

# Race and the Enlightenment

*A Reader*

Edited by

*Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze*

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# The Geographical and Cultural Distribution of Mankind

*Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon*  
(b. Montbard, 7 September 1707;  
d. Paris, 16 April 1788)

In this selection from Buffon's multi-volume *A Natural History, General and Particular* (French publication 1748–1804), the author insists that there is one origin for human species, provides a geographical and cultural distribution of the races, and ascribes to climatic and biological causes differences in intelligence, customs, and habits.

## **From *A Natural History, General and Particular***

### **The American**

In the most northerly regions of America, we find a species of Laplanders, similar to those of Europe, or to the Samoiedes of Asia. Though their numbers are few, they are spread over a large extent of country. Those who live around Davis's Straits are small, of an olive colour, and have short thick limbs. They are excellent fishers, and eat their meat and fish raw. Their drink is

pure water, or the blood of the sea-dog. They are very robust, and long lived. These are exactly the figure, colour, and manners of the Laplanders: and, what is singular, as the Fins, who are adjacent to the European Laplanders, are white, beautiful, and pretty large and handsome; so, in the neighbourhood of the American Laplanders, we find a species of men who are tall, handsome, pretty white, and possessed of very regular features. The savages along Hudson's Bay, and to the north of Labrador, though they are small, ill made, and ugly, appear not to be of the same race with the former. Their visage is almost entirely covered with hair, like the savages of the lands of Jesso, to the north of Japan. In summer they dwell in tents made of the skins of the reindeer; and, in winter, they live under ground, like the Laplanders and Samoiedes, where they lie promiscuously, and without ceremony. Though their food consists only of raw flesh and fish, they live very long. The savages of Newfoundland resemble those of Davis's Straits. They are of small stature, have little or no beard, broad faces, large eyes, and generally flat noses. The traveller who gives this description adds, that they have a great similarity to the savages in the environs of Greenland.

To the south of these savages, who are spread over the northern regions of America, we meet with a different and more numerous race, who occupy Canada, and the adjacent territories, as far as the Assiniboils. They are large, strong, well made, and all of them have black hair, black eyes, very white teeth, a swarthy colour, little beard, and hardly any hair on their bodies. They are indefatigable in travelling, and extremely nimble in the chase. With equal ease they can support hunger, and the greatest excess in eating. They are hardy, bold, grave, and moderate; in a word, they have so strong a resemblance, both in their external appearance, and in their manners and dispositions, to the Oriental Tartars, that, if they were not separated by a vast sea, we should believe them to have sprung from the same nation. They also live under the same latitude; which is a farther proof of the influence of climate upon the figure and colour of the human species. To conclude, in the northern extremities of the New Continent, as well as in those of the old, we first find men similar to the Laplanders, and likewise a race of whites with fair hair, like the inhabitants of the north of Europe; then hairy men resembling the savages of Jesso; and, lastly, the savages of

Canada, who occupy the whole territory as far as the Gulf of Mexico, and so strongly resemble the Tartars, that, if there were no embarrassment concerning the possibility of their migration, we should conclude them to be the very same people.

However, if we attend to the small number of men scattered over the immense territories of North America, and their universal want of civilization, we must admit that all these nations of savages have been peopled by the escape of individuals from some more numerous race. Though we should allow the number of natives to be now reduced to a twentieth part of what they were on the first discovery of America, still this country was, even then, so thinly inhabited, that it must be considered as a desert, or a land so recently peopled, that the men had not time sufficient for an extensive multiplication. M. Fabry, who penetrated farther into the interior parts of this country, to the north-west of the Mississippi, than any other man had done, and where, of course, the savages could not have suffered any diminution by the inroads of the Europeans, assures us, that he often travelled in this region 200 leagues without seeing a human face, or any marks which indicated the adjacent country to be inhabited; and that, when he did meet with any Indian huts, they were always at least 100 leagues distant from each other, and seldom contained above 20 persons. Along the banks of rivers and lakes, it is true, the savages are more numerous, and some of them are even troublesome to our colonists. But these nations seldom exceed three or four thousand persons, and are spread over a country often more extensive than the kingdom of France: so that I am persuaded there are more men in Paris than all the natives of North America, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Northern Ocean, though this territory is much larger than Europe.

Population depends more on society than Nature. Men would not be comparatively so numerous as the savage animals, if they were not united, and derived not mutual aid and succour from society. In North America, the bisons are perhaps more abundant than the men. But, though population be a result of society, it is the increased number of men which necessarily produces their unity. We may therefore presume, that the want of civilization in America is owing to the paucity of its inhabitants; for, though each nation had peculiar customs and manners, though some

were more savage, cruel, and dastardly than others; yet they were all equally stupid, ignorant, and destitute of arts and of industry.

—But to return to our subject: if North America affords only savages, Mexico and Peru present us with a polished people, governed by laws, and subject to regal establishments. They had industry, arts, and a species of religion. They dwelt in cities, where order and police were maintained by the authority of the sovereign. These people, who were very numerous, cannot be considered as new nations, or as originating from individuals who had escaped from Europe or Asia, from whom they are so remote. Besides, if the savages of North America, because they are situated under the same latitude, resemble the Tartars, the people of Mexico and Peru, though like the Negroes they live under the Torrid Zone, have no similarity to them.

What then is the origin of these people, and what cause can be assigned for the difference of colour in human species, since the influence of climate is insufficient in this case to solve the phenomenon?

Before answering these questions, we must continue our description of the savages of South America. Those of Florida, of the Mississippi, and of the more southerly regions, though not absolutely brown, are more tawny than the Canadians. The oil and paint with which they rub their bodies, render their colour unnaturally olive. Coreal tells us that the women of Florida are tall, strong, and, like the men, of an olive colour; that they paint their arms, limbs and body, with several colours, which remain for ever, because they are grained in the skin by means of puncturing; that the olive colour of both sexes proceeds not so much from the heat of their climate, as from the oil with which they varnish the skin; he adds, that the women are extremely active; that with an infant in their arms, they swim across large rivers; and that with equal agility they climb the highest trees. All these qualities they possess in common with the Canadians and other savages of America. The author of the *Natural and Moral History of the Antilles* remarks, that the Apalachins, a people bordering on Florida, are tall, well-shaped, and of an olive colour; and that they all have long black hair; he adds, that the Caribbees, who inhabit the Antilles, have sprung from the sav-

ages of Florida; and that the time of their migration has been handed down by tradition.

The natives of Lucia islands are less tawny than those of St Domingo and Cuba. But so few of either now remain, that the relations of the first voyagers to these countries can derive no support from them. These people, it has been alleged, were very numerous; that they were governed by a kind of chiefs called Caciques; and that they had priests and physicians. But all this is problematical, and besides has no connection with our history. The Caribbees in general, says Father du Tertre, are tall, and have a pleasant aspect; they are strong, robust, active, and healthy; some of them have flat visages and depressed noses; these features however are not natural to them, but artificially induced by their parents soon after birth. This capricious practice of altering the natural figure of the head is very general among savage nations. Most of the Caribbees have small black eyes, white teeth, and long, smooth, black hair. Their colour is tawny or olive; and this colour is natural to them, and not the effect of painting, as some authors have maintained; for the colour of such of their children as have been trained up among Europeans, and not allowed the use of paint, was precisely the same with that of their parents. All these savages, though they never think, have a pensive melancholy aspect.

Some voyagers mention a nation in Guiana, of which the natives are blacker than any other Indians. The Arras, says Raleigh, are nearly as black as the Negroes, are extremely strong, and use poisoned arrows. This author speaks likewise of another nation of Indians, whose necks are so short, and shoulders so elevated, that their eyes seem to be upon their shoulders, and their mouths in their breast. This monstrous deformity cannot be natural; it is not improbable that savages, who delight in disfiguring Nature by flattening, rounding, or lengthening the heads of their children, should likewise conceive the fancy of sinking their heads between their shoulders. To give rise to such absurd caprices, nothing farther was necessary than the idea that deformity rendered them more terrible to their enemies. The Scythians, who were formerly as savage as the present American Indians, entertained the same notions, and practised the same ridiculous arts, which unquestionably gave rise to what the

ancients have written concerning men without heads, men with dog's heads, etc.

The savages of Brazil are nearly of the same size with the Europeans; but they are stronger, more robust, and more nimble; neither are they subject to so many diseases; and they live very long. Their hair, which is black, rarely grows hoary with age. Their colour is tawny, being a mixture of brown and red. They have large heads, broad shoulders, and long hair. They pull the hairs out of their beards, their eye-brows, and every part of their bodies, which gives them an uncommon and fierce aspect. They pierce their under lip for the purpose of inserting a small bone polished like ivory, or a green stone. The mothers flatten the noses of their children immediately after birth. They all go absolutely naked, and paint their bodies with various colours. Those of them who lie on the seacoasts are now a little civilized by the trade they carry on with the Portuguese; but most of those who inhabit the interior parts of the country are still absolute savages. It is not by force and by slavery that savages are civilized; the missionaries have polished more men in these savage nations than the arms of those princes who subdued them. It was in this manner that Paraguay was conquered.

\* The natural ferocity and stubbornness of these savages were overcome by the gentleness, humanity, and venerable example of the missionaries. They often spontaneously solicited to be instructed in that law which rendered men so perfect; and they frequently submitted to its precepts, and united with society. Nothing can reflect greater honour on religion than the civilizing of these nations of barbarians, and laying the foundations of an empire, without employing any other arms but those of virtue and humanity . . .

## The African

America is not less singular for the uniformity in the figure and colour of its inhabitants, than Africa is remarkable for the variety of men it contains. This part of the world is very ancient, and very populous. The climate is extremely hot; and yet the temperature of the air differs widely in different nations. Their manners also are not less various, as appears from the description I have given of them. All these causes have concurred in produc-

ing a greater variety of men in this quarter of the globe than in any other; for in examining the differences of temperature in the countries of Africa, we find, that in Barbary and all the regions adjacent to the Mediterranean, the men are white, and only a little tawny; this whole tract of country is refreshed, on one hand, by the air of the Mediterranean Sea, and by the snows on Mount Atlas, on the other; it is, besides, situated in the Temperate Zone, on this side of the Tropic. All the natives, likewise, from Egypt to the Canary islands, are only more or less tawny. Beyond the Tropic, and on the other side of Mount Atlas, the heat becomes much greater, and the inhabitants are very brown, but not entirely black. When we come, however, to the 17th or 18th degree of north latitude, under which Senegal and Nubia are situated, the heat is excessive, and the natives are perfectly black. At Senegal the liquor in the thermometer rises to 38 degrees, while it seldom rises to 30 in France, and never exceeds 25 in Peru, though it be situated under the Torrid Zone. In Nubia we have no observations made with the thermometer; but all travellers agree in declaring the heat to be excessive. The sandy deserts between Upper Egypt and Nubia heat the air to such a degree that the north wind must be extremely scorching in that country. Besides, as the east wind, which generally blows between the Tropics, arrives not at Nubia till it has traversed Arabia, it is not surprising to find the natives very black; it is less surprising to see the inhabitants of Senegal perfectly black; for the east wind before it reaches them, must blow over the whole of Africa in its great breadth, which renders the heat of the air almost insupportable. Taking, therefore, the whole of Africa situated between the Tropics, where the east wind blows most constantly, we may easily conceive why the western coasts of this part of the globe should and actually do suffer a greater degree of heat than the eastern coasts; for this wind arrives at the eastern coasts with a freshness which it acquires by traversing a vast sea; but, on the other hand, before it arrives at the western coasts it acquires a scorching heat by blowing across the interior regions of Africa. It is for this reason that the coasts of Senegal, Sierra, Sierra-Leona, Guiana, and all the western parts of Africa situated under the Tropics, are the hottest climates on the globe. It is not near so hot on the eastern coasts as at Mosambique, Mombaza, etc. I cannot, therefore, hesitate in ascribing to this

reason the cause of our finding the true Negroes, or the blackest men, on the western territories of Africa, and Caffres, or men of a less deep blackness, on the eastern coasts. The difference between these two kinds of blacks, which is very apparent, proceeds from the heat of the climate, which is not very hot in the eastern parts, but excessive on the western. Beyond the Tropic on the south, the heat considerably diminishes, both on account of the higher latitude, and because the point of Africa begins to turn narrow; and this point of land, being surrounded by the sea, receives fresher breezes than if it had been in the midst of a continent. The natives also of this country begin to whiten, and are naturally more white than black, as was formerly remarked. Nothing can prove more clearly that the climate is the principal cause of the varieties of mankind, than this colour of the Hottentots, whose blackness could not be diminished but by the temperature of the climate.

We will be the more confirmed in this opinion, if we examine the other people who live under the Tropics to the east of Africa. The inhabitants of the Maldiva islands, of Ceylon, of the point of the Indian Peninsula, of Sumatra, of Malacca, of Borneo, of Celebes, of the Philippine islands, etc. are all very brown, without being absolutely black; because all these territories are either islands or peninsulas. The sea in these climates has a great effect in tempering the air; and besides, the east and west winds, which blow alternately in this part of the globe, pass over a vast extent of sea, before they arrive at this Archipelago. Thus all these islands are peopled with brown men, because the heat is not excessive. But in New Guinea we find blacks, who, from the descriptions of voyagers, appear to be real Negroes; because, in this country, which extends far to the east as to form a kind of continent, the wind which traverses it is much hotter than that which prevails in the Indian ocean. In New Holland, which is not so hot a climate, the natives are less black, and very similar to the Hottentots. Do not these Negroes and Hottentots, who live so remote from the other people distinguished by that appellation, prove that their colour depends on the heat of the climate? No communication can ever be supposed to have taken place between Africa and this southern continent; and yet we find there the same species of men, because the same circumstances concur in producing the same degree of heat. An example taken from

the other animals will still farther confirm what has been advanced. It has been remarked, that, in the province of Dauphiny, all the swine are black, but that in Vivarais, on the other side of the Rhône, where it is colder than in Dauphiny, all these animals are white. It is not probable that the inhabitants of one of these two provinces would agree to raise only black swine, and the other only white swine. It appears to me, that this phenomenon is owing to the different temperature of the climates, combined perhaps with the manner of feeding these animals.

The few blacks who are found in the Philippines, and some other islands of the Indian ocean, are probably derived from the Papous or Negroes of New Guinea, with which the Europeans have been acquainted for these last 50 years only. Dampier, in the year 1700, discovered the most eastern parts of this country, to which he gave the name of New Britain; but its extent is still unknown; we only know that those parts of it which have been discovered seem to be thinly inhabited.

Thus it appears that the existence of Negroes is confined to those parts of the earth where all the necessary circumstances concur in producing a constant and an excessive heat. This heat is so necessary, not only to the production, but even to the preservation of Negroes, that it has been remarked in our islands, where the heat, though great, is not comparable to that of Senegal, that the Negro infants are so liable to be affected by impressions from the air, that the proprietors are obliged to keep them, for the first nine days after birth, in close warm chambers. If these precautions be neglected, and the children exposed to the air immediately after birth, they are liable to be affected with a tetanus or locked jaw, which proves fatal, because it deprives them of the power of taking nourishment. M. Littré, who dissected a Negro in the year 1702, remarked, that the end of the glans, which was not covered with the prepuce, was black, and that the part of it which was covered was perfectly white. This observation demonstrates, that the air is necessary to produce the blackness of Negroes. Their children are born white, or rather red, like those of other men. But two or three days after birth their colour changes to a yellowish tawny, which grows gradually darker till the seventh or eighth day, when they are totally black. It is well known, that all children, two or three days after birth, are affected with a kind of jaundice, which among white

people soon passes off and leaves no impression; but in Negroes, on the contrary, it gives an indelible colour to the skin, which becomes always more and more black. M. Kolbe remarks, that he has seen Hottentot children, who were born as white as the Europeans, become olive in consequence of this jaundice, and the impressions of the air, however, are only the occasional, and not the primary causes of blackness; for it has been observed, that the children of Negroes, as soon as they come into the world, have black genitals, and a black spot at the root of their nails. The action of the air and the jaundice may perhaps help to expand this colour; but it is certain, that the rudiments of blackness are communicated to them by their parents; that, in whatever part of the world a Negro is brought forth, he will be equally black as if he had been born in his own country; and that if there is any difference in the first generation, it is so small as not to be perceptible. This fact, however, implies not that the colour will continue the same after many successive generations. On the contrary, there are many reasons for presuming, that as this colour is originally the effect of a long continued heat, it will be gradually effaced by the temperature of a cold climate; and, consequently, that if a colony of Negroes were transplanted into a northern province, their descendants of the eighth, tenth, or twelfth generation would be much fairer, and perhaps as white as the natives of that climate.

Anatomists have inquired into the seat of this black colour. Some of them allege, that it neither resides in the skin nor scarf-skin, but in the cellular membrane between them; that this membrane, after long maceration in hot water, retains its original blackness; but that the skin and scarf-skin appear to be as white as those of other men. Dr Town, and some others have maintained, that the blood of the Negroes is black, and that their blackness originates entirely from their blood. I am much inclined to believe this fact; for I have observed, that among us the blood of those persons who have tawny, yellowish, or brown complexions, is blacker than that of those who are fairer. M. Barrere, who seems to have examined this subject most minutely, tells us, and Mr Winslow agrees with him, that the scarf-skin of Negroes is black; and though its extreme thinness and transparency may make it appear white, that it is really as black as the blackest horn, when reduced to the same degree of

thinness. They also assure us, that the skin of Negroes is of a reddish brown colour, approaching to black. This colour of the Negroes, according to Barrere, is produced by their bile, which he affirms, from several dissections he made in Cayenne, instead of yellow, to be as black as ink. The bile, when absorbed and dispersed through the body, tinges the skin of white people yellow; and if it were black, it would probably produce a black colour. But as soon as the effusion of the bile ceases, the skin resumes its natural whiteness. We must therefore suppose that the bile of the Negroes is perpetually effused, or as Barrere alleges, that it is so abundant as to be naturally secreted in the scarf-skin, and to tinge it of a black colour. Upon the whole it is probable, that both the bile and blood of Negroes are browner than those of white people, as their skin is likewise blacker. But one of these facts cannot be admitted to prove the cause of the other; for if the blackness of the blood or bile be allowed to give the same colour to the skin, then instead of demanding why the skin of Negroes is black, we ought to ask why their blood or their bile is of that colour? This species of false reasoning, in place of solving the question, renders it still more intricate. To me it has always appeared, that the same cause which makes our complexions brown, after being exposed to the action of the air, and to the rays of the sun, which renders the Spaniards more brown than the French, and the Moors than the Spaniards, also renders the Negroes blacker than the Moors. Besides, I am not here inquiring how this cause acts; I only mean to ascertain that it does act, and that its effects are more perceptible in proportion to its strength and time of acting.

### **The Chinese, the Laplander, and the European**

The heat of the climate is the chief cause of blackness among the human species. When this heat is excessive as in Senegal and Guinea, the men are perfectly black; when it becomes somewhat temperate, as in Barbary, Mogul, Arabia, etc. the men are only brown; and, lastly, when it is altogether temperate, as in Europe and Asia, the men are white. Some varieties indeed are produced by the mode of living. All the Tartars, for example, are tawny, while the Europeans who live under the same latitude are white.

This difference may safely be ascribed to the Tartars being always exposed to the air; to their having no cities or fixed habitations; to their sleeping constantly on the ground; and to their rough and savage manner of living. These circumstances are sufficient to render the Tartars more swarthy than the Europeans who want nothing to make life easy and comfortable. Why are the Chinese fairer than the Tartars, though they resemble them in every feature? Because they are more polished; because they live in towns, and practise every art to guard themselves against the injuries of the weather; while the Tartars are perpetually exposed to the action of the sun and air.

But when the cold becomes extreme, it produces effects similar to those of violent heat. The Samoiedes, the Laplanders, and the natives of Greenland, are very tawny. We are even assured, that some of the Greenlanders are as black as the Africans. Here the two extremes approach each other: great cold and great heat produce the same effect upon the skin, because each of these causes acts by a quality common to both; and this quality is the dryness of the air, which perhaps is equally great in extreme cold as in extreme heat. Both cold and heat dry the skin, and give it that tawny hue which we find among the Laplanders. Cold contracts all the production of nature. The Laplanders, accordingly, who are perpetually exposed to the rigours of frost, are the smallest of the human species. Nothing can afford a stronger example of the influence of climate than this race of Laplanders, who are situated, along the whole polar circle, in an extensive zone, the breadth of which is limited by nothing but excessive cold; for that race totally disappears whenever the climate becomes a little temperate.

The most temperate climate lies between the 40th and 50th degree of latitude, and it produces the most handsome and beautiful men. It is from this climate that the ideas of the genuine colour of mankind, and of the various degrees of beauty, ought to be derived. The two extremes are equally remote from truth and from beauty. The civilized countries situated under this zone, are Georgia, Circassia, the Ukraine, Turkey in Europe, Hungary, the south of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, and the northern part of Spain. The natives of these territories are the most handsome and most beautiful people in the world.

The climate may be regarded as the chief cause of the different colours of men. But food, though it has less influence upon colour, greatly affects the form of our bodies. Coarse, unwholesome, and ill-prepared food, makes the human species degenerate. All those people who live miserably are ugly and ill made. Even in France the country people are not so beautiful as those who live in towns; and I have often remarked, that in those villages where the people are richer and better fed than in others, the men are likewise more handsome and have better countenances. The air and the soil have great influences upon the figure of men, beasts, and plants. In the same province, the inhabitants of the elevated and hilly parts are more active, nimble, handsome, ingenious, and beautiful, than those who live in the plains, where the air is thick and less pure. In France, it is impossible to perpetuate the race of Spanish or Barbary horses: they degenerate even in the first generation, and in the third or fourth, unless the breed be crossed by the importation of fresh stallions, they become altogether French horses. The effects of climate and of food upon animals are so well known, that we need hardly mention them; and though their operation is slower and less apparent upon men; yet from analogy, we ought to conclude, that their effects are not less certain, and that they manifest themselves in all the varieties we find among the human species.

Upon the whole, every circumstance concurs in proving, that mankind are not composed of species essentially different from each other; that, on the contrary, there was originally but one species, who, after multiplying and spreading over the whole surface of the earth, have undergone various changes by the influence of climate, food, mode of living, epidemic diseases, and the mixture of dissimilar individuals; that, at first, these changes were not so conspicuous, and produced only individual varieties; that these varieties became afterwards specific, because they were rendered more general, more strongly marked, and more permanent by the continual action of the same causes; that they are transmitted from generation to generation, as deformities or diseases pass from parents to children; and that, lastly, as they were originally produced by a train of external and accidental causes, and have only been perpetuated by time and the constant

operation of these causes, it is probable that they will gradually disappear, or at least that they will differ from what they are at present, if the causes which produced them should cease, or if their operation should be varied by other circumstances and combinations.

## “Negroes . . . naturally inferior to the whites”

*David Hume*

(b. *Edinburgh, 26 April 1711;*

d. *Edinburgh, 25 August 1776*)

The first extract is from Hume's essay, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations" (1748). It advances the theory that history, like a living organism, develops or grows over time through stages: infancy, youth, and maturity. This evolutionary outlook provides the context for understanding the second essay, "Of National Characters," (published 1748; the version of 1754 is given here); it contains the famous footnote in which Hume suspects "all other species of men . . . to be naturally inferior to the whites."

### **Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations**

There is very little ground, either from reason or observation, to conclude the world eternal or incorruptible. The continual and rapid motion of matter, the violent revolutions with which every part is agitated, the changes remarked in the heavens, the plain traces as well as tradition of an universal deluge, or general convulsion of the elements; all these prove strongly the mortality of this fabric of the world, and its passage, by corruption or dissolution from one state or order to another. It must therefore, as well as each individual form which it contains, have its in-

fancy, youth, manhood, and old age; and it is probable, that, in all these variations, man, equally with every animal and vegetable, will partake. In the flourishing age of the world, it may be expected, that the human species should possess greater vigour both of mind and body, more prosperous health, higher spirits, longer life, and a stronger inclination and power of generation. But if the general system of things, and human society of course, have any such gradual revolutions, they are too slow to be discernible in that short period which is comprehended by history and tradition. Stature and force of body, length of life, even courage and extent of genius, seem hitherto to have been naturally, in all ages, pretty much the same. The arts and sciences, indeed, have flourished in one period, and have decayed in another. But we may observe, that, at the time when they rose to greatest perfection among one people, they were perhaps totally unknown to all the neighbouring nations; and though they universally decayed in one age, yet in a succeeding generation they again revived, and diffused themselves over the world. As far, therefore, as observation reaches, there is no universal difference discernible in the human species; and though it were allowed, that the universe, like an animal body, had a natural progress from infancy to old age; yet as it must still be uncertain, whether, at present, it be advancing to its point of perfection, or declining from it, we cannot thence presuppose any decay in human nature. To prove, therefore, or account for that superior populousness of antiquity, which is commonly supposed, by the imaginary youth or vigour of the world, will scarcely be admitted by any just reasoner. These general physical causes ought entirely to be excluded from this question . . .

## Of National Characters

The vulgar are apt to carry all national characters to extremes; and having once established it as a principle, that any people are knavish, or cowardly, or ignorant, they will admit of no exception, but comprehend every individual under the same censure. Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judg-

ments; though at the same time, they allow that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours. The common people in Switzerland have probably more honesty than those of the same rank in Ireland; and every prudent man will, from that circumstance alone, make a difference in the trust which he reposes in each . . .

Different reasons are assigned for these national characters; while some account for them from moral, others from physical causes. By moral causes, I mean all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reasons, and which render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us. Of this kind are, the nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which the people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbours, and such like circumstances. By physical causes I mean those qualities of the air and climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the temper, by altering the tone and habit of the body, and giving a particular complexion, which, though reflection and reason may sometimes overcome it, will yet prevail among the generality of mankind, and have an influence on their manners.

That the character of a nation will much depend on moral causes, must be evident to the most superficial observer; since a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals, and the manners of individuals are frequently determined by these causes. As poverty and hard labour debase the minds of the common people, and render them unfit for any science and ingenious profession; so where any government becomes very oppressive to all its subjects, it must have a proportional effect on their temper and genius, and must banish all the liberal arts from among them . . .

As to physical causes, I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular; nor do I think, that men owe anything of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate. I confess, that the contrary opinion may justly, at first sight, seem probable; since we find, that these circumstances have an influence over every other animal, and even those creatures, which

are fitted to live in all climates, such as dogs, horses, etc. do not attain the same perfection in all. The courage of bull-dogs and game-cocks seems peculiar to England. Flanders is remarkable for large and heavy horses: Spain for horses light, and of good mettle. And any breed of these creatures, transplanted from one country to another, will soon lose the qualities, which they derived from their native climate. It may be asked, why not the same with men?

There are few questions more curious than this, or which will more often occur in our inquiries concerning human affairs; and therefore it may be proper to give it a full examination.

The human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through that whole club or knot of companions. Where a number of men are united into one political body, the occasions of their intercourse must be so frequent, for defense, commerce and government, that, together with the same speech or language, they must acquire a resemblance in their manners, and have a common or national character, as well as a personal one, peculiar to each individual. Now though nature produces all kinds of temper and understanding in great abundance, it does not follow, that she always produces them in like proportions and that in every society the ingredients of industry and indolence, valour and cowardice, humanity and brutality, wisdom and folly, will be mixed after the same manner. In the infancy of society, if any of these dispositions be found in greater abundance than the rest, it will naturally prevail in the compositions and give a tincture to the national character . . .

If the characters of men depended on the air and climate, the degrees of heat and cold should naturally be expected to have a mighty influence; since nothing has a greater effect on all plants and irrational animals. And indeed there is some reason to think, that all the nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are

incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind. The poverty and misery of the northern inhabitants of the globe, and the indolence of the southern from their few necessities, may, perhaps, account for this remarkable difference, without our having recourse to physical causes. This however is certain, that the characters of nations are very promiscuous in the temperate climates, and that almost all the general observations, which have been formed of the more southern or more northern people in these climates, are found to be uncertain and fallacious. [In a footnote:] I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are negroe slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people without education will start up amongst us and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly [end of footnote] . . .

Lord BACON has observed, that the inhabitants of the south are, in general, more ingenious than those of the north; but that, where the native of a cold climate has genius, he rises to a higher pitch than can be reached by the southern wits. This observation a later writer confirms, by comparing the southern wits to cucumbers, which are commonly all good in their kind; but at best are an insipid fruit; while the northern geniuses are like melons, of which not one in fifty is good; but when it is so, it has an exquisite relish. I believe this remark may be allowed just, when confined to the European nations . . .

## James Beattie (b. 1735; d. 1803)

The general context of the following objections to Hume by James Beattie is the latter's disagreements with Aristotle's idea that certain groups of peoples are more suited for physical labor and therefore are through the "intention" of nature "destined to serve others." Beattie's specific objections to Hume are directed against Hume's suggestion that "all other species of men . . . [are] naturally inferior to the whites." This excerpt is from Beattie's *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Skepticism* (first published 1770).

### A Response to Hume

That I may not be thought a blind admirer of antiquity, I would crave the reader's indulgence for one short digression more, in order to put him in mind of an important error in morals, inferred from partial and inaccurate experience, by no less a person than Aristotle himself. He argues "That men of little genius, and great bodily strength, are by nature destined to serve, and those of better capacity, to command; that the natives of Greece, and of some of other countries, being naturally superior in genius, have a natural right to empire; and that the rest of mankind, being naturally stupid, are destined to labour and slavery." This reasoning is now, alas! of little advantage to Aristotle's countrymen, who have for many ages been doomed to that slavery, which, in his judgment, nature had destined them to impose on others; and many nations whom he would have consigned to everlasting stupidity, have shown themselves equal in genius to the most exalted of humankind. It would have been more worthy of Aristotle to have inferred man's natural and universal right to liberty from that natural and universal passion

with which man desires it, and from the salutary consequences to learning, to virtue, and to every human improvement, of which it never fails to be productive. He wanted perhaps, to desire some excuse for servitude; a practice which to their eternal reproach, both Greeks and Romans tolerated even in the days of their glory.

Mr Hume argues that nearly in the same manner in regard to the superiority of white man over black. "I am apt to suspect," says he, "the negroes and in general all the other species of man (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures among them, no arts, no sciences. There are negro-slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity." These assertions are strong, but I know not whether they have anything else to recommend them. For, first, though true they would not prove the point in question, except were it also proved, that the Africans and Americans, even though arts and sciences were introduced among them, would still remain unsusceptible to cultivation. The inhabitants of Great Britain and France were as savage 2,000 years ago as those of Africa and America are to this day. To civilize a nation is a work which requires a long time to accomplish. And one may as well say of an infant, that he can never become a man, as of a nation now barbarous, that it can never be civilized. Secondly, of the facts here asserted, no man could have sufficient evidence, except from a personal acquaintance with all the negroes that now are, or ever were, on the face of the earth. These people write no histories, and all of the reports of all the travellers that ever visited them, will not amount to anything like a proof of what is here affirmed. But, thirdly, we know that these assertions are not true. The empires of Peru and Mexico could not have been governed, nor the metropolis of the latter built after so singular a manner, in the middle of a lake, without men eminent both for action and speculation. Every body has heard of the magnificence, good government, and ingenuity, of the ancient Peruvians. The Africans and Americans are known to have many ingenious manufactures and arts among them, which even Europeans would find it no easy matter to imitate. Sciences indeed

they have none, because they have no letters, but in oratory, some of them, particularly the Indians of the Five Nations, are said to be greatly our superiors. It will be readily allowed that the condition of a slave is not favourable to genius of any kind; and yet, the negro-slaves dispersed over Europe, have often discovered symptoms of ingenuity, notwithstanding their unhappy circumstances. They become excellent handicraftsmen, and practical musicians, and indeed learn everything their masters are at pains to teach them, perfidy and debauchery not excepted. That a negro-slave, who can neither read nor write, nor speak any European language, who is not permitted to do anything but what his master commands, and who has not a friend on earth, but is universally considered and treated as if he were of a species inferior to the human – that such a creature should so distinguish himself among Europeans, as to be talked of throughout the world for a man of genius, is surely no reasonable expectation. To suppose him of an inferior species, because he does not thus distinguish himself, is just as rational as to suppose any private European of an inferior species, because he has not raised himself to the condition of royalty.

Had the Europeans been destitute of the arts of writing and working in iron, they might have remained to this day as barbarous as the natives of Africa and America. Nor is the invention of these arts to be ascribed to our superior capacity. The genius of the inventor is not always to be estimated according to the importance of the invention. Gunpowder and the mariner's compass have produced wonderful revolutions in human affairs, and yet were accidental discoveries. Such, probably, were the first essays in writing and working with iron. Suppose them the effects of contrivance: they were at least contrived by a few individuals, and if they required a superiority of understanding, or of species, in the inventors, those inventors, and their descendants, are the only people who can lay claim to the honour of that superiority.

That every practice and sentiment is barbarous which is not according to the usages of modern Europe, seems to be a fundamental maxim with many of our critics and philosophers. Their remarks often put us in mind of the fable of the man and the lion. If Negroes and Indians were disposed to recriminate; if a Lucian or a Voltaire from the coast of Guinea, or from the Five

Nations, were to pay us a visit, what a picture of European manners he would present to his countrymen at his return! Nor would caricature, or exaggeration be necessary to render it hideous. A plain historical account of some of our most fashionable duellists, gamblers, and adulterers (to name no more) would exhibit specimens of brute barbarity, and sottish infatuation such as might vie with any that ever appeared in Kamschatka, California, or the land of the Hottentots.

It is easy to see with what views some modern authors throw out these hints to prove the natural inferiority of the Negroes. But let every friend of humanity pray, that they may be disappointed. Britons are famous for generosity, a virtue in which it is easy for them to excel both the Romans and Greeks. Let it never be said, that slavery is countenanced by the bravest, and most generous people on earth; by a people who are animated with that heroic passion, the love of liberty, beyond all nations ancient or modern; and the fame of whose toilsome, but unwearied perseverance, in vindicating, at the expense of life and fortune, the sacred rights of mankind will strike terror into the hearts of sycophants and tyrants, and excite the admiration and gratitude of all good men to the latest posterity.

*Editor's note:* It seems that Hume responded to some of Beattie's criticisms by making some alterations to the text of "Of National Characters," in a 1776 revision of his work, which was published posthumously in 1777. Below, a short passage from the 1754 text is followed by the corresponding passage from the 1776 one.

I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white . . .

I am apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even of individual eminent in action or speculation . . .

All else in the essay remained unchanged.

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“This fellow was quite black . . . a clear proof that what he said was stupid”

*Immanuel Kant*

*(b. Königsberg, East Prussia, 22 April 1724; d. Königsberg, 12 February 1804)*

In the essay below, written in 1775, Kant argues that there are four distinct varieties of the human species, each with a specific “natural disposition.” Each race, however, derives from an ideal, original, “stem genus.” This stem genus, Kant says, was a race of “white brunette” people who must have existed “between the 31st and 52nd parallels in the Old World,” and are currently best approximated by the “white” inhabitants of Europe (“very blond, soft white-skinned, red-haired, pale blue eyes”), particularly in “the northern regions of Germany.”

## **On the Different Races of Man**

In the animal kingdom the natural division into genera and species is founded upon the law of reproduction-in-common, and the unitary nature of the generating force which holds good throughout a certain manifold variety of animals. Hence the rule of Buffon, namely, that animals which generate between them fertile young (whatever the difference of bodily form they may

possess) belong to one and the same physical genus, must be looked upon as the general definition for a natural genus of animals, in contradistinction to all academic definitions of genera. Academic taxonomy deals with classes; it merely arranges according to similarities; while a natural taxonomy arranges according to kinships determined by generation. The former supplies a school-system for the sake of memorizing; the latter a natural system for the comprehension; the former has for its purpose only to bring creatures under a system of labelings; but the latter seeks to bring them under a system of laws.

According to the latter conception, all humans in the whole world belong to the same natural genus, because universally they generate fertile children between them, however great the differences of their bodily form may otherwise be. For this unitary character of the natural genus, which is just as thoroughgoing as is the unitary character of the generative force that has for them a validity in common, we can adduce only a single natural cause; namely, that they all belong to a single stem, whence they have sprung regardless of differences; or whence at least, they could have sprung. In the first case, all men would belong not only to one and the same genus, but also to one family; in the second they would resemble each other, but would not be kin, and many local creations would have to be assumed; which is an opinion that would needlessly multiply the number of causes. An animal genus which at the same time has a common stem, does not contain within itself different species (for these mean diversity of derivation; instead, their mutual differences are *variations* if they are hereditary). The hereditary traits, if they agree with their derivation, are called *resemblances*; but if the deviation is such that the original stem-formation cannot be restored, it may be called an *exspeciation*.

Among the deviations – i.e., the hereditary differences of animals belonging to a single stock – those which, when transplanted (displaced to other areas), maintain themselves over protracted generation, and which also generate hybrid young whenever they interbreed with other deviations of the same stock, are called *races*. Those which at every transplantation maintain the distinctiveness of their deviation and so preserve their resemblance, yet when interbreeding with others do not necessarily generate hybrids, are called *sports*; but those which

maintain resemblance often and persistently are called *varieties*. Conversely, the deviation which generates hybrids with others, yet which after being transplanted gradually disappears, is called a special *strain*.

In this way Negroes and Whites are not different species of humans (for they belong presumably to one stock), but they are different *races*, for each perpetuates itself in every area, and they generate between them children that are necessarily hybrid, or blendings (mulattoes). On the other hand, blonds or brunettes are not different races of whites, for a blond man can also get from a brunette woman altogether blond children, even though each of these deviations maintains itself throughout protracted generations under any and all transplantations. Hence sometimes whites generate sports. Gradually and at last the constitution of the soil (moisture or drought), and food, also, induce a hereditary difference or strain among animals of one and the same stock and race, especially in stature, proportion of limbs (plump or lanky), and also in the temperament; which latter hybridizes when mixed with another kind; but on another soil and in the presence of other food (even without alteration of climate) disappears in but a few generations. It is a pleasant thing to take note of the different strains of humans according to the differences in these causes, wherever it is ascertainable in one and the same land simply according to province (as the Boeotians on a moist soil differed from the Athenians on a dry one); although the difference often is ascertainable only to an attentive eye while the rest ridicule the notion. Whatever pertains only to varieties and, therefore, is in itself hereditary (although not by that token persistent), can nonetheless bring forth in time, by means of matings that remain within the same families, what I call the *family strain*, where something characteristic becomes so deeply rooted in the generative force that it comes near to being a sport and perpetuates itself as does the latter . . .

### **Division of the human genus into its different races**

I believe it necessary to assume only four races of man in order to derive from them all the differences which are ascertainable

on first sight and which perpetuate themselves. They are (1) the race of Whites, (2) the Negro race, (3) the Hunnic (Mongolian or Kalmuck) race, (4) the Hindu or Hindustanic race. In the first, which has its chief seat in Europe, I count the Moors (Mauritanians of Africa), the Arabians (following Niebuhr), the Turko-Tataric ethnic stock and the Persians, and all the other peoples of Asia who are not specifically excepted by inclusion in the other divisions. The Negro race of the northern hemisphere is native (*Autochthones*) only to Africa; the race in the southern hemisphere (except Africa) is perhaps native only to New Guinea and in a few of the neighboring islands is but a transplantation. The Kalmuck race seems to be purest among the Khoshots; among the Torguts it apparently is somewhat mixed with Tataric blood; among the Dzingari more so; it is the same which in antiquity went under the name of Huns, later that of Mongols (in the wider sense) and now of Oliuts.

The Hindustanic race is very pure and ancient in the land of this name; but it is distinct from the people on the farther peninsula of India. I believe it possible to derive from these four races all other hereditary ethnic characters; either as mixed or as incipient races, of which the former is the offspring of different mixings, while the latter has not yet lived in the climate long enough to have assumed fully the character of the race belonging in it. Thus, the mixture of the Tataric with the Hunnic blood has produced the Kara-Kalpaks, the Nagai and the other half-races. The Hindustanic blood mixed with that of the ancient Scyths (in and around Tibet), plus more or less of the Hunnic, has perhaps generated the inhabitants of the farther peninsula of India as mixed races – the Tonkinese and the Chinese. The inhabitants of the northern arctic coast of Asia are an example of an incipient Hunnic race, showing already the universal black hair, the beardless chin, the flat face and eyes that are long slits and but slightly open – the influence of the arctic zone upon a people which in recent times has been driven out from under a mild latitude into these abodes; as for instance the maritime Lapps, an offshoot of the Hungarian people, have become adapted to the peculiarities of the latitude in but a few centuries, although they have budded off from a well-grown people of the temperate zone. Finally, the Americans seem to be a Hunnic race not yet completely adapted. For in the extreme north-west of America (where, according to all supposition, the peopling of this conti-

ment must have taken place out of north-eastern Asia, on account of the agreement in the animal species in both), on the northern shores of Hudson's Bay, the inhabitants are very similar to the Kalmucks. Farther southward the face to be sure becomes more open, has more relief; but the beardless chin, the universal black hair, the red-brown face color coincident with the coldness and the unimpressionableness of the temperament are all left-overs of the influences of a long sojourn in cold regions as we soon shall see; these stretch from the extreme north of this continent to Staten Island. The lengthier sojourn of the ancestors of the Americans in north-eastern Asia and the adjacent north-west of America has brought the Kalmuck formation to perfection; while the more rapid spread of their descendants southward in this continent has done the same for the American formation. From America there have emanated no colonizations. For on the islands of the Pacific Ocean all the inhabitants, except for some Negroes, are bearded; much rather, they indicate somewhat a derivation from the Malays, and likewise on the Sunda islands; and the kind of feudalism which was encountered on the island of Tahiti, and which is the customary Malayan form of state, confirms this supposition.

The reason for assuming the Negroes and Whites to be fundamental races is self-evident. As for the Hindustanic and Kalmuck races, the olive-yellow which underlies the more or less brown of the hot countries in the former race is just as impossible to derive from any other known national make-up as it is to derive the unique face of the latter; and both types are expressed unfailingly in the hybrids.

### **On the immediate causes of origin of these different races**

The elemental determinants for a certain development which are inherent in the nature of an organic body (plant or animal) may be called (if this development concerns particular parts) *germs* [*Keime*]; but if this development concerns only the size or the relationships between parts, I call these determinants *natural dispositions* [*Anlagen*]. In birds of the same species that nonetheless live in different climates, there are contained germs for

developing a new layer of feathers if they are to live in a cold climate; but these are restrained if they are to sojourn in a temperate climate. Because in a cold land the wheat grain must be more protected against damp cold than in a dry or warm land, it contains a predetermined ability or a natural disposition to produce gradually a thicker skin. This foresight of Nature to equip her creation with hidden inner furnishings against all sorts of future circumstances in order that it be preserved and suited to the variety of climate or soil, is worthy of all wonder; and in the course of wanderings and transplantations of animals and plants it seems to produce new sorts which, however, are nothing more than deviations and races of one and the same genus, whose germs and natural dispositions have merely developed appropriately at long periods in various ways.

Chance or common mechanical laws could not have brought out such harmonious relationships. Hence we must look upon such appropriate developments as preformed. But even there, where nothing answering the purpose is manifest, the mere capacity to reproduce its particular assumed trait is proof enough that a particular germ or natural disposition was to be found in the organic creation. For external things can be causes of an occasion, but not evocative causes, of that which is necessarily inherited and makes for resemblance. Just as chance or physical-mechanical causes cannot produce an organic body, no more can they add something to its generative force, i. e., effect something that can reproduce of itself, if it be a special configuration or relationship between parts. Air, sun, and food can modify an animal body in its growth, but cannot at the same time supply this alteration with a generative force that would be capable of again producing itself without this cause; on the contrary, what is to be reproduced must previously have lain in the generative force, as predisposed towards a development on occasion, according to circumstances which the creature may get into and in which it must maintain itself. For nothing alien to the animal must enter the generative force which would be capable of gradually removing the creature from its original disposition and of producing real exspeciations that perpetuate themselves.

Man was disposed for all climates and every constitution of ground; it follows that there must have lain in him many sorts of germs and natural dispositions, ready on occasion either to be

developed or hold back, in order that he might be fitted to his place in the world, and that he might appear in the course of generations to have been born to that place and made for it. In accordance with these conceptions we shall review the entire human genus throughout the world and, wherever the natural causes are not perhaps discernible, we shall adduce suitable ones for its deviations; but wherever we cannot ascertain the purposes we shall adduce natural causes. Here I shall simply note that air and sun seem to be the causes which can penetrate most deeply into the generative force and can produce a lasting development of the germs and dispositions; i.e. that can found a race; while on the other hand special food is sure to produce a human strain but its distinctiveness soon disappears on transplantation. That which is to depend upon the generative force must affect not the maintenance of life but that of its source, i.e. it must affect the fundamental principles of its animal organization and movement.

Displaced into the arctic zone, man gradually had to exspectiate to smaller stature; because with such, the strength of the heart remaining constant, the blood makes a complete circuit in a shorter time; the pulse therefore is more rapid and the warmth from the blood is greater. As a matter of fact, Cranz found the Greenlanders to be not only far shorter than the Europeans but also possessors of a noticeably greater natural body-heat. Even the disproportion between the total body-stature and the short legs of the northernmost peoples is well suited to their climate, since the latter parts of the body run a greater risk from cold because of their remoteness from the heart. At the same time, most of the now-known inhabitants of the arctic zone seemingly are but late arrivals there; as for instance the Lapps, who with the Huns have sprung from one and the same stock, namely the Hungarian, and have taken up their present seat only since the emigration of the latter from the eastern part of Asia; and yet they have already become adapted to this climate to a considerable degree.

But whenever a northern people is compelled over a long period of time to withstand the influence of the arctic cold it has to undergo yet greater alterations. All development which is extravagant with the body's juices must gradually be curtailed in this desiccating atmosphere. Hence the germs of the hair-growth

must be suppressed in time, so that only those remain which are necessary for covering the head. By means of a natural disposition the prominent parts of the face, which is least suitable for covering, so that those parts suffer continually from the cold, gradually become flattened by virtue of a foresight of Nature in order to preserve them better. The fleshy prominence below the eyes, the half-closed and squinting eyes seem a protective device partly against the desiccating cold of the air, partly against the light from the snow (against which the Eskimo wear snowgoggles), even though they may also be looked upon as natural effects of the climate, which are also to be observed in milder atmospheres though in far less pronounced measure. Thus there gradually originate the beardless chin, the flattened nose, thin lips, squinting eyes, flat face, reddish brown complexion with black hair; in a word, the Kalmuck facial formation, which through a long succession of generations in the same climate has entrenched itself into producing an enduring race, which maintains itself even if immediately afterwards such a people acquires new abodes in milder latitudes.

Doubtless it will be asked, by what right I derive the Kalmuck formation, which now is encountered in its most complete form in the temperate atmospheres, out of the north or the north-east. My reason is this. As far back as Herodotus we learn that the Argippae, dwellers in a land at the foot of mountains in a region which we may take for the Ural mountains, were glabrous and flat-nosed and covered their tents with white coverings (probably he is speaking of felt tents). These physiognomies are now found more or less in north-eastern Asia, but predominantly in the north-western part of America; which part has been explored starting from Hudson's Bay, and in which according to some recent reports the inhabitants look like genuine Kalmucks. If now we reflect that anciently animals and humans must have crossed back and forth between Asia and America, so that we meet with the same kinds of animals in the cold atmosphere of both continents; that this human race, according to Desguines, was known first of all to the Chinese about 1,000 years before our era as being located beyond the Amur, and gradually drove other peoples of Tataric, Hungarian, and other stocks out of their abodes; then this derivation from out of the cold region of the world will not appear to be forced.

However, the most intelligible case of all, namely the derivation of the Americans, as the not completely adapted race of people which has long inhabited the northernmost region of the world, will be well confirmed by the suppressed growth of hair on all parts of the body except the head, by the reddish, rusty color characteristic of the colder territories and the darker copper color of the hotter ones of this continent. For the red-brown appears to be suited (an effect of the atmospheric acids) as well to the cold climate as olive-brown (as an effect of the alkaline-bilious condition of the juices) to the hot; to say nothing of the temperament of the Americans; which temperament betrays a half-extinguished body-force, which can most naturally be looked upon as the effect of a cold world-region.

On the other hand, the extreme damp heat of the warm climate must show, upon a people that has aged in it sufficiently to have become fully adapted to its soil, effects that are quite the opposite of the former. It is precisely the opposite appearance from the Kalmuck formation that is engendered. The growth of the spongy parts of the body must increase in a hot, moist climate; hence a thick snub-nose and tumid lips, The skin must be oily, not only to moderate the influence of evaporation but also to prevent the injurious absorption of the noxious vapors of the air. The superabundance of the iron particles, which are present in all human blood, and which are precipitated in the reticular substance through evaporation of the acids of phosphorus (which make all Negroes stink) cause the blackness that shines through the superficial skin; and the high iron content of the blood seems also necessary in order to forestall a slackening of all parts. The oil of the skin which weakens the nutrient mucus that is requisite for hair growth, has permitted hardly even the production of a woolly covering for the head. Besides all this, damp heat promotes strong growth in animals in general; in short, the Negro is produced, well suited to his climate; that is, strong, fleshy, supple, but in the midst of the bountiful provision of his motherland lazy, soft and dawdling.

The native of Hindustan may be looked upon as having sprung from one of the oldest human races. His country, braced to the north against a high mountain range and from north to south to the tip of the peninsula traversed by a long mountain chain (to which I count also Tibet in the north which perhaps was the

common place of refuge for mankind and his stock of vegetation after the last great revolution of our earth), has in an equable atmosphere the most perfect drainage-divide, such as is possessed by no other part of the Asiatic mainland situated in an equable climate. It therefore has been dry and habitable even in the most ancient times, since both the eastern peninsula of India and China must have been still uninhabited in those times of floods (for in them the rivers, instead of being divided, run parallel). Here then it was possible for a firm human race to take its foundation over a long period of time. The olive-yellow of the Indian skin, the true gypsy color, which is at the base of the more or less dark brown of other eastern peoples, is just as characteristic and maintains itself as constantly as the black color of the Negroes; and it seems, along with the rest of the formation and the different temperament, to be as much the effect of a dry heat as the other of a moist one. According to Ives, the common diseases of the Indians are congested gall-bladders and swollen livers; but their innate color is inclined to yellow anyway and seems to indicate a continuous excretion of the gall that has entered the blood and that in saponified form dissolves perhaps the thickened juices and dissipates them and thereby cools blood at least in the external parts.

So now we have surmises which at least are substantial enough to be counterpoise for those other surmises which find the differences in the human genus so impossible to reconcile that they prefer to assume discrete local creations. To say with Voltaire, God who created the reindeer in Lapland to devour the moss of these cold regions, created also the Laplander to eat the reindeer, is no poor flash for a poet; but it is a bad expedient for the philosopher who may not depart from the chain of natural causes except where the direction it is immediately bound to take is obvious to him.

We have counted four human races under which all the manifold variations of this genus are supposed to be conceived. But all deviations need nevertheless a stem genus; and either we must declare it now extinct, or else we must seek among those extant the one which we can best compare to the stem-genus. To be sure we cannot hope any more to come upon the unaltered original human form anywhere in the world. Precisely because of Nature's propensity to adapt to the soil everywhere over long

generations, the human form must now everywhere be supplied with local modifications. But that portion of the earth between the 31st and 52nd parallels in the Old World (which seems to earn the name of Old World even from the standpoint of peopling) is rightly held to be that in which the most happy mixture of influences of the colder and hotter regions and also the greatest wealth of earthly creatures is encountered; where man too must have departed the least from his original formation because from here he is equally well prepared for all transplantations. Here, to be sure, we find white inhabitants, but they are brunette; so we shall assume their form to be closest to the stem-genus. The very blond, soft-white-skinned, red-haired, pale-blue-eyes variation seems to be its nearest in the north; in the time of the Romans it inhabited the northern regions of Germany and, according to other evidence, farther eastward to the Altai mountains, but everywhere in unmeasurable forests of a rather cold region. So the influence of a cold and damp air, which gives the juices a tendency towards scurvy, finally produced a certain strain of humans which would have attained the self-sufficiency of a race; if only in this region of the earth frequent alien mixture had not interrupted the progress of the variation. We can therefore reckon this as at least an approach to the genuine races; and thereupon they may be brought into the following sketch in connection with the natural causes of their origin:

*Stem genus: white brunette*

First race, very blond (northern Europe), of damp cold.

Second race, copper-red (America), of dry cold.

Third race, black (Senegambia), of dry heat.

Fourth race, olive-yellow (Indians), of dry heat.

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In the following excerpt from his philosophico-anthropological work, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), Kant argues that different nations have different aesthetic and moral sensibilities. The "beautiful" and the "sublime" are, for Kant, various qualities of aesthetic and moral "feeling." At the top of Kant's classification, "the German . . . has a fortunate combination of feeling, both in that of the sublime and in that of the

beautiful" (thereby surpassing the Englishman and the Frenchman who each seem to have predominately only one half of the feeling); the African, on the other hand, is at the bottom. Quoting from Hume's footnote (see Chapter 3), Kant arrived at the conclusion that the African "has no feeling beyond the trifling." (We need to bear in mind that for Kant, the "feeling of the beautiful and the sublime" refers to the higher realms of aesthetic experience. While almost every human being is capable of experiencing the "coarse" pleasures which do not require intellectual and moral cultivation, according to Kant, only the refined intellect or character is capable of ascending to the experience of the qualitatively higher moral delights of the beautiful (which arouses joy) and the sublime (which arouses awe).)

## **On National Characteristics, so far as They Depend upon the Distinct Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime**

The first sort of beautiful feeling seems to be excellently suited to the Italians, and the second, to the French. In the national character that bears the expression of the sublime, this is either that of the terrifying sort, which is a little inclined to the adventurous, or it is a feeling for the noble, or for the splendid. I believe I have reason to be able to ascribe the feeling of the first sort to the Spaniard, the second to the Englishman, and the third to the

[Note on the title] My intention is not at all to portray the characters of peoples in detail, but I sketch only a few features that express the feeling of the sublime and the beautiful which they show. One can readily imagine that in such a picture only a passing justice could be demanded, that its prototypes stand out only in the great multitude of those who lay claim to a finer feeling, and that no nation lacks dispositions that combine the most excellent qualities of this sort. On that account the blame that might occasionally fall upon a people can offend no one, for it is of such a nature that each one can hit it like a ball to his neighbor. Whether these national differences are contingent and depend upon the times and the type of government, or are bound by a certain necessity to the climate, I do not here inquire. [Editor's note: All following footnotes are also Kant's.]

German. The feeling for the splendid is not original by nature, like the remaining kinds of taste; and although a spirit of imitation can be united with every other feeling, it really is more peculiar to the glittering sublime; for this is properly a mixed feeling combining the beautiful and the sublime, in which each taken by itself is colder, so that the mind is free enough by means of their combination to attend to examples, and in fact it stands in need of the impulsion of such examples. Accordingly, the German will have less feeling in respect to the beautiful than the Frenchman, and less of what pertains to the sublime than the Englishman; but instances in which both appear in combination will be more suitable to his feeling, as he will fortunately escape the faults into which an excessive strength of either of these sorts of feeling could fall.

I shall mention only fleetingly the arts and the sciences, the choice of which can confirm the taste of the nations which we have imputed to them. The Italian genius has distinguished itself especially in music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. All these beautiful arts encounter a similarly fine taste in France, although their beauty there is less moving. Taste in respect to poetic or oratorical perfection in France falls more into the beautiful, in England more into the sublime. Fine jests, comedy, laughing satire, enamored flirting, and light and naturally flowing writing are native to France. In England, on the other hand, are thoughts of profound content, tragedy, the epic poem, and in general the solid gold of wit, which under French hammers can be stretched to thin leaves of great surface. In Germany wit still shines very much through a foil. Earlier, it was flagrant, but through examples and by the understanding of the nation it has become more charming and noble – but the first with less naïveté, the second with a less bold energy, than in the aforementioned peoples. The taste of the Dutch nation for a painful order and a grace that stirs one to solicitude and embarrassment causes one to expect little feeling also in regard to the inartificial and free movements of the genius, whose beauty would only be deformed by the anxious prevention of faults. Nothing can be more set against all art and science than an adventurous taste because this distorts nature, which is the archetype of all the beautiful and noble. Hence the Spanish nation has displayed little feeling for the beautiful arts and sciences.

The mental characters of peoples are most discernible by whatever in them is moral, on which account we will yet take under consideration their different feelings in respect to the sublime and beautiful from this point of view.<sup>1</sup>

The Spaniard is earnest, taciturn, and truthful. There are few more honest merchants in the world than the Spanish. He has a proud soul and more feeling for great than for beautiful actions. In his composition little of the kind and gentle benevolence is to be encountered; thus he is often harsh and indeed quite cruel. The *auto-da-fé* is maintained not so much by superstition as by the adventurous inclination of the nation, aroused by the pomp and terror of a rite in which one sees the *San Benito*, daubed with diabolic figures, committed to the flames kindled in an access of devotion. One cannot say that the Spaniard is haughtier or more amorous than anyone of another people; but he is both in an adventurous way, which is odd and exceptional. Letting the plow stand and walking with long sword and mantle up and down the tilled fields until the traveling stranger has passed; or in a bullfight, where for once the beautiful of the land are seen unveiled, to proclaim his ladylove by a special salute and then to risk his life in her honor in a dangerous battle with a wild beast – these are exceptional and odd actions, which deviate far from the natural.

The Italian appears to have a feeling mixed from that of a Spaniard and that of a Frenchman, more feeling for the beautiful than the former and more for the sublime than the latter. In this way, as I think, the remaining traits of his moral character can be explained.

The Frenchman has a predominant feeling for the morally beautiful. He is gracious, courteous, and complaisant. He becomes familiar very quickly, is jesting and free in society, and the expression "*a man or a lady of good tone*" has an understandable meaning only for him who has acquired the polite feeling of a Frenchman. Even his sublime sensations, of which he has not a few, are subordinated to the feeling of the beautiful and obtain

1 It is hardly necessary that I repeat here my foregoing apology. In each folk the finest part contains praiseworthy characters of all kinds, and whoever is affected by one or another reproach will, if he is fine enough, understand the advantage that follows when he relinquishes all the others to their fate but makes an exception of himself.

their strength only through harmony with the latter. He likes very much to be witty and will without hesitation sacrifice something of the truth for a conceit. On the other hand, where he cannot be witty,<sup>2</sup> he displays just as profound an insight as someone from any other country, for example in mathematics and in the other dry or profound arts and sciences. To him a *bon mot* has not a fleeting worth, as elsewhere; it is eagerly spread about and preserved in books like the most momentous event. He is a quiet citizen and revenges himself against the oppressions of the farmers-general by satires, or by remonstrances in parliament, which, when they have given the fathers of the people a beautiful patriotic aspect as intended, do nothing further than to become crowned by a glorious rebuke, and are celebrated in ingenious elegies. The object to which the merits and national talents of this people refer most often is woman.<sup>3</sup> It is not as if she

2 In metaphysics, ethics, and theology, one cannot be cautious enough of the publications of this nation. Commonly there prevails in them much beautiful delusion, which in a cold inquiry does not hold up under the test. The Frenchman loves the bold in his declarations; but in order to attain the truth, one must be not bold but cautious. In history he loves anecdotes, to which nothing more is lacking than only to wish that they were true.

3 In France, woman gives the tone to all companies and all society. Now of course it cannot be denied that gatherings without the fair sex are rather tasteless and boring; but if the lady gives the beautiful tone, so should the man on his side give the noble. Failing that, the society becomes just as boring, but from an opposite reason, for nothing disgusts so much as excessive sweetness. The French taste is not to say, "Is the gentleman at home?" but "Is Madame at home?" "Madame is in her toilette," "Madame has vapors" (a sort of beautiful caprice); in short, with Madame and by Madame are all conversations and all pleasures kept occupied. However, the woman is not at all more honored by this. A man who flirts is always without feeling, as well of true respect as of tender love. I would certainly not have wanted to say what Rousseau so boldly asserts, that a woman never becomes more than a grown-up child [See translator's note below]. But the sharp-sighted Swiss wrote this in France and presumably, as such a great defender of the fair sex, he felt indignation that it is not treated there with more respect. [Kant's translator notes: "Rousseau in *Émile* says 'Les mâles, en qui l'on empêche le développement ultérieur du sexe, gardent cette conformité toute leur vie; ils ont toujours de grands enfants: et les femmes, ne perdant point cette même conformité, semblent, à bien des égards, ne jamais être autre chose.' Kant has apparently taken the phrase modifying 'femmes' as nonrestrictive. Rousseau's English translator makes it restrictive: 'women who never lose this resemblance seem in many respects never to be more than children.' The latter better fits the context. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou de l'Éducation*, ed. Ernest Flammarion, Paris, n.d., p. 272; and *Émile*, trans. Barbara Foxley, London, 1911, p. 171)."]

were loved or treasured here more than elsewhere, but she gives the best occasion to display in her light the most favorite talents of wit, politeness, and good manners. Besides, a vain person of either sex always loves only himself; to him, the opposite sex is merely a plaything. The Frenchman does not actually lack noble qualities, but these can be brought to life only by the feeling of the beautiful; thus the fair sex here would be able to have a mightier influence to arouse the noblest deeds of the male and to set them astir than perhaps anywhere else in the world, if one were minded to favor this bent of the national spirit a little. It is a pity that the lilies do not spin.

The fault to which this fictional character comes nearest is the trifling, or with a more polite expression, the frivolous. Weighty matters are treated as sport, and trivialities serve for the most earnest business. In old age the Frenchman still sings sportive songs, and is, as much as he can be, still gallant toward the ladies. In these remarks I have great authorities from this nation itself on my side, and I retreat behind a Montesquieu or a D'Alembert, in order to be safe against any anxious indignation.

The Englishman is cool in the beginning of every acquaintance, and indifferent toward a stranger. He has little inclination to small complaisances; on the other hand, as soon as he is a friend, he is laid under great performances of service. He takes little trouble to be witty in society, or to display a polite demeanor; but rather, he is reasonable and steady. He is a bad imitator, cares very little about what others judge, and follows solely his own taste. In relation to woman he is not of French politeness, but displays toward her far more respect, and perhaps carries this too far, as in marriage he generally grants to his wife an unlimited esteem. He is steadfast, sometimes to the point of obstinacy, bold and determined, often to audacity, and acts according to principles generally to the point of being headstrong. He easily becomes an eccentric, not out of vanity but because he concerns himself little about others, and does not easily do violence to his taste out of complaisance or imitation; on that account he is seldom as much loved as the Frenchman, but when he is well known, generally more highly esteemed.

The German has a feeling mixed from that of an Englishman and that of a Frenchman, but appears to come nearer to the first, and any greater similarity to the latter is only affected and imitated. He has a fortunate combination of feeling, both in that

of the sublime and in that of the beautiful; and if in the first he does not equal an Englishman, nor in the second a Frenchman, he yet surpasses both so far as he unites them. He displays more complaisance in society than the first, and if indeed he does not bring as much pleasant liveliness and wit into the company as the Frenchman, still he expresses more moderation and understanding. In love, just as in all forms of taste, he is reasonably methodical, and because he combines the beautiful with the noble he is cool enough in each feeling to occupy his mind with reflections upon demeanor, splendor, and appearances. Therefore family, title, and rank, in civil relations as well as in love, are of great significance to him. Far more than the aforementioned nationalities, he asks how people might *judge him*; and if there is something in his character which could arouse the wish for a general improvement, it is this weakness whereby he does not venture to be original although he has all the talents needed for that, and occupies himself too much with the opinion of others. This takes away all support from his moral qualities, as it makes them fickle and falsely contrived.

The Dutchman is of an orderly and diligent disposition and, as he looks solely to the useful, he has little feeling for what in the finer understanding is beautiful or sublime. A great man signifies exactly the same to him as a rich man, by a friend he means his correspondent, and a visit that makes him no profit is very boring to him. He contrasts as much with a Frenchman as with an Englishman, and in a way he is a German become very phlegmatic . . .

In love the Germans and the English have rather healthy inclinations, a bit delicate in feeling but rather more of a hale and hearty taste. In this point the Italian is sophisticated, the Spaniard visionary, the Frenchman dainty . . .

If we cast a fleeting glance over the other parts of the world, we find the Arab the noblest man in the Orient, yet of a feeling that degenerates very much into the adventurous. He is hospitable, generous, and truthful; yet his narrative and history and on the whole his feeling are always interwoven with some wonderful thing. His inflamed imagination presents things to him in unnatural and distorted images, and even the propagation of his religion was a great adventure. If the Arabs are, so to speak, the Spaniards of the Orient, similarly the Persians are the French of

Asia. They are good poets, courteous and of fairly fine taste. They are not such strict followers of Islam, and they permit to their pleasure-prone disposition a tolerably mild interpretation of the Koran. The Japanese could in a way be regarded as the Englishmen of this part of the world, but hardly in any other quality than their resoluteness – which degenerates into the utmost stubbornness – their valor, and disdain of death. For the rest, they display few signs of a finer feeling. The Indians have a dominating taste of the grotesque, of the sort that falls into the adventurous. Their religion consists of grotesqueries. Idols of monstrous form, the priceless tooth of the mighty monkey Hanuman, the unnatural atonements of the fakirs (heathen mendicant friars) and so forth are in this taste. The despotic sacrifice of wives in the very same funeral pyre that consumes the corpse of the husband is a hideous excess. What trifling grotesqueries do the verbose and studied compliments of the Chinese contain! Even their paintings are grotesque and portray strange and unnatural figures such as are encountered nowhere in the world. They also have venerable grotesqueries because they are of very ancient custom,<sup>4</sup> and no nation in the world has more of these than this one.

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color. The religion of fetishes so widespread among them is perhaps a sort of idolatry that sinks as deeply into the trifling as appears to be possible to human na-

4 In Peking they still carry on the ceremony, in an eclipse of the sun or moon, of driving away with a great noise the dragon that wants to devour these heavenly bodies and thus they preserve a miserable custom from the ignorance of most ancient times, although they are now much better informed.

ture. A bird feather, a cow's horn, a conch shell, or any other common object, as soon as it becomes consecrated by a few words, is an object of veneration and of invocation in swearing oaths. The blacks are very vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings.

Among all savages there is no nation that displays so sublime a mental character as those of North America. They have a strong feeling for honor, and as in quest of it they seek wild adventures hundreds of miles abroad, they are still extremely careful to avert the least injury to it when their equally harsh enemy, upon capturing them, seeks by cruel pain to extort cowardly groans from them. The Canadian savage, moreover, is truthful and honest. The friendship he establishes is just as adventurous and enthusiastic as anything of that kind reported from the most ancient and fabled times. He is extremely proud, feels the whole worth of freedom, and even in his education suffers no encounter that would let him feel a low subservience. Lycurgus probably gave statutes to just such savages; and if a lawgiver arose among the Six Nations, one would see a Spartan republic rise in the New World; for the undertaking of the Argonauts is little different from the war parties of these Indians, and Jason excels Attakakullakulla in nothing but the honor of a Greek name. All these savages have little feeling for the beautiful in moral understanding, and the generous forgiveness of an injury, which is at once noble and beautiful, is completely unknown as a virtue among the savages, but rather is disdained as a miserable cowardice. Valor is the greatest merit of the savage and revenge his sweetest bliss. The remaining natives of this part of the world show few traces of a mental character disposed to the finer feelings, and an extraordinary apathy constitutes the mark of this type of race.

If we examine the relation of the sexes in these parts of the world, we find that the European alone has found the secret of decorating with so many flowers the sensual charm of a mighty inclination and of interlacing it with so much morality that he has not only extremely elevated its agreeableness but has also made it very decorous. The inhabitant of the Orient is of a very false taste in this respect. Since he has no concept of the morally beautiful which can be united with this impulse, he loses even the worth of the sensuous enjoyment, and his harem is a con-

stant source of unrest. He thrives on all sorts of amorous grotesqueries, among which the imaginary jewel is only the foremost, which he seeks to safeguard above all else, whose whole worth consists only in smashing it, and of which one in our part of the world generally entertains much malicious doubt – and yet to whose preservation he makes use of very unjust and often loathsome means. Hence there a woman is always in a prison, whether she may be a maid, or have a barbaric, good-for-nothing and always suspicious husband. In the lands of the black, what better can one expect than what is found prevailing, namely the feminine sex in the deepest slavery? A despairing man is always a strict master over anyone weaker, just as with us that man is always a tyrant in the kitchen who outside his own house hardly dares to look anyone in the face. Of course, Father Labat reports that a Negro carpenter, whom he reproached for haughty treatment toward his wives, answered: "You whites are indeed fools, for first you make great concessions to your wives, and afterward you complain when they drive you mad." And it might be that there were something in this which perhaps deserved to be considered; but in short, this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid. Among all savages there are none by whom the feminine sex is held in greater actual regard than by those of Canada. In this they surpass perhaps even our civilized part of the world. It is not as if they paid the women humble respects; those would be mere compliments. No, they actually exercise authority. They assemble and deliberate upon the most important regulations of the nation, even upon the question of war or peace. They thereupon send their deputies to the men's council and generally it is their voice that determines the decision. But they purchase this privilege dearly enough. They are burdened with all the domestic concerns, and furthermore share all the hardships of the men.

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While Kant himself edited for publication his lectures in anthropology (*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*), he wrote, concerning his lectures in geography, "it will not be possible, considering my age, to produce a compendium from my manuscript." The following excerpts are taken therefore from a posthumous edition of Kant's lectures,

*Physical Geography*, in volumes 2 and 8 of Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Reimer, 1900-66). In addition to insightful observations about Africa, Kant's opinions on the geographical distribution of peoples ("the tallest and most beautiful people . . . are on the parallel . . . which runs through Germany") and his hierarchically arranged "innate" characteristics of the races ("The inhabitant of the temperate parts of the world, above all the central part, has a more beautiful body, works harder, is more jocular, more controlled in his passions, more intelligent than any other race of people in the world" or "Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites") remain the same as in the *Observations*.

## From *Physical Geography*

### On Countries that are Known and Unknown to Europeans

#### *Africa*

Another object which interests the archeologists would be a more precise knowledge of Egypt. Besides, Africa deserves the most careful investigation, and it seems to have been better known by the ancients in its interior than by us, because they traveled more by land. Even many of the coastlines of this continent are still unknown today to the Europeans, and the center of the continent completely eludes our gaze. It is only Egypt that we know somewhat more exactly, but even here what we know is extremely little.

We have reason to assume the existence of a significant lake in Africa into which the eastern, and not as otherwise believed the western, branch of the Niger river flows. Incidentally, we also come across the largest and most beautiful animals on this continent as well as the best plants. According to some accounts, timid Portuguese believed the most beautiful interior parts of Africa to be peopled with [African] cannibals who even fattened humans up for slaughter. However, we should not attach

credibility to such fables so easily because experience has taught us that these people only slaughter their prisoners of war whom they capture while still alive, and then with great ceremony . . . Whenever [Europeans] did not know much about the country, someone would say that it was inhabited by cannibals, despite the fact that there are very few of these kinds of people or even more correctly, none at all.

The number of names of countries and towns on the map of Africa is quite considerable; but one would be much mistaken if one were to believe that wherever there is a name there are inhabitants . . . The reason that the interior of Africa is so unknown to us, as if they were countries of the moon, lies far more with us Europeans than with the Africans, in that we have made ourselves suspects through slave trade. The coast of Africa is, in fact, visited by Europeans; but these journeys are very violent because Europeans carry away each year between 60,000 and 80,000 Negroes to America. Thus it has come to pass that even up until modern times hardly 30 miles from the coast into the interior of this continent is known to Europeans . . .

## **Geographical distribution of humans**

If we begin with the inhabitants of the icy zones, we find that their color approaches that of the inhabitants of the hot zones. The Samoyeds, the Danish and Swedish Lapplanders, the Greenlanders, and those who live in the icy zone of America have a brown facial color and black hair. Here great cold appears to have the same effect as great heat. Like the people in the hot parts of the world they also have a very sparse beard. Their build is like that of a tree-trunk. It is small, their legs are short, they have a broad and flat face and a large mouth.

Those who live closest to them in the temperate zones (except the Kalmucks and the peoples related to their tribe) have a blond or brownish hair and skin color and are greater in stature. The tallest and most beautiful people on dry land are on the parallel and the degrees which run through Germany . . . In the northern parts of Mongolia, Kashmir, Georgia, Mingrelien, and Circassien as far as the British-American colonies, one finds people of blond color, well formed, with blue eyes. The further south one goes,

there increases the brunette color, the thinness, and the small stature which degenerates into the Indian-yellow or Moorish figure.

One can say that the only true Negroes are in Africa and New Guinea. Not just the evenly smoked-black color but also the black woolly hair, the broad face, the flat nose, and the thick lips constitute the characteristics of these people, in addition to clumsy large bones. In Asia these blacks have neither the deep black color nor the woolly hair, unless they are descended from people who have been brought over from Africa. There is no native black person in America, where the facial color is copper and the hair is straight. However there are large groups of descendants of the African slaves.

In Africa one calls Moors those brown people who are descendants of the *Mauren*. The actual black people are the Negroes. The above-mentioned Moors stretch along the coast of Barbary to Senegal. In comparison, from there to Gambia are the blackest Moors, but also the most beautiful in the world, above all the Wolofs. The Fuli are black-brown. On the Gold Coast they are not so black and have very thick lips. Those from Congo and Angola to Cape Negro are a little less so. The Hottentots are only black-brown but they have an otherwise quite Moorish appearance. On the other side (of the Cape), namely the eastern side, the Caffers like the Abyssinians, are not true Negroes.

#### *A few curiosities about the blacks*

- 1 The Negroes are born white apart from their genitals and a ring around the navel, which are black. During the first months of life the black color spreads out from these parts over the whole body.
- 2 When a Negro burns himself the spot turns white. Long illnesses also turn the Negroes quite white; but a body that has become white through illness turns blacker in death than it ever was before.
- 3 The Europeans who live in this hot belt of the world do not become Negroes after many generations but rather retain their European figure and color. The Portuguese on Cape Verde, who should become Negroes in 200 years, are Mulattos.

- 4 The Negroes, if they do not mix with white people, remain over many generations Negroes, even in Virginia.
- 5 White and black mixed produces *Mulattos*. The children that the latter have with whites are called in Spanish America *Terzerons*; their children out of a marriage with a white person a *Quarteron*, their children with whites *Quinteron*, and their children with whites are then once again called white. However, when a *Terzeron* marries a *Mulatto* woman, the children are generated backwards along this color-chain.
- 6 The inhabitants of the *Cordilleren* resemble the Europeans; in Ethiopia, they look brown.
- 7 Occasionally there are white Moors or Albinos who come from black parents. They are Moorish in figure, have curly, snow-white, woolly hair, are pale and can only see in moonlight.
- 8 The Moors, like all inhabitants of the hot zones have a thick skin; when one disciplines them, one cannot hit with sticks but rather whip with split canes, so that the blood finds a way out and does not suppurate under the skin.

### *Opinions on the origin of blackness*

Some people imagine that Ham is the father of the Moors and that God made him black as a punishment which now all his descendants have inherited. However, one can provide no proof as to why the color black should be the mark of a curse in a more fitting fashion than the color white.

Many physicians believe that the color black comes from the epidermis and the black substance of which it is stained. Still others trace it to the reticular membrane. Because the color of humans goes through all the shades of yellow, brown and dark brown until it becomes black in the hot parts of the earth, it is clear that the reason for it is the hot climate. However, it is certain that a great number of generations has been needed for it to become part of the species and hereditary.

It appears that the drying up [by the hot sun] of the vessels that carry the blood and serum under the skin brings about the lack of a beard and the short curly hair. Likewise, because the sunlight that falls through the surface skin into the dried up

vessels eats up the reticular membrane, there arises the appearance of a black color.

How such a coincidental thing as color could, however, become part of a species cannot be explained so easily. But one sees from other examples that this is the situation in other parts of nature. The reason why some hens become quite white in color can be explained by the difference in food, air and the way in which they are raised; and if one chooses only the white chicks from the many chicks that come from one set of parents and puts them together, one finally achieves a white race – a result which does not easily turn out differently. Is this not the way that English and Arabian or Spanish horses raised on dry land generate themselves, so that they finally create foals of a quite different build? All dogs that are brought from Europe to Africa become dumb and bald and produce only similar offspring thereafter. Similar changes occur with sheep, cows and other species of animal. The fact that Moors occasionally have a white child happens for the same reason that, now and again, there appears a white raven, a white crow or blackbird.

The fact that it is the heat of the area – rather than a particular set of parents – that causes blackness can be seen by the fact that in the same country [Africa] those that live in the flat parts are far blacker than those who live in the high altitudes. That is why the blacker people live in Senegal than in Congo, and blacker people live in Angola than in Upper Ethiopia or in Abyssinia.

### **Innate characteristics of the human being considered throughout the whole world**

All oriental nations that lie towards the East on the meridian of Bengal have something of the Kalmucks or Tartars about them. They are made in the following way: a face that is wide on top and narrow and flat below, almost no protruding nose, very small eyes, very thick eyebrows, black hair, thin and sparse tufts of hair instead of a beard and short legs with fat calves. Shaped in this manner are the eastern Tartars, the Chinese, the Arak, the Siamese, the Japanese, etc., although they all make themselves more beautiful on occasion.

Without taking any notice of the superstitious opinions about the origins of certain forms [*Bildungen*] one can make only the

following remark with certainty: namely, that in this area of Meliapur on the Coromandel coast, there are many people with very fat legs. A few sensible travelers trace the fat legs to the constitution of the water, in the same way as goiters in the Tyrol and Salzburg are similarly supposed to stem from the water, which contains sinter. The giants of Patagonia are, at least as a people of giants, fictitious. The same fictitious origin could be ascribed to the people with raw and huge lips that are supposed to live in Senegal, who hold a cloth in front of the mouth and communicate without speech. The people Plinius spoke of, the one-eyed, bumpy, one-footed people without a mouth, dwarves and the like, also belong to this category.

The inhabitants of the coast of New Holland have half-closed eyes and cannot see into the distance without tilting their heads right back. They accustom themselves to this because of the many mosquitoes that are always flying into their eyes. Some peoples, like the Moors of Sierra Leone and the Mongols who are within the area of China, spread an evil smell.

Among the Hottentots, as Kolbe reports, many women develop a piece of leather on their pubic bone which partially covers their reproductive organs, and which they are supposed to cut off from time to time. Ludolph reports the same of many Egyptian (Ethiopian) women. (See *Le Vaillant's Travels*.) The people on Formosa, in the interior of Borneo etc., who possess the beginnings of an ape's tail . . . seem to be not completely fictitious.

In the hot countries the human being matures in all aspects earlier, but does not, however, reach the perfection of those in the temperate zones. Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites. The yellow Indians do have a meagre talent. The Negroes are far below them and at the lowest point are a part of the American peoples.

The Moors and the other peoples between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn can run quite astonishingly. They as well as other savages have more strength than the other civilized peoples, which stems from the free movement allowed them in their childhood. The Hottentots can perceive a ship with the naked eye at the same distance as a European can with a telescope. The women in the hottest parts of the world already produce children at the age of 9 or 10 and finish before they are 25 years old.

Don Ulloa remarks that in Cartagena in America and in the surrounding areas people become clever very early but they do not continue to grow in intelligence at the same rate. All inhabitants of the hottest zones are exceptionally lethargic. With some this laziness is somewhat mitigated by rule and force.

When an Indian sees a European going somewhere, he thinks that he has something to accomplish. When he comes back, he thinks that he has already taken care of his business, but if he sees him going out a third time he thinks that he has lost his mind, as the European is going for a walk for pleasure, which no Indian does; he is only capable of imagining it. Indians are also indecisive, and both traits belong to the nations that live very far north. The weakening of their limbs is supposedly caused by brandy, tobacco, opium and other strong things. From their timidity comes superstition, particularly in regard to magic, and the same with jealousy. Their timidity makes them into slavish underlings when they have kings and evokes an idolatrous reverence in them, just as their laziness moves them rather to run around in the forest and suffer need than to be held to their labors by the orders of their masters.

Montesquieu is correct in his judgment that the weak-heartedness that makes death so terrifying to the Indian or the Negro also makes him fear many things other than death that the European can withstand. The Negro slave from Guinea drowns himself if he is to be forced into slavery. The Indian women burn themselves. The Carib commits suicide at the slightest provocation. The Peruvian trembles in the face of an enemy, and when he is led to death, he is ambivalent, as though it means nothing. His awakened imagination, however, also makes him dare to do something, but the heat of the moment is soon past and timidity resumes its old place again . . .

The inhabitant of the temperate parts of the world, above all the central part, has a more beautiful body, works harder, is more jocular, more controlled in his passions, more intelligent than any other race of people in the world. That is why at all points in time these peoples have educated the others and controlled them with weapons. The Romans, Greeks, the ancient Nordic peoples, Genghis Khan, the Turks, Tamurlaine, the Europeans after Columbus's discoveries, they have all amazed the southern lands with their arts and weapons.

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## The Kant–Herder Controversy

One of the most lively public intellectual debates of eighteenth-century Germany was that between Kant and his former student, J. G. von Herder (1744–1803). The debate, parts of which are reproduced below, was occasioned by Kant's review of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784–91). Kant criticized the book on both methodological and substantive grounds. Methodologically, Kant claimed that Herder naïvely presumed that truth or purpose in history was, thanks to nature, a given, only to be uncovered and affirmed in experience. Kant, however, was of the opposite opinion, and argued that what needed investigating was the principle of reason through which humans attribute meaning or purpose to history. Substantively, Herder and Kant disagreed on a number of issues: (a) Herder, unlike Kant, disapproved of the classification of mankind into various races on the basis of skin color; (b) Herder, again unlike Kant, was a cultural pluralist who believed that each culture contains its own unique and incommensurable truth or worth, and as such could not be subordinated or elevated as inferior or superior to another; and finally, (c) while Kant sought to establish an inherent human rational capacity responsible for historical progress from the "primitive" to the "civilized," Herder believed that cultural and historical evolution were accounted for by an intrinsic force or "truth" – which for Herder was God – within, yet transcending, both the capacity and the history of the human species. (The excerpt below is taken from Kant's review of Part Two of Herder's *Ideas*.)

## From Kant's Review of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, Part Two (1785)

This part, which continues as far as the tenth book, first describes in six sections of Book VI the organization of the peoples in the vicinity of the North Pole and around the Asiatic massif, in the zones inhabited by the physically beautiful races and the African nations, and on the tropical islands and in America. The author concludes his description by calling for a collection of new ethnographic illustrations, the basis of which has already been laid by Niebuhr, Parkinson, Cook, Höst, Georgia and others. "It would be of great service if someone with the means to do so would gather together the faithful portraits which are scattered here and there of the different branches of our race, and would thereby lay the foundations of an *explicit natural science and physiognomy of the human race*. Art could scarcely be applied in a more philosophical way, and an anthropological chart similar to the zoological chart which *Zimmermann* tried to construct, and on which only information concerning the diversity of mankind should be recorded – but in all its aspects and manifestations – would be the crowning achievement of this philanthropic work."

Book VII first considers the propositions that, despite such variations of form, the human race is nevertheless one and the same species everywhere, and that this single race has acclimatized itself to every part of the world. Next, the effects of climate on man's physical and spiritual development are considered. The author acutely observes that much preliminary work remains to be done before we can arrive at a physiological and pathological climatology, let alone a climatology of all the intellectual and sensory powers of man. He notes that it is impossible to transform that chaos of causes and effects which the height and depth of a given terrain, its nature and that of its products, the varieties of food and drink, the way of life, kinds of work, dress, and even customary attitudes, entertainments, and arts, together with other circumstances, cumulatively constitute, into an orderly world in which each thing and each separate region is given its due and none receives too much or too little. With commendable

modesty, he duly describes (p. 92) the general remarks which follow (p. 99) simply as problems. These are grouped under the following headings. (1) All kinds of causes combine to produce a climatic community on earth which is conducive to the existence of living creatures. (2) The habitable land on our planet is concentrated in areas where the greatest number of living creatures can function in the form most suited to them; this distribution of the continents has an influence on the climate of them all. (3) The fact that the earth was built around mountain ranges means not only that its climate was modified in endless ways appropriate to the enormous variety of living creatures, but also that the dispersal of the human race was as far as possible averted. In the fourth section of this book, the author maintains that the genetic force is the mother of all earthly forms, and that climate merely acts upon it in a favourable or hostile manner; he concludes with observations on the *conflict between genetics and climate*, and calls, among other things, for a *physico-geographical history of the descent and variation of our race in different climates and eras*.

In Book VIII, Herr Herder examines the use of the human senses, the human imagination, man's practical understanding, his instincts, and his happiness, and illustrates the influence of tradition, opinions, practice, and custom by means of examples from various nations.

Book IX deals with man's dependence on others in the development of his abilities, with language as a means of human education, with the invention of the arts and sciences through imitation, reason, and language, and with governments as systems of human organization based for the most part on inherited traditions. The book concludes with remarks on religion and the most ancient tradition . . .

There is one precondition which the reviewer would have liked to see realized, both for our author and for any other philosopher who should embark on a general natural history of mankind – namely that a historical and critical mind had done all the preparatory work for them, selecting from the boundless mass of ethnographical descriptions or travelogues, and from all the reports in these which can be presumed to shed light on human nature, those in particular which are mutually contradictory, placing them side by side and supplementing them with comments on the credibility of their respective authors; for if this

had been done, no one would so boldly rely on one-sided accounts without first having carefully assessed the reports of others. But as it is, one may prove if one wishes, from numerous descriptions of various countries, that Americans, Tibetans, and other genuine Mongolian peoples are beardless – but also, if one prefers, that they are all naturally bearded and merely pluck their hair out. Or one may prove that Americans and Negroes are races which have sunk below the level of other members of the species in terms of intellectual abilities – or alternatively, on the evidence of no less plausible accounts, that they should be regarded as equal in natural ability to all the other inhabitants of the world. Thus, the philosopher is at liberty to choose whether he wishes to assume natural differences or to judge everything by the principle *tout comme chez nous*, with the result that all the systems he constructs on such unstable foundations must take on the appearance of ramshackle hypotheses. Our author disapproves of the division of mankind into races especially on the basis of inherited colour, presumably because he believes that the concept of race is not yet clearly defined. In the third numbered section of Book VII, he calls the cause of the climatic differences between human beings genetic force. As the reviewer understands it, the sense in which the author uses this expression is as follows. He wishes to reject the system of evolution on the one hand, but also the purely mechanical influence of external causes on the other, as worthless explanations. He assumes that the cause of such differences is a vital principle which modifies *itself* from within in accordance with variations in external circumstances, and in a manner appropriate to these. The reviewer is fully in agreement with him here, but with this reservation: if the cause which organizes *from within* were limited by its nature to only a certain number and degree of differences in the development of the creature which it organizes (so that, once these differences were exhausted, it would no longer be free to work from another archetype under altered circumstances), one could well describe this natural determinant of formative nature in terms of germs or predispositions, without thereby regarding the differences in question as originally implanted and only occasionally activated mechanisms or buds (as in the system of evolution); on the contrary, such differences should be regarded simply as limitations imposed on a self-

determining power, limitations which are as inexplicable as the power itself is incapable of being explained or rendered comprehensible.

A new train of thought begins with Book VIII and continues to the end of this portion of the work. It deals with the origin of man's education as a rational and moral creature, and hence with the beginning of all culture. This, in the author's opinion, is to be sought not in an inherent capacity of the human species, but completely outside it in the instruction and guidance provided by other natures. From this beginning, as he sees it, all cultural advances are simply the further transmission and casual exploitation of an original tradition; and it is this, rather than his own efforts, that man has to thank for all his progress towards wisdom. Since the reviewer becomes completely lost as soon as he strays from the path of nature and rational knowledge – for he is not conversant with learned philology nor familiar with ancient documents and able to assess them, and therefore has no idea how to make philosophic use of the facts they relate and attest – he readily accepts that he cannot pass judgement on such matters. Nevertheless, the author's wide reading and his particular aptitude for bringing scattered data into focus probably allow us to expect that we shall at least read many valuable observations on the course of human affairs, in so far as this can afford greater insight into the character of the species, and even perhaps into certain classical differences within it – observations which could be instructive even for someone who held different views on the ultimate origin of all human culture . . .

We are told on page 205: "It was a benevolent thought of providence to give the more easily attained happiness of individual human beings priority over the artificial ends of large societies, and to save those expensive machines of state as far as possible for a later age." Quite so; but first comes the happiness of the animal, then that of the child, then that of the youth, and finally that of the man. In all the epochs of mankind, as in all sections of society at any given time, we find a happiness which is precisely commensurate with the concepts and habits of the creature in question with regard to the circumstances in which it was born and grew up; indeed, it is not even possible in this connection to draw a comparison between the respective degrees of happiness or to define the advantage of one class of people or

generation over another. But what if the true end of providence were not this shadowy image of happiness which each individual creates for himself, but the ever continuing and growing activity and culture which are thereby set in motion, and whose highest possible expression can only be the product of a political constitution based on concepts of human right, and consequently an achievement of human beings themselves? Thus, we read on page 206 that "each human individual has the measure of his happiness within him", and that he does not yield in the enjoyment of this happiness to any of those who come after him; but as far as the value of their existence itself is concerned – i.e. the reason why they are there in the first place, as distinct from the conditions in which they exist – it is in this alone that a wise intention might be discernible within the whole. Does the author really mean that, if the happy inhabitants of Tahiti, never visited by more civilized nations, were destined to live in their peaceful indolence for thousands of centuries, it would be possible to give a satisfactory answer to the question of why they should exist at all, and of whether it would not have been just as good if the island had been occupied by happy sheep and cattle as by happy human beings who merely enjoy themselves?

*Johann Gottfried von Herder*  
 (b. Mohrunge, East Prussia,  
 25 August 1744; d. Weimar,  
 18 December 1803)

In this extract from Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (of which Kant's review appears above), we notice in the beginning Herder's unusual perspective on non-European cultures – a perspective which would not

have made him popular among some Enlightenment intellectuals committed to "progress" and unqualified claims of European cultural superiority. However, later in this text when Herder tries to explain "the origin of the negro blackness," or when he tries to determine who is or is not "negro," he inevitably heavily relies upon the ethnocentric "scientific" classifications and interpretations of his time. For example, it is ironic that, given his opening paragraph, Herder does not equally seek to explain the causes of "white" skin color.

## **Organization of the Peoples of Africa**

It is but just, when we proceed to the country of the blacks, that we lay aside our proud prejudices, and consider the organization of this quarter of the globe with as much impartiality, as if there were no other. Since whiteness is a mark of degeneracy in many animals near the pole, the negro has as much right to term his savage robbers albinos and white devils, degenerated through the weakness of nature, as we have to deem him the emblem of evil, and a descendant of Ham, branded by his father's curse. I, might he say, I, the black, am the original man. I have taken the deepest draughts from the source of life, the Sun: on me, and on every thing around me, it has acted with the greatest energy and vivacity. Behold my country: how fertile in fruits, how rich in gold! Behold the height of my trees! the strength of my animals! Here each element swarms with life, and I am the centre of this vital action. Thus might the negro say; let us then enter the country appropriate to him with modesty.

On the very isthmus, that joins Africa to Asia, we meet with a singular people, the Egyptians. Large, strong, corpulent, for the Nile bestows on them fatness, big-boned, and of a yellow-brown complexion; they are at the same time healthy and prolific, temperate and long-lived. Though not indolent, they are at once diligent and laborious. A people of such bone, and such a frame

(see the statues of their ancient artists, their mummies, and the paintings of the cases of the mummies) could alone have produced the arts and establishments, that we admire among the ancient Egyptians; to which a people of finer mould could not easily have applied themselves.

On the inhabitants of Nubia, and the interior regions of Africa beyond it, we yet know but little. If however we may trust the preliminary communications of *Bruce* (*Buffon's Suppliments à l'Histoire Naturelle*, vol. IV, p. 495. Lobo says, at least, that the blacks there are neither ugly nor stupid, but ingenious, delicate, and possessed of some taste: *Relation historique d'Abyssinia*, p. 85. As all accounts of this country are ancient and doubtful, the publication of *Bruce's* travels, if he did visit Abyssinia [trans. note, 1800: "undoubtedly he did, as we have sufficient testimony of that fact, and his travels, containing much curious information, have at length been published"] is much to be wished) no negro race dwells upon the whole of this elevated region, they being confined to the east and west of this quarter of the globe, where the land is lower, and the heat more intense. Even under the equator, he says, on these temperate and rainy heights, we find none but white or yellow-brown complexions. Remarkable as this fact would be in explaining the origin of the negro blackness, yet the bodily shape of the people in these parts, which is more to our purpose, displays a gradual declension to the negro form. We know that the Abyssinians were originally of Arabian descent, and both nations have been frequently and long connected; yet, if we may judge from the representations of *Ludolf* (*History of Ethiopia*) and others, how much harsher features do we meet with here, than among the Arabs, and more distant Asiatics! They approach those of the negro, though yet remotely; and the great diversity of the country, with its lofty mountains and pleasant plains, the variations of the climate, in heat and cold, sunshine and storms, with a chain of other causes, seem sufficient to account for their harsh compounded features. In a diversified part of the world a diversified race of men must occur, whose character appears to consist in great sensuality, endurance, and an approach to the extreme in figure, which brings it nearer to the brute. The government of the Abyssinians, and their state of civilization, are conformable to their figure, and the nature of their country: a wild mixture

of heathenism and chieftancy, of careless freedom and savage tyranny.

On the other side of Africa in like manner we know too little of the *Berbers*, or *Brebers*, to be able to form any judgement of them. Their residence on Mount Atlas, and their hardy and active way of life, have preserved for them that well-proportioned, light, and flexible make, by which they are distinguishable from the Arabs (Hoft's *Nachrichten von Maroko*, p. 141, compare with 132 and following). Consequently they are as little of the negro race, as the Moors, who are descended from the Arabs, but intermixed with other nations. A modern observer (Schott's *Account of Senegal*, in the *Beitrag. z. Volk. und Landerkunde*, vol. I, p. 47) says they are handsome people, with delicate features, oval faces, fine large sparkling eyes, longish noses, neither broad nor flat, and beautiful black hair slightly falling in ringlets; so that they are of the Asiatic form, though in the midst of Africa.

The negro race properly begins with the rivers Gambia and Senegal; yet here with gradual transformations (see Schott's *Account of Senegal*). The *jalof*, or *wuluf*, have neither the flat noses nor thick lips of the common negroes. Both they and the smaller, more active *foulies*, who, according to some accounts, live under the happiest regulations, and spend their time in mirth and dancing, are models of beauty, compared with the *mandingoes* and the negroes that live further to the south; their limbs being well made, their hair sleek and but little woolly, and their countenance open and inclined to oval. Thus the thick lips and flat noses of the negro form, which spreads far down through innumerable varieties of little nations in Guinea, Loango, Congo, and Angola, commence not till we cross the Senegal. In Congo and Angola, for instance, the black skin assumes an olive hue, the crisped hair is reddish, the irises of the eyes are green, the lips are less thick, and the stature diminishes. In Zangeubar, on the opposite coast of Africa, we again find the same olive hue, but in men of large stature, and better proportioned limbs. Lastly the hottentots and caffres are retrogradations from the negro form to another. Their nose begins to lose somewhat of its depressed flatness, their lips of their swelling prominence; their hair is a mean between the wool of the negro and the hair of other nations; their complexion is of yellow-brown; their size is that of

Europeans in general, only they have smaller hands and feet (Sparmann's *Travels*). Did we know the numerous nations that dwell beyond these regions, in the interior country, as far as Abyssinia, and among whom, from many indications on their borders, we may expect to find more fertility, beauty, strength, arts, and civilization, we might fill up the shades of the human picture in this quarter of the globe, and should probably find not a single break.

But how deficient are we in authentic information respecting this country! We barely know its coasts; and are in many parts acquainted with these no further than our cannons reach. No modern European has traversed the interior of Africa, which the Arabian caravans frequently do (Schott's *Account of Senegal*, pp. 49, 50); and what we know of it is either from tales of the blacks, or pretty ancient accounts of lucky or unfortunate adventures (Zimmermann's comparison of the known and unknown parts, an essay replete with learning and sound judgement, in the *Geographical History of Man*, book III, p. 104, and following). Even the nations, that we might know as things are, the eye of the European seems to behold with too tyrannical indifference, to attempt to investigate the variation of national form in wretched black slaves. Men handle them like cattle; and when they buy them, distinguish them by the marks of their teeth. A single Moravian missionary (Oldendorp's *Missionsgeschichte auf St Thomas*, p. 270 and following) has transmitted us from another quarter of the globe more accurate discriminations of the negroes, than all the voyagers that have infested the African shores. How fortunate would it have been for the knowledge of nature, and of man, had a company of travellers, endued with the penetration of Forster, the patience of Sparmann, and the science of both, visited this undiscovered country! The accounts that are given of the cannibal jaga and ansicans [*sic*] are certainly exaggerated, when they are extended to all the interior nations of Africa. The jaga appear to be a mixed, predatory people, a sort of artificial nation, composed of the outcasts of several, living by plunder, and at length becoming inured to savage and barbarous practices (see Proyard's *History of Loanga, Cacongo, etc.*, to the German translation of which, Lespsic, 1770, has added an able collection of accounts representing the jaga). The Africans are mountaineers, probably the mungals and calmucs of this coun-

try. But how many happy and peaceful nations may dwell at the feet of the Mountains of the Moon! Europeans are unworthy to behold their happiness; for they have unpardonably sinned, and still continue to sin, against this quarter of the globe. The peaceably trading Arabs traverse the country, and have planted colonies far within it.

But I forget, that I had to speak of the form of the negroes, as of an organization of the human species; and it would be well, if natural philosophy had applied its attention to all the varieties of our species, as much as to this. The following are some of the results of its observations.

1 The black colour of the negro has nothing in it more wonderful than the white, brown, yellow, or reddish, of other nations. Neither the blood, the brain, nor the seminal fluid of the negro is black, but the reticular membrane beneath the cuticle, which is common to all, and even in us, at least in some parts, and under certain circumstances, is more or less coloured. Camper has demonstrated this (See Camper's *Kleine Schriften*, "Tracts", vol. I, p. 24 and following); and according to him we all have the capacity of becoming negroes. Even amid the frosts of Samoieda we have noticed the sable mark in the female breast: the germ of the negro blackness could not be farther extended in that climate.

2 All depends therefore on the causes, that were capable of unfolding it here; and analogy instructs us, that sun and air must have had great share in it. For what makes us brown? What makes the difference between the two sexes in almost every country? What has rendered the descendants of the Portuguese after residing some centuries in Africa, so similar in colour to the negroes? Nay, what so forcibly discriminates the negro races in Africa itself? The climate, considered in the most extensive signification of the word, so as to include the manner of life, and kind of food. The blackest negroes live precisely in that region where the east wind, blowing wholly over the land, brings the most intense heat; where the heat is diminished, or cooled by the sea breeze, the black is softened into yellow. The cool heights are inhabited by white, or whitish people; while in the close lower regions the oil, that occasions the black appearance beneath the

cuticle, is rendered more a dust by the heat of the sun. Now if we reflect, that these blacks have resided for ages in this quarter of the world, and completely naturalized themselves to it by their mode of life; if we consider the several causes, that now operate more feebly, but which in earlier periods, when all the elements were in their primitive rude force, must have acted with greater power; and if we take into the account, that so many thousands of years must have brought about a complete revolution as it were of the wheel of contingencies, which at one period or another turns up every thing that can take place upon this earth; we shall not wonder at the trifling circumstance, that the skin of some nations is black. Nature, in her progressive secret operations, has produced much greater changes than this.

3 And how did she effect this small change? To me the thing seems to speak for itself. It is an oil, that colours the reticular membrane. The sweat of the negroes, and even of Europeans, in this country frequently has a yellow colour. The skin of the blacks is a thick, soft velvet, not so tense and dry as that of the whites; the heat of the sun having drawn from their inner parts an oil, which, ascending as near as it could to the surface, has softened their cuticle, and coloured the membrane beneath it. Most of the diseases of this country are bilious; and if we read the descriptions of them (See Schott's *Treatise on the Synochus atrabiliofa*), we shall not wonder at the yellow or black complexions of the inhabitants.

4 The woolly hair of the negro may be accounted for on similar principles. As the hair is nourished only by the finer juices of the skin, and is generated as it were unnaturally in the fat, it becomes curled in proportion to the abundance of nutriment it receives, and dies where this is deficient. Thus in the coarser organization of brutes, we find their wool converted into rough hair, in countries uncongenial to their nature, where the juices, that flow into it, are incapable of elaboration. The finer organization of man on the contrary, intended for all climates, is capable of converting the hair into wool, when the oil, that moistens the skin, is superabundant.

5 But the peculiar formation of the members of the human body says more than all these; and this appears to me explicable

in the African organization. According to various physiological observations, the lips, breasts, and private parts, are proportionate to each other; and as Nature, agreeably to the simple principle of her plastic art, must have conferred on these people, to whom she was obliged to deny nobler gifts, an ampler measure of sensual enjoyment, this could not but have appeared to the physiologist. According to the rules of physiognomy thick lips are held to indicate a sensual disposition; as thin lips, displaying a slender rosy line, are deemed symptoms of a chaste and delicate taste; not to mention other circumstances. What wonder then, that in a nation, for whom the sensual appetite is the height of happiness, external marks of it should appear? A negro child is born white; the skin around the nails, the nipples, and the private parts, first become coloured; and the same consent of parts in the disposition to colour is observable in other nations. A hundred children are a trifle to a negro; and an old man, who had not above seventy, lamented his fate with tears.

6 With this oleaginous organization to sensual pleasure, the profile, and the whole frame of the body, must alter. The projection of the mouth would render the nose short and small, the forehead would incline backwards, and the face would have at a distance the resemblance of that of an ape. Conformably to this would be the position of the neck, the transition to the occiput, and the elastic structure of the whole body, which is formed, even to the nose and skin, for sensual animal enjoyment (Camper has shown in the *Haarlem Transactions*, that the negro has the centres of motion nearer together than the European, and in consequence possesses greater elasticity of body). Since in this quarter of the globe, as the native land of the solar heat, the loftiest and most succulent trees arise, herds of the largest, strongest, and most active animals are generated, and vast multitudes of apes in particular sport, so that air and water, the sea and the lands, swarm with life and fertility; organizing human nature could not fail to follow, with respect to its animal part, this general simple principle of the plastic powers. That finer intellect, which the creature, whose breast swells with boiling passions beneath this burning sun, must necessarily be refused, was countervailed by a structure altogether incompatible with it. Since then a nobler boon could not be conferred on the negro in such a climate, let us pity, but not despise him; and honour that

parent, who knows how to compensate, while she deprives. He spends his life void of care in a country which yields him food with unbounded liberality. His limber body moves in the water, as if it had been formed for that element; he runs and climbs, as if each were his sport; and not less strong and healthy than light and active, his different constitution supports all the accidents and diseases of his climate, under which so many Europeans sink. What to him are the tormenting sensations of superior joys, for which he was not formed? The materials were not wanting; but Nature took him in hand, and formed of him what was most fit for his country, and the happiness of his life. Either no Africa should have been created, or it was requisite, that negroes should be made to inhabit Africa.

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## The Degeneration of Races

*Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*

(b. Gotha, 11 May 1752; d. Göttingen,  
22 January 1840)

Blumenbach's book, *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*, which was published in 1776, quickly became a major authority on the subject of racial classification, and remained so well into the nineteenth century. Although he believed himself opposed to racism, and indeed wrote several essays objecting to the idea that non-white peoples are inherently incapable of excelling in the arts and the sciences, Blumenbach advocated a "degeneration" theory about the origin of racial differences. According to this theory, there are five races belonging to a single species: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. Blumenbach, however, states that he has "allotted the first place to the Caucasian" because this "stock displays . . . the most beautiful race of men." The other races are supposed to have "degenerated" from this ideal stock.

### Degeneration of the Species

*Subject proposed.* Hitherto we have investigated those things in which man differs from the rest of the animals. Now we come nearer to the primary object of the whole treatise, for we are to inquire of what kind and how great is the natural diversity which separates the races and the multifarious nations of men; and to

consider whether the origin of this diversity can be traced to degeneration, or whether it is not so great as to compel us rather to conclude that there is more than one original species of man. Before this can be done, there are two questions which must be considered: first, what is *species* in zoology? Secondly, how in general a primordial species may degenerate into varieties? And now of each separately.

*What is species?* We say that animals belong to one and the same species, if they agree so well in form and constitution, that those things in which they do differ may have arisen from degeneration. We say that those, on the other hand, are of different species, whose essential difference is such as cannot be explained by the known sources of degeneration, if I may be allowed to use such a word. So far so good, in the abstract, as they say. Now we come to the real difficulty, which is to set forth the characters by which, *in the natural world*, we may distinguish mere varieties from genuine species.

The immortal Ray, in the last century, long before Buffon, thought those animals should be referred to the same species, which copulate together, and have a fertile progeny. But, as in the domestic animals which man has subdued, this character seemed ambiguous and uncertain, on account of the enslaved life they lead; in the beginning of this century, the sagacious Frisch restricted it to wild animals alone, and declared that those were of the same species, who copulate in a natural state.

But it must be confessed that, even with this limitation, we make but little progress. For, in the first place, what very little chance is there of bringing so many wild animals, especially the exotic ones, about which it is of the greatest possible interest for us to know whether they are to be considered as mere varieties, or as different species, to that test of copulation? Especially if their native countries are widely apart, as is the case with the *Satyris Sngolensis* (chimpanzee) and that of the island of Borneo (orang-utan) . . .

*Application of what has been said to the question whether we should divide mankind into varieties or species.* It is easily manifest whither what we have hitherto said has been tending. We have no other way, but that of analogy, by which we are likely to arrive at a solution of the problem above proposed. But as we enter upon this path, we ought always to have before our eyes the two

golden rules which the great Newton has laid down for philosophizing. First, *that the same causes should be assigned to account for natural effects of the same kind.* We must therefore assign the same causes for the bodily diversity of the races of mankind to which we assign a similar diversity of body in the other *domestic* animals which are widely scattered over the world. Secondly, *that we ought not to admit more causes of natural things than what are sufficient to explain the phenomena.* If therefore it shall appear that the causes of degeneration are sufficient to explain the phenomena of the corporeal diversity of mankind, we ought not to admit anything else deduced from the idea of the plurality of human species.

*How does the primitive species degenerate into varieties?* As we are now about to treat of the modes of degeneration, I hope best to consult perspicuity in dealing with the subject if I arrange it again under two heads, of which the first will briefly relate the principal phenomena of the degeneration of brute animals, and the second will inquire into the causes of this degeneration. This being done, it will be easier in the following section to compare the phenomena of variety in mankind as well with those phenomena of degeneration in brute animals as with the causes of them.

*Principal phenomena of the degeneration of brute animals.* A few instances, and those taken from the warm-blooded animals alone, and also as far as possible from the mammals which are most like man in their corporeal economy, will be enough to show that there is no native variety in mankind which may not be observed to arise amongst other animals as a mere variety and by degeneration. But it is better to go over these things in separate chapters . . .

*Causes of degeneration.* Animal life supposes two faculties, depending upon the vital forces as primary conditions and principles of all its singular functions; the one, namely, of so receiving the force of the stimuli which act upon the body that the parts are affected by it; the other so reacting from this affection that the living motions of the body are in this way set in action and perfected. So there is no motion in the animal machine without a preliminary stimulus and a consequent reaction. These are the hinges on which all the physiology of the animal economy turns. And these are the fountains from which, just as

the business itself of generation, so also the *causes of degeneration* flow . . .

*Some considerations to be observed in the examination of the causes of degeneration.* Many of the causes of degeneration we have already spoken of are so very clear, and so placed beyond all possibility of doubt, that most phenomena of degeneration above enumerated may by an easy process be undoubtedly referred to them, as effects to their causes. But on the other hand even in that very way there is frequently such a concurrence or such a conflicting opposition of many of them; such a diverse and multifarious proneness of organic bodies to degeneration, or reaction from it; and besides, these causes have such effects upon these bodies according as they act immediately (so to speak) or otherwise; and finally, such is the difference of these effects by which they are preserved unimpaired by a sort of tenacious constancy through long series of generations, or by some power of change withdraw themselves again in a short space of time, that in consequence of this diversified and various relation there is need of the greatest caution in the examination of varieties.

Let me then, if only for the benefit of the student, at the end of this discourse, before we pass to the varieties of men themselves, lay down some maxims of caution at least, as corollaries to be carefully borne in mind in the discussion we are entering upon:

1. The more causes of degeneration which act in conjunction, and the longer they act upon the same species of animals, the more palpably that species may fall off from its primeval conformation. Now no animal can be compared to man in this respect, for he is omnivorous, and dwells in every climate, and is far more domesticated and far more advanced from his first beginnings than any other animal; and so on him the united force of climate, diet, and mode of life must have acted for a very long time.

2. On the other hand an otherwise sufficiently powerful cause of degeneration may be changed and debilitated by the accession of other conditions, especially if they are as it were opposed to it. Hence everywhere in various regions of the terraqueous globe, even those which lie in the same geographical latitude, still a very different temperature of the air and an

equally different and generally a contrary effect on the condition of animals may be observed, according as they differ in the circumstances of a higher or lower position, proximity to the sea, or marshes or mountains, or woods, or of a cloudy or serene sky, or some peculiar character of soil, or other circumstances of that kind.

3. Sometimes a remarkable phenomenon of degeneration ought to be referred not so much to the immediate, as to the mediate, more remote, and at the first glance concealed influence of some cause. Hence the darker colour of peoples is not to be derived solely from the direct action of the sun upon the skin, but also from its more remote, as its powerful influence upon the functions of the liver.

4. Mutations which spring from the mediate influence of causes of this sort seem to strike root all the deeper, and so to be all the more tenaciously propagated to following generations. Hence, if I mistake not, we are to look for the reason why the brown colour of skin contracted in the torrid zone will last longer in another climate than the white colour of northern animals if they are transported towards the south.

5. Finally, the mediate influences of those sorts of causes may lie hid and be at such a distance, that it may be impossible even to conjecture what they are, and hence we shall have to refer the enigmatical phenomena of degeneration to them, as to their fountains. Thus, without doubt, we must refer to mediate causes of this kind, which still escape our observation, the racial and constant forms of skulls, the racial colour of eyes, etc.

### **Five principal varieties of mankind, one species: A**

*Innumerable varieties of mankind run into one another by insensible degrees.* We have now completed a universal survey of the genuine varieties of mankind. And as, on the one hand, we have not found a single one which does not . . . even among other warm-blooded animals especially the domestic ones, very plainly, and in a very remarkable way, take place as it were under our eyes, and deduce its origin from manifest causes of degeneration; so, on the other hand . . . no varieties exist, whether of colour, countenance, or stature, etc., so singular as not to be connected

with others of the same kind by such an imperceptible transition, that it is very clear they are all related, or only differ from each other in degree.

*Five principal varieties of mankind may be reckoned.* As, however, even among these arbitrary kinds of divisions, one is said to be better and preferable to another; after a long and attentive consideration, all mankind, as far as it is at present known to us, seems to me as if it may best, according to natural truth, be divided into the five following varieties, which may be designated and distinguished from each other by the names *Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay*. I have allotted the first place to the Caucasian, for reasons given below, which make me esteem it the primeval one. This diverges both directions into two, most remote and very different from each other; on the one side, namely, into the Ethiopian, and on the other into the Mongolian. The remaining two occupy the intermediate positions between that primeval one and these two extreme varieties; that is, the American between the Caucasian and Mongolian; the Malay between the same Caucasian and Ethiopian.

*Characters and limits of these varieties.* In the following notes and descriptions these five varieties must be generally defined. To this enumeration, however, I must prefix a double warning; first, that on account of the multifarious diversity of the characters, according to their degrees, one or two alone are not sufficient, but we must take several joined together; and then that this union of characters is not so constant but what it is liable to innumerable exceptions in all and each of these varieties. Still this enumeration is so conceived as to give a sufficiently plain and perspicuous notion of them in general.

*Caucasian variety.* Colour white, cheeks rosy . . . hair brown or chestnut-coloured . . . head subglobular . . . face oval, straight, its parts moderately defined, forehead smooth, nose narrow, slightly hooked, mouth small . . . The primary teeth placed perpendicularly to each jaw . . . the lips (especially the lower one) moderately open, the chin full and rounded . . . In general, that kind of appearance which, according to our opinion of symmetry, we consider most handsome and becoming. To this first variety belong the inhabitants of Europe (except the Lapps and the remaining descendants of the Finns) and those of Eastern

Asia, as far as the river Obi, the Caspian Sea and the Ganges; and lastly, those of Northern Africa.

*Mongolian variety.* Colour yellow . . . hair black, stiff, straight and scanty . . . head almost square . . . face broad, at the same time flat and depressed, the parts therefore less distinct, as it were running into one another; glabella flat, very broad; nose small, apish; cheeks usually globular, prominent outwardly; the opening of the eyelids narrow, linear; chin slightly prominent . . . This variety comprehends the remaining inhabitants of Asia (except the Malays on the extremity of the trans-Gangetic peninsula) and the Finnish populations of the cold part of Europe, the Lapps, etc. and the race of Esquimaux, so widely diffused over North America, from Behring's Straits to the inhabited extremity of Greenland.

*Ethiopian variety.* Colour black . . . hair black and curly . . . head narrow, compressed at the sides . . . forehead knotty, uneven; malar bones protruding outwards; eyes very prominent; nose thick, mixed up as it were with the wide jaws . . . alveolar edge narrow, elongated in front; the upper primaries obliquely prominent . . . the lips (especially the upper) very puffy; chin retreating. Many are bandy-legged . . . To this variety belong all the Africans, except those of the north.

*American variety.* Copper-coloured . . . hair black, stiff, straight and scanty . . . forehead short; eyes set very deep; nose somewhat apish, but prominent; the face invariably broad, with cheeks prominent, but not flat or depressed; its parts if seen in profile, very distinct, and as it were deeply chiselled . . . the shape of the forehead and head in many artificially distorted. This variety comprehends the inhabitants of America except the Esquimaux.

*Malay variety.* Tawny-coloured . . . hair black, soft, curly, thick and plentiful; head moderately narrowed; forehead slightly swelling . . . nose full, rather wide, as it were diffuse, end thick; mouth large . . . upper jaw somewhat prominent with the parts of the face when seen in profile, sufficiently prominent and distinct from each other . . . This last variety includes the islanders of the Pacific Ocean, together with the inhabitants of the Marianne, the Philippines, the Molucca and the Sunda Islands, and of the Malayan peninsula. . . .

**Five principal varieties of mankind, one species: B**

*Caucasian variety.* I have taken the name of this variety from Mount Caucasus, both because its neighbourhood, and especially its southern slope, produces the most beautiful race of men, I mean the Georgian; and because all physiological reasons converge to this, that in that region, if anywhere, it seems we ought with the greatest probability to place the autochthones of mankind. For in the first place, that stock displays, as we have seen . . . the most beautiful form of the skull, from which, as from a mean and primeval type, the others diverge by most easy gradations on both sides to the two ultimate extremes (that is, on the one side the Mongolian, on the other the Ethiopian). . .

*Mongolian variety.* This is the same as what was formerly called, though in a vague and ambiguous way, the Tartar variety, which denomination has given rise to wonderful mistakes in the study of the varieties of mankind which we are now busy about. So that Buffon and his followers, seduced by that title, have erroneously transferred to the genuine Tartars, who beyond a doubt belong to our first variety, the racial characters of the Mongols, borrowed from ancient authors, who described them under the name of Tartars.

But the Tartars shade away through the Kirghis and the neighbouring races into the Mongols, in the same way as these may be said to pass through the Tibetans to the Indians, through the Esquimaux to the Americans, and also in a sort of way through the Philippine Islanders to the men of Malay variety.

*Ethiopian variety.* This variety, principally because it is so different in colour from our own, has induced many to consider it, with the witty, but badly instructed in physiology, Voltaire, as a peculiar species of mankind. But it is not necessary for me to spend any time here upon refuting this opinion, when it has so clearly been shown above that there is no single character so peculiar and so universal among the Ethiopians, but what it may be observed on the one hand everywhere in other varieties of men; and on the other that many Negroes are seen to be without it. And besides there is no character which does not

shade away by sensible gradations from this variety of mankind to its neighbours, which is clear to every one who has carefully considered the difference between a few stocks of this variety, such as the Foulahs, the Wolufs, and Mandingos, and how by these shades of difference they pass away into the Moors and Arabs.

The assertion that is made about the Ethiopians, that they come nearer the apes than other men, I willingly allow so far as this, that it is in the same way that the solid-hoofed . . . variety of the domestic sow may be said to come nearer to the horse than other sows. But how little weight is for the most part to be attached to this sort of comparison is clear from this, that there is scarcely any other out of the principal varieties of mankind, of which one nation or other, and that too by careful observers, has not been compared, as far as the face goes, with the apes; as we find said in express words of the Lapps, the Esquimaux, the Caaiguas of South America, and the inhabitants of the Island Mallicollo.

*American variety.* It is astonishing and humiliating what quantities of fables were formerly spread about the racial characters of this variety. Some have denied beards to the men, others menstruation to the women. Some have attributed one and the same colour to each and all the Americans; others a perfectly similar countenance to all of them. It has been so clearly demonstrated now by the unanimous consent of accurate and truthful observers, that the Americans are not naturally beardless, that I am almost ashamed of the unnecessary trouble I formerly took to get together a heap of testimony, by which it is proved that not only throughout the whole of America, from the Esquimaux downwards to the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, are there groups of inhabitants who cherish a beard; but also it is quite undeniable as to the other beardless ones that they eradicate and pluck out their own by artifice and on purpose, in the same way as has been customary among so many other nations, the Mongolians for example, and the Malays. We all know that the beard of the Americans is thin and scanty, as is also the case with many Mongolian nations. They ought therefore no more to be called beardless, than men with scanty hair to be called bald. Those therefore who thought the Americans were naturally beardless fell into the same error as that which induced the ancients to

suppose and persuade others, that the birds of paradise, from whose corpses the feet are often cut off, were naturally destitute of feet.

The fabulous report that the American women have no menstruation seems to have had its origin in this, that the Europeans when they discovered the New World, although they saw numbers of the female inhabitants almost entirely naked, never seem to have observed in them the stains of that excretion. For this it seems likely that there were two reasons: first, that amongst those nations of America, the women during menstruation are, by a fortunate prejudice, considered as poisonous, and are prohibited from social intercourse, and for so long enjoy a beneficial repose in the more secluded huts far from the view of men; secondly, because, as has been noticed, they are so commendably clean in their bodies, and the commissure of their legs so conduces to modesty, that no vestiges of the catamenia ever strike the eye.

As to the colour of the skin of this variety, on the one hand it has been observed above, that it is by no means so constant as not in many cases to shade away into black . . . and on the other, that it is easily seen, from the nature of the American climate, and the laws of degeneration when applied to the extremely probable origin of the Americans from northern Asia, why they are not liable to such great diversities of colour, as the other descendants of Asiatic autochthones who peopled the ancient world. The same reason holds good as to the appearance of the Americans. Careful eye-witnesses long ago laughed at the foolish, or possible facetious hyperbole of some, who asserted that the inhabitants of the New World were so exactly alike, that when a man had seen one, he could say that he had seen all, etc. It is, on the contrary, proved by the finished drawings of Americans by the best artists, and by the testimony of the most trustworthy eye-witnesses, that in this variety of mankind, as in others, countenances of all sorts occur; although in general that sort of racial conformation may be considered as properly belonging to them which we attributed to them above . . . It was justly observed by the first Europeans who visited the new continent, that the Americans came very near to the Mongolians, which adds fresh weight to the very probable opinion that the Americans came from northern Asia, and derived

their origin from the Mongolian nation. It is probable that migrations of that kind took place at different times, after considerable intervals, according as various physical, geological, or political catastrophes gave occasion to them; and hence, if any place is allowed for conjecture in these investigations, the reason may probably be derived, why the Esquimaux have still much more of the Mongolian appearance about them than the rest of the Americans: partly, because the catastrophe which drove them from northern Asia must be much more recent, and so they are a much later arrival; and partly because the climate of the new country, which they now inhabit, is much more homogeneous with that of their original country. In fact, unless I am much mistaken, we must attribute to the same influence I mentioned above . . . which the climate has in preserving or restoring the racial appearance, the fact that the inhabitants of the cold southern extremity of South America, as the barbarous inhabitants of the Straits of Magellan, seem to come nearer, and as it were fall back, to the original Mongolian countenance.

*The Malay variety.* As the Americans in respect of racial appearance hold as it were a place between the medial variety of mankind, which we called the Caucasian, and one of the two extremes, that is the Mongolian; so the Malay variety makes the transition from that medial variety to the other extreme, namely, the Ethiopian. I wish to call it the Malay, because the majority of the men of this variety, especially those who inhabit the Indian islands close to the Malacca peninsula, as well as the Sandwich, the Society, and the Friendly Islanders, and also the Malambi of Madagascar down to the inhabitants of Easter Island, use the Malay idiom.

Meanwhile even these differ so much between themselves through various degrees of beauty and other corporeal attributes, that there are some who divide the Otaheitans themselves into two distinct races: the first paler in colour, of lofty stature, with a face which can scarcely be distinguished from that of the European; the second, on the other hand, of moderate stature, colour and face little different from that of Mulattos, with curly hair, etc. This last race then comes very near the men who inhabit the islands more to the south in the Pacific Ocean, of which the inhabitants of the New Hebrides in particular come sensibly near the Papuans and New Hollanders, who finally on

their part graduate away so insensibly towards the Ethiopian variety, that, if it was thought convenient, they might not unfairly be classed with them, in that distribution of the varieties we were talking about.

*Conclusion.* Thus too there is with this that insensible transition by which as we saw the other varieties also run together, and which, compared with what was discussed in the earlier sections of the book, about the causes and ways of degeneration, and the analogous phenomena of degeneration in the other domestic animals, brings us to that conclusion, which seems to flow spontaneously from physiological principles applied by the aid of critical zoology to the natural history of mankind; which is, *That no doubt can any longer remain but that we are with great probability right in referring all and singular as many varieties of man as are at present known to one and the same species.*

## Entries in the *Encyclopédie* and the *Encyclopaedia* *Britannica*

The first extract is part of the entry on "Nègre" in one of the monuments of the Enlightenment, the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers*, co-edited by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, and published from 1751 to 1772. The entry was written by M. le Romain.

### Nègre

Man who inhabits different parts of the earth, from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn. Africa has no other inhabitants but the blacks. Not only the color, but also the facial traits distinguish them from other men: large and flat noses, thick lips, and wool instead of hair. They appear to constitute a new species of mankind.

If one moves further away from the Equator toward the Antarctic, the black skin becomes lighter, but the ugliness remains: one finds there this same wicked people that inhabits the African Meridian. If one goes east, the features soften and become more regular, but the skin color remains black as inside Africa. After these [eastern peoples], one encounters a greatly tanned people, distinguishable from others by their narrow and obliquely positioned long eyes. If we pass through this vast part of the world which appears to be separate from Europe, from Africa and Asia, one finds – if several travelers are to be believed – a different

human variety. There is absolutely no white person: the land is peopled by red nations tanned in a thousand ways . . .

Many physicians have researched the causes of the blackness of the negro. The major opinions that the physicians hold on this matter can be reduced to two: one attributes the cause to bile, the other to some fluid contained in the veins of the mucous membrane. Malpighi, Ruysch, Littré, Santorini, Heifter, and Albinus have done intriguing researches on the skin of the negroes. The first opinion on the blackness of the negro is entirely supported by proofs in a work entitled *Dissertation sur la cause physique de la couleur des nègres, etc.* by M. Barrere (Paris, 1741). The following is how he deduced his hypothesis: when, after a long maceration of the black skin in water, the outer skin is removed and attentively examined, one finds that it is black, very thin, and transparent when held up to daylight. That is how I saw it in America, and it has been remarked upon as well by the anatomists of our time, such as M. Winslow . . .

It needs to be further observed, however, that if the outer skin of the negro is transparent, the color becomes pronounced in the under-skin, which is reddish-brown, bordering on the dark. But since the skin of the black, like that of the white, is made up of veins, it must necessarily contain some juice. The results of the examination of this juice are at present in question. However, one can say with some basis that the juice is analogous to the bile, an opinion supported by observation. (1) On the cadavers of the Negroes whom I had the opportunity to dissect in Cayenne,<sup>1</sup> the bile is always as dark as ink; and (2) it is always more or less black in proportion to the skin color of the negro; (3) the blood is blackish-red, again according to the grade of blackness of the negro's skin; (4) it is certain that the bile re-enters the chyle in the blood, and flows with it through all parts of the body . . .

*The vessels of the mucous body, following the observations of Malpighi:* the skin and the cuticle of the negroes are white; the blackness comes only from the mucous or the reticular membrane which is between the epidermis and the skin. Ruysch's injections have partly confirmed this discovery, and brought them to light. The outer skin of the negro is not white, according

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: "Cayenne" is a Tupi name, and here may refer to some place in Brazil or other part of South America inhabited by the Tupis.

to this anatomy, because it has the whiteness of a [animal's] horn (*blancheur de la corne*), which always has a mixture of black. Ruysch sent to Heifter a portion of the skin of a negro. It was white, certainly, but the external surface of the epidermis was black-tainted, the inside face was covered as well with deep, black taint. Santorini, in his *Remarques anatomiques*, reports of observations that establish the cause of the color of the Negroes in the mucous membrane. These researches prove that, if the Negro's epidermis was lifted, there remains an extremely black colored portion of the mucous membrane, on the skin or the vascular tissues. This black portion of the mucous membrane is what leaves black stain on the fingers that lifted the epidermis. There is, as a result, a particular reservoir of this black taint between the epidermis and the skin.

The mucous membrane, a tissue almost unknown, appears to be quite unequally distributed in different parts of the body. It is closely attached to the epidermis, and could not be entirely separated from it, and that is why the black color cannot be erased off of the outer skin, and is of a deeper texture in the teguments of the inner surface.

The vessels of the reticular membrane are full of blackish liquor (*liqueur noirâtre*). One may ask where this comes from. Santorini did not believe that one can decide on the source of this material which taints the reticular membrane of the negroes; but he suspected that the liver could furnish the taint of the skin in this human species. The red color of the fish's liver, various sorts of jaundice to which humans are subject, and the blackishness that one finds in the bile vesicles, led him to this conjecture.

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The following extract from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is taken from the first American Edition, of 1798.

## Negro

NEGRO, *Homo pelli nigra*, a name given to a variety of the human species, who are entirely black, and are found in the torrid zone,

especially in that part of Africa which lies within the tropics. In the complexion of negroes we meet with various shades; but they likewise differ far from other men in all the features of their face. Round cheeks, high cheek-bones, a forehead somewhat elevated, a short, broad, flat nose, thick lips, small ears, ugliness, and irregularity of shape, characterize their external appearance. The negro women have the loins greatly depressed, and very large buttocks, which give the back the shape of a saddle. Vices the most notorious seem to be the portion of this unhappy race: idleness, treachery, revenge, cruelty, impudence, stealing, lying, profanity, debauchery, nastiness and intemperance, are said to have extinguished the principles of natural law, and to have silenced the reproofs of conscience. They are strangers to every sentiment of compassion, and are an awful example of the corruption of man when left to himself.

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“The difference is fixed in nature”

*Thomas Jefferson*

(b. *Shadwell, Virginia, 13 April 1743*;  
d. *Monticello, Virginia, 4 July 1826*)

In these excerpts from the essays entitled “Manners” and “Laws,” in the only book he published, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), Thomas Jefferson shows acute awareness of the cancerous effect of the institution of slavery on the moral fibre of his nation; for example, children of slave owners learn from their parents that it is all right to treat humans in cruel, inhumane, and, as Jefferson puts it, “degrading” fashion. Jefferson, in the first essay, prays for wisdom to find a way to end slavery in a manner that would not bring about a reversal of “the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation” between white and black. A disproportionate part of the second essay, “Laws,” is devoted to arguments in support of what Jefferson believed to be the innate or “natural” inferiority of the Negro (and superiority of the white) in the areas of physical beauty, and mental and intellectual capacity. The Negroes, according to Jefferson, are biologically conditioned for manual labor because they are “tolerant of heat.”

**“Manners,” from *Notes on the State of Virginia***

It is difficult to determine on the standard by which the manners of a nation may be tried, whether *catholic*, or *particular*. It is more

difficult for a native to bring to that standard the manners of his own nation, familiarized to him by habit. There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to his worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who permitting one half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriae* of the other. For if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labour for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute as far as depends on his individual endeavours to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him. With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man will labour for himself who can make another labour for him. This is so true, that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labour. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the

wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest. But it is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into everyone's mind. I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave rising from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.

### ***“Laws,” from Notes on the State of Virginia***

It will probably be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the state, and thus save the expense of supplying, by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race. To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral. The first difference which strikes us is that of colour. Whether the black of the negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf-skin, or in the scarf-skin itself; whether it proceeds from the colour of the blood, the colour of the bile, or from that of some other secretion, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us. And is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in

the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immoveable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race? Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form, their own judgment in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oran-ootan for the black women over those of his own species. The circumstance of superior beauty, is thought worth attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man? Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold, than the whites. Perhaps too a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious experimentalist has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it. They seem to require less sleep. A black, after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female; but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me, that in memory they are equal to the whites; in

reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous. It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation. We will consider them here, on the same stage with the whites, and where the facts are not apocryphal on which a judgment is to be formed. It will be right to make great allowances for the difference of condition, of education, of conversation, of the sphere in which they move. Many millions of them have been brought to, and born in America. Most of them indeed have been confined to tillage, to their own homes, and their own society; yet many have been so situated that they might have availed themselves of the conversation of their masters; many have been brought up to the handicraft arts, and from that circumstance have always been associated with the whites. Some have been liberally educated, and all have lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated to a considerable degree, and have had before their eyes samples of the best works from abroad. The Indians, with no advantages of this kind, will often carve figures on their pipes not destitute of design and merit. They will crayon out an animal, a plant, or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation. They astonish you with strokes of the most sublime oratory; such as prove their reason and sentiment strong, their imagination glowing and elevated. But never yet<sup>1</sup> could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never seen even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture. In music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved. Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar oestrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion indeed has produced a Phyllis

1 The following was deleted by Jefferson, on this spot, in the original manuscript: "but never yet . . . as far as I have heard, has a black excelled in any art, in any science." (Editor's note)

Whately; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism. The heroes of the *Dunciad* are to her, as Hercules to the author of that poem. Ignatius Sancho has approached nearer to merit in composition; yet his letters do more honour to the heart than the head. They breathe the purest effusions of friendship and general philanthropy, and shew how great a degree of the latter may be compounded with strong religious zeal. He is often happy in the turn of his compliments, and his stile is easy and familiar, except when he affects a Shandean fabrication of words. But his imagination is wild and extravagant, escapes incessantly from every restraint of reason and taste, and, in the course of its vagaries, leaves a tract of thought as incoherent and eccentric, as is the course of a meteor through the sky. His subjects should often have led him to a process of sober reasoning; yet we find him always substituting sentiment for demonstration. Upon the whole, though we admit him to the first place among those of his own colour who have presented themselves to the public judgment, yet when we compare him with the writers of the race among whom he lived, and particularly with the epistolary class, in which he has taken his own stand, we are compelled to enroll him at the bottom of the column. This criticism supposes the letters published under his name to be genuine, and to have received amendment from no other hand, points which would not be of easy investigation. The improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by everyone and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life. We know that among the Romans, about the Augustan age especially, the condition of their slaves was much more deplorable than that of the blacks on the continent of America. The two sexes were confined in separate apartments, because to raise a child cost the master more than to buy one. Cato, for a very restricted indulgence to his slaves in this particular, took from them a certain price. But in this country the slaves multiply as fast as the free inhabitants. Their situation and manners place the commerce between the two sexes almost without restraint. The same Cato on a principle of Economy, always sold his sick and superannuated slaves. He gives it as a standing precept to a master visiting his farm, to sell his old oxen, old waggons, old

tools, old and diseased servants, and everything else become useless. "Vendat boves vetulos, plaustrum vetus, ferramenta, vetera, servum senem, servum morbosum, & si quid aliud supersit vendat." The American slaves cannot enumerate this among the injuries and insults they receive. It was the common practice to expose in the island of Aesculapius, in the Tyber, diseased slaves, whose cure was like to become tedious. The Emperor Claudius, by an edict, gave freedom to such of them as should recover, and first declared that if any person chose to kill rather than to expose them, it should be deemed homicide. The exposing them is a crime of which no instance has existed with us; and were it to be followed by death it would be punished capitally. We are told of a certain Vedius Pollio, who, in the presence of Augustus, would have given a slave as food to his fish, for having broken a glass. With the Romans, the regular method of taking the evidence of their slaves was under torture. Here it has been thought better never to resort to their evidence. When a master was murdered, all his slaves, in the same house, or within hearing, were condemned to death. Here punishment falls on the guilty only, and as precise proof is required against him as against a freeman. Yet notwithstanding these and other discouraging circumstances among the Romans, their slaves were often their rarest artists. They excelled too in science, insomuch as to be usually employed as tutors to their master's children. Epictetus (Diogenes, Phaeton), Terence, and Phaedrus, were slaves. But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then, but nature, which has produced the distinction. Whether further observation will or will not verify the conjecture, that nature has been less bountiful to them in the endowments of the head, I believe that in those of the heart she will be found to have done them justice. That disposition to theft with which they have been branded, must be ascribed to their situation, and not to any depravity of the moral sense. The man in whose favour no laws of property exist probably feels himself less bound to respect those made in favour of others. When arguing for ourselves, we lay it down as a fundamental, that laws, to be just, must give a reciprocation of right: that, without this, they are mere arbitrary rules of conduct, founded in force, and not in conscience; and it is a problem which I give to the master to solve, whether the religious precepts against the viola-

tion of property were not framed for him as well as his slave? And whether the slave may not as justifiably take a little from one, who has taken all from him, as he may slay one who would slay him? That a change in the relations in which a man is placed should change his ideas of moral right and wrong, is neither new, nor peculiar to the colour of the blacks. Homer tells us it was so 2,600 years ago.

Jove fix'd it certain that whatever day  
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

But the slaves of which Homer speaks were whites. Notwithstanding these considerations which must weaken their respect for the laws of property, we find among them numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their better instructed masters, of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity. The opinion, that they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence. To justify a general conclusion, requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the anatomical knife, to optical glasses, to analysis by fire, or by solvents. How much more then where it is a faculty, not a substance, we are examining; where it eludes the research of all the senses; where the conditions of its existence are various and variously combined; where the effects of those which are present or absent bid defiance to calculation; let me add too, as a circumstance of great tenderness, where our conclusion would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them. To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. It is not against experience to suppose, that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications. Will not a lover of natural history then, one who views the gradations in all the races of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the depart-

ment of man as distinct as nature has formed them? This unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. Many of their advocates, while they wish to vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious also to preserve its dignity and beauty. Some of these embarrassed by the question "What further is to be done with them?" join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only. Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.

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“The race from which we are descended has been called Caucasian . . . the handsomest on earth”

*Georges Léopold Cuvier*

(b. Montbéliard, 23 August 1769;  
d. Paris, 13 May 1832)

In this essay, taken from Cuvier's *Animal Kingdom* (1797), the author classifies the human race into three distinct varieties: the Caucasian, the Mongolian, and the Ethiopian, emphasizing the superiority of the Caucasian and the inferiority of the rest in beauty, intellect, and culture.

## Varieties of the Human Species

Although the promiscuous intercourse of the human species, which produces individuals capable of propagation, would seem to demonstrate its unity, certain hereditary peculiarities of conformation are observed which constitute what are termed *races*.

Three of them in particular appear very distinct: the *Caucasian* or white, the *Mongolian* or yellow, and *Ethiopian* or negro.

The Caucasian, to which we belong, is distinguished by the beauty of the oval formed by its head, varying in complexion and the colour of the hair. To this variety, the most highly civilized nations, and those which have generally held all others in subjection, are indebted for their origin.

The Mongolian is known by his high cheek bones, flat visage, narrow and oblique eyes, straight black hair, scanty beard and olive complexion. Great empires have been established by this race in China and Japan, and their conquests have been extended to this side of the Great Desert. In civilization, however, it has always remained stationary.

The Negro race is confined to the south of Mount Atlas; it is marked by a black complexion, crisped or woolly hair, compressed cranium, and a flat nose. The projection of the lower parts of the face, and the thick lips, evidently approximate it to the monkey tribe; the hordes of which it consists have always remained in the most complete state of utter barbarism.

The race from which we are descended has been called *Caucasian*, because tradition and the filiation of nations seem to refer its origin to that group of mountains situated between the Caspian and Black Seas, whence, as from a centre, it has been extended like the radii of a circle. Various nations in the vicinity of Caucasus, the Georgians and Circassians, are still considered the handsomest on earth. The principal ramifications of this race may be distinguished by the analogies of language. The Armenian or Syrian branch, stretching to the south, produced the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the hitherto untamable Arabs, who, after Mahomet were near becoming masters of the world; the Phoenicians, Jews and Abyssinians, which were Arabian colonies; and most probably the Egyptians. It is from this branch, always inclined to mysticism, that have sprung the most widely extended forms of religion; the arts and literature have sometimes flourished among its nations, but always enveloped in a strange disguise and figurative style.

The Indian, German, and Pelagic branch is much more extended, and was much earlier divided: notwithstanding which, the most numerous affinities may be observed between its four principal languages: the Sanscrit, the present sacred language of the Hindoos, and the parent of the greater number of the dialects of Hindostan; the ancient language of the Pelasgi, common mother of the Greek, Latin, many tongues that are extinct, and of all those of the south of Europe; the Gothic or Teutonic, from which are derived the languages of the north and north-west of Europe, such as the German, Dutch, English, Danish, Swedish, and other dialects; and finally, the Sclavonian, from which

spring those of the north-east, the Russian, Polish, Bohemian, etc.

It is by this great and venerable branch of the Caucasian stock, that philosophy, the arts, and the sciences have been carried to the greatest perfection, and remained in the keeping of the nations which compose it for more than three thousand years.

It was preceded in Europe by the Celts, who came from the north, whose tribes, once very numerous, are now confined to its most eastern extremity, and by the Cantabrians, who passed from Africa into Spain, now confounded with the many nations whose posterity have intermingled in that peninsula.

The ancient Persians originate from the same source as the Indians, and their descendants to the present hour bear great marks of resemblance to the people of Europe.

The predatory tribes of the Scythian and Tartar branch, extending at first to the north and north-east, always wandering over the immense plains of those countries, returned only to devastate the happier abodes of their more civilized brethren. The Scythians, who, at so remote a period, made irruptions into upper Asia; the Parthians, who there destroyed the Greek and Roman domination; the Turks, who there subverted that of the Arabs, and subjugated in Europe the unfortunate remnant of the Grecian people, all swarmed from this prolific branch. The Finlanders and Hungarians are tribes of the same division, which have strayed among the Slavonic and Teutonic nations. Their original country, to the north and north-east of the Caspian Sea still contains inhabitants who have the same origin, and speak similar languages, but mingled with other petty nations, variously descended, and of different languages. The Tartars remained unmixed longer than the others in the country included between the mouth of the Danube to beyond the Irtisch, from which they so long menaced Russia, and where they have finally been subjugated by her. The Mongoles, however, have mingled their blood with that of those they conquered, many traces of which may still be found among the inhabitants of lesser Tartary.

It is to the east of this Tartar branch of the Caucasian race that the Mongolian race begins, when it extends to the eastern ocean. Its branches, the Calmucs, etc., still wandering shepherds, are constantly traversing the desert. Thrice did their ancestors under Attila, Genghis, and Tamerlane, spread far the terror of their

name. The Chinese are the earliest and most civilized branch not only of this race, to which they belong, but of all the nations upon earth. A third branch, the Mantchures, recently conquered, and still govern China. The Japanese, Coreans, and nearly all the hordes which extend to the north-east of Siberia, subject to Russia, are also to be considered, in a great measure, as originating from this race and such also is esteemed the fact, with regard to the original inhabitants of various islands of that Archipelago. With the exception of a few Chinese literati, the different nations of the Mongoles are universally addicted to Buddhism or the religion of Fo [*sic*].

The origin of this great race appears to have been in the mountains of Altai, but it is impossible to trace the filiation of its different branches with the same certainty as we have done those of the Caucasian. The history of these wandering nations is as fugitive as their establishments, and that of the Chinese, confined exclusively to their own empire, gives us nothing satisfactory with respect to their neighbours. The affinities of their languages are also too little known to direct us in this labyrinth.

The languages of the north of the peninsula beyond the Ganges, as well as that of Thibet, are somewhat allied to the Chinese, at least in their monosyllabic structure, and the people who speak them have features somewhat resembling other Mongoles. The south of this peninsula, however, is inhabited by Malays, whose forms approximate them much nearer to the Indians, whose race and language are extended over all the coasts of the islands of the Indian Archipelago. The innumerable little islands of the southern ocean are also peopled by a handsome race, nearly allied to the Indians, whose language is very similar to the Malay; in the interior of the largest of these islands, particularly in the wilder portions of it, is another race of men with black complexions, crisped hair, and Negro faces, called Alfourous. On the coast of New Guinea, and in the neighbouring islands, we find other Negroes, nearly similar to those of the eastern coast of Africa, named Papuas; to the latter, are generally referred the people of Van Diemen's land, and those of New Holland to the Alfourous.

These Malays, and these Papuas are not easily referable to either of the three great races of which we have been speaking, but can the former be clearly distinguished from their neigh-

bours, the Caucasian Hindoos and the Mongolian Chinese? As for us, we confess we cannot discover any sufficient characteristics in them for that purpose. Are the Papuas Negroes, which may formerly have strayed into the Indian Ocean? We possess neither figures nor descriptions sufficiently precise to enable us to answer this question.

The northern inhabitants of both continents, the Samoièdes, the Laplanders, and the Esquimaux spring, according to some, from the Mongolian race, while others assert that they are mere degenerate offsets from the Scythian and Tartar branch of the Caucasian stock . . .

We have not yet been able to refer the Americans to any of the races of the eastern continent; still, they have no precise nor constant character which can entitle them to be considered as a particular one. Their copper-coloured complexion is not sufficient; their generally black hair and scanty beard would induce us to refer them to the Mongoles, if their defined features, projecting nose, large and open eye, did not oppose such a theory, and correspond with the feature of the European. Their languages are as numberless as their tribes, and no demonstrative analogy has as yet been obtained, either with each other, or with those of the old world.