department, Earlham College, 1997).

but against heaven itself, for the king was God's appointed deputy on earth, with semi-divine powers.”<sup>15</sup> Essentially, it was unthinkable to openly question the legitimacy or validity of the theory, and when in the coming centuries it was used to derive the system of racial classification, it created an unquestionable, flawed science.

“Inferiority of certain races was no more to be contested than the law of gravity to be regarded as immoral. Before any social critique of racial thinking was possible, and belief in the biological validity of race as a concept had to be undermined.”<sup>16</sup> Inherently, practices being implemented that resulted in the superiority of human beings to one another needed to be rationally explained and justified within the confines of the theory. In the middle of the eighteenth century two works introduced similar ways of interpreting The Great Chain of Being as part of a larger scientific method viewing and explaining humanity historically, biologically, and anthropologically. The idea of creating subspecies within the original group of human beings was approached with a scientific justification surrounding the determination of superiority — the result was the invention of race.

French naturalist, mathematician, cosmologist, and encyclopedic author George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) wrote his *Histoire Naturelle* in 1749, fourteen years after Swedish naturalist and botanist Charles Linnaeus

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<sup>15</sup> K. Wheeler, “The Chain of Being: Tillyard in a Nutshell” (Carson Newman University, 2006), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Elazar Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the World Wars* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 3.

(1707-1783) published his theories in his 1735 work General System of Nature. In each of these works, the author aimed to justify a system of human classification derived from a theory that expanded upon The Great Chain of Being, a theory that addressed the problem of humans being superior to one another as contradictory. In order to address this problem, the focus came to be what was referred to as the “missing link”, that which connected animals to humans; the reason for this was that proving if such a species was that close to being classified as an animal, it certainly must be inferior to certain humans.

“In 1677, Dr. William Petty of England came up with a solution. He announced in a paper to the Royal Society that the missing link they had been looking for consisted of ‘savages’, beings that fit between Caucasian men and other organisms. Thus, he also naturally concluded that since they were lower on the Great Chain, they were brought into being to serve and follow the will of the beings superior to them.”<sup>17</sup> What Petty proposed, and Buffon and Linnaeus expanded and expounded on, would be the foundation for the political and religious justification through science that would eventually result in the widespread use of racial classification.

The two primary theories in explaining human evolution are simple enough to understand for any person with a basic knowledge of the species’ existence. Throughout the world people have certain obvious physical features and ways of living that serve as clear, tangible distinctions amongst a species whose members’

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<sup>17</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008).

similarities overwhelm their differences. There are two ways of explaining these differences that have been dominant throughout the rise of the modern Western thought. The first, monogenesis, proposes that all humans come from the same being; the antonym, polygenesis, proposes that humans developed independently from, and simultaneously to, one another across the continents.

The challenge of explaining these differences using either theory, within the context of the widely accepted concept of The Great Chain of Being that equates all human beings, exists simultaneously with politic and religious need to justify human beings having superiority over one another. Implicit with this hierarchy, contained within the religious motivations of the original science of the Renaissance, is also the concept of a responsibility to devote existence to superior beings. The combination of these factors resulted in a legitimized, scientifically accredited, politically supported, and religiously indoctrinated practice of thought that produced the existence, and promoted the persistence, of human racial classification.

Firstly, Charles Linnaeus theorized that there were four subsets of the human species, qualified by physical appearance that determined continent of origin, and behavioral traits that were genetically imposed within these subsets. “Though he did not believe all the concepts concerning the Great Chain of Being, Charles Linnaeus still did believe in a set hierarchy of organisms. He placed man in the order of primates along with the other mammals. However, he did believe that the one characteristic that distinguished men from the apes was the ability to

use the facility of reason. But distinctions in that order did not cease to be merely with that classification.”<sup>18</sup> One thing that is overwhelmingly clear is an obvious lack of thorough scientific reasoning motivating and driving the thinking of this time, despite its claimed reverence of reason.

Unfortunately for Linnaeus and the generations negatively impacted thereafter by his work, blatant ignorance continues to dominate and discredit any instance of rational science that may be found throughout his thought process. “He stated that variations within the Genus *Homo sapiens* existed as a result of varying cultures and climates. The four main categories of the Genus that he proposed were the following: *Americanus*. Native American males were supposedly red; had black hair and sparse beards; were stubborn; prone to anger; ‘free’; and governed by traditions.”<sup>19</sup> Not only is what he is using to base his physical and behavioral generalizations regarding Native Americans unclear, but his mixing of positive and negative behavioral attributes, along with conjoining them to physical appearance traits, symbolizes not only an intertwining of the two, but his implication of objectivity in his science.

Of course, Native Americans are just the beginning of his discourse: “*Asiaticus*. The male Asian was said to be ‘yellowish, melancholy, endowed with black hair and brown eyes, severe, conceited, and stingy. He puts on loose clothing. He is governed by opinion.’ *Africanus*. The male of this subset,

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<sup>18</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008).

according to Linnaeus, could be recognized by his skin tone, face structure, and curly hair. This kind was apparently cunning, passive, and inattentive, and ruled by impulse. The female of this kind was also apparently shameless, because ‘they lactate profusely.’”<sup>20</sup> While these types of generalizations would normally be capable of being dismissed as harmless rhetoric, in the early eighteenth century this was groundbreaking scientific data, unquestionable for politic and religious reasons. The simple inclusion of things ridiculously irrelevant to biology or anatomy, such as style of dress, hair color, and amazingly even amount of lactating, serves to baffle a modern observer as to how this type of work was ever given credence as scientific.

It is with the introduction and explanation of the uniquely superior subset that motivation and origins of the modern conceptions of racial classification become apparent. “*Europeaus*. The males of this subset were supposedly ‘changeable, clever, and inventive. He puts on tight clothing. He is governed by laws.’ In addition to these categories, Linnaeus also suggested there were some more miscellaneous ones that occurred: ‘wild men’, dwarfs, troglodytes, and ‘lazy Patagonians’.”<sup>21</sup> It becomes abundantly clear to a modern reader of Linnaeus’ work that he was writing from a standpoint of sheer scientific ignorance, yet despite his overwhelming incompetence in scientifically reporting on this subject, his work did something that changed the world forever.

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<sup>20</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008)

In identifying Europeans as superior, and using physical appearance and customs relative to habitat, climate, and cultural history as qualifiers that denote the differences between the subsets of species, Linnaeus invented something extremely dangerous. “Therefore, being the most civilized of the *Homo sapiens*, the *Europeaus* was obviously the most superior type in Charles Linnaeus's view. Before Linnaeus proposed the ideas mentioned above, race had been used to distinguish between different nationalities. But after he proposed the system above, Europeans began to identify themselves with a larger group: white people. Now the ideal physical standards were those of classical Greece. The further one's physical traits were from that notion of perfection, the less Caucasian one was.”<sup>22</sup> If his ideas had not been so thoroughly destructive to the development of human beings, Linnaeus’ ability to invent such a popular system of classifying human beings would be rightfully revered as unprecedentedly astounding. Unfortunately, the invention of the white race has wrought the modern exploitations resultant from such a scientifically flawed concept; this represents a rare, massive step back away from enlightenment in the development of Western culture. The notion that thinking of race as a way to distinguish nationality is antiquated and in the face of enlightenment is ironic considering that when the notion is presented modernly, it is often regarded as moving toward just that end.

What is presented by Buffon fourteen years after Linnaeus is eerily similar in its classification of people, and conclusions reached thereafter. “In his work A

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<sup>22</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008)

Natural History: General and Particular, Comte de Buffon was the first person to coin the word race. Buffon describes the variety of peoples found on the different continents with his thesis that one species spread throughout the earth and after several generations have ‘undergone various changes by the influence of climate, food, mode of living, epidemic diseases’ He also shows his unscientific preference for Caucasians when he writes, ‘The most temperate climate lies between the 40th and 50th degree of latitude, and it produces the most handsome and beautiful men.’<sup>23</sup>

Buffon’s style of writing is similar to that of Linnaeus in that he is projecting mere observations as scientific data, and his interpretation of such as objective fact. “What we have hitherto remarked concerning the generation of man and the structure of his body, constitutes only the history of the individual: that of the species requires a separate detail, the principal facts of which must be collected from the varieties that appear among men in different regions of the earth.”<sup>24</sup> While the tone of his writing is that commonly found in philosophy, and the sciences were often blended with philosophy at the time of his writing and throughout Western history, his scientific assertions describing subspecies of human beings that follows is bordering on laughable.

“These varieties may be reduced to three heads: the colour, the figure and stature, and the dispositions of different people. Each of these heads, if extensively

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<sup>23</sup> Amanda Thompson, “Scientific Racism: The Justification of Slavery and Segregated Education in America” (Corpus Christi, TX: Texas A&M University, 2007), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Natural History: General and Particular, (trans. by William Smellie, 1781) Vol. 3 Section IX, 57.

considered, might afford materials for a volume; but we shall confine ourselves to those which are most general and best ascertained.”<sup>25</sup> His admittance to the study’s oversimplification of human beings is dumbfounding considering this is a text primarily being written to argue a system of classifying the species scientifically and objectively. “We find a race of men of an uncouth figure, and small stature. Their countenances are equally savage as their manners. These men, who appear to be a degenerated species, are very numerous, and occupy vast regions. The Danish, Swedish, Muscovite Laplanders, the inhabitants of Nova Zembla, the Borandians, the Samoiedes, the northern Tartars, the Ostiacks of the Old Continent, and the Greenlanders and savages to the north of the Esquimaux Indians in the New Continent, appear to be all the same race, who have extended and multiplied along the coast of the north sea, in deserts, and under climates which could be inhabited by other nations.”<sup>26</sup> The summation continues to be largely focused on the same qualifiers that Linnaeus’ work was, indicating that these men were part of a large school of thought at the time, one that depended on monogenesis.

It is a question then as to why these men sought to explain the differences between species, rather than focusing on how they are important, and questioning whether or not they in fact do entail some difference between different human beings. Buffon continues to detail the physical differences he observes, applying

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<sup>25</sup> Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Natural History: General and Particular, (trans. by William Smellie, 1781) Vol. 3 Section IX, 57.

<sup>26</sup> Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Natural History: General and Particular, (trans. by William Smellie, 1781) Vol. 3 Section IX, 57.

them and their envisioned implications uniformly, not giving any credence to human beings as a species of unique individuals. “All these people have broad large faces, and flat noses. Their eyes are of a yellowish brown colour, inclining to black; their eye-lids extend towards the temples; their cheek-bones are very prominent; their mouths are large, and their lips thick and reflected; the under part of their face is narrow; they have a squeaking voice; the head is large, the hair black and smooth; and the skin of a tawny or swarthy hue. Their size is diminutive; but though meager, their form is squat. Most of them are only four feet high; and their tallest men exceed not four feet and a half. This race is so different from all others that it seems to constitute a distinct species; for, if there be among them any distinction it arises only from a greater or less degree of deformity.”<sup>27</sup>

What can be concluded from examining Linnaeus and Buffon is that there was a time of human subjugation that converged with a time of perceived enlightenment and scientific progression; unfortunately, the resultant thoughts regarding classifications of human beings were atrocious. In the nineteenth century science would reach new plateaus, achieving understandings of the universe previously unimaginable. With this achievement would undoubtedly be an ever greater perversion of science for the continuing juxtaposition of human beings revering reason, yet simultaneously wanting to continue benefitting from the practices that defy it.

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<sup>27</sup> Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Natural History: General and Particular, (trans. by William Smellie, 1781) Vol. 3 Section IX, 58.

One of the greatest scientific minds in the history of mankind was an English naturalist named Charles Darwin, who in his 1859 work Origin of Species devised a theory that would change not only the history of human beings, but their understanding of themselves and their surrounding universe. “Natural Selection”, or “Survival of the Fittest”, is a concept that explains the dominance, evolution, and longevity of living things in relation to the universe, and to one another. “It consisted of the thought that many varieties of each species of organism existed, and as time passed on and environments changed, those best suited to the environment would survive, and those varieties not so well-suited would die off. Those species that survived changed and developed as more time went on in order to better suit themselves to their surroundings.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike Linnaeus and Buffon, Darwin was primarily motivated by finding objective truth through science, as opposed to justifying unenlightened practices of human barbarism under a guise of science. “Before Darwin carried out his observations that would later lead him to publish Origin of Species, numerous authors had already published books alluding to some evolutionary theory - but their purpose was to prove the superiority of the ‘white’ race.”<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, Darwin’s science had its objectivity used to utterly perverse his work for the purpose of human beings excusing mistreatment of one another by the natural laws devised by Darwin. “It revolutionized natural science and -

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<sup>28</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008)

<sup>29</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008)

although it was not his intent - vindicated imperialist practices. Since Europeans believed themselves to be more technologically advanced than other peoples, Darwin's theory suggested that they were indeed the most superior race of all. It also suggested that the different human races were engaged in a competitive struggle to survive. Thus, it justified such ignorant acts as the conquest, colonization, and extermination of entire peoples.”<sup>30</sup> The disastrous results of this type of perversion of science are a stunning testament to the dichotomy that exists between reason, enlightenment, and equality, and unwavering human greed. “Despite Darwin’s idea that there were no fixed divisions between species, let alone races, polygenist notions of race, which assumed that the divisions between races were ancient and fixed, thrived in the new evolutionary thought.”<sup>31</sup>

The racial classification of human beings is an utterly ridiculous concept, one that has persisted through modernity. Through the awakening of the human species, one that supposedly brought human beings into an enlightened state that revered and thrived on reason, it is truly sad that a concept of existing in racial subspecies has preserved. John Hope Franklin dedicated his entire life to the study of history, continually encountering fallacies and challenges arising purely from this antiquated system burdening his existence as a man because he was a man who was not Caucasian. After a semester of learning about the things he exposed and challenged in defiance of this absurd classification of human beings, there was

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<sup>30</sup> Shah Aahsna Hossain, “Scientific Racism in Enlightened Europe: Linnaeus, Darwin, and Galton” (Bryn Mawr College, 2008)

<sup>31</sup> John P. Jackson, Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction (ABC-CLIO Publishers, 2004), 97.

instilled a desire to uncover why things exist modernly in such an obviously flawed way. The political and religious perversion of scientific progression for the gain of one human being over another speaks to the unflappable unenlightened state of the species — one that sadly continues to exist.

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