

Representations of 'Race' in British Science and Culture during the Eighteenth Century

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Abstract

A dominant narrative of change is fundamental to how recent historiography has accounted for the apparent emergence of 'racial' theories in the late eighteenth century. This model argues that non-Europeans were largely evaluated and differentiated by their relative cultural qualities during the early-modern period, rather than through 'racialised' bodily features such as skin colour. With the evolution of Enlightenment sciences, these cultural varieties were supposedly eroded by categorical, scientifically-validated differences between Europeans and non-Europeans. Thus modern ideas of 'racial' hierarchy are seen to originate from the 1770s onwards.

This thesis re-evaluates the British contribution to 'racial science' during the eighteenth century, examining sources in a more comprehensive and intertextual manner than has so far been achieved. Juxtaposing the post-1770s anatomy, natural history and philosophy with texts from the late seventeenth century onwards, this thesis argues that there are profound representational continuities throughout this period which challenge the above shift. Common belief in specific categories of human variety, established through repeated attention to particular bodily features, is seen to be prevalent in travel literature throughout the period. Here it is maintained that the tendency towards a basic comparative anatomy in earlier texts is tantamount to a 'racial science' in itself.

Four distinct representational motifs are studied herein, which are seen to operate in texts throughout the eighteenth century. Stereotypes of animality were used to convey a sense of inferior distinctiveness upon 'savage' peoples: an idea which becomes apparent in both travelogues and later anatomical works. Disproportional depictions of sensory capacity are part of this representation, whilst the use of animalised metaphor in discussions of 'interracial' breeding shows an awareness of 'racial' divides from at least the 1690s. Also explored are the connections between 'racial science' and scientific theories of sex and gender, which offer a similar challenge to the dominant historical narrative.

For
Donald William Brokenshire
(1928-2008)
and
Derek Arthur Newberry
(1929-2008)

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	6
Introduction	7
Chapter One: The Non-European Animal, Internal and External	59
Chapter Two: The Senses in 'Racial' Demarcation	105
Chapter Three: 'Miscegenation', Hybridity and the Evidencing of Difference	160
Chapter Four: The Lust, Fetish and Gender of Non-European Bodies	209
Chapter Five: Conclusion	269
Appendices	294
Bibliography	296

List of Illustrations

Figure 1	<i>'PLATE II...intended to shew the facial line in Man, and in different Animals.'</i> Charles White, <u>The Regular Gradation in Man</u> (1799)	63
Figure 2	<i>'TAB. II.'</i> <i>An illustrated table of facial angles.</i> Petrus Camper, <u>The Works of the Late Professor Camper</u> (1794)	64
Figure 3	<i>'Direct lineal Ascent'.</i> <i>A chart depicting the Spanish 'science' of 'racial' interbreeding.</i> Edward Long, <u>The History of Jamaica</u> (1774)	171
Figure 4	<i>'MEDIATE OR STATIONARY'.</i> <i>A chart depicting the Spanish 'science' of 'racial' interbreeding.</i> Edward Long, <u>The History of Jamaica</u> (1774)	172
Figure 5	<i>A table demonstrating the caste system of Lima, Peru.</i> William Betagh, <u>A Voyage Round the World</u> (1728)	201
Figure 6	<i>'The clitoris of an Arabian girl, circumcised.'</i> Johann Blumenbach, <u>On the Natural Variety of Mankind</u> (1775)	237
Figure 7	<i>'The Laplander'</i> Oliver Goldsmith, <u>An History of the Earth and Animated Nature</u> (1774)	258
Figure 8	<i>'TABLE Of the Proportions of all the Heads in Profile.'</i> Petrus Camper, <u>The Works of the Late Professor Camper</u> (1794)	285
Figure 9	<i>'General Summary...Diagram'.</i> <i>An illustrated depiction of human racial categories.</i> A.C. Haddon, <u>The Races of Man</u> (1924)	287

Introduction

Historiography

Attempts to historically investigate racism over the last twenty years or so have been powerfully influenced by models of sociological construction. Offering a more nuanced and less polemical approach to the subject of 'race relations' than was previously suggested by competing Marxist theories, the sociological argument alleges that racism and racial theories were the by-product of interactions between European and non-European cultures. Michael Banton, one of the most vociferous proponents of the sociological rationale, identified several orders of 'race relations' that shape race and racial stereotypes: 'peripheral contact, institutionalised contact, acculturation, domination, paternalism, integration and pluralism.'¹ European racism was thus construed as having been forged through a process of social change: as the levels of contact between European societies and 'other' cultures increased, many disparate notions about lineage, climate, religion, bodies and class became consolidated into a system of racial differentiation. Common European psychological and cultural assumptions, the sociological model showed, became enmeshed with new scientific modes of human categorisation. Sociologists in favour of this argument moreover claimed that the social changes necessary for generating racial beliefs could be located in one particular period. Thus Banton and Jonathan Harwood influentially wrote that although 'prior to the eighteenth century there was no conception of race as a physical category, there was a basic idea, grounded in European thought, that black was the

¹ Rohit Barot, 'Reflections on Michael Banton's Contribution to Race and Ethnic Studies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29:5 (2006), p. 788.

colour of sin and death.’² Prevalent early-modern and medieval metaphors surrounding the colour black were transformed into something ‘modern’ by growing social issues such as debates over slavery and colonisation. Several scholars, including David Theo Goldberg, further developed the case for a sociological construction of race. Although Goldberg traced the roots of human categorisation back to Aristotle, he too perceived a new scheme of ‘skin colour, head shape, body size, smell, hair texture, and so on [that] engendered a metaphysical pathos, and aesthetic empathy or aversion’ which was specifically ‘modern’.³ Goldberg continues, ‘[t]he subjectivity of aesthetic taste and judgement...was applied to this objectification of human subjects. The full weight of eighteenth-century science and rationality, philosophy, aesthetics, and religion thus merged to circumscribe European representations of others.’⁴ Even though these above claims originated from sociologists and had variable historical proof in themselves, they have gathered many adherents within the discipline of history. This introduction thus opens with a survey of this historiography, to be followed after by sections discussing the research questions, sources and structure of this thesis.

Much recent writing about ‘race’ during the early modern period has, as in the material above, been dominated by a narrative of change. Such works have often been aimed at demonstrating vague and culturally-based, rather than scientifically-founded, notions of human variety. Sujata Iyengar’s *Shades of Difference* (2005) investigates depictions of non-Europeans in the various learned professions of religion, medicine and law, so as to gain a broad overview of how the discourse⁵ of race manifested itself

² Michael Banton and Jonathan Harwood, *The Race Concept* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1975), p. 14.

³ David Theo Goldberg, ‘The Social Formation of Racist Discourse’, in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Anatomy of Racism* (London; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 302.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ ‘Discourse’ is a word I will often use in this thesis to describe race or racial science. Obviously the theoretical connotations of this word are voluminous, but I use the term without any particular critical slant. Rather I simply believe that ‘discourse’ best summarises the processes of racial conception as I understand them in this thesis. Race herein is seen to be a conversation between numerous published authors who were both harvesting ideas from common sources and responding to each other personally, but through the public forum of publication.

between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Iyengar perceives that '[e]arly modern ethnic prejudice, xenophobia, and color prejudice, pernicious though they were, comprised a different structure of feeling from modern pseudoscientific racialism.'⁶ For her, 'racism' before the eighteenth century was a 'mythology of color', which declined 'in favour of racialism and the fear of miscegenation'; a 'complex of early modern beliefs' not founded in scientific categorisation but in cultural sentiment.⁷ Likewise, Kim F. Hall's *Things of Darkness* (1995) constructs 'race' as something other than a biological idea in the dynamics of early-modern fiction. This is shown in the racial nomenclature of the period, which is believed to have different ramifications to those seen today. Hall believes, for instance, that "'black" in Renaissance discourses is opposed not to "white" but to "beauty" or "fairness," and these terms most often refer to the appearance or moral states of women...a black woman is the opposite of fair.'⁸ Cultural and social comparisons are integral to this representation, rather than the bodily polarisation between 'black' Africans and 'white' Europeans as seen in later anatomical study.

David M. Goldenberg has also written extensively on medieval and early-modern concepts of religious 'racism'. Examples of this include the fabled 'Curse of Ham', which became a religious justification of African slavery stemming from Genesis 9:18-25, in which Noah's son Ham witnesses and then speaks of his father naked and drunk. For this Noah curses Ham's son Canaan: 'a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.'⁹ From this passage came the older justification, through an ancient, extra-biblical tradition, that 'Noah uttered a dual curse against his son Ham, cursing him with

⁶ Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Colour in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 15.

⁷ Iyengar, *Shades of Difference*, pp. 14-15.

⁸ Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 9.

⁹ Genesis 9:25, *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, quoted in David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 1.

blackness and with slavery at the same time.’¹⁰ Alongside Ham, another non-biblical tradition sees Cain, son of Adam, as having been ‘smitten with dark skin as punishment for killing his brother Abel.’¹¹ Both of these figures have been credited with being the father of the ‘black’ African peoples, in turn legitimising their enslavement by the lighter-skinned, non-cursed people of Europe, North Africa and the Near East. These concepts were prominent in early-modern Europe, as

[b]y the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade in the fifteenth century Black and slave were inextricably joined in the Christian mind. Over and over again one finds Black enslavement justified with a reference to the biblical story of the curse of eternal servitude pronounced against Ham, considered to be the father of black Africa.¹²

What these accounts reveal, then, are diverse methods of thinking about ‘race’ in the early modern period. The non-European ‘other’—the foreigner, the outsider, ‘that strange, exotic, incomprehensible creature, feared, abhorred, and yet in some ways also envied’—was not different in terms of bodily categories but rather culturally, religiously and politically so.¹³

The condensing of these cultural facets into a modern, scientific conception of ‘race’ is epitomised by the etymological changes of the word itself. ‘Race’ has been noted by many historians as not taking on its hierarchical, biological implications until the last decades of the eighteenth century. Bronwen Douglas writes that ‘*race* was rarely used...as a synonym for the concrete noun *variété*, ‘variety’—before the mid-18th century [sic] and not much then in comparison with the term’s prevalence in the 19th

¹⁰ Goldenberg, *Curse of Ham*, p. 170.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³ Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 1.

century [sic]'.¹⁴ Rather the word had a more ambiguous meaning, enveloping national, tribal and familial divisions. To Douglas, the transformation of this word into its modern biological sense is symbolic of a wider, 'momentous reworking of older ideas on generation and reproduction which has underpinned racist and antiracist ideologies alike since their consolidation at the end of the 18th century'.¹⁵ Nicholas Hudson pushes these conclusions further, considering the evolving meaning of the word 'race' to be a 'central and revealing development in the history of racial classification'.¹⁶ The word 'race' in its modern biological sense is, to Hudson, a 'racist' practice in itself: through the transition from 'nation' as a category to 'race', we see the linguistic result of wider political thought, as 'the general influence of imperialism and slavery deprived non-European peoples of their national identities and made those differences less important to Europeans.'¹⁷ 'Race' as a word implies the reduction of sometimes hundreds of national and cultural varieties into one set of bodily characteristics. Furthermore, another of Douglas' articles notes 'a changing valence in western European discourses on the natural history of "man" at the end of the eighteenth century, and the concept of "race" began...to congeal towards its scientifically-validated, modernist dogma of permanent, hereditary physical differences'.¹⁸ Especially through the interplay between illustration and text, she demonstrates how ambivalent and varied discourses became reduced to central stereotypes.

The shift to a 'modern' sense of race is also often evidenced by the first textual arguments for polygenetic theory. For many centuries, European scientific speculation over the origins of variations such as skin colour had tended towards climatic theories,

¹⁴ Bronwen Douglas, 'Notes on "Race" and the Biologisation of Human Difference', *Journal of Pacific History* 40:3 (December 2005), p. 332.

¹⁵ Douglas, 'Notes on "Race"', p. 338.

¹⁶ Nicolas Hudson, 'From "Nation" to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29:3 (1996), p. 247.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹⁸ Bronwen Douglas, 'Science And The Art Of Representing "Savages": Reading "Races" In Text And Image In South Seas Voyage Literature', *History and Anthropology* 11:2-3 (1999), p. 162.

whereby the influence of the sun, wind and heat of an environment upon the skin or the humours led to a population-wide development of certain physical characteristics. All such theories are monogenetic. They argue that, whilst there are obvious physical differences between different branches of humanity, the human race still had one common point of origin; all peoples are the descendents of Adam and Eve, and in terms of biology are of one single species. Polygenetic theory takes another position, suggesting that those people of different 'races' are in fact of an entirely different species, or were created in another act of genesis unrecorded in the Bible. Accordingly, within this theory, these other species had no claim to the developing human rights of Enlightenment philosophies. Such groups were consequently viable targets for slavery or European rule, since their souls lacked the human capacity for salvation through Christ. This idea was in many ways controversial, being essentially counter to biblical knowledge, and remained a minority belief during the eighteenth century. The very fact that, after the 1770s, the idea was even permissible in British culture has been read by historians as a symbol of the changing attitudes towards human difference during this period. The idea is strongly connected with later, more 'modern' racial theories: 'worries about the coloring and degeneracy of the Negro encouraged polygenetic justifications for racism followed by the pseudoscientific racism of the nineteenth century.'¹⁹ Authors of the polygenetic arguments, moreover, have been interpreted by historians as pivotal in the invention of 'racism'. Edward Long, who published in the early 1770s, has for instance been configured by historians as a 'founding father in the pantheon of British racism.'²⁰ Polygenetic theory in the eighteenth century, then, is considered as the tentative vocalising of a new sense of categorical difference, more extreme and 'racist' than those ideas which preceded it.

¹⁹ Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 12.

²⁰ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 130.

Histories of the eighteenth century have more thoroughly analysed the difference between early-modern and modern thinking on race, as well as the transition between the two modes. Precedents exist for such a shift in perceptions in philosophy. Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1966) identified a transition in the history of thought during the early modern period—from the end of the sixteenth century—whereby the fundamental basis of knowledge grew from a system of 'similitudes' into a new episteme he calls the 'classical'. This new episteme is critical in understanding the revolution in scientific process and the desire to classify. Foucault observed a change in the very nature of thinking of and representing the world:

The activity of the mind...will therefore no longer consist in *drawing things together*, in setting out on a quest for everything that might reveal some sort of kinship, attraction, or secretly shared nature within them, but, on the contrary, in *discriminating*, that is, in establishing their identities, then the inevitability of the connections with all the successive degrees of a series. In this sense, discrimination imposes upon comparison the primary and fundamental investigation of difference.²¹

The change depicted above, we see, was critical in the development of 'new scientific systems of categorisation. The impulse towards classifying in the 'classical episteme' becomes a system of '*mathesis*, a *taxinomia*, and a *genetic analysis*. The sciences always carry within themselves the project...of an exhaustive ordering of the world'. We are told that the 'centre of knowledge, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is the *table*'²², or more aptly for this work, the hierarchy. Although Foucault himself spoke very little about specifically 'racial' conceptions, the transition he depicted is echoed often within the historical works examined below. The movement from religious and social to anatomical signifiers of difference, indeed, could be considered as

²¹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966: London: Routledge, 2007), p. 61.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

emblematic of the movement from a system of 'similitudes' (whereby a people are constructed as superior or inferior upon a shared axis of culture facets) to one of 'differentiation' (in which physical variations subsume culture and religion in the formation of identity).

A brief history of 'racial' ideas during the early modern period demonstrates a narrative of change similar to the one argued by Foucault above. As already suggested, many historians connect new conceptualisations of non-European people to historical change. Slavery was a phenomenon to which many historians have attributed much importance in this conceptual process. Commentators such as Orlando Patterson point out that there 'is nothing notably particular about the institution of slavery', as it has 'existed from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilised.'²³ The practice, indeed, had been long present in Europe, since the days of the Ancient Romans and Greeks, and had become prominent again in the late middle-ages and the *Reconquista* which led 'the Christian races to dominate and exploit the defeated Moors.'²⁴ The nature of European slavery was greatly altered and dramatically escalated in the early modern period to cope with the demands of the new age of commerce, however. Henry Kamen explains that in 'both quantity and quality a new era had commenced,' and furthermore slavers increasingly selected their victims on the basis of geographical origin. Whereas factors such as social status, hereditary law and capture in warfare had once decided who was enslaved, certain Africans in particular were now 'enslaved in numbers that exceeded any previous practice' purely on the basis of their continental origin. Portugal, the first exponent of this new slavery, was inundated, and by '1551 Lisbon was calculated to have one slave for every ten free Portuguese'.²⁵ These slaves were traded throughout

²³ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. vii.

²⁴ Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 202.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203

Europe, and were occasionally made highly visible as symbols of affluence. As early as the first decade of the sixteenth century, for instance, King James IV of Scotland 'apparently employed several Africans, including at least one family group, as part of his household.'²⁶ Africans were to be found in increasingly noticeable situations in European and colonial society, where they could be physically contrasted with Europeans.

The early modern period has also been labelled an 'age of discovery'. Exploration by Europeans of the wider world, and consequently the beginning of European colonialism, also did much to bring the 'other' into the consciousness of European culture. Through high profile adventures such as Columbus' famed 12th of October 1492 landing in the Americas, Europe was saturated with tales of the wealth and wonders that that land possessed, and of the people who lived there. Just as slavery brought the 'exotic' peoples of the African continent into a new, European geographical context, so Anthony Pagden tells us that colonisation, 'and the dual experience of administration and acculturation which colonisation involved, brought the hitherto semi-mythical, and often mythologized "savage" far closer to the European world than he had been during antiquity and the Middle Ages.'²⁷ This new proximity was fostered by the growing genre of travel literature, which carried on from the tradition of late medieval works by authors such as Marco Polo. As the New World was 'discovered' and then explored, authors and editors found a growing cultural desire for knowledge of foreign lands. William Sherman sees the genre as increasingly important during this period, writing that the 'number of new titles published (and old titles reprinted)...suggests that there was a significant audience for travel writing, eager to hear news of the wider

²⁶ Joyce Green MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 2.

²⁷ Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 13.

world...travel books became a reliable commodity for a growing number of printers'.²⁸ With the new attention on travel accounts, the 'others' of the world came under greater scrutiny than ever before, since now their culture and customs could be described in great depth by an eyewitness, and cross-referenced with many similar works. Images of new peoples entered society from numerous sources, sometimes contradicting and sometimes concurring with older preconceptions, but always serving to make their audience think about how such people compared to Europeans.

These comparisons, as pointed out in J.H. Elliott's important book *The Old World and the New* (1970), were inevitably tainted by the collective cultures of European thought. The observations of the traveller and the subsequent reader 'were formed out of the accumulated images of a society which had been nurtured for generations on tales of the fantastic and marvellous.'²⁹ On Africans in particular, several sources already existed by the dawn of the early modern period that became integral to contemporary perceptions:

A broad smattering of ethnographic knowledge about Africans had been available to [the] literate...long before the middle of the sixteenth century. Ancient texts, especially the works of Herodotus and Pliny the Elder, were readily available in Greek or Latin...The information they imparted about Africans was usually unsophisticated and often unreliable, but it...[introduced] readers to the issue of body colour that would become a major theme of early modern authors.³⁰

Ancient thought, it shall be seen in this thesis, underlined much early-modern philosophy and the construction of racial schemas. Throughout the period, prominent scholars had sought to reassess the scientific knowledge of ancient scholars such as

²⁸ William H. Sherman, 'Stirrings and Searchings (1500-1720)', in Peter Hulme and Tim Young (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 20-21.

²⁹ J.H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 24.

³⁰ Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, 'Before Othello: Elizabethan Representations of Sub-Saharan Africans', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser. 54: 1 (Jan., 1997), p. 21.

Aristotle, taking into account contemporary discoveries and inventions. This process has often been referred to by historians as the ‘scientific revolution’.³¹

The impact of exploration and colonialism was not only textual, but as in the case of slavery Europeans could interact with and observe non-Europeans both at home and abroad to a new degree: ‘As a result of intensified colonial activities, many dark-skinned people came to live, as servants and labourers, in European countries, while many white families settled permanently in the colonies.’³² Increasingly non-European people could be examined out of their normal environment, and more-importantly at first hand by ‘credible’ witnesses. Because the eighteenth century has been historicised as an era of new intellectual development—of Enlightenment—much current historiography argues that attempts to study mankind thus became removed from geographical and cultural observations—until by the end of the eighteenth century physical anatomy was the chief determinate factor of human variety.

Hannah Augstein argued that scientific racial theories grew in the eighteenth century out of ‘previously rather distinct traditions...the rise of the nation-state...a political interest in finding a scientific justification for slavery; and the philosophical investigation of languages as a mirror of national character.’³³ Nation-states clashed over new lands and depended increasingly on slavery to establish colonies, to the extent that ‘scientists’ now had to clarify human hierarchies to justify or criticise European actions. The late eighteenth century, however, brought with it a growing cultural concern about the morality and virtue of such exploitative behaviours. The issue of the abolition of slavery forced matters to a head by the dawn of the nineteenth century, bringing notions of racial difference to wide public attention through the ongoing debates. Peter Kitson writes, ‘[h]istorians of slavery have long accepted the presence

³¹ Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), p. 2.

³² Hannah F. Augstein, *Race: The Origins of an Idea, 1760-1850* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. xviii.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. x.

and importance of racial ideas in the debate about slavery and the slave trade'.³⁴ It is these attacks on slavery, and the subsequent defences, that are construed by historians to factor in the proliferation of a new 'racial science'. Historians have argued, however, that advocates of slavery 'rarely rationalised' the practice 'on the grounds that Africans were biologically inferior or non-human'—although there were a number of exceptions to this.³⁵ Instead, slavery was justified by the position it had taken up within the economic institutions of the Empire. Kenan Malik writes, 'Black slaves were regarded as the only available labour to work New World plantations...slavery was defended for its practical utility'.³⁶ It is in the writings of abolitionists, then, that 'the ideas of 'scientific racism' are probably most apparent, albeit under pressure of refutation.'³⁷ Irrespective of who instigated the shift and why, however, the framing of 'race' into a newly consolidated, scientific basis has been seen by historians as instrumental in legitimising multiple stereotypes and prejudices.

Several books have attempted to survey the full breadth of eighteenth century thought on race, and also align those ideas with other historiographies including gender, sex, disability and identity. Once again these are by-and-large dominated by a narrative of transition, although the arguments are inevitably complex and the specific chronology regarding conceptual change is debated. Roxann Wheeler's *The Complexion of Race* (2000) and Felicity A. Nussbaum's *The Limits of the Human* (2003) are two of the most thorough works of this kind. Wheeler seeks to express the multitude of varying theories extant in the early eighteenth century: 'this book demonstrates more fully that there was not yet consensus...about the extent to which humans were different from

³⁴ Peter Kitson, "Candid Reflections": The Idea of Race in the Debate over the Slave Trade and Slavery in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century', in Brycchan Carey, Markman Ellis, and Sara Salih (eds.), *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition: Britain and its Colonies, 1760-1838* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), p. 12.

³⁵ Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p. 62.

³⁶ Malik, *The Meaning of Race*, pp. 62-63.

³⁷ Kitson, "Candid Reflections", p. 21.

each other, what caused these variations, or about how to value the visible differences.³⁸ True to the general historical model outlined above, Wheeler illustrates a complex, often ambiguous variety of ideas on non-anatomical characteristics such as religion, state of civilisation and clothing. Before the last two to three decades of the eighteenth century, she maintains, such cultural standards played a larger part in defining ‘race’ than issues such as skin colour. The author notes the increasing tendency in science to reference skin colour as a primary factor of difference, but also shows the elasticity of such variations prior to the 1770s: ‘the way that individual colors signified for eighteenth-century writers varied considerably. For example, “tawny” could mean black, brown, reddish brown, or even olive green, and it could be a descriptive term or an insult, depending on the context and user.’³⁹ The author thus depicts a dramatic and very specific shift between the early and mid eighteenth-century concepts of human variety, in which cultural signifiers such as religion, dress and manners ‘were more explicitly important...than physical attributes such as skin color, shape of the nose, or texture of the hair’, to a ‘modern’ concept in which anatomical difference became the most significant factor of difference.⁴⁰

Like Wheeler, Nussbaum describes ideas on race in the early eighteenth century as ambivalent. She believes ‘that, rather than congealing into modern racism, incongruent manifestations of “race” in language and culture coexist in the eighteenth century, and that strategic confusions persist regarding the meanings assigned to skin colorings, physiognomies, and nations.’⁴¹ Nussbaum studies little of the scientific material from the eighteenth century, instead demonstrating that within cultural discourses there is a parallel solidifying of racial boundaries to the scientific transition

³⁸ Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴⁰ Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, p. 7.

⁴¹ Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human*, p. 136.

seen in *The Complexion of Race*: 'As demand for credibility in travel accounts and fictive representations increases, so does racist thinking'.⁴² This change, the author surmises, is brought about by the more frequent occurrence of free black people in English society, as the debate over abolition became more vehement. This political event, she argues, forced people to re-examine the boundaries between 'civilised' and 'savage' people: as equality and integration became more likely, there was too more 'vigorous attention to hybridity and mongrelization'.⁴³ The upshot of this explanation is that the chronology of the conceptual shift is pushed into the early nineteenth century as, 'abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and[...]emancipation in 1833 correspond[ed] to increasingly public attempts to clarify black inferiority.'⁴⁴ Although she sees the preconditions of 'race' as emerging in the late eighteenth century with the popularisation of ideas such as polygenesis, then, Nussbaum argues that it is not until abolition becomes a reality that 'racism' becomes pervasive within British society.

Dror Wahrman's *The Making of the Modern Self* (2004) shares and expands upon the views of Wheeler's and Nussbaum's books. The text reveals the consolidation of identity into set categorical forms in late eighteenth-century English society, the book not being specifically on the subject of 'race' but rather the 'self'. Parts of the book concentrate on what Wahrman calls the 'gender panic'.⁴⁵ This was a shifting of cultural outlook that the historian believes occurred during the 1770s, in which gender roles became increasingly static. Popular episodes of gender 'slippage', in which individuals were reported to have convincingly assumed traits of another gender by adopting the relevant dress and manners, are seen to suddenly in the late eighteenth century become 'ridiculous'.⁴⁶ To Wahrman, these changes in English attitudes towards identity are

⁴² Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human*, p. 19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁴⁵ Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

linked to the adoption of ever more rigid, scientific hierarchies throughout society. Just as gender differences became perceived as innate, Wahrman believes, so too did the nature of race. In the context of the *Ancien Régime*, Wahrman looks at texts showing ‘animal-human proximity’⁴⁷ which demonstrate a belief that animals can develop human capacities for thought and action, if only in menial ways. This is coupled with examples of early racial science, which suggested that racial difference was due to climatic variation, suggesting in turn that such divergences were impermanent and thus analogous to the *Ancien Régime* concept of gender. Wahrman suggests that, as the century wore on, the trend in British racial theory removed impetus from climate and onto concepts of ‘nature’ and physical law: ‘the distinction between humans and *all* animals was now insisted upon in ways that it had not been in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century.’⁴⁸ The knock-on effect of this new distinction between human and animals was shown to in turn cause the consolidation of ‘racial’ boundaries between groups of humans themselves, as the imagined animalistic characteristics of various non-European races now became indicators of categorical difference.

Wahrman sees the late eighteenth century, then, as the point at which racialisation was conceived. Although it was to take ‘many more years before rigid, essentialised, racialized, congenital understandings of human difference[...]were to drive their pre-modern flexible, mutable counterparts to the cultural margins[...]The closing decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the beginnings of this historical change.’⁴⁹ Much as in the histories above, the 1770s are for Wahrman a period of commencement for ‘modern’ notions of categorisation. Although the seeds of such ideas may have been present within culture prior to this time, they were only ‘developing gradually and imperceptibly beneath the surface.’⁵⁰ The rationale behind this shift is not one shared

⁴⁷ Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, p.142.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

with the authors above, however. Rather than the general influences of discourses of colonialism and slavery, Wahrman connects a very specific political event with the sea-change in thought: namely the American Revolution. This event, he argues, forced the English to readdress their boundaries of difference through its intrinsic questioning of Englishness. Many people were concerned, he believes, with classifying the war: essentially they asked, ‘was this a civil war between Englishmen, or was it a war with aliens[...]disguising themselves as Englishmen with the aid of linguistic ambiguity and confusing representations?’⁵¹ The war caused a new degree of introspection to arise in English culture that enabled concerns about gender, ‘race’ and class to be examined anew. The result was that the war ‘brought to a cataclysmic head trends that had long been developing[...]turning them from tentative possibilities to overbearing actualities.’⁵² Although a dominant narrative of conceptual change can certainly be identified in much of the historical literature on this topic, we thus see that the argument is complex. Historians have placed emphasis upon several different chronological and causal features of the ‘late eighteenth century’.

That the timing of and explanation behind the shift in thought on ‘race’ is still a subject of debate demonstrates that the historical understanding of ‘racial’ ideas is far from complete. Historical works from tangential historiographies, indeed, have served to complicate the dominant narrative further. In studies of the nineteenth century, many historians agree that ‘race’ was not consolidated as a concept until the middle of that century. Malik, for instance, writes of ‘considerable evidence that until the middle of the century black people were treated according to their social status’, which assertion is supported by the work of Douglas A. Lorimer who argued, ‘[l]ike their eighteenth-century forefathers, the mid-Victorians accepted an individual black according to his ability to conform to English social conventions. A dark complexion did not inevitably

⁵¹ Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, p. 246.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 247.

signify lowly social status.’⁵³ This historical work thus posits the cultural, ambivalent approach to non-Europeans as lasting in a dominant form well beyond the shift depicted above.

I am more interested in this thesis, however, with studies which have illustrated a sense of ‘modern’ ‘racial’ thought as present in British culture prior to the late eighteenth century. Norris Saakwa-Mante, for instance, has written on medical work contained in ‘the surgical manual of John Atkins (1685-1757).’⁵⁴ Saakwa-Mante identifies Atkins’ writing from the 1730s as ‘a recognisable part of the polygenist tradition,’ providing evidence that such ideas were available within English culture throughout the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Atkins’ medical theories on the ‘constitutional immaturity of the black body, and the...natural weakness of the African brain’ lead Saakwa-Mante to conclude that the author had a concept of human variety somewhat ahead of his time, as according to the academics examined above.⁵⁶ The essay propounds that Atkins’ ‘concept of the racial constitution depends on having some implicit or explicit notion of what race is.’⁵⁷ To Saakwa-Mante, then, this example of racial medicine demonstrates a polygenic expression of biological race that predates a 1770s transition. Atkins’ text is seen as part of an earlier, ‘much wider cultural shift in European attitudes to race, beginning in the mid-seventeenth century.’⁵⁸

The work of Joyce Chaplin gives greater credibility to the notion of an earlier conception for British ‘racial’ consciousness. Studying a mix of colonial correspondence and medical reports, Chaplin demonstrates that, long before the

⁵³ Malik, *Meaning of Race*, p. 91; Douglas A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leicester University Press, 1978), p. 67.

⁵⁴ Norris Saakwa-Mante, ‘Western Medicine and Racial Constitutions: Surgeon John Atkins’ Theory of Polygenism and Sleepy Distemper in the 1730s’, in Waltraud Ernst and Bernard Harris, *Race, Science and Medicine, 1700-1960* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

supposed 'biologisation' of race in the late eighteenth century, voyagers and settlers in North America produced tracts of 'natural philosophy' that compared English bodies to native bodies. Texts such as Daniel Goodkin's *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England* (1674) position the decline of climatic theories some sixty years before Atkins' *The Navy Surgeon* (1734) was published: the 'Indian susceptibility to disease was described as an innate weakness, more easily explained by internal factors that presented themselves externally as symptoms of imbalance than by climate.'⁵⁹ Through these observations, Chaplin believes that the 'colonists defined a new idiom: that the significant human variation in North America was not due to external environment but instead lay within the bodies of its European and Indian peoples.'⁶⁰ The experiences of settlers in the fledgling American colonies thus popularised 'racial' systems of thought back to British culture through written accounts, demonstrating a significant precedent to the ideas which many historians argue did not arise until over a century later.

In addition to the two works above, comments by other authors serve to show that there are certainly some curious anomalies to the dominant narrative which warrant further investigation. Bronwen Douglas, although a general adherent to the intellectual shift, also notes that 'there is a striking congruence in European thinking about non-White people over more than 400 years'—from around the fifteenth century onwards—as 'opposed sets of supposedly "Negro" and "white" bodily characteristics began to provide the negative and positive standards for describing, comparing and evaluating human beings.'⁶¹ Furthermore, J.H. Elliott observes that, although outside of the English-language focus of this thesis, as far back as the sixteenth century Spanish authors,

⁵⁹ Joyce E. Chaplin, 'Natural Philosophy and an Early Racial Idiom in North America: Comparing English and Indian Bodies', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser. 54: 1 (Jan., 1997), p. 244.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁶¹ Bronwen Douglas, 'Seaborne Ethnography and the Natural History of Man', *Journal of Pacific History* 38: 1 (2003), p. 6.

found evidence for [Native American] inferiority, not in their colour—for colour[...]possessed few of the connotations which it later acquired—but in the size and thickness of their skulls, which indicated a deformation in that part of the body which provided an index of a man's rational powers. This assumption indicates that there existed, at least among the Spanish colonialists, a crude biological theory.⁶²

The existence of clearly hierarchical, 'racial'-style categories in texts from as far back as the sixteenth century is significant. Although the sources examined by Chaplin and Elliott above were outside of the strictly British remit of the historical works by Wheeler, Nussbaum and Wahrman, they were also works which were in dialogue with British culture through the large public interest in printing and translating information describing the New World. That such ideas existed in common texts so early indicates that the political changes, such as foreign republican revolution, debates over abolition and the escalation of colonialism, possibly had a different impact on 'race' theory than suggested by many historians. The sociological model of the rise of 'racism' within European society, and consequently much of the history reviewed earlier, has thus in some instances been shown to be problematic. This thesis concerns itself with a more thorough examination of these problems than has thus far been achieved in current historiography.

Research Questions

The dominant historical argument concerning this topic thus portrays the birth of 'racial science' out of a renewed, politically motivated interest in 'race' in the late eighteenth century, channelled through the discourses surrounding colonialism and slavery. It is the

⁶² Elliott, *Old World and the New*, pp. 43-44.

primary contention of this thesis that such a view of the development of 'race' is, although strongly evidenced, still oversimplified. This is a point already demonstrated by some of the works above, such as Saakwa-Mante's and Chaplin's, and my thesis will thus build upon such challenges to the dominant narrative. Rather than simply offering more instances of 'racial' thought extant prior to the late eighteenth century, however, my research also aims to demonstrate that the reading of the later scientific texts themselves is incomplete. More detailed attention to the texts which are used by several historians to demonstrate the arrival of a new manner of 'racial' thought, I argue, reveals complex but fundamental continuities from early-modern notions of bodily variety between population groups. I also argue that certain works have been overly prioritised in the historical discussion about the emergence of 'race science' in the eighteenth century. European authors are well investigated in modern academic work, but I believe critical analysis of the British contribution to racial science is still underdeveloped. The studies of British ideas that do exist are for the most part unsatisfying, dealing with one or two scientists at a time rather than showing the British debate in its entirety. Few have addressed authors such as Charles White in great detail with regards to what I call 'representational practice'; examining the exact motifs through which they exhibit modern and historic racism and the history and culture influencing these motifs. Moreover, other British authors who have been studied in any detail have often been dealt with in an ahistorical manner. Peter Fryer's popular book *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, for instance, examines Edward Long at length, but fails to fit the book into its proper intellectual context. Whilst frequently attacking the author for his plagiarism, Fryer also still regards Long as the 'first pseudo-scientific racist'.⁶³ By simply dismissing the influences acting upon

⁶³ 'The really interesting thing about Long's exposition of racism is how essentially unoriginal it was', Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 134; p. 159.

authors such as Long as ‘plagiarism’, rather than a form of pre-existing ‘racial science’ in themselves according to contemporary standards, Fryer misses the fact that the assimilation of pre-existing ‘facts’ was one way in which all scientific writers at this point gained legitimacy. The complexities of eighteenth-century scientific method are thus not fully considered in his text. This project, therefore, is dedicated to bringing as many British race theorists as possible together in one study, and examining them intertextually⁶⁴ so as to draw out the deepest, most commonly held strains of ‘racial’ thought in eighteenth-century British science. This approach furthermore allows me to identify the greatest influences operating not just on individual authors, but upon the genre as a whole. If ‘racial science’ is shown to be a genre highly dependent upon older forms of knowledge to gain legitimacy, I will be able to demonstrate that many late eighteenth-century sources thus resist placement within a narrative of conceptual change.

One of the key issues this thesis will address is a reassessment of the debate between monogenesisists and polygenesisists. Incomplete understandings of this important discussion, I believe, have contributed to the dominant model of historical change in ‘race’ thought. As seen previously, several academics see the rise of scientific arguments for polygenesis in the late eighteenth century as symbolic of British society’s changing attitudes towards non-Europeans. Concentrating only upon the theoretical conclusions of later scientists, however, can occasionally blind historians to the continuities in the beliefs and stereotypes which they supported and shared regardless of adherence to a monogenetic or polygenetic philosophy. Much of my work shows that

⁶⁴ ‘Racial science’ texts are in this thesis revealed to be involved in a complex discourse of racial theorisation: all such sources cannot stand alone as monolithic espousals of racism, but instead must be considered for the ways in which they build upon previous knowledge, respond to claims made by authors from a multitude of genres, and rely upon contemporary, accepted facts to legitimise their original claims. Consequently an intertextual approach, by which I mean the consideration of all sources in the light of their relation to other works, is the only way to properly understand ‘racial science’ as a body of knowledge.

neither belief was more 'racist' than the other due to such commonalities; instead both schools served in their own way to construct certain stereotypes as scientifically valid. Both shared common concepts which were taken from wider British culture and which had been repeatedly invoked in texts for a long time before the written debate over polygenesis found post-1770. These commonalities have not received due attention from historians of the late eighteenth century.

Whilst several historians have recognised that 'racial science' was influenced by the common cultural assumptions of the authors, indeed, few have investigated the roots of these ideas and the ways they were assimilated, as well as their popularity prior to their adoption into anatomy and natural history. This is one of the main research interests of this project. To achieve this I will identify the most prominent and repetitive 'racial' stereotypes within eighteenth-century 'science', which motifs have enabled this burgeoning discipline to be read by academics as initiating 'modern' racism. I will then juxtapose the language and concepts these texts utilise with older sources from popular genres, such as travel writing and occasionally novels, so as to investigate 'racial science's conceptual precedents. I will often refer to these earlier texts as the 'informing culture' of 'race science'. They represent a body of knowledge which, despite being generated in different epistemological conditions, nonetheless had a powerful influence over the later scientists which has yet to be examined in full detail.

Travel literature, this study contends, has been misunderstood by many historians of 'race' in the eighteenth century. By analysing comprehensively Britain's contribution to the burgeoning 'racial science' and contrasting this work with pervasive pieces of travel writing, this thesis aims to establish that the central stereotypes and categories in 'racial science' had established precedents in earlier scientific thought. In this way it shall be seen that certain popular ideas about human variety remain stable

throughout the period studied. Essentially I aim to unify two distinct historiographies; showing that the history of 'racial science' cannot be properly comprehended without a good understanding of travel writing. The theorists who described the sociological model of racial formation at the start of this introduction saw travelogues as a medley of personal, literary images which were subsequently selected and validated in a scientific form by scientists. By collecting many such accounts into one study and examining the shared, repetitive and stereotyped language they convey, my study shows that new attention must be paid to the importance of travelogues. As the section on sources below will show, these works themselves were perceived as a legitimate and systematised medium of recording and communicating scientific data about the world. Precedents for 'race' in early-modern British culture, I will argue, were so prevalent across a range of sources that they themselves constitute a discourse of 'racial science' which was, by the epistemological demands of the time, as equally valid as those anatomical, biologised ideas which followed.

As was seen earlier, the changing use of the word 'race' itself has been used by historians to demonstrate a conceptual shift toward a new paradigm of 'racial' difference. As with the emphasis placed upon the theoretical conclusions of 'race scientists', however, I suggest that focusing too closely on changing vocabulary can again give an inaccurate picture of how authors thought in the eighteenth century. This project, on the other hand, observes continuities in the conception of non-Europeans throughout the century, suggesting that there are profound and deeply-held motifs to be found in representations of the body that operate consistently, regardless of the semantic changes of the language of 'race' in the period. One of the research questions addressed in this study is: how significant is terminological and stylistic change to the development of 'race' and 'racism'? Certainly, as the works of Douglas and Hudson show, historians have thus far accorded it much significance. Has the change to a more

recognisably 'modern' vocabulary of 'race' led to the neglect of the complexities and strength of 'racist' discourse earlier in the early modern period, however? Could it be argued that the precepts of 'racism' ran so deep in the literature which informed 'racial science' that the eighteenth century should no longer be regarded as a period of invention, but rather as a time during which already accepted 'knowledge' of other 'races' was rearticulated with a new technical vocabulary? Was 'racism' possible, and indeed prevalent, before 'race' itself existed in the modern sense of the word?

Definitions

The study of the idea of race in all circumstances is beset with numerous problems. Race itself is still a highly controversial issue subject to wide varieties of theoretical discussion and political significance. In an historical context, we are also faced with the problems caused by changing cultural and scientific standards. As pointed out previously by historians such as Nicholas Hudson, in a technical sense it is anachronistic to use the term race to refer to models of human variety, beyond the familial or national, prior to the modern word's common acceptance into English in the 1770s. To clarify my particular usages of the word race and its affiliates, I will here offer some precise definitions. By race, I will in this thesis be referring to any model of human variety which suggests categorical difference based upon stereotyped features of the body said to be particular to geographical groups. Although these categories may not be articulated with anything resembling a modern, biological theory behind them, they will have been espoused in a format considered to be factually valid as per the scientific methods of the time. I believe it valid to discuss race as extant prior to the 1770s: it is the contention of this thesis that the notion arrived before the word itself. To acknowledge the historical point at which it becomes technically valid to discuss race as

a consensus term for the above beliefs, however, I write 'race' critically, by which I mean in inverted commas, when using it to refer to ideas before and during the eighteenth century, when the modern racial vocabulary was still forming. After this point I use the word uncritically, for although I personally believe race to be a culturally-constructed and wholly inadequate model of thought, it must be demonstrated that from the nineteenth century onwards a great many people possessed a world-view to which a notion of racial difference was consciously important, and expressed with a vocabulary we still recognise today.

Racism, quite simply, is a word I use to describe prejudiced behaviour based upon the geographical varieties I describe above. Unlike racialism, racism does not require a developed chain of reasoning to support it: racism is in this thesis the belief in a particular set of stereotypes, rather than the sustained effort to rationalise, explain or validate such prejudices. A racialist, therefore, is somebody who makes an effort to explain or justify their racist beliefs, often in a manner they believe to be scientifically rigorous. A racist simply selects or absorbs their beliefs from background cultural assumptions, or from their own psychological prejudices. As with the term race itself, I write words such as racism and racialism with inverted commas when discussing them in the eighteenth-century context, but without afterwards.

'Racial science' is a body of knowledge formed by texts from a multitude of different eighteenth-century knowledge-producing genres: it is defined more clearly and discussed in greater detail later on. As a consequence of its intertextual nature, however, I will often refer to an author contributing to this discourse as a 'racial scientist', even though their primary contribution to human knowledge may well have little at all to do with 'race'. Oliver Goldsmith and Buffon are good examples of this, being for the most part remembered fondly as a poet and natural historian respectively. I use 'racial

scientist' to describe such people, however, as I believe it to be accurate according to both their contemporary standards and their own desires. All of these authors consciously entered the debate on human variety, and did so in a manner they personally believed to be scientifically rigorous. Furthermore, in almost every instance in this thesis a 'racial scientist's' contribution was picked up and examined by later scientists because of its perceived legitimacy. Eighteenth-century theorising on race was not isolated to that century, but provoked an intellectual sequence of ideas which directly led to those historically-accepted 'racial scientists' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The general cultural acceptance of much of the scientific work described in this thesis is also the reason why I do not refer to such texts as 'pseudoscience' at any point. Although by modern standards such works are of course now known to be wholly spurious and inaccurate, to describe the work of authors such as Buffon and Charles White as pseudoscience would be ahistorical: it would miss entirely the fact that all such authors worked hard to conform to the established standards for truth-finding enquiry at that time. It is only the evolution of scientific method subsequently which has rendered 'racial science' a pseudoscience to our modern perspective.

Sources

To achieve my research goals, over 90 separate textual sources are examined within this thesis. Approximately 70 of these were written or published between 1700 and 1800. The latest text discussed in this period was published in 1799: I chose to exclude texts from the nineteenth century as 'racial science' in this century has been somewhat over-studied by historians in comparison to its eighteenth-century ancestry. The lower chronological limits of this study are harder to define. Whilst this thesis is primarily

trying to investigate eighteenth-century culture and science, it cannot be denied that prominent early-modern and classical theories are absolutely integral to understanding the intellectual environment in which such authors worked. Given that my argument suggests that some concepts in classificatory thought had been observable in British culture for many years before the modern terminology of 'race' arose, it was necessary for me to push the focus of my study back further into the early modern period. Several sources from the late seventeenth century onwards are examined thoroughly, considered as part of a 'long eighteenth century' intellectual culture. The influential political activities to which this thesis frequently refers, such as colonisation and slavery, were important in this century too and consequently I aim to demonstrate that similar classificatory patterns exist accordingly. It is my belief, moreover, that the methodology of this thesis could be carried even further backwards into British and European history, indeed, and accordingly works from the Elizabethan period onwards are thus occasionally discussed in terms of their influence over later trends of writing. Travel literature was especially significant during this earlier period, and is seen in this thesis to influence the imaginations of other travellers and scientists long into the eighteenth century.

This work is principally a history of texts considered scientific in their time, both by their authors and the wider scientific community. Moreover, almost all of the sources in this thesis are published texts. It is certain that an examination of non-printed sources, including correspondence between authors and personal notes and diaries, would enrich this study and allow a more complete understanding of the individuals involved in constructing 'racial' ideas. What I am most anxious to demonstrate in this thesis, however, is how 'race' as a concept was portrayed to wide audiences in a format considered to be factually and scientifically rigorous. In the act of publishing, authors had to use particular linguistic and methodological systems to portray their work as

valid, which I believe greatly contributed to the popularisation of ‘race’ as a scientific concept; something more personal sources may not demonstrate to the same extent. Furthermore, I believe that published texts held a particular importance to the ‘racial scientists’ themselves. Many were avid collectors of volumes of travel writing and anatomical works, and when, as they frequently did, they chose to quote from a source to evidence their claims, they more often than not used published texts rather than sources such as letters or lecture notes. As mentioned above, the primary intention of this thesis is to fully analyse eighteenth-century British ‘racial science’ within the framework of its informing culture. By sticking to published texts, many of which belonged to widely-read popular genres, I believe we get a better impression of that culture and the methods with which it supported and legitimised ‘racial’ conceptions.

The texts examined in this thesis span several different disciplines, although classifying texts into specific genres is highly problematic in the context of the nature of eighteenth-century science and literature. Whereas disciplines such as philosophy are now separate—almost diametrically so—from the sciences, George S. Rousseau shows that the eighteenth-century concept of knowledge ‘had not yet been classified into the species, or disciplines, of science, theology, and philosophy that we take for granted.’⁶⁵ Instead the concept of science had a different, more ambiguous definition, which Rousseau characterises in the following comments: ‘encyclopaedists[...]derived their definitions from the traditions of *scientia* as knowledge that was accurate, communicable, predictable, and knowable through the rational faculty[...]“science is Knowledge founded upon, or acquir’d, by clear, certain, and self-evident Principles” [or] “science is any doctrine deduced from self-evident principles.”’⁶⁶ It is this quality of logical deduction, rather than the application of mathematical and experimental systems

⁶⁵ George S. Rousseau, ‘Science, Culture, and the Imagination: Enlightenment Configurations’, in Roy Porter (ed.), *Science in the Eighteenth Century* (The Cambridge History of Science, Vol. 4) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.770.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 769.

familiar today, that thus characterised science for much of the eighteenth century. Consequently the scientific debate over the nature of human variation took place across many different modes of enquiry. This being the case, it is important to define and separate works of 'racial science' from the other sources this thesis studies.

The sources I will be using to represent Britain's contribution to the development of 'racial science' in this thesis were in several cases selected precisely because they have been used by historians already in establishing the dominant narrative of conceptual change. These uses will be discussed in the following chapters, as my analysis proceeds. Branching out from the starting point offered by the current historiography, however, I have also used some texts upon which very little has thus far been written. The quality of interconnectivity was highly important in selecting these. The genre of 'racial science' was not forged by common forms of texts, but by the cumulative effect of cross-referencing between a number of works. There were certainly very few methodological or structural similarities between texts: the debate was highly interdisciplinary and intertextual. By selecting texts referenced and engaged with by the most famous examples of eighteenth-century 'racial science', I have been able generate a more complete picture of how the genre forged its credibility through a series of reactions for and against a collection of stock ideas, such as mono- and polygenesis.

This quality of interconnectivity also made it clear that, even beginning with only British sources, the debate over human variety was not limited by national boundaries. Sources from British colonies and in the New World were of great interest to scientists in Britain. Although several historians, including Linda Colley and Jack P. Greene⁶⁷, have discussed the ways in which people in the British colonies were subject

⁶⁷For more details see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Yale University Press, 1992) or Jack P. Greene, 'Empire and Identity from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution', in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Vol. II, *The Eighteenth Century*, pp. 208-231.

to ‘othering’ stereotypes long before the American Revolution in the 1770s, I deal with works written in colonial contexts before the war as British for all intents and purposes. Such authors for the most part considered themselves as contributing to the same intellectual tradition as their mainland counterparts.⁶⁸ Moreover, I have a particular interest in ‘race’ as a linguistic phenomenon, and I believe sources from the colonies were contributing no less to this evolution of the English language. Certainly the late eighteenth-century scientists I discuss show little nationalistic favouritism concerning the sources they appropriated and dissected. American sources following the Revolution were also still significant to British theory. The works of Thomas Jefferson and Samuel Stanhope Smith, for instance, were printed in London and Edinburgh respectively and consequently distributed across Britain. The War of Independence may have severed political connections between Britain and its former American colonies, but intellectual and linguistic ties certainly remained.

The British debate was also highly dependent upon ideas radiating from continental Europe: sources by some of the most influential authors in France, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere were translated and distributed in English throughout the century, and the ‘racial scientists’ of Britain were as engaged with these works as they were with each other. This being the case, the sources for this study are not limited to British authors but instead to British culture: works translated into English and widely available are integral to placing Britain’s contribution to the debates into context. With these continental texts, it has been my convention within this thesis to utilise the earliest possible English version in the hope that the translation will more competently capture the original meaning of the source. The eighteenth century was a

⁶⁸ As Stephen states, a ‘considerable body of scholarship has established that most of the colonists in British North America continued to see themselves as Britons, or even as part of the English nation, right until the eve of Independence.’ (Stephen Conway, ‘From Fellow-Nationals to Foreigners: British Perceptions of the Americans, circa 1739-1783’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Third Series) 59: 1 (Jan, 2002), p. 65.)

period of transition and standardisation for English and several other European languages, and by selecting the most chronologically proximate versions I hope to avoid as many potential translation errors as possible. Moreover, there are several European texts which were never translated into English during the period I study. For the most influential of these, for instance Blumenbach's *Anthropological Treatises*, I have used nineteenth-century translations. These works do not form any major part of this thesis, however: as already stated, I am particularly interested in 'race' as an English-language phenomenon, and untranslated texts only contributed to this by theoretic proxy, through their assimilation and rearticulation by multilingual British and American scientists.

Appendix 1 breaks down all of my 'racial science' sources into their particular subgenres, which helps to illustrate the intertextual nature of science during this period. Legal and geographical histories such as Edward Long's *The History of Jamaica* (1774) and Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781) frequently engaged with ideas taken from natural and philosophical histories including Oliver Goldsmith's *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774), Henry Home's *Sketches on the History of Man* (1774; 1788) and James Burnet's *Antient Metaphysics. Volume Fifth. Containing the History of Man in the Civilised State* (1797). John Millar's *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771) was one of the first works of sociology, and Burnet's earlier work *The Origin and Progress of Language* (1772-93) was a work of philology: probably not genres immediately associated with the development of a 'racial science'. They all, however, in some way—theoretically or thematically—intersected and disputed with the contributions from medicine, such as John Atkins' *The Navy-Surgeon* (1734) and John Hunter's *Disputatio inauguralis quaedam de hominum varietatibus* (1775) and *Observations of the Diseases of the Army in Jamaica* (1788); and from anatomical treatises like John Mitchell's 'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colour of People in Different Climates' (1744), Samuel Stanhope Smith's *Essay on the*

Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species (1788) and Charles White's *On the Regular Gradation of Man, and Other Animals* (1799). As well as naturalists and doctors, contributions to the debate over human origin and variety were validated by other academic fields, and perceived and accepted as equally viable. The authors used their skills in philosophical deduction and argument to assess and respond to biological theorists just as they would to another philosopher.

By these standards, then, it is often difficult to draw distinct lines between science, philosophy and literature. An overview of the nature of science in eighteenth-century Britain is important here. Historians have noted that the 'scientific revolution' caused a 'scientific' methodology to enter and influence literary circles, so that, '[I]oosely speaking, one could say that the writer of prose fiction was a scientist of the interior who penetrated the psyche's entrails: a Newton of the mind, as it were, dissecting human nature and its ulterior motives with the same precision as the natural philosopher charting the physical world.'⁶⁹ With this in mind, this thesis will also address select works of contemporary prose fiction, such as the novels of Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe, which demonstrate that scientific speculation over racial variety pervaded many other forms of literature during this period. Frequently, indeed, we see that eighteenth-century scientific texts had their foundation in information garnered from works entirely outside of the disciplinary boundaries we might accord them today. One of the primary and most influential texts of racial science on the continent, *Of the Varieties of the Human Species* (1749) by Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, was based entirely on the collating of data from myriad travel accounts from across the globe. This technique was passed on to the theorists following later in the century who, though they acknowledged the flawed nature of such accounts as scientific sources, invented principles by which such observations could be given scientific validity. The previously

⁶⁹ Rousseau, 'Science, Culture, and the Imagination', pp.770-771.

mentioned sociologist John Millar, for instance, developed the following criteria: 'Millar...insisted that no factual claim be accepted unless it met three conditions: it had to be confirmed by another independent observer separated by the first by a significant period of time and coming from a different national and religious background, so that biases and fictive claims could be controlled'.⁷⁰ Even in the late eighteenth century, then, travel literature was a permissible scientific source if certain standards were observed by the anatomist or natural historian who would draw information from such accounts. Truthful, scientific knowledge was something which seemed deducible and self-evident, and information in travelogues which was seen to span religious and national boundaries was deemed so. Further to this, there is also evidence for the development of several scientific disciplines, such as anthropology and comparative ethnography, as having been not just based upon travel writing, but also having evolved through that genre's format, as we shall see shortly.

Eighteenth-century science was forged by forces other than its evidentiary basis, moreover. Due to the fame of scientists such as Isaac Newton and those who followed in his footsteps, science became a popular field of entertainment. Roy Porter has written extensively on the commercialisation of the discipline, by which process arose a 'marketplace in ideas'. Scientists were stymied in their attempts to investigate the truths of the universe by the demands of this market, and failure to tailor studies in this way could be ruinous.⁷¹ This reinvention of science as commerce meant that it was ultimately the audience who decided the scientific value of a text: theories had to conform to certain acceptable ideas, and had to be articulated in a formatted manner to ensure readership. Concerns about the audience as well as skill of delivery and validity of argument became a chief concern of those who would fashion a public reputation

⁷⁰ Richard Olson, 'The Human Sciences', in Porter (ed.), *Science in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 444.

⁷¹ Roy Porter, 'Introduction', in Porter, *Science in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 9.

with their natural histories. This commercial popularity, indeed, became one of the primary driving forces behind the initial conceptualisation of scientific treatises: ‘The production of knowledge, of scientific facts, increasingly depended upon the victory of a market model of public competition and consumption.’⁷² This influence was integral to most European science of the era, and is well demonstrated—in the field of race science—by the work of Buffon once more. Jeff Loveland tells us that the ‘public at large was obviously taken with the *Histoire naturelle* [in which *Of the Varieties of the Human Species* was published]...Subscribers to the series included, pre-eminently, aristocrats, provincials, and representatives of the noble professions.’⁷³ Buffon’s chapter thus not only propagated sentiments that led to the racial science of the nineteenth century; it also influenced many people who, without scientific training, took his ideas as proven facts. Most of *Histoire naturelle* was, in fact, stylistically as much an artistic project as scientific—aimed at securing a commercial audience. Buffon ‘created textual drama with repetition, hyperbole, and rhythmically organised parallel structures.’⁷⁴ ‘Racial science’ was thus, like all other contemporary science, subject to numerous traditions and influences which in many ways dictated the content and conclusions authors could legitimately include. It is vital, therefore, that historians are aware of the stylistic, commercial and methodological legacies upon which British texts discussing ‘race’ were based. Eighteenth-century science has been credited with much invention. Some ideas, however, remain constant throughout the period and they reveal the concepts so firmly-rooted within culture that they linger irrespective of ‘epistemological’ revolution.

⁷² Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. xxiii-xxv.

⁷³ Jeff Loveland, *Rhetoric and Natural History: Buffon in Polemical and Literary Context* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), p. 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Scientific debate was conducted across a wide variety of forms, with influences coming from many facets of culture: the debate over human difference was not confined solely to physical biology. Theories of language, hierarchy, geography, philosophical concepts of savagery, nature and religion were all interwoven when inventing, describing, and categorising humanity in the eighteenth century and the resulting tangle of ideas cannot be fully understood if one mode of deductive enquiry is omitted. The artistic and commercial influence upon disciplines considered by contemporaries to be scientific forms of knowledge meant that ancient but commonly held preconceptions were validated with more potency than ever before. Porter writes, '[p]romoters of science and the Enlightenment should not, to be sure, be taken at their own estimations. The natural sciences always came gift-wrapped in ideology...The voice of "science" might bolster elite culture, while discrediting the beliefs and behaviours of the pious, the poor, and the plebs, of women and the marginalized.'⁷⁵ Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) is a good example of this. The author produced one of the most famous and accepted taxonomies of the century with his *Systema Naturae* (1735), and was one of the first authors to directly delineate humans into separate 'varieties'. Linnaeus, however, mirrored Buffon in using travellers' accounts to substantiate his arguments, demonstrating the 'futility of claims that the science of race developed outside the social and political world, as the scientists based their judgements on the judgements of merchants, soldiers, and adventurers.'⁷⁶

There are several examples, we see, of natural histories which discussed human classification which were evidenced almost solely by travel literature. Both the work of Linnaeus and Buffon, two of the most influential naturalists of the eighteenth century, used similar *modus operandi* in constructing their works. 'Race science' was not only

⁷⁵ Porter, 'Introduction', p. 11.

⁷⁶ John P. Jackson Jr. and Nadine M. Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction* (Santa Barbara, California, 2004), p. 16.

forged through natural history, however. Anatomy and medicine also played a large part in giving ‘racial’ ideas a scientific legitimacy, and once again it is clear that these studies too had deeply-rooted cultural and aesthetic concerns. One of the most comprehensive contributions to the history of eighteenth-century race theories—but on a European scale—demonstrates this in detail. David Bindman’s *Ape to Apollo* (2002) studies several anatomists generally held to be pivotal in fabricating a ‘modern’ notion of ‘race’. The text is primarily a work of art-history: it studies in detail the visual representations of non-Europeans in the work of scientists such as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (one of the ‘founding fathers of comparative racial taxonomy’⁷⁷), and Petrus Camper (who played an ‘even more decisive[...]part than Blumenbach in giving race the aura of exact science’⁷⁸), showing how common eighteenth-century concepts of aesthetics influenced science. Bindman writes of the ‘assumption among the elite, that the exterior beauty or ugliness of a person could reflect their inner moral being...[t]he ability to make aesthetic judgements could in itself be a way of dividing the “civilised” from the “savage”.’⁷⁹ This demonstrates that inherited aesthetic concepts did not just heavily influence the writing of scientific theory: rather aesthetic concepts *were* scientific theory. Much Enlightenment philosophy, indeed, was characterised by increasing attempts to define beauty as a concept. Key eighteenth-century artists and art historians, such as Anton Raphael Mengs and Johann Joachim Wincklemann, had ‘popularized the idea that beauty was something absolute and moderns could grasp it by studying antiquity’s works of art.’⁸⁰ This is certainly a belief held by several of the British scientific and philosophical authors studied in this thesis, including James Burnet and Charles White.

⁷⁷ David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 12.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸⁰ Miriam Claude Meijer, *Race and Aesthetics in the Anthropology of Petrus Camper (1722-1789)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), p. 107.

The concept of absolute, determinable criteria for beauty, moreover, preoccupied some of the most influential thinkers of the century. Edmund Burke, author of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), outlined the role of the 'aesthetician [as] to inventorize "the pleasures of the imagination" or "the emotions of taste" and reduce them to psychological simples.'⁸¹ In Burke's case, then, the study of the sense of beauty and other passions became equivalent to a natural history of human psychology: a process of collecting, differentiating and defining into a categorical system. Accordingly 'beauty' itself is simplified to a matter of measurements: Burke 'took beautiful objects to be symmetrical' and a matter of correct 'proportion'.⁸² Both Burke and Emmanuel Kant took pains to differentiate beauty from other, similar experiences such as the 'sublime'. Kant, whose famous 1784 essay on the subject 'What is Enlightenment?' for many scholars offers 'the major definition of the Enlightenment'⁸³, saw the emotional effects of beauty and the sublime as uniformly different: 'The sublime *moves* or touches, the beautiful *charms*. The mein of the person, who finds himself in the full sentiment of the sublime, is serious, sometimes fixed and astonished. On the other hand announces itself the lively sentiment of the beautiful by a sparkling glory in the eye, by lineaments of smiling, and frequently by loud merriment.'⁸⁴ Human experiences were undergoing during the eighteenth century the same processes of categorisation and hierarchy-building seen for humanity itself, as argued by authors such as Foucault. Sometimes these systems even overlapped: thus to Kant, 'the black tawny colour and black eyes are

⁸¹ Jerome Stolnitz, "'Beauty": Some Stages in the History of an Idea', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22: 2 (Apr.-Jun., 1961), pp. 189-190.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁸³ Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Second Edition) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 7.

⁸⁴ Immanuel Kant, 'Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime', *Essays and Treatises on Moral, Political, Religious and Various Philosophical Subjects*. (London: William Richardson, 1799), p. 6.

nearer related to the sublime, blue eyes and a fair colour to the beautiful.’⁸⁵ The sciences of aesthetics and race were firmly connected throughout the eighteenth century.

For the majority of eighteenth-century scientists the universe was still highly moralised: there was an objective good and bad, or civilised and savage, and these qualities could be investigated, measured and revealed scientifically. Such systems were already in operation with regards to gender, as is noted in the work of Thomas Laqueur: the inferiority of women in classical medical theory was evident in their internalised genitalia, symbolic of their lesser humoural heat.⁸⁶ As attention shifted during the early modern period away from humoural models of difference and onto more ‘modern’ anatomical analysis, so too did the evidentiary basis of women’s scientific inferiority. Nancy Leys Stepan’s work similarly asserts that the metaphors and analogies of sexual difference also formed an important part of ‘racial science’. To her, the fixing of racial and gender stereotypes into science are part of the same oppressive social process: under the doctrines of white, male scientists, women’s ‘deficient brain structures were analogous to those of lower races,’⁸⁷ so proving them all ‘incapable of the abstract reasoning found in white men.’⁸⁸ While the focus of Stepan’s research falls for the most part in the nineteenth century, she does mention that ‘the analogies used by scientists in the late eighteenth century, when human variation began to be studied systematically, were products of long-standing, long-familiar, culturally endorsed metaphors.’⁸⁹ There has been some historical work already, then, on the cultural roots of scientific ‘racism’ in the eighteenth century. The extent to which these informing factors in the construction of scientific discourse challenge the notion that there was a sea-change in

⁸⁵ Kant, ‘Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime’, p. 12.

⁸⁶ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 149.

⁸⁷ Nancy Leys Stepan, ‘Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science’, in Goldberg (ed.), *Anatomy of Racism*, p. 39.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

thought on 'race', however, has not been considered. To this end, I will now examine the nature of travel literature during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, exploring the importance such sources had in constructing 'racial' thought prior to its absorption into natural history and anatomy.

Travel writing as a genre blossomed with the advent of printing: accounts from far and wide could, thanks to advances in technology, now be distributed throughout European society more freely and cheaply than ever before. Richard G. Cole notes that this process in itself had a profound influence over how people perceived non-Europeans. He argued that through the 'shift from script to print culture in the sixteenth century...arrogant and ethnocentric observations of non-European peoples were given immortality by the printed page.'⁹⁰ This article utilises sixteenth-century travel accounts from across Europe, such as those collected in Richard Hakluyt's canonical *Principal Navigations* (1589), to demonstrate the '[r]epetitive, stereotyped, and frequently inaccurate' nature of travelogues at this time.⁹¹ Changes in the stylistics of travel writing subsequent to the shift to print culture, however, could be argued to be even more important in forging categorical human varieties.

Several historians have already noted that, whilst perhaps unrecognisable as science by modern standards, travellers approached their descriptions of the world with a certain set of attitudes and training which allowed them by their contemporary values to make objective truth-claims. With regards to 'racial' systems, Joan-Pau Rubiés' work studies the growth of conventions in depicting and classifying non-Europeans during voyages of discovery and exploration throughout the early modern period. Rubiés demonstrates the stability of certain ethnographic categories between accounts of

⁹⁰ Richard G. Cole, 'Sixteenth-Century Travel Books as a Source of European Attitudes toward Non-White and Non-Western Culture', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 116: 1 (Feb. 15, 1972), p. 59.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

different geographical regions and chronological eras, manifest in the ‘emergence of a basic set of analytical categories...An example of continuity is the recurrent interest shown by various writers in topics like political order...warfare, and justice; national, or racial, temperaments...sexuality; dress, or nudity.’⁹² As shall be seen in my later chapters, these repetitive concerns mirror closely trends in the later ‘racial science’ of the eighteenth century, which too relied on consistently utilised categories of difference, both physical and cultural, by which non-Europeans were examined. And, like the strictures of that science, these categories are, to Rubiés, innately ethnocentric: ‘given that the categories of analysis, with the language of the narratives, were defined in a European setting, it was unlikely that many observers would find ways of letting the “native voice” speak.’⁹³ By investigating non-Europeans according to set European standards of culture and body, travellers demonstrated a potentially ‘racist’ tendency towards hierarchy-building and categorisation.

Travellers, several historians argue, had to adhere to certain standards in constructing their texts which allowed them to display their observations as ‘knowledge’. Rubiés’ work explores a body of literature aimed specifically at ensuring travelogues met the principles of empiricism demanded by a new scientific age: ‘Methods for travellers were in fact a genre through which a new intellectual elite sought to teach Europeans how to see the world[...]the scientific institutions had become depositories of a concern for travel literature and for methodological travel which clearly belonged to the cultural transformations of the late Renaissance.’⁹⁴ Travel writing, indeed, was configured as a sub-genre of wider scientific disciplines during the two centuries preceding the late eighteenth-century conceptual shift. He writes, for

⁹² Joan-Pau Rubiés, ‘Travel Writing and Ethnography’, in Hulme and Young (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p. 251.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁹⁴ Joan-Pau Rubiés, ‘Instructions for Travellers: Teaching the Eye to See’, *History and Anthropology* 9: 2-3 (1996), pp. 140-141.

instance, that it 'was[...]as natural histories[...]that the most scientific accounts of the New World were published in sixteenth-century Spain'.⁹⁵ Thus travelogues were often compared to and treated as such works: William Dampier, whose accounts of his voyages in the first decade of the eighteenth century form an important source for this thesis, has been described as an individual who, 'as an observer and transcriber of natural phenomena[...]is a worthy precursor of the great natural historians and marine geographers of the eighteenth century.'⁹⁶ Guides for travellers, Rubiés argues, show us that there was great concern in ensuring the genre was rigorous and unprejudiced with regards to factual claims. Such authors had to obey the principles for constructing truth: '[T]he proper way to acquire knowledge was no longer the spontaneous acceptance of traditional forms, but the widening of the practices and the self-conscious reflection applied to them, with the ideal of finding an abstract and universal technique that could be learnt and used by an autonomous and capable subject.'⁹⁷ If travel literature in the early modern period was thus considered scientific, the constructions and categorisations of non-Europeans must be considered to portray in a literal sense a form of 'racial science' which has to date been largely neglected by historians of the eighteenth century.

Travel literature was, of course, still a literary genre, but one which borrowed the skills and epistemological qualifications of natural history, and which in doing so legitimised itself as a truth-finding exercise. Methodology and structures present in that genre long before the late eighteenth century, I will argue, enabled the development of 'racist' thinking prior to the creation of a science dedicated solely to the study of 'race'. As seen above, a great amount of effort went into ensuring a set of criteria were observed by travellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of these criteria

⁹⁵ Rubiés, 'Instructions for Travellers', p. 147.

⁹⁶ Geraldine Barnes and Adrian Mitchell, 'Measuring the Marvellous: Science and the Exotic in William Dampier', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26: 3 (Fall 2002), pp. 46-47.

⁹⁷ Rubiés, 'Instructions for Travellers', p. 151.

was to utilise stolid, functional description at the expense of sensationalism. It has been noted, for instance, that the Royal Society even ‘took it upon itself to arbitrate on late seventeenth-century travel reporting, [and] was fundamentally opposed to any romanticizing of the unfamiliar by those who[...]actually experienced it, laying down its requirements in the general preface to volume II of the *Philosophical Transactions*’.⁹⁸ The disdain placed upon embellishment in travelogues by such societies owed much to canonical figure Francis Bacon’s attitudes towards natural history. He too preferred a mode of conveying knowledge on the natural world devoid of exaggeration, a view which extended beyond the content of texts to the very stylistics which comprised them. Bacon’s work suggests a kind of ‘literary technology’ similar to that later developed by Robert Boyle: a set of linguistic rules which allow a text to be presented as scientific and truthful.⁹⁹ Jill Marie Bradbury shows that, ‘in the absence of a qualitative difference between scientific knowledge and reasoned opinion, the elimination to rhetoric served to distinguish logic from argument, proof from persuasion. Words and rhetoric—the instrument and style of discourse—thus became a central concern of the new scientists.’¹⁰⁰ The correct, scientific prose style thus becomes one of plain and consistent language, with alternate meanings and interpretations cut down to a minimum by a clear and concise author. Bacon, we see, ‘envisions[...]natural histories [which] will supply an unbiased report of phenomena observed by investigators[...]purged of all superfluous matters, as well as ornaments of speech and stylistic eloquence[...]empirical phenomena [should] be ordered and set down “briefly and concisely, so that they may be nothing less [*sic*] than words”’¹⁰¹ One of the consequences of this, this thesis aims to demonstrate, is that the use of repetitive terminology, of this brevity of language,

⁹⁸ Barnes and Mitchell, ‘Measuring the Marvellous’, p. 47.

⁹⁹ Scott Black, ‘Boyle’s Essay: Genre and the Making of Early Modern Knowledge’, in Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt (Eds.), *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (University of Chicago Press: London: 2007), p. 194.

¹⁰⁰ Jill Marie Bradbury, ‘New Science and the “New Species of Writing”: Eighteenth-Century Prose Genres’, *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27:1 (Winter 2003), p. 36.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

became standard in describing non-European peoples. The upshot of this linguistic style for 'race' as a categorising system is profoundly reductive: words themselves come to produce stereotyped meanings through their commonality in texts across periods and genres, which connotations are given scientific validity precisely because of their simplistic and repetitive use.

Of the 90 or so sources referred to at the start of this section, at least 40 would fall under the umbrella term of 'travel writing'. These were selected in several ways. Many of them were identified by my reading of eighteenth-century 'race science': scientists would often cite by author name or title the works upon which their natural histories or anatomies were based, enabling historians to examine in a very specific manner the translation of ideas across genre, chronological and even epistemological boundaries. Others were recognised within current historiography as being particularly popular in their contemporary culture, and thus their inclusion was important to my argument that 'racial' notions existing in travel writing should also be considered as existing within British culture more generally. Some of the texts, however, were uncovered simply by further reading into the genre. Recent advances in technology enabled this: the colossal resources available to historians through databases such as the Eighteenth Century Collections Online and Early English Books Online have been integral to this project.

As mentioned at the start of this sources section, the texts I used were taken from a wide chronological range. They also, moreover, offer a diverse geographical coverage: texts on the Americas, near and far East Asia, northern and southern Africa, Oceania and Europe itself are used, reflecting the exhaustive project of classification underway in eighteenth-century natural history.¹⁰² Several of the most important travelogues I will

¹⁰² See Appendix 2 for a list, by date, of all the travel writing and edited collections considered by this thesis.

be using, indeed, are framed as accounts of global journeys which provide brief descriptions of dozens of nations and peoples. The previously-mentioned William Dampier offers one of the earliest of such texts in his *A New Voyage Round the World*, (1697). This same style was replicated throughout the eighteenth century in sources such as Woodes Rogers' *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712; 1718), William Betagh's *A Voyage Round the World* (1728) and George Forster's *A Voyage Round the World* (1777). Other sources offer more detailed, specific geographical and ethnographical studies of limited areas, including John Atkins' *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies* (1735), Francis Moore's *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (1738) and M. Adanson's *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (1759), whilst further sources make their scientific, epistemological claims at new knowledge even clearer with their very titles: Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657), Lionel Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1704), Griffith Hughes' *The Natural History of Barbados* (1750) and James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile...*(1790) are some prime examples of this latter kind. Further to these staples of British exploration, this thesis will occasionally examine translations of wider European accounts, including Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan's *New Voyages to North-America* (1703), Aubrey de la Motraye's *Travels through Europe, Asia, and into Part of Africa* (1723) and Antonio De Ulloa's *A Voyage to South-America* (1753). As shall be seen later in this thesis, 'race' as a concept did not develop in any one national context, but simultaneously through the intermixture of pan-European traditions in thought, and the inclusion of translated texts allows us to examine the influence of such sources on the construction of 'racial' categorisation in the English language.

'Race' as a linguistic system is the key interest of this thesis. It has already been shown how, from the seventeenth century onwards, new, empirical standards of knowledge-making were resulting in a reconfiguring of the English language itself. Older modes of rhetoric were being replaced with new genres and styles, and the very meaning of words was being re-examined in the face of increasing standardisation. In the eighteenth century, some of the period's foremost philosophers broached the subject. John Locke argued that 'the ultimate source of all ideas is the world of sense; and that accuracy and complexity in both thought and speech depend upon just observation of what our senses tell us, as well as careful discrimination of one idea from another.'¹⁰³ Words, then, only represented what was observed of the physical universe, and the careful use of them was intrinsic in expressing any idea or fact correctly. The increasingly comprehensive nature of dictionaries was a highly significant symbol of this empirical desire for precise meaning. Of Samuel Johnson's famous mid-century dictionary, for instance, Elizabeth Hendrick notes that it 'share[d] Locke's desire to render the process of definition technically exact, largely in the hope of clarifying contemporary speech and writing, but also in the hope of reducing, if not eradicating, confusions in meaning in the future.'¹⁰⁴ As with Bacon a century earlier, it is plain word use which best generates knowledge. Given the importance of dictionaries in supplying compact meanings legitimated by the contemporary standards of 'factual' knowledge, this thesis draws occasionally on these books. Dictionaries offer precise interpretations of 'racialised' language long before the anatomy and natural history of the late eighteenth century, and as such they offer an important body of evidence concerning the assimilation of human categorisation into the culture of the English language.

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Hendrick, 'Locke's Theory of Language and Johnson's Dictionary', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 20: 4 (Summer, 1987), p. 423.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

Structure

Many representational motifs which are used by European authors to express racial beliefs have already been identified by modern historical and sociological work, and also by literary criticism. Such motifs are seen to be common in modern racist rhetoric, but this thesis argues they can also be observed in early-modern discourses. Frequently in the following chapters my investigation will begin with the ‘modern’, post-1770 theory, identifying the pervasive language used by authors to discuss particular themes of difference, and then work backwards into earlier culture to demonstrate the intellectual ancestry of such ideas. This method will best allow the continuous currents of thought to become apparent, whilst also highlighting the stylistic, terminological and epistemological changes which did occur across the period. This thesis, as previously mentioned, thus aims to comment on both the ideas that remain static throughout the eighteenth century and those that change.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, which are organised thematically. The first two chapters are based upon one of the most documented forms of racism; discourses of animality and savagery. Chapter One examines these stereotypes with regards to overtly hierarchical systems within scientific texts. Gustav Jahoda’s *Images of Savages* (1999) offers an excellent overarching exploration of the animalistic stereotype, from antiquity to the twentieth century. To Jahoda, certain stereotypes now considered ‘racist’, such as those of the ‘savage’ or ‘animalistic’ nature of the other, have their origins in ancient Greek myths, which conceived of ‘wild men’ born of ‘indiscriminate interbreedings between gods, humans and animals’.¹⁰⁵ This tradition, Jahoda claims, is found recurrently in the dehumanisation of supposed ‘savages’ in early-modern discourse. He notes, for instance, the perceived ‘relationship between

¹⁰⁵ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p.5.

humans at large and apes; subsequently it became focused on the relative closeness to apes of particular ethnic groups, especially blacks.’¹⁰⁶ Through this representation the foreign ‘savages’ were made to be less than human; not a collection of individual selves but a single identity shared by entire populations. In the current historiography, academics have suggested the conviction of the non-European’s intrinsic animal inferiority was a late eighteenth-century phenomenon, before which time such sentiment was held to be a ‘minority belief’.¹⁰⁷ Chapter One, however, demonstrates that animalistic stereotypes were more prevalent during the eighteenth century than has been stated in previous histories. In many instances, it will be argued, travelogues and certain novels offer a sense of ‘biological’ otherness closely approximate to later racial systems. The anecdotal proof used by scientists to evidence animalistic differences is investigated here, looking at how particular accounts of ape/non-European sexual encounters and certain stereotyped bodily facets of non-Europeans such as hair and smell had been present for many years within British culture.

Chapter Two builds on the first by investigating how animality in ‘race’ theory intersects with the debate on sensory history. The human senses were construed in late eighteenth-century science as having different qualities depending upon a ‘racial’ disposition. We will see examples, for instance, of African and American women experiencing less pain than Europeans in childbirth, whilst some ‘races’ are ascribed with superhuman sight or hearing. In historiography, this representation has often been roughly aligned with the narrative of conceptual shift: ‘Travelers and explorers newly read in nervous anatomy began to apply the theories to foreign natives[...]For centuries, explorers had been exposed to races other than white, but before approximately the mid-eighteenth century their observations rarely commented on racial difference in light of

¹⁰⁶ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁷ Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, p. 293.

nervous constitution.’¹⁰⁸ This may well be true in terms of the technical vocabulary used: nerves and brain function were not often mentioned in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century travelogues. What they did remark upon, however, was the functioning of the senses, which comments will be revealed to again provide another widespread precedent for the ‘modern’ animalistic beliefs. Moreover, it is argued in this chapter that an exploration of non-European people as an animalistic component of the natural world, rather than as part of humankind, was in many sources the default view from at least as far back as the seventeenth century.

After the two chapters on animality, Chapter Three studies representations of ‘miscegenation’ and ‘mixed-race’ individuals across the eighteenth century. In a period where it is commonly held that the concept of distinct races became consolidated, the act of miscegenation served to problematise these new categories. We have already seen that Felicity Nussbaum saw the heightened ‘attention to hybridity and mongrelization’ as a direct consequence of the late eighteenth-century shift in thought, and thus the reaction against this behaviour as publicised in scientific tracts should offer useful information on how attitudes towards the theory of ‘race’ progressed across the eighteenth century. Kenan Malik offers a good summation on the idea of ‘miscegenation’. He writes on representations of mixed-race people: ‘from the standpoint of race...intermixing was fatal because it caused racial degeneration and the creation of a ‘mongrel race’.¹⁰⁹ The demonization of such people is a conscious part of the practice, aimed at the ‘creation of barriers between human groups to minimise the impact of cultural mongrelisation.’¹¹⁰ The conscious and vocalised fear of miscegenation, then, seems entrenched in a basic biological notion of categorical difference.

¹⁰⁸ George S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 38.

¹⁰⁹ Malik, *The Meaning of Race*, p. 168.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

Just a brief look at some academic criticism of English literature, however, portrays a continuity of representation not accounted for in the work many historians. Joyce Green MacDonald's discussion of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, for instance, notes that 'Anthony's crossing of borders, his miscegenous joining with Cleopatra, threatens the survival of the categories of barbarous and civilised'.¹¹¹ Other sixteenth and seventeenth century contemporaries shared this concern. Jean Howard's discussion of Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West* (c. 1600-1604) shows that the text graphically voiced a 'racist fear of miscegenation, of the contamination of the white woman by a polluting and inferior blackness.'¹¹² Margo Hendricks's study of Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter* (c.1688-89) likewise shows congruent representational practices at the other end of the seventeenth century, and concerning Native Americans rather than Africans. Behn's play is set in a colonial situation in America. In the play, Hendricks writes, 'miscegenation can (and often does) result in the proliferation of "natives" who reject "civility"...if miscegenation erases the boundaries between English and the American Indians, what then becomes of the ineradicable measure of "difference" required to justify the colonising project?'¹¹³ These studies thus seem to contradict the historical consensus in a way that warrants further investigation of the eighteenth century scientific discourse. The representations described above are dependent on a notion of physical rather than cultural difference, and operate by 'polluting' with bodily fluids and threatening 'mongrel' children whose bodies are irredeemable by social education. It is important to examine in Chapter Three how much of the growing disgust and fear of miscegenation in later science, as shown by Nussbaum and Malik, is generated by changing social circumstances, and how much of

¹¹¹ Joyce Green MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 41.

¹¹² Jean E. Howard, 'An English Lass amid the Moors: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and National Identity in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*', in Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (eds.), *Women, 'Race' and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 113.

¹¹³ Margo Hendricks, 'Civility, Barbarism, and Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*' in Hendricks and Parker (eds.), *Women, 'Race' and Writing*, p. 237.

it is simply repeating the pre-existing notions of earlier authors, whose notions of human variety often seem more biologised than is allowed for in the current historiography.

Leading on from many of the themes surrounding miscegenation, Chapter Four sets out to investigate the connections between the production of sexual and racial biology. Several academics, including Dror Wahrman and Londa Schiebinger, have suggested strong connections between the chronology and theory behind the development of these categorical systems. Thomas Laqueur, who in *Making Sex* (1990) wrote one of the most important historical monographs on the development of sex and reproductive science, likewise hints a number of times during his work at the 'important parallels between...discussions of sexual and racial differences, since both seek to produce a biological foundation for social arrangements.'¹¹⁴ One purpose of this chapter will therefore be to examine such congruencies both within eighteenth-century 'racial science' and also its informing literature. Doing so allows us to see that many bodily signifiers, such as genitalia and facial hair, operated with the same intrinsic metaphors. Although this fact had been noted by several historians before now, this chapter uses these similarities to demonstrate a scientific interest in classifying non-Europeans primarily by the body as present in British culture from at least the end of the seventeenth century. These sexualized differences, moreover, also show a highly stable set of European sexual norms present in the minds of early-modern scientists and travellers.

Further to this, Chapter Four will offer a criticism of some modern sociological theories of 'race' which also draw upon gendered motifs. Stuart Hall's *Representation* (1997) is a particularly important book for the study of racial stereotypes, translations

¹¹⁴ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 282.

and representations across different genres and periods. One of the most significant of these representational practices is labelled by Hall as ‘fetishization’, which is the ‘substitution of a *part* for the *whole*, of a *thing*—an object, an organ, a portion of the body—for a subject.’¹¹⁵ This particular idea is demonstrated by Hall to refer often to specifically sexual components of the body: ‘whites often fantasized about the excessive sexual appetites and prowess of black men—as they did about the lascivious, over-sexed character of black women—*which they both feared and secretly envied*.’¹¹⁶ Hall’s text gives particular attention to representations of African people, but the general concept that sexual organs and natures are fundamental motifs of difference is vital to Chapter Four. It is important to see if modern sociological concepts are commensurable with early-modern beliefs: as we saw at the beginning of this introduction the sociological model of the construction of ‘racism’, with its depiction of a dramatic eighteenth-century shift in European attitudes, has had a powerful influence over modern historical thought on the subject.

Although Hall’s work refers largely to the world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Margaret Hunt’s historical work demonstrates earlier versions of similar ideas. She writes on the proliferation of inter-textual reading amongst a wider range of travel writers, which led to travelogues becoming ‘extremely derivative’; the traveller, she shows, suffered from the need to ‘reconfirm received stereotypes about people he or she encounters.’¹¹⁷ This in turn led to the proliferation of certain representations in a way that established stereotypes as facts through sheer weight of numbers. Hunt demonstrates that fetishization may have been one of these stereotypes: ‘visitors to

¹¹⁵ Stuart Hall, ‘Spectacle of the “Other”’, in Stuart Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1997), p. 266.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

Africa inevitably remarked upon the nakedness and heathenish character of Africans'.¹¹⁸

Chapter Four of my thesis thus builds upon work such as Hunt's by examining the sexualised and fetishized bodies of not just Africans, but other non-Europeans also, across the eighteenth century, so as to complicate the often polarised system of 'racism' depicted by many studies.

To fully understand the underlying metaphors of sexual difference and miscegenation, however, one must first comprehend the depth of animalistic features ascribed to those people who were 'other' to the white, European, male pinnacle during the eighteenth century. This one representational motif pervaded all hierarchical conceptions of the body, providing a collection of well-established criteria by which people could be compared 'objectively' according to contemporary science, and thus it is with these notions that I begin this study.

¹¹⁸ Margaret Hunt, 'Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveller's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England', *The Journal of British Studies* 32: 4 (Oct., 1993), p. 340.

Chapter One:

The Non-European Animal, Internal and External

Introduction

The animality of the ‘savage’ is a theme of representations with a long history in European thought, and is often the central metaphor in the dehumanisation of groups and populations. The observation that representations of animality exist in eighteenth-century science would not be an original one. In this chapter I want to focus specifically on the observation of change in these representations. Discussions over the boundaries between human and animal were common in early-modern England, and apparently reached an important stage in the eighteenth century. In 1699 Edward Tyson published his *Orang-Outang*, a comprehensive anatomical dissection of a chimpanzee made to explore the creature’s possible humanity. By 1799, Charles White was making comprehensive anatomical dissections of Africans to explore what he perceived as their animal inferiority. As noted in greater detail by Dror Wahrman in his *Making of the Modern Self* (2004), by the last decades of the century the ‘distinction between humans and all animals was now insisted upon in ways that it had not been in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century.’¹ In short, the qualities that identify humanity became more rigidly defined, to the extent that certain ethnic groups were eventually denied the human status by polygenetic theorists. Jahoda too perceives a ‘shift in perspective away from the question of the relationship between humans and apes, and towards an ordering of human races according to the supposed degree of proximity to apes [which

¹ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 141.

was] indicative of a shift from Enlightenment values towards racial intolerance.’² As a specific example, he notes the development from the perceived ‘relationship between humans at large and apes’ to the subsequent focus on the relative closeness to apes of particular ethnic groups, especially blacks.’³ Similar ideas also recur in other prominent critical works, such as Roxann Wheeler’s *The Complexion of Race* and Felicity A. Nussbaum’s *The Limits of the Human*.

While it seems certain that the technical vocabulary by which ideas such as these were communicated underwent change during the late eighteenth century, the contention of this chapter is this: that significant representational continuities in sources throughout this period complicate claims for an ‘epistemic’ shift. This chapter, consequently, is aimed at examining in detail the various representational practices used by eighteenth-century scientists and naturalists to render the non-European animalistic, and to investigate changes in the expression of what we would now term ‘racism’. Also examined in this chapter are representations found in eighteenth-century literature and travel writing from throughout the eighteenth century, juxtaposed with the later anatomical and scientific works. The selected texts, it will be seen, offer precedents to the themes and ideas found in late-eighteenth-century ‘racial science’ which show that there was a continuous complexity to discussions of human variety, which persisted at least to the dawn of the nineteenth century.

The chapter is split into three substantive segments and a conclusion. The first section is a case study of two authors, James Burnet, the Lord Monboddo and Charles White, who embodied the essence of two different theoretical concepts, mono- and polygenesis. In this way their texts represent the variety of hierarchical systems present within scientific texts, the central point here being that, despite their conceptual

² Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 53.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

differences, there is more common ground between the two conceptions than previously allowed for by historians—a common ground which points to the shared cultural influences acting upon their work. The second section examines how the internal desires of certain non-Europeans were expressed by British authors to suggest greater proximity to animals. Particularly explored here are accounts of animal/human sexual relations, which are used by authors of both the mono- and polygenetic schools of thought to evidence categorical differences. Their evidence is seen to be appropriated from a legacy of representation stretching back to Ancient Greece, and which serves to complicate the boundaries between humans and animals, as well as varieties of humans, right to the end of the eighteenth century. Thirdly, I will begin to address the historiographical understanding of the body as an indicator of ‘racial’ difference. This section looks at two bodily stereotypes not usually considered in any great detail with regards to ‘race’ theory (hair and scent), examining the transmission of repetitive language from travel writing and creative literature into science across the period in question. It is argued in this third segment that there are essentially two vocabularies used to describe race. One consists of technical terms aimed at classifying and specifying human categories, and the other is a collective body of descriptive terms which depict the facets of difference themselves. I will argue that a stock vocabulary of racial signifiers had already developed by the time ‘racial scientists’ began their studies in the late eighteenth century.

Apes are People and People are Apes: a Case Study of Charles White and James Burnet, Lord Monboddo

One of the most straightforward methods of constructing the animalistic non-European was to create a rigid, explicit hierarchy in which different human populations occupied

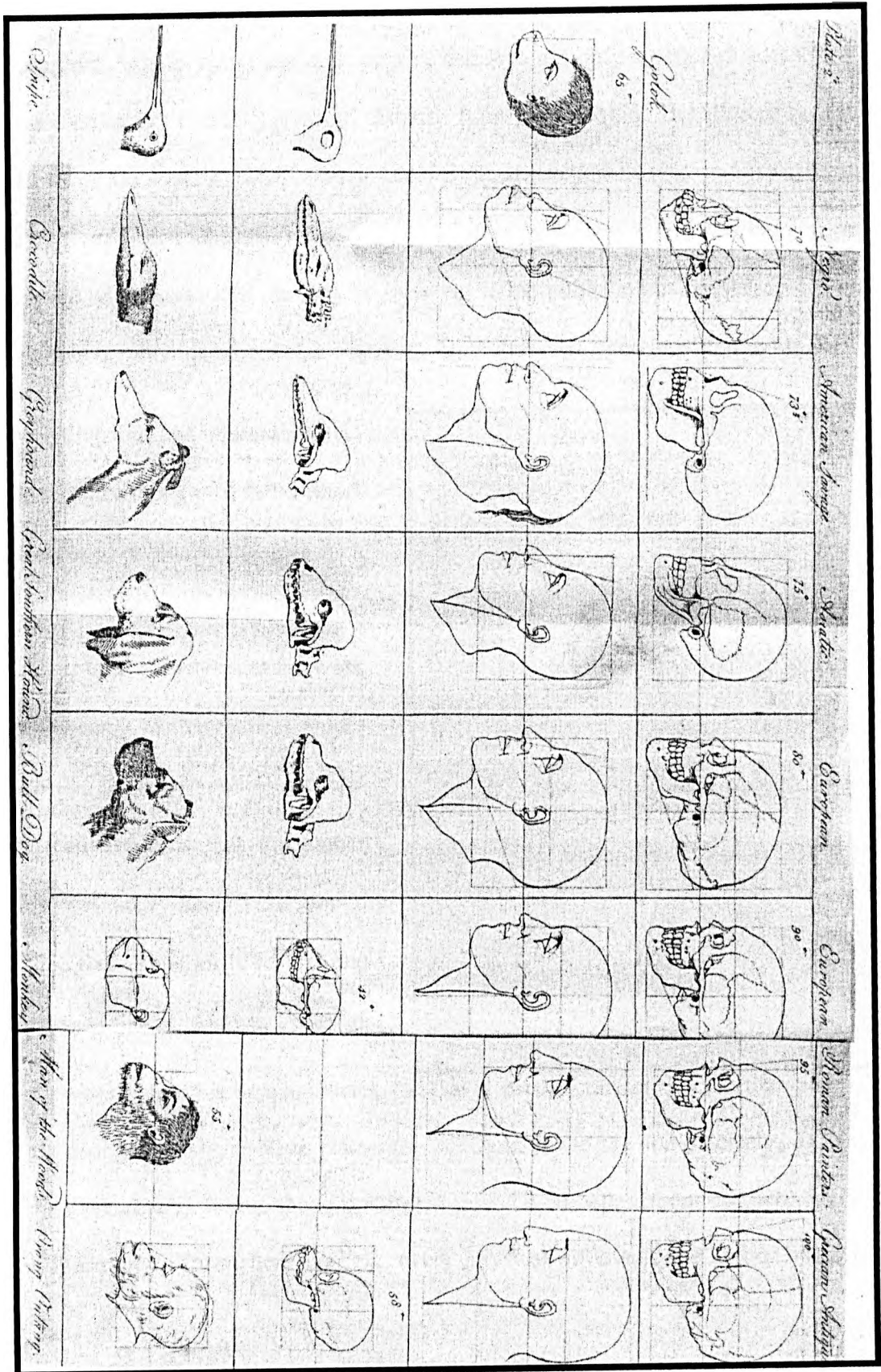
staggered and fixed positions from the brute to the divine. Current historical understanding is that it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that such formalised structures came to be popularised. To demonstrate the extent to which animalism as a theme of representation became intrinsic in scientific depictions of non-Europeans during the eighteenth century, this chapter starts at the end of this period with an examination of Charles Whites' *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (1799). White presented from the outset a text of measured and comprehensive anatomical and biological science, aimed at proving there exists a 'beautiful gradation...amongst created beings, from the highest to the lowest. From man down to the smallest reptile...Nature exhibits to our view an immense chain of beings, endued with various degrees of intelligence and active powers, suited to their stations in the general system.'⁴ Even before the reader reaches the body of the text they are confronted with a series of images on foldout sheets. One of these sheets, provided below, offers a visual summation of White's concept (Figure 1): here the author uses measurements of facial angles to express his perceived gradation in man and animal. He explains the image thus,

the angle made by the facial line may be estimated as follows: that the European, from 90 to 80°; of the Asiatic, from 80 to 75°...of the American, from 75 to 70°; of the African negro, from 70 to 60°; of the orang, from 60 to 50°; of the common monkey, from 50 to 40°. It is less in the dog, and still more so in birds.—There is, therefore, a perfect and regular gradation in the inclination of the face, from the perpendicular line of the European man, to the horizontal one of the snipe or woodcock.⁵

⁴ Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (London: C. Dilly, 1799), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Figure 1⁶

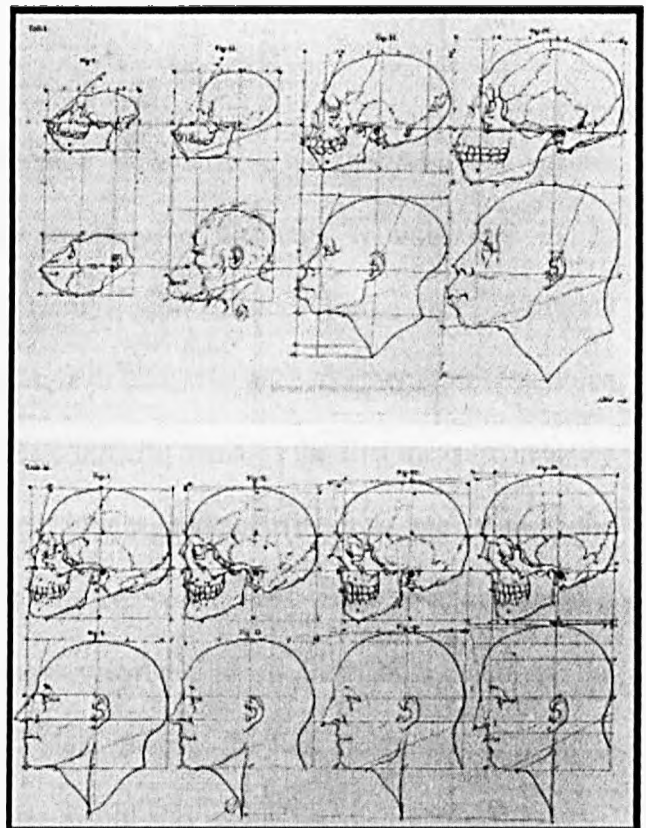


⁶ White, Regular Gradation, Plate II.

This schema reveals White's basic division of humanity into the four categories of European, Asiatic, American and 'negro', and it is not only a series of categories but also a hierarchy marking physical distance from animal kind. The illustration can be placed within wider debates occurring in eighteenth-century Europe, and is very similar to those of Dutch theorist Professor Petrus Camper's work *The Connexion between the Science of Anatomy and the Arts of Drawing...* (first published in English in 1794), an example of which is provided in Figure 2.⁷ Both drawings operate with roughly the

Figure 2

same divisions and methodology in place, and although the two authors disagree over the exact angles each human variety represent, the same scale is clear. Much historical work has been written on Camper already, however, and in general the conclusion is that the author was profoundly against the notion of the fixed superiority of any one race over another. He was aware of



the proposition of his image, indeed, and David Bindman notes that Camper claimed, 'a little disingenuously, to have placed the African next to the ape precisely to highlight their difference'.⁸ White, though, suffered no such anxieties about the implications of his illustration. Throughout his text, every physical difference the author observed is

⁷ Petrus Camper, *The Works of the Late Professor Camper on the Connexion Between the Science of Anatomy and the Arts of Drawing...* (London: C. Dilly, 1794), pp. 120-121.

⁸ David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 205.

manipulated to fit his central premise. The original four-way division of humanity presented in the illustration quickly became more polarised. He wrote,

I did not carry my enquiries into provincial or national varieties or features, but confined them chiefly to the extremes of the human race: to the European, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the African, who seems to approach nearer to the brute creation than any other of the human species.⁹

The differences between black and white thus came to symbolise the gradational manner of human kind as a whole, and such differences were observed by White with comprehensive fervour.

Every conceivable bodily difference is indicative of the African's greater animality in White's text, and the comparative anatomy is extensive in its dehumanisation of the African body. Here I will consider just a few of myriad examples, as several of the descriptions come to bear relevance to other representational motifs dealt with later in this chapter. White initially explains the first measurements he made: 'I had observed that the arms were longer, and feet flatter in apes than in the human species; and, having the skeleton of a Negro amongst others in my museum, I measured the radius and ulna, and found them nearly an inch longer than in the European skeleton of the same stature.'¹⁰ Here, then, is the first incarnation of White's simplistic thesis that the 'negro' occupies a mid-way point between ape and human. Likewise the mental capacity of the 'negro' is limited by anatomical measurements: 'The cavity of the skull, which contains both cerebrum and cerebellum, is less capacious in the African than in the European, and still less in the Brute species.'¹¹ Another example is seen the 'SKIN, including the *epidermis* and *rete mucosum*, [which] is well

⁹ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

known to be thicker in the African than in the Europeans, and still thicker in monkeys.’¹²

To White, these anatomical differences amounted to more than superficial, temporary adaptations to different climates: they are manifestations of permanent, unalterable differences between species. White is seen by Jahoda as attempting one of the first clear scientific proofs of polygenetic theory.¹³ Although in many ways based upon his work, White criticises Camper’s tendencies to espouse unified, monogenic notions of humanity:

Professor *Camper* was decidedly of the opinion, that the whole human race descended from a single pair, and that all varieties were occasioned by climate, nutrition, air, &c....But what would he have said, if he had known that the lower arm of the African was considerably longer than that of the European, though there seems no difference in the length of the upper arm, the leg, or the thigh?¹⁴

Of those who treated varieties in skin colour as malleable, he wrote ‘[a]ll those naturalists who contend that the colour of the human species is caused by climate, advance, that there cannot be more striking instance of this than in the Jews...But the truth is...that the Jews are generally swarthy in every climate.’¹⁵ In White, then, we could easily read the resolution of eighteenth-century scientific thought on race and the beginnings of the nineteenth-century mode. Roxann Wheeler observes that White believed in ‘significant and fixed differences among European, Asiatics, Americans, and Africans’; a belief she sees as critiquing ‘the dominant racial theory of the century. He contends that gradation among several races was a better principle than variety in one race. In his usage, gradation means that there are people with more humanity than

¹² White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 57.

¹³ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p. 58.

¹⁴ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 55.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

others, a minority belief at the time.’¹⁶ However, my claim in this chapter, and also Chapter Two, is that this ‘minority’ belief—the portrayal of animally inferior non-Europeans—is one of the most consistently advocated themes of eighteenth-century race science, both amongst monogenetic and polygenetic theorists and throughout the period.

A good comparison to make here is with James Burnet, Lord Monboddo’s epic six volume *Origin and Progress of Language* (1773-1787). This text is one traditionally viewed by historians as outmoded in its conception of humankind even in the 1770s, being for the most part reliant on cultural rather than bodily evidence. Robert Wokler sees the text as drawing ‘to a close [an older] tradition of scientific speculation on human nature’¹⁷, where boundaries between various peoples and animals are not delineated by strict physical categorisations but circumstantial, religious, civilisational and potentially flexible distinctions. Likewise Wahrman sees the subsequent public disdain for Burnet’s work as evidence of a larger cultural shift from the *ancien régime* to the ‘modern’ conception of race and gender boundaries.¹⁸ At a first glance, indeed, Burnet’s work does not resemble a text that could be considered an early form of ‘racial science’, being primarily an attempt to trace language historically from the ‘*birth* of human nature...to its state of *maturity*.’¹⁹ While ostensibly a literary, philological tract, it is clear from the outset that Burnet himself views his work as explicitly rigorous, logical and scientific. He wrote, ‘[t]he style will be plain and didactic, such as is suitable to a subject that is to be treated as a matter of science.’²⁰ These two texts vary

¹⁶ Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 293.

¹⁷ Robert Wokler, ‘Apes and Races in the Scottish Enlightenment: Monboddo and Kames on the Nature of Man’, in Peter Jones (ed.), *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1988), p. 163.

¹⁸ Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, pp. 136-138.

¹⁹ James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and W. Creech, 1773), Vol. I, p. 2.

²⁰ Burnet *Origin and Progress*, Vol. I, p. 244.

widely, then, in their genre and their method: they approach their sources differently and initially contribute to separate branches of philosophy.

In their primary contentions, too, there is a difference of opinion. They were opposed, as I will demonstrate below, on one of the key issues of eighteenth-century natural history. Like White, however, *Origin and Progress of Language* is fraught with certain polarised concepts, which transform it into as much an enquiry into the nature of human variety as a language history. I agree wholly, indeed, with Robert Wokler's assessment of *Origin* as 'contributing to the discipline of *physical anthropology*'.²¹ Burnet's work, like many tracts of the time, demonstrates an attitude towards mankind that is religiously monogenetic: in other words, all people of the world represent one distinct, biblical act of creation, and a single species. Whereas White delineated the European, Asian, American and African into different species, *Origin* not only maintains that all the peoples of the Earth are to be considered part of a single human species, but also some primates. What Burnet calls 'Orang Outangs'—but were in fact chimpanzees—are to be considered, by his system, as 'a barbarous nation, which has not yet learned the use of speech.'²²

This apparent divergence, however, is also where the two texts in question come together, in terms of the representational motifs they validate within their texts. The inclusion of higher apes by Burnet within the structure of humanity is instrumental in his creation of a developmental hierarchy by which certain people are rendered animalistic by the intrinsic qualities of their language. 'Orang Outangs', we see, represent 'natural man'; the primary incarnation of humanity. He wrote, 'First, we have a number of wild men not associated, or at least not living in so close an intercourse of society as is necessary for the invention of language, and therefore without the use of

²¹ Wokler, 'Apes and Races', p. 162.

²² James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Second Edition) (Edinburgh: J. Balfour, 1774), Vol. I, p. 271.

speech.’²³ From this foundation comes the gradual development of humanity, through three further stages:

Next, we have a people that had learned a little articulation, but not so much as to communicate their thoughts to one another, without the help of the natural language signs. The next step is what may be called a language, very rude and imperfect indeed, but such as is sufficient for communication, with little or no help from action or gesture: Of this kind is the language of the Hurons in North America, and other barbarous languages...And, last of all, comes the language of art.²⁴

This last quality, this language of ‘art’, shows how aesthetics comes to play a role in constructing a humanity divided by the civilised and the barbarous or savage states. In volume IV of the work, this aesthetic investigation of language forms a more ‘scientifically’ justified hierarchy, whereby measurements of word-length and syllable use become almost like the physiognomic measurements of White. Burnet states, ‘the first thing I require to make a language beautiful is, that it should have a variety of articulate sounds...the want of this variety is seen in almost all the barbarous languages, which are very defective’.²⁵ In this model, ‘racial’ divisions are supported by Burnet’s linguistic analysis: the barbarous tongues belong almost exclusively to non-Europeans. The difference between ‘black’ and ‘white’, for instance, not only becomes apparent through language, but is also imparted with evolutionary rhetoric. He wrote,

I have had occasion to observe, that a black that came from a country in Africa near to the settlement of Goree, when he was so old that he never learned English well, could not pronounce two mute consonants

²³ Burnet, *Origin and Progress*, Vol. I, p. 256.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

²⁵ James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Edinburgh: J. Bell, 1787), Vol. IV, pp. 5-6.

together[...]. Thus we see, the progress has been from the use of single consonants in syllables to the use of two or more.²⁶

This 'progress' towards more aesthetically pleasing language is, for Burnet, more than a process of culture or education. It is also symbolic of the decline of animal interiority. By Burnet's schema, a less beautiful language is a more animalistic one. He imagines 'barbarous' languages as influenced by the inarticulate cries, used to express basic emotions 'such as, cries of joy, grief, terror, surprise, and the like.'²⁷

And this representation is not just a general comment on the 'savage' or 'barbarous' Other, but is often articulated specifically towards geographical locations: 'That men, without the use of speech, should be found in the midst of the civilised Europe, is much more incredible than that such men should be found in Africa, a country which we are sure in all times has abounded with wild men.'²⁸ One would think the interpretation of Burnet's ideas as 'racial' could be questioned by the cultural nature of language: an African in Europe could learn a European language from birth and thus escape the animalistic stigma placed upon them by Burnet, regardless of bodily differences. The divisions created by his linguistic theories, however, take on an element of biological determinism under closer scrutiny. Importantly, Burnet wrote:

For the habits and dispositions of mind, and, by consequence, the aptitude to learn any thing, are qualities which go to the race, as well as the shape and other bodily qualities. And it is for this reason, that the offspring of a savage animal will never be so tame, whatever pains may be taken upon him, as the offspring of a tame animal... And, accordingly, Kolben, in his account of the Hottentots, tells us, that it is

²⁶ Burnet, *Origin and Progress* (Second Edition), Vol. I, p. 505.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 475.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

not possible to tame a Hottentot, and reconcile him to Dutch manners, though taken quite young, and bred up in the European way; and he says, the experiment has often been tried, but never succeeded.²⁹

Thus physical variations come to be symptomatic of internal deficiencies: while bodily differences in Burnet's philosophy are climatic, and therefore potentially malleable, they are still stable enough to provide a concrete measure of difference for several generations to come. The outward body is symbolic of an internal condition common to all members of particular human varieties. The descendants of black Africans, for instance, may in this theory at some point hundreds of years in the future—if the correct climatic and cultural conditions are met—become as distant from the animals as white Europeans are supposed to be. In Burnet's present and immediate future, however, the stereotypes attached to certain non-European groups are as equally inefaceable and 'racist' as those found in White's text. This is a line of reasoning which can be followed within the work of many monogenetic authors, as is argued elsewhere in this thesis.

Burnet considered his measurement of linguistic features to be as equally rigorous and scientific as White regarded his study of bone structure. Given this fact, the former's work consequently predates, by some twenty-five years, the latter's as a formalised 'scientific' attempt to demonstrate the animal inferiority of non-Europeans. The representational congruencies between the two texts run even deeper, as can be seen if we return to the notion of aesthetics as a quantifiable measure of racial superiority. As noted before, Burnet perceived the European languages as languages of art: and the pinnacle of these languages, the author believed, was ancient Greek, which he described as 'the most perfect language I am acquainted with.'³⁰ This prompts an interesting comparison with Figure 1, which was so instrumental in establishing White's central thesis. The illustration is a very prominent declaration of the animalistic

²⁹ Burnet, *Origin and Progress* (Second Edition), Vol. I, pp. 300-301.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

inferiority of non-Europeans, but a further congruency with Burnet can be seen in the pinnacle of this scale from the brute to the divine: just as to Burnet Ancient Greek language is the most beautiful, so in this scale is the Grecian Antique sculptural figure the height of human bodily perfection.

The similarity of these scales suggests that there were fundamental cultural assumptions operating on both authors, stemming from common notions present long before either work was written. Their fundamental belief in classical European superiority of body and mind, and the increased distance from the animal kingdom which this implied, suffused their racial hierarchies in a manner that confirms the notion of 'racial' variety itself was present within their shared acculturation. The next section shows in even greater detail how classical knowledge permeated early-modern thinking on human variation via numerous genres, providing a set of established metaphors for categorical difference which recurred throughout the eighteenth century with great frequency.

Bestiality: Differing Conclusions and Continuous Stereotypes

Such highly structured representations of non-Europeans as those seen in the last section were infrequent in the eighteenth century. In many other texts engaging in the scientific debates on humanity it was the historical or physical descriptions of non-Europeans that suggested animality most clearly, even if there was not a clear, structured hierarchy implemented. The next few sections, then, will deal with a number of stereotypes that served to dehumanise in subtly different ways, and which are found repeatedly in the English-language discourse of race theory. This section specifically examines the implications of bestiality, of the sexual interbreeding between human

populations and animals—in most instances apes. Dror Wahrman calls this motif a ‘common early-modern refrain’ found in travel writing and literature.³¹ The perpetuation of such stories in late eighteenth-century scientific and philosophical discussions, it is seen, served to consolidate the sub-humanity of those groups represented via the inference of greater proximity to the brute creation; they reduce and blur the emotional and sexual boundaries between human and animal. It is argued in this section, moreover, that there is little difference in how authors at each end of the eighteenth century employed such descriptions to create a sense of non-European ‘Otherness’ within their texts.

James Burnet, as we saw in the last section, created a highly structured progression hierarchy of ‘humanity’ from apes to ancient Greeks, based on the detailed analysis of language. In providing evidence for his controversial inclusion of apes in this schema, however, the author relied upon historical accounts of ‘barbarous’ nations from a variety of eras. In his demonstration of the ‘Orang Outang’s’ humanity, Burnet compounds images of animalism by giving voice to and ‘scientifically’ authorising travel narratives that describe ape interaction with African people. The apes are found by Burnet in many sources to maintain and act upon sexual urges towards humans, and some human groups are also reported to experience similar urges towards animals: all of which suggests to Burnet that the progression from ape into ‘barbarous’ human is fairly smooth, and symbolic of them being a single series with the rest of humanity. Burnet uses the consensus of many travel narratives from across a variety of eras to prove his central thesis. With the depiction of human/animal sexual interaction he begins in ancient history with a recounting of Diodorus Siculus’ description of African nations, the accuracy of whose information he is anxious to demonstrate: ‘Of these he had an opportunity of being very well informed, by the curiosity of one of the

³¹ Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, p. 135.

Ptolemies, King of Egypt, who[...]sent men whom he could trust, on purpose to be informed concerning such nations'.³² We are told of a race called the *Insensibles* who lived 'promiscuously with other animals[...]and he adds, that they lived with those animals, and with one another, with great good faith, and in great peace and concord.'³³ Classical knowledge is thus important once again in demonstrating the animalistic nature of non-European groups. It is a representation which is revealed to have persisted in travel writing—despite demands for objectivity and plain, unembellished style in this genre—throughout the early modern period. Burnet reconciles these classical reports with more modern travel writers, paraphrasing the findings of French traveller 'de la Brosse', who 'made a voyage to Angola in 1738[...][who found] Orang Outangs, whom he calls by the name *Quimpezes*[...]from six to seven feet height. They carry away young negroe girls, and keep them for their pleasure: And, he says, he knew one negroe girl that had been with them three years'.³⁴ Moreover he adds to this a letter, printed in full in his footnotes, by a 'credible merchant in Bristol, still living, who formerly was captain of a ship trading to the slave coast of Africa, and made several voyages thither.'³⁵ This letter describes daily interactions between apes and communities on the coast of Angola, who are harassed in their fields by the creatures. It notes, '[w]hen a he one catches a black woman, it commonly forces, and lies with her; if there are several, they all do it, it seems, in their turns.'³⁶ The cumulative effect of these accounts is to prove to Burnet that apes are operating on the same instinctive drives as people:

³² Burnet, *Origin and Progress*, Vol. I, pp 238-239.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

The substance of all these different relations is, that the Orang Outang is an animal of the human form, inside as well as outside: That he has the human intelligence, as much as can be expected in an animal living without civility or arts[...]and] That he has the sentiments and affections peculiar to our species.³⁷

The tales of travellers, both ancient and contemporary, are thus used by Burnet to expound a supposedly early-modern concept of nature, in which boundaries between the human and the animal are sometimes too indistinct to draw definitive conclusions. The blurred edge of this boundary in Burnet's text, however, is located somewhere around black Africans and the higher apes—no account of an ape desiring a European is found in any of the texts examined in this discourse.

In other contemporary sources a hierarchical structure of humanity is even more apparent. In the hands of the 'modern' regime polygenesisists, the same fables are used to an ideologically alternative end. Edward Long's *The History of Jamaica* (1774) is a three-volume work, primarily concerned with Jamaica's 'Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government.'³⁸ The section on the island's inhabitants, however, engages with several of the scientific speculations about human nature, and even articulates new theories, and thus is an important text to consider here. Long is a rather infamous author. Wahrman refers to him as a 'founding father in the pantheon of British racism'³⁹ and Gustav Jahoda refers to *The History of Jamaica* as a 'watershed' work with a 'radical thesis [which] had not previously been formulated in such explicit and passionate terms'⁴⁰; specifically, the theory that black Africans were a separate, biologically inferior and distinct species. Long was personally involved in the colonial affairs of Jamaica for much of his life, running a plantation and being 'promoted to the position of judge of the vice admiralty court in Jamaica', a role

³⁷ Burnet, *Origin and Progress*, Vol. I, p. 289.

³⁸ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica... In Three Volumes* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), Vol. II, title page.

³⁹ Wahrman, *Modern Self*, p. 130.

⁴⁰ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p. 55.

he maintained even from Britain until ‘about 1797.’⁴¹ His work thus reveals many of the pseudo-scientific constructions of colonial reality. Furthermore, he was highly important to attempts to scientifically justify the colonial slavery system: ‘Long’s peculiar talent lay in linking a ‘scientific’-sounding assertion of black inferiority[...]with a defence of black slavery that comes across as a good deal more plausibly than any previous statement of the slave-owners’ case.’⁴² Given *History of Jamaica*’s contemporary political meaning, it is especially important that the racist claims of the text are properly understood.

Unlike Burnet’s and White’s contributions, the primary purpose of Long’s *History of Jamaica* was not to scientifically deconstruct human variety but to describe and dissect Jamaica as a colony. The incidence of such animalised representations of African people, however, is still quite staggering, presumably as a method of justifying their enslavement. In one example Long wrote,

Their hearing is remarkable quick; their faculties of smell and taste are truly bestial, not less so their commerce with the other sex; in these acts they are libidinous and shameless as monkeys, or baboons. The equally hot temperament of their women has given probability to the charge of their admitting these animals frequently into their embrace.⁴³

Accusations such as this, so rich in representational motifs, permeate much of the text’s body. It is the last sentence here, though, that offers an obvious parallel with Burnet’s descriptions. Long takes the claim even further, in fact: unlike in *Origin and Progress*, African women do not have sex with apes unwillingly but instead ‘admit’ the animals in order to fulfil their ‘hot temperaments’. Black African desires extend down the hierarchy rather, signalling their animalistic inferiority. In *History of Jamaica* this is not

⁴¹ Kenneth Morgan, ‘Long, Edward (1734-1831)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16964, accessed 4th August 2008.

⁴² Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 159.

⁴³ Long, *Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 383.

only the regurgitation of other travel sources, located in specific nations or towns, but is made by Long to become a larger stereotype engulfing the entire continent. Following immediately on from the quote above, Long speculates,

An example of this intercourse once happened, I think, in England; and if lust can prompt to such excesses in that Northern region, and in despite of all the checks which national politeness and refined sentiments impose, how freely may it not operate in the more genial soil of Afric, that parent of everything monstrous in nature, where these creatures are frequent and familiar; where the passions rage without any control; and the retired wilderness presents opportunity to gratify them without fear of detection!⁴⁴

In this statement, an African proclivity towards sex with apes becomes a specifically 'racial' trait: it occurs despite the acculturation of England, due to some intangible difference in internal governing passions. Long, furthermore, gives considerable attention to the case of the 'Orang Outang' as potentially human, and even utilises Burnet's work to demonstrate the perceived proximity between apes and the 'Negroe race'. His conclusions, however, are drastically different: in another example, for instance, Long suggests that 'Orang Outangs'

do not seem at all inferior in the intellectual faculties to many of the Negroe race; with some of whom, it is credible that they have the most intimate connexion and consanguinity. The amorous intercourse between them may be frequent; the Negroes themselves bear testimony that such intercourses actually happen; and it is certain, that both races agree perfectly well in lasciviousness of disposition.⁴⁵

From these and other accounts, Long thus concludes that 'an orang-outang, in this case, is a human being, *quod* his form and organs; but of an inferior species, *quod* his intellect; he has in form much nearer resemblance to the Negroe race, than the latter

⁴⁴ Long, *Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 383.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

bear to white men.’⁴⁶ These same bodily and intellectual features provided evidence for monogenetic, although intrinsically hierarchical, human species in Burnet’s work. Here, though, they are used diametrically by Long as evidence for a firmly divisional ladder of separate kinds. After a study of black populations across Africa, Long comes to the conclusion that, ‘[t]he measure of the several orders and varieties of these Blacks may be as compleat as that of any other race of mortals; filling up that space, or degree, beyond which they are not destined to pass; and discriminating them from the rest of men, not in *kind*, but in *species*.’⁴⁷ A few other authors came to similar conclusions in the decades after Long and, as we shall see, the insinuation of sexual congress between Africans and apes was present in all.

Like Long’s work, Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781), published widely across both America and Britain, is not specifically aimed at a scientific analysis of human nature but is rather an historical and political work. Once again, however, the author’s descriptions of the state’s inhabitants engage with the wider debates in scientific and philosophical circles. Although Jefferson’s work ‘leaves open’ the question of ‘whether the Negro is a separate species’, just as in *History of Jamaica* they are in general ‘represented as inferior to the white man in both body and mind.’⁴⁸ This inferiority is grounded in a loose aesthetic hierarchy, seemingly congruent with visual scales such as that seen earlier by Petrus Camper. Jefferson’s scale, though, is not developed through empirical measurement of facial angle but rather begins with an assessment of skin colour. He wrote,

The first difference which strikes us is that of colour[...]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

⁴⁶ Long, *Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 371.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁴⁸ John C. Greene, ‘The American Debate on the Negro’s Place in Nature, 1780-1815’, in Maryanne Cline Horowitz (ed.), *Race, Gender, and Rank: Early Modern Ideas of Humanity* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1992), p. 66.

white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one, preferable to that monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable 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 judgement in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own species.⁴⁹

In this passage the ‘uniform’ fact of sexual attractiveness of black Africans for apes is taken to be evidence of the gradation between brute and civilised humanity, made manifest in Jefferson’s objective and measurable notion of ‘beauty’. It is perhaps the fact that the accusation of such inter-species attraction is provided without any sources referenced, as if common truth, that bears most importance to the central thesis of this section, as shall be seen in the conclusion.

First, however, I will examine one more example of this representational motif. Charles White’s primary contention of ‘negro’ proximity to apes, as we have already seen, was grounded in physical measurement and comparative anatomy; a feature of the modern regime of race science, whereby ‘physical attributes such as skin colour, shape of the nose, or texture of the hair’ came to be more explicitly important than the ‘older conceptions of Christianity, civility, and rank’ which critics such as Wheeler see as being so prominent for the majority of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ Despite this apparently practical approach to delineating humanity, however, White still sees fit to adduce hearsay extracted from travel narratives to his work, in support of his gradational views. As well as animalising the African, White also humanises the ‘orang-outang’ much as Burnet does. Again the sheer weight of representations justified his use of travel reports in an anatomical text. He wrote, ‘[a]ll those who have had opportunities of making observations on the orang-outangs, agree in ascribing them, not only a remarkable docility of disposition, but also actions and affections similar to those observable in the

⁴⁹ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787), pp. 229-230.

⁵⁰ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 7.

human kind.’⁵¹ These observations quickly come to bear greater meaning than a simple characterisation of apes: as White’s work is apt to do, the humanity of the apes comes to meet the animality of Africans along his gradational scale. And, as in the previous examples, this meeting is not only a meeting of natures but also a physical and sexual one:

They have been known to carry off negro-boys, girls, and even women, with a view of making them subservient to their wants as slaves, or as objects of brutal passion: and it has been asserted by some, that women have had offspring from such connections. This last circumstance is not, however, certain.⁵²

There is great repetition, we consequently see, between these remarks and those observed in the preceding texts.

White, furthermore, takes such suggestions even further: the implication of possible ape/‘negro’ offspring here is a very important feature, for it removes the observations of travellers from the realms of literary discourse and firmly into biological discussion over human nature. This is because the issue of breeding couples was one of the primary factors considered by naturalists such as Buffon and Linnaeus to draw biological categories: two entities that could produce fertile offspring together were commonly considered a single species. More shall be said on this in Chapter Three, which considers ‘miscegenation’ and the surrounding representations. For now, however, it should be noted that, although White admits such progeny are not certain to even exist, he does immediately use such rumours to approach the question of polygenetic theory in an oblique way: ‘Supposing it be true, it would be an object of enquiry, whether such offspring would propagate, or prove to be mules.’⁵³ Despite his reservations to entirely represent the claims of travellers as fact, he does serve to give

⁵¹ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 33.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

them some scientific ratification by his very consideration of them, and his interest in them as avenues of further study.

The above has demonstrated that there is an obvious continuity in the anecdotes selected and perpetuated by the above theorists. It is important to recognise here that the use of such descriptions is equally uncritical in all the texts, despite their shifting theoretical perspectives: Burnet is the archetypal monogenesist, Jefferson portrays himself as undecided, and Long and White are fervently polygenetic in their formulations. They all, however, use the cumulative reports of animal/African sexual interaction as hard evidence for their divergent ideas. They are all equally dependent upon traditional early-modern knowledge in their work: the only constant is the assumption by each author that the travel sources are valid as material for scientific study.

Even in the eighteenth century, this synthesis of ethnographic information was treated as suspicious. In 1789 William Dickson, fierce abolitionist and one time private secretary to Edward Hay, Governor of Barbados, published a collection of letters on the subject of slavery. Their cumulative purpose was to attack the gathering apologies for slavery, and to exalt 'some Negroes eminent for their virtues and abilities.'⁵⁴ Edward Long, being the most vocal advocate of the black African's sub-humanity, was an obvious target for attack. To Long's suggestion that, 'Ludicrous as the opinion may seem, I do not think that an *Orang Outang husband* would be any disgrace to a Hottentot female'⁵⁵, Dickson reacts angrily. He labels the statement '*indecent* or *shocking*' and writes, '[i]t is mortifying to see an author, of so much general merit, misled by travellers, whose only aim seems to have been, to fill the world with

⁵⁴ William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery* (London: J. Phillips, 1789), title page.

⁵⁵ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 364.

monsters, of their own creating.’⁵⁶ Dickson here seems to be aware of what the above authors of natural history, anatomy and philology were not: that rather than the causes of particular racial stereotypes being open to debate, the representations of non-Europeans themselves were highly questionable. All the scientists in this section, despite their differing conclusions, served to validate as fact the impressions of animalistic difference proffered by their informing culture. The information that proved monogenesis could also prove polygenesis, and neither branch of theory challenged the stereotype itself.

Authors such as Long, however, were doing more than simply repeating the claims of travellers in an uncritical fashion when citing incidents of bestiality. They were also reducing what was actually a widely spread legend, with a far more diverse geographical application, to represent black Africans alone. Although all the primary suggestions of animal/human sex in this chapter have thus far been centred on this population group, the stereotype was once far more general. Jahoda traces the invention of a nonspecific ‘savage’ character back to ancient Greece, where mythology conceived of ‘wild men’ born of ‘indiscriminate interbreedings between gods, humans and animals’.⁵⁷ Inter-species breeding was thus integral not just in the representation of Africans, but of ‘savage’ races across the globe. Accordingly, later travel literature displays such notions towards the ‘newly-discovered’ American populations. Anthony Pagden’s study of early-modern perceptions of the American Indian tells of ‘two sexual crimes—sodomy and bestiality—of which the Indians were[...]accused.’⁵⁸ The notion of an internal difference in sexual desires, then, was widely available to the eighteenth-century writers as a general stereotype of the non-European; a stereotype which later came to be selected and focused upon the black African in particular, not just in

⁵⁶ Dickson, *Letters*, p. 83.

⁵⁷ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p.5.

⁵⁸ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indians and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 86.

scientific discourse but also in wider literature. In 1762, for instance, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote in her personal observations of Africans, that they ‘differ so little from their own country people, the Baboons, tis hard to fancy them a distinct race, and I could not help thinking there had been some ancient alliances between them.’⁵⁹ In making this comment she communicates not a form of ‘racism’ conjured in the eighteenth-century by the increasing need to distinguish between black and white people, but a common and ancient belief of the ‘other’ that had been selected by contemporary theory to express the growing political and cultural pervasion of visible black figures in European society. She and the scientific authors in this section did not invent their expressions of ‘racial’ difference, but rather they picked them from a representational tradition which had its roots in antiquity.

It was my purpose in this section to readdress the proliferation of ‘racial’ ideas after 1770. It is true, as the primary source material indicates, that around this time a considerable amount of information on human ‘racial’ variety became available in Britain. Much of this work, I argue, served to locate onto particular populations—in this instance black Africans—the weight of representational traditions with old and powerful histories. This should not, however, be considered the beginning of ‘racial’ thought. Rather, as I go on to suggest in this and later chapters, it was the case that existing ‘racial’ boundaries between human groups were shifting to a more recognisably modern set of categories. The very notion of bestiality as an action of the ‘savage’, whether in America or Africa or anywhere else, indeed, has within it an inherent notion of ‘biological’ separateness as a hereditary result of those liaisons. The categories and vocabulary of ‘race’, including the meaning of the word ‘race’ itself, underwent change during this period, but the practical concept itself was already in place within the minds

⁵⁹ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Written during her Travels* (London, 1763) cited in Wahrman, *Modern Self*, p. 134.

of many authors. Animalistic inferiority, even for climatic theorists, was stable enough to be considered permanent on an immediate timescale—this was seen in the case of Burnet’s theories in the last section. This section has shown that this animalism was a long-established way of thinking about peoples differing from the European benchmark. As we see in the next section, furthermore, this historical model based upon varieties of internal desire is mirrored by constructions of the body.

Bestial Bodies and Bestial Natures

The last section dealt with the fairly intangible distinctions of sexual nature and inward character. As was seen in the work of Burnet in the first section of this chapter, however, internal natures were often seen as determining outward appearance: this, indeed, is the essence of physiognomical thought. This section looks at the representations found in scientific texts exploring how certain groups—particularly in this segment black Africans—were dehumanised and made animalistic by accounts of their bodily appearances. Of particular interest here are two physical features: scent and hair. These qualities, we see, have long been established as markers of variance from a European benchmark, and through this it is seen that the language used to evoke ‘racial’ theory is binary. On the one hand there is a technical vocabulary of nouns which essentialise people into a particular, hierarchical category and on the other is a vocabulary of adjectives which describe ‘racialised’ features of the body and soul. The latter vocabulary remains prominent in texts throughout the eighteenth century.

While this thesis is a study of representations of non-Europeans worldwide, the majority of this chapter’s material has so far dealt with assumptions surrounding black Africans. This is chiefly because ‘animality’ as a stereotype was in the eighteenth-century most frequently associated with this group in scientific discourse, probably due

to the dehumanising process of the increasing visibility of the slave trade combining with far older prejudices drawn from authors of the ancient world, who located ‘monstrous races’ in ‘remote places, but remoteness in the physiological sense as much as the geographical sense.’⁶⁰ At the end of the last section, indeed, it was suggested that the shift in thought on race observed by several historians is in fact the consolidation of ‘negro’ Africans as polar opposite of the European. This is not to say, however, that Africans were not already established in the minds of many earlier eighteenth-century authors as a categorically different, animalistically inferior branch of humanity. This section demonstrates continuity in ‘racial’ consciousness stemming from at least the late seventeenth century, which was not always expressed using scientific terminology, but which still shows many thematic and linguistic similarities.

Like polygenetic treatises *The History of Jamaica* and *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man*, Henry Home, Lord Kames’ *Six Sketches on the History of Man* (1774; 1776) clearly articulates belief in separate species of mankind. The work quickly became controversial, eliciting several written responses from authors such as John Hunter, David Doig and Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith, who shall be investigated in later sections. The text itself is actually, for the most part, devoted to explicating a progressional history of legal and philosophical matter, such as property, commerce and art. But it is in the author’s first sketch, on ‘The Diversity of Men, and of Languages’ that Home engages with wider debates over human nature. Like many of the monogenetic theorists previously studied, the author sees the physical variations of mankind as specifically linked to climate. Unlike those others, however, the author believes such physical groupings to be permanent qualities that will not adjust to new climates or circumstances. ‘Certain it is,’ he wrote, ‘that all men are not fitted equally for every climate. There is scarce a climate but what is natural to some men, where they

⁶⁰ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p. 1.

prosper and flourish; and there is not a climate but where some men degenerate.’⁶¹ From this reasoning, evidenced by travelling and colonial accounts of people removed to climates other than their original, Home believed he had ‘ascertained beyond any rational doubt, that there are different races or kinds of men, and that these races or kinds are naturally fitted for different climates: whence we have reason to conclude, that originally each kind was placed in its proper climate, whatever change may have happened in later times by war and commerce.’⁶² Physical variety, therefore, becomes ordained, and symbolic of irrevocable differences between the various human ‘species’. Home, indeed, attributes physical differences to God’s providence—something strongly criticised by authors such as John Hunter—studied later—as a ‘superstition’⁶³.

In *Sketches*, however, Home used physical features as a primary factor in his argument for polygenetic theory, and also as evidence that climactic theories were insufficient to explain global human variation. Home wrote,

[t]he black colour of negroes, thick lips, flat nose, crisped woolly hair, and rank smell, distinguish them from every other race of men. The Abyssinians on the contrary are tall and well made, their complexion a brown olive, features well proportioned...There is no such difference of climate between Abyssinia and Negroland as to produce these striking differences.⁶⁴

This description comes fourteen pages into his first sketch on the ‘Diversity of Men and of Languages’, and is the first comment made in his whole work on the ‘negroe’ people. It should be seen, consequently, as how Home primarily conceived of black Africans and chose to characterise them to a wider audience, and as such is a potent statement. In

⁶¹ Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Six Sketches on the History of Man* (Philadelphia: R. Bell and R. Aitkin, 1776), p. 11.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶³ John Hunter, *Disputatio Inauguralis Quaedam de Hominum Varietatibus, Et Harum Causis Exponens* (Edinburgi: Apud Balfour et Smellie, 1775); English translation in: Thomas Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), ‘The Inaugural Dissertation of John Hunter, M.D. on the Varieties of Man’, *The Anthropological Treatises* (London: Longman, 1865), p. 361.

⁶⁴ Home, *Six Sketches*, p. 14.

support of modern historiography, it is immediately clear here that the body is the first point of difference to be discussed between populations. Both Abyssinia and 'Negroland' are not represented by their states of culture or religion or society, but by the particular features of their inhabitants. Such features are depicted, however, with inherently loaded adjectives that render the comparative moral ranks and states of each group obvious. In direct contrast to the 'well made' and 'well proportioned' Abyssinians, the negative connotations of 'black colour' and 'thick lips' are clear, and furthermore the word 'woolly' has a blatant bestial implication. The 'rank smell' mentioned is also equally significant here. The animalistic suggestions of this are not widely apparent at first glance, but an examination of descriptions in a broader context soon reveals the importance of such statements.

In his *History of Jamaica*, fellow polygenesist Long dedicated an entire chapter to exploring and analysing 'negroes' as a collective group. This section at once launches into an account of 'the particulars wherein they differ most essentially from the Whites', which again begins with physical characteristics and once again the fifth instance of which is '[t]heir bestial or fetid smell, which they all have in a greater or less degree'.⁶⁵ This reference is thus instantly tied to notions of animality through the word 'bestial': a term which is recurrent in the texts studied throughout this chapter. Furthermore, Long's reporting of this smell is not just a casual observation, but is intimately tied to some vague quality of civilisation. He wrote, 'the Congo's, Arada's, Quaqua's, and Angola's, particularly the latter, who are likewise the most stupid of the Negroe race, are the most offensive; and those of Senegal (who are distinguished from the other herds by greater acuteness of understanding and mildness of disposition) have the least noxious odour.'⁶⁶ Here the smell becomes symbolic of a hierarchy, of a state of regression from the civilised peak of humanity that reminds us of the explicit schemas

⁶⁵ Long, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 351-352.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 352-353.

developed by White and Burnet. The physical quality of scent, indeed, is also important to Charles White's central thesis. White tells us, '[t]he RANK SMELL emitted from the bodies of many negroes is well known; but it is much stronger in some tribes or nations than in others, and the strongest in apes.'⁶⁷ The physical comparison of smell, through information presumably assimilated from cultural artefact such as travelogues, and although unsupported by any empirical measurement of any kind, is thus used by White to further his conclusions on human and sub-human gradation. Long, however, and in common with much of his work, represents this 'bestial' smell to the point of hyperbole: 'The scent in some of them is so strong, especially when their bodies are warmed either by exercise or anger, that it continues in places where they have been near a quarter of an hour.'⁶⁸ Scent here seems to become an intrinsic and emotive fact of difference, not just scientifically relevant as in White's texts but personally distasteful to Long, who dealt with the practicalities of interaction with 'negroes' on a daily basis.

Just as White and Long converge with Home on descriptions of scent, so there are remarkable similarities in their depiction of hair. This is, for instance, for Long the second indication of difference between Europeans and Africans. Or rather, the divergence for the author does not lie in a variation of the hair itself, but in the fact that black people do not have real hair at all: Long observed a 'covering of wool, like the bestial fleece, instead of hair.'⁶⁹ This comment presumably intends to compound the notion that the black African represents a different species to white Europeans, in that it reveals a lack of a feature commonly associated with humanity, and fills this lack with an inferior, animalistic alternative. With White, the effect is the same. He talks of hair, which is 'shorter and more woolly in the African than in the European, and still more so in monkeys.'⁷⁰ Here the 'woolly' description is again united with a hierarchical

⁶⁷ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Long, *History of Jamaica*, pp. 353.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 352.

⁷⁰ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 58

conclusion: the adjective is not just an analogy used to conjure images of thick, curled hair, and the animalistic implication is made explicit.

The three primary polygenetic works of eighteenth-century Britain—these proponents of Wheeler’s ‘minority view’ that some people represent a distinct and less-human species—thus all carry the stereotypes of ‘bestial’ smell and ‘woolly’ hair. What, though, of the more common-place monogenetic treatises, which supposedly operated from a more indistinct, early-modern precept of climate and culture, and which would thus presumably conceptualise the physical body as being less significant in human classification? There are a number of texts that bear interesting comparisons here.

Oliver Goldsmith’s *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774) is an example of a text published at the same time as, but fundamentally opposing in theory, the polygenetic literature examined above. This eight-volume attempt at a comprehensive natural history owes much to continental predecessors such as Buffon, the canonical monogenesist refuted sternly by authors such as Home. Goldsmith, indeed, believes Buffon has ‘brought greater talents to this part of learning than any other man’⁷¹, even admitting that ‘many of the materials are taken from him, yet I have added, retrenched, and altered, as I thought proper.’⁷² It is clear that Goldsmith

⁷¹ Oliver Goldsmith, *An History of Earth and Animated Nature* (London: J. Nourse, 1774), Vol. I, p. i.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. xi. It may seem unfair to those familiar with the life and work of Oliver Goldsmith to group the author together in this thesis with ‘racialists’ who had a far greater claim to contemporary scientific validity (for instance Johann Blumenbach or Carolus Linnaeus). *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, indeed, was by his own admission largely culled from the work of other authors and contained little of original merit to the study of natural history. Describing the author as a ‘racial scientist’ perhaps thus appears somewhat misrepresentative. What I mean to demonstrate by doing so, however, is that the methodology of a poet and playwright making a tentative foray into the natural history of humanity still bears striking similarities to that implemented by scientists who still today possess a gloss of legitimacy. Much of Linnaeus’ *Systema Naturae*, for example, was similarly pieced together from the accounts of other authors (Introduction, p. 35). ‘Racial science’ was from the outset a process of collectors and readers bringing together first-hand accounts and existing theory into individual narratives. By imposing our modern sense of legitimacy onto the reputation of individual authors we miss the fact that all such ‘racial scientists’, whether remembered for their science or not, drew upon common scholarly tools and methods which they believed to be useful and accurate in producing factual knowledge.

considered his own work rigorously scientific; a claim he perhaps felt was legitimised by his study of medicine at the University of Edinburgh, which he entered in 1752.⁷³ On the first page of the Preface he wrote that the first objective of his natural history was the ‘discovering, ascertaining, and naming all the various productions of nature...which is the most difficult part of this science...[being] systematical, dry, mechanical, and incomplete.’⁷⁴ Of all eight volumes, only one chapter of the first volume has much meaning to my project, namely Chapter XI: ‘Of the Varieties in the Human Race.’⁷⁵ Contained within this chapter, however, is a broad overview of humanity, which contains many revealing generalisations.

The author’s initial comments on that ‘striking variety in the human species...the Negroes of Africa’ immediately conjure images of a people inferior to white Europeans. He writes, ‘[t]his gloomy race of mankind is found to blacken all the southern parts of Africa’.⁷⁶ Their skin colour seems to be immediately united with some inward quality of character by Goldsmith and, as in the texts above, physical appearance becomes the first recorded measure of difference in his text. Amongst the nations of southern Africa itself, however, Goldsmith notes an internal variety of figure:

Each of the Negroe nations, it must be owned, differ among each other; they have particular countries for beauty, like us; and different nations, as in Europe, pride themselves on the regularity of features. Those of Guinea, for instance, are extremely ugly, and have an insupportable scent; those of Mosambique, are reckoned beautiful, and have no ill scent whatsoever.⁷⁷

⁷³ John A. Dussinger, ‘Oliver Goldsmith (1728?-74)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10924, accessed 5th June 2008.

⁷⁴ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. x.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

Again the nature of scent is combined with other, broader hierarchical concepts: the notion of aesthetic beauty is integral to many eighteenth-century methods of evaluating different populations, as seen earlier in the images by Camper and White. For Goldsmith, this scale of being is changeable: the smell abates the more beautiful a group is, and groups can move up and down the hierarchy. He wrote, for instance, of Portuguese settlers to the African coast ‘about two centuries ago’, who ‘also are become almost as black as the Negroes; and are said, by some, to be even more barbarous.’⁷⁸ Thus physical appearance becomes symbiotically related to civilisation in Goldsmith’s work, and as in Long’s passage the uglier a group is the more heavily scented and thus more savage. Goldsmith’s distinctions are impermanent and flexible when considered over a long time scale of hundreds of years, but in fact the implications of his claims vary little from those of the polygenesists. In his work, an individual of an ‘inferior’ ‘race’ remains so regardless of their cultural, climatic and religious surroundings; over the course of a single lifetime, they would still be irredeemably ‘other’ and inferior.

The practical difference between black and white, indeed, is made even greater considering Goldsmith’s comments on hair. Here the African is seen to ‘differ[...]entirely from what we are used to’.⁷⁹ And again the language used is remarkably familiar, their hair being characterised as ‘soft, woolly, and short.’⁸⁰ Other monogenetic theorists also reproduce this description, showing important continuities between texts of either side of the theoretical divide. John Hunter, who we saw earlier criticise Home’s ideas, wrote in his *Disputatio Inauguralis Quaedam de Hominum Varietatibus* (1775) of the texture of black African hair that ‘there seems to be a great difference, for that of some is soft and curly like wool, and that of others harsh and

⁷⁸ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, pp. 228-229.

⁷⁹ *Ibid* p. 227.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

dense.’⁸¹ Unlike in the texts above, Hunter refuses to speculate on the meanings behind this and offered no further animalising remarks. In explaining this variation, indeed, Hunter reveals himself to be firmly climatic in his theory and thus much opposed to authors such as Home and White, who offer static and unchangeable analyses of humanity. He tells us that,

in the negroes, whose hair is like wool, the bulbs or roots of the hair are attenuated and small, as if through deficiency of nourishment: and it is only in the case of those who inhabit the hottest regions, or who are born elsewhere from the natives of such, that the hair becomes almost a kind of wool.⁸²

The variation in hair is here ostensibly an innocent result of environment. But the animalistic metaphor, used so commonly among the previously examined authors, is still part of the discourse; it is there to be read into by an audience. The term ‘wool’ and the derivatives thereof, indeed, are used repeatedly throughout Hunter’s discussion of hair, five times in the space of two pages, just as they were used frequently throughout the entire debate over the nature and varieties of man in the eighteenth century. This, then, is the main point of this section: that a common, non-technical vocabulary had developed from which British theorists could draw terms to describe and delineate humanity, and that consequently there were recurring representations of black Africans and other non-Europeans that gained legitimacy through their perpetuation across the gamut of disparate theoretic positions. This vocabulary of motifs of difference was not an invention of the late eighteenth century, but the product of a long-standing tradition in British culture.

In a postscript to the ninth letter of his 1789 publication, William Dickson engages with the polygenetic arguments for slavery, which posed the African as a

⁸¹ Hunter, *Disputatio Inauguralis*, p. 386.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388.

species below the rest of mankind. Dickson endeavoured, however, to apply the “test of truth” to some of these very pertinent profound objections.’⁸³ It seems somewhat surprising that the first feature dealt with by Dickson is not skin-colour or imagined intellectual capacity, but rather the assertion that ‘negroes[...]have a fetid smell.’⁸⁴ As we have seen in the earlier section, this contention was finding much exposure in the debates of natural history in the late eighteenth century, in both polygenetic and monogenetic texts. Dickson rejects this, claiming that many of the ‘negroes’ he knew ‘have no particular smell that I could discover.—But, granting it to be universal, what connection has a fetid smell with the intellect?’⁸⁵ In making this comment the author shows himself to be particularly resistant to a stereotype that by all accounts was gathering in popularity by the last decades of the eighteenth century. The fact that Dickson chose to address smell first out of all the differences he addresses, which also include facial features and claims of affinity with apes, would seem testament to this. The same growth has also been noted by Milton Cantor, who states, ‘[t]oward the end of the century there were frequent comments on the lips, noses, general features, and the “rank offensive smell” of Negroes.’⁸⁶ This last comment is a quote taken from John F. D. Smyth’s *A Tour of the United States of America* (1784), but Cantor offers some more examples to prove a legacy of this representation. He cites, for instance, Richard Ligon’s *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657). The full quote shares much in common with the remarks seen in Long’s *History of Jamaica* earlier. Ligon, explaining a local weather phenomenon by which large pools of water appear on the ground in particular seasons, writes, ‘[t]his pond water, they use upon all occasions, and to all purposes; to boyle their meat, to make their drink, to wash their linen, for it will beare soap. But one thing seem’d to me a little loathsome, and that was the *Negroes*

⁸³ Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, p. 81.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

⁸⁶ Milton Cantor, ‘The Image of the Negro in Colonial Literature’, *The New England Quarterly* 36: 4 (Dec. 1963), p. 463.

washing themselves in the Ponds, in hot weather; whose bodies have none of the sweetest savours.' Long, then, shares with Ligon a disgusted reaction to 'negroe' scent, and the parallel sub-humanity conjectured by the former is also implicit in the latter's work: 'The most o them[...]are as neer beasts as may be, setting their soules aside.'⁸⁷ Cantor also adds a further invocation of this stereotype to demonstrate continuity over time between this mid seventeenth- and the previously-mentioned late eighteenth-century examples, from the *South Carolina Gazette*, July 17, 1736.

This stereotype is found not just as an aside in travel accounts, however, but also in earlier anatomical work. Thirty years before the supposed shift towards 'race', John Mitchell's 'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colour of People in Different Climates' (1744) offers a remarkably early expression of a kind of race science that specifically explores variations between people using anatomical measurement. Elizabeth Baigent notes that Mitchell was avowedly monogenetic, and 'showed empirically that differences between the two were merely superficial.'⁸⁸ The piece, indeed, is predominantly based upon an analysis of the skin. Mitchell, however, also sees fit to comment upon the sweat that issues from it: 'The perspirable Matter of black or tawny People is more subtil and volatile in its Nature; and more acrid, penetrating, and offensive, in its Effects; and more of the Nature, and more apt to degenerate to a contagious Miasma, than the milder Effluvia of Whites.'⁸⁹ Much more will be said on the wider conclusions of Mitchell's essay in Chapter Two, but for now it should be noted that whilst this passage lacks the animalistic references seen in White's and Long's work, it does have obvious convergences. The phrase 'acrid, penetrating, and offensive', indeed, seems particularly pejorative and reminds much of Long's later

⁸⁷ Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657), p. 28; p. 47.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Baigent, 'Mitchell, John (1711-1768), *botanist and cartographer*', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18842, accessed 14th May 2009.

⁸⁹ John Mitchell, 'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colour of People in Different Climates', *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 43 (1744-45), p. 143.

comments. In the above two paragraphs we thus see that scent, even when presented without overt claims of animal inferiority, is used and understood as a physical invocation of difference between varieties of humans, in both cultural and scientific contexts.

Representations concerning hair, indeed, also share a significant and perhaps even more prominent continuity. In imaginative literature of the long eighteenth century the invocation of 'woolly' hair, so prominent in the scientific enquiries seen earlier, is also often twinned with a measure of inferiority in character and body. This is perhaps best revealed through the converse stereotype of the 'noble savage': characters who, although forged in a dearth of civility and religion, nonetheless embody the positive, 'European' characteristics of bravery, refinement, morality and modesty.

Felicity Nussbaum notes that such characters in literature, including the protagonist of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688), are not only internally, but also externally, 'Europeanised'. She writes, 'Oroonoko's partially classical, partially African physique, Roman nose, piercing eyes, and finely shaped mouth are of course reminiscent of the most elegant Greek and Roman statues, except for the blight of his colour.'⁹⁰ In equal proportion to his appearance, indeed, in no way did the 'perfections of his mind come short of those of his person; for his discourse was admirable upon almost any subject'.⁹¹ Nussbaum, attempting to demonstrate a continuity in such representations, also links Behn's description to Daniel Defoe's character Friday in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) who,

⁹⁰ Nussbaum, Felicity, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 195.

⁹¹ Aphra Behn, 'Oroonoko', in *Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works* (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), p. 81

had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect, but seemed to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of an European in his countenance too, especially when he smiled[...]His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the Negroes', a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory.⁹²

Both these characters, then, are characterised as positive precisely by their differences from 'negroe' Africans. One feature Nussbaum fails to mention, however, is that both Oroonoko and Friday have straight, European-like hair. In Behn's novel this is an artificial contrivance on the part of Oroonoko, whose 'hair came down to his shoulders, by the aids of art; which was, by pulling it out with a quill, and keeping it combed, of which he took particular care.' Although not an innate physical feature, the straightness of Oroonoko's hair is intrinsic in establishing his 'European' perfections. The above quote, indeed, follows immediately on from this line: 'There was no one grace wanting, that bears the standard of true beauty.'⁹³ Likewise Friday's hair is integral to his goodness: 'His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead very high and large; and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes.'⁹⁴ Here we see, then, not only the invocation of the 'wool' adjective used by the racial theorists earlier in this chapter. There is also an apparent link between straight hair and Friday's natural intelligence, given how closely the description of internal qualities proceeds from the 'Europeanised' exterior features.

The 'Europeanised' features, mental and physical, are particularly important in both of these works as, elsewhere in each text, the general representation of black Africans is far less positive. Catherine Gallagher's analysis of *Oroonoko* notes that the title character is very much an exception from his people: he is 'a wonder because blackness and heroism are normally thought to be mutually exclusive qualities[...]The

⁹² Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1719; 1994), p. 195.

⁹³ Behn, 'Oroonoko', p. 81.

⁹⁴ Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 95.

reader is frequently invited to marvel at the fact that Oroonoko, *although black*, behaves just like a perfectly conventional European tragic hero.⁹⁵ In *Robinson Crusoe*, indeed, the difference between Friday and Crusoe's general conception of 'negroes' is even more noticeable. When Crusoe escapes from slavery in North Africa and sails down the coast with his companion Xury, he repeatedly vocalises a fear of the southerly populations of that continent that relies much on animalistic comparisons. Defoe wrote, 'for who would have supposed we were sailed on to the southward to the truly barbarian coast, where whole nations of Negroes were sure to surround us with their canoes, and destroy us: where we could ne'er once go on shore but we should be devoured by savage beasts, or more merciless savages of human kind?'⁹⁶ In this quote, indeed, the 'negroes' mentioned are considered worse than wild animals by Crusoe. Two pages later the character again raises the same concerns: 'for to have fallen into the hands of any of the savages had been as bad as to have fallen into the hands of lions and tigers; at least we were equally apprehensive of the danger of it.'⁹⁷ The general representation of black Africans in the book, then, is one of animalistic threat: they are seen by Crusoe as so unpredictable and innately violent as to be comparable wild beasts.

The use of the word 'wool' in the depiction of various Africans populations, as seen above in Defoe's book and earlier in the scientific treatises, can also be found proliferated throughout the eighteenth-century's travel writing. Sometimes it is used simply as an adjective, to describe soft, fine and curled hair, and exists in no further animalising context other than its own natural implication. Examples of this can be seen across the century, for instance in the English translations of various foreign expeditions. In the 1792 translation of The Abbé Rochon's *A Voyage to Madagascar, and the East Indies*, for instance, a particular group of Madagascar's inhabitants are

⁹⁵ Catherine Gallagher, 'Oroonoko's Blackness', in Robert DeMaria Jr. (ed.), *British Literature 1640-1789: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 86.

⁹⁶ Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 28.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

distinguished from their fellow islanders by their black skin, and ‘All those who are black have woolly hair, like the negroes on the coast of Africa.’⁹⁸ Late in the century, indeed, accounts of several French expeditions to Africa were published in London. Others, though, saw ‘woolly’ hair as more fundamentally important to questions of natural history. In 1790 a compendium entitled *Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa* became available to English-speaking audiences. The work recorded a series of journeys made between 1780 and 1785, and represents to its readers a variety of different African peoples. Of the ‘Hottentot’ people—traditionally seen by many authors as an inferior off-shoot of ‘negroes’—we are told, ‘It must indeed be allowed that there is something peculiar in his features, which in a certain degree separates him from the generality of mankind[...]to the sight and touch his hair has the resemblance of wool; it is very short, curls naturally, and in colour is as black as ebony.’⁹⁹ This passage, even though it lacks obviously evaluative, hierarchical rhetoric, seems reminiscent of some of the language used by authors such as White and Long, who also spoke in terms of clear black African separateness from the rest of humanity.

Furthermore, in an earlier French translation we see another example of the ‘wool’ stereotype, this time with an extra linguistic context that makes the implications of the word more profound. In *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (1759) George Adanson describes the shock of some African children when confronted with his European appearance:

It came into my head, that my colour, so opposite to the blackness of the Africans, was the first thing that struck the children: those poor little creatures were then in the same case as our infants, the first time they

⁹⁸ Abbé Rochon, *A Voyage to Madagascar, and the East Indies* (London: G.G.J and J. Robinson, 1792), p. 18.

⁹⁹ M. Le Vaillant, *Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa, by the Way of the Cape of Good Hope; in the Yeares 1780, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85* (London: G.G.J and J. Robinson, 1790), pp 117-118.

see a Negroe. I recalled to mind also, that the second thing which surprized the rest, was the length and thickness of my hair, compared to theirs, which looks like fine curled wool.¹⁰⁰

Here 'woolly' hair forms the second demarcation of difference between black and white. Further to this prominence, though, the word 'creatures' is significant. It was a complex word in the eighteenth century. In this instance, it could be taken as a '[w]ord of petty tenderness', as Samuel Johnson's mid-century dictionary might suggest. Perhaps in this context 'creature' is used as a comment on the status of children rather than different 'races'. It should also be noted that the word literally meant '[a]ny thing created by the supreme power': all people were thus 'creatures' fashioned by God.¹⁰¹ This sense was popular in the anti-slavery campaign of the late eighteenth century, as in this context 'creature' actually suggests a unity between black and white people: the term 'fellow-creatures' can be found repeatedly in abolitionist literature during this period.¹⁰² I do not believe this to be the usage found in the above quotation, however, as other common meanings suggest an element of dehumanisation which appears to be more apt. Other possibilities Johnson offered include '[a]n animal not human' and '[a] word of contempt for a human being'.¹⁰³ In the context of travel literature, then, the word could certainly be read as carrying a sense of animalistic inferiority. These last two meanings, indeed, may have applied to the below example found in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. When Crusoe and Xury come nearer to land, their worst fears are realised when they see both a group of 'negroes' on the shore and 'two mighty[...]ravenous creatures' which charge into the water and head for their boat.

¹⁰⁰ M. Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse, 1759), p. 74.

¹⁰¹ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (Second ed.) (London: W. Strahan, 1755), Vol. I, CRE'ATURE, n., definitions 6 and 1.

¹⁰² Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), pp. 50-57.

¹⁰³ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, CRE'ATURE, n., definitions 3 and 5.

Crusoe fires upon one of the animals with a musket and kills it, but the noise frightens the watching people:

It is impossible to express the astonishment of these poor creatures at the noise and the fire of my gun; some of them were ready to die for fear, and fell down as dead with the very terror. But when they saw the creature dead and sunk in the water[...]they took heart.¹⁰⁴

There is a confusion here over who the 'creatures' are: the word is used to describe both the unnamed, ravenous animals attacked by Crusoe and also the watching 'negroes', who collapse in a kind of animalistic fear. It is apparent from this, then, that the use of the word 'creature', although complex, should not be disregarded in contexts such as that in Adanson's travelogue as a source of animalistic meaning when studying the cultural vocabulary through which scientific racism developed.

Although these examples of travel writing clearly demonstrate a level of continuity between them in terms of both the language used and the conclusions, explicit or implicit, drawn from their observations, it is notable that some English travel accounts from much earlier in the century articulate even more clearly the role physical features such as hair had in constructing human categories. When Francis Moore, '*Factor several years to the Royal African Company of England*', published in 1738 two descriptions of journeys by English travellers to the nations along the river Gambia—made in 1723 and 1733—he saw fit to add an introduction offering a basic overview of the nations visited. Of sub-Saharan Africa he writes, 'This is inhabited by the *Negroes*, a Race of People who appear to be different from the rest of Mankind; their Hair being woolly, and their Colour black'.¹⁰⁵ Not only does hair here take primacy over even skin colour, but the statement also seems to articulate clearly a profound difference between the 'negroe' and the rest of humanity: perhaps an early

¹⁰⁴ Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁰⁵ Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: D. Henry and R. Cave, 1738), p. xi.

expression of the notions later to become polygenetic theory. It is a question, indeed, that the author is surprisingly well aware of; he is unsure ‘whether these are an original Race, or whether the Difference arises from the Climate, the Vapours of that particular Soil, [or] the Manner of breeding their Children’.¹⁰⁶ These statements show that such suggestions were extant long before similar, scientifically expressed ideas were even a ‘minority belief’ at the end of the century, and that the ‘woolly’ stereotype was an important factor in legitimising such dehumanisation.

This proto-polygenetic theorising can be seen even more clearly in John Atkins’ *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies* (1735). Atkins, a surgeon on the ships HMS Swallow and HMS Weymouth, used his medical training to attempt to scientifically examine differences between African and European responses to disease. Norris Saakwa-Mante, as we saw in the Introduction, has already identified Atkins’ *The Navy Surgeon* (1734) as ‘a recognisable part of the polygenist tradition.’¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Atkins’ medical theories on the ‘constitutional immaturity of the black body, and the...natural weakness of the African brain’¹⁰⁸ lead Saakwa-Mante to conclude that the author had a concept of human variety somewhat ahead of his time. The essay propounds that Atkins’ ‘concept of the racial constitution depends on having some implicit or explicit notion of what race is’.¹⁰⁹ While Saakwa-Mante’s article does much to problematise the accepted model of conceptual shift through its study of Atkins’ medical theory, a brief look at the more simplistic representational motifs I study show it to be part of a wider tradition. The paragraph below illustrates just how advanced Atkins’ ideas were, especially considering their similarity to comments made by Home, Long and White, as seen earlier in this chapter:

¹⁰⁶ Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa*, p. xi.

¹⁰⁷ Norris Saakwa-Mante, ‘Western Medicine and Racial Constitutions: Surgeon John Atkins’ Theory of Polygenism and Sleepy Distemper in the 1730s’, in Ernst and Harris, *Race, Science and Medicine*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

The black Colour, and woolly Tegument of these *Guineans*, is what first obtrudes itself on our Observation, and distinguishes them from the rest of Mankind, who no where else, in the warmest Latitudes, are seen thus totally changed; nor removing, will they ever alter, without mixing in Generation. I have taken notice in my Navy-Surgeon, how difficultly the Colour is accounted for; and tho' it be a little Heterodox, I am persuaded the black and white Race have, *ab origine*, sprung from different-coloured first Parents.¹¹⁰

The animalistic inferences of 'woolly' are here multiplied by the use of the word 'Tegument' as opposed to 'hair: a term meaning 'a covering'. As Samuel Johnson noted, the 'word is seldom used but in anatomy or physicks', as if the Guineans are objects for study rather than true people to Atkins as a traveller.¹¹¹ Overall, though, this paragraph clearly demonstrates that 'woolly' hair was from very early in the eighteenth century represented not as a simple variety, but a direct and obvious indication of a fundamental difference between European and African.

Conclusion

At both the heart of the late eighteenth-century debate between authors of early-modern monogenetic and modern polygenetic theories and also before this discussion, in the popular culture of the early eighteenth century, there were persistent and recurring ideas concerning the greater animality of particular non-European peoples. This was certainly not an insignificant minority opinion within eighteenth-century culture, but rather the conclusion of many authors who operated within the scientifically-validated genres that discussed human variety. The 'shift in perspective' described previously by Jahoda was a conceptual move away from the question of links between apes and humans and towards a hierarchical system in which proximity to apes determined a racial status.

¹¹⁰ John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies* (London: Caesar Ward and Richard Chandler, 1735), p. 59.

¹¹¹ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (Second ed.), (London: W. Strahan, 1756), Vol. II, **Te'gument**, *n.*, definition 1.

These subtle distinctions between early and late eighteenth-century thought seem less significant when we take into account that both regimes of knowledge support essentially the same conclusion: that non-European groups exist which possess less humanity than Europeans, which sub-humanity was seen as manifest in bodily signifiers and internal desires. Furthermore, the continuity of traditional early-modern anecdotes into later racial theory, such as accounts of sex between humans and apes, also complicate the technical shift Jahoda depicts.

The 'racial' focus of these stereotypes, it has been shown, changed over time, and in the examples seen in this chapter they largely became concentrated on black Africans for a number of reasons. This does not, however, demonstrate the beginning of race as a concept. Although the term 'race' itself was consolidating into its modern meaning during this period, it is apparent from the evidence gathered in the last section that a sense of 'biological' otherness had been present in culture for some time, rooted in the body and imbued in many instances with implications of interior nature comparable to modern racism. The boundaries changed, in line with political and social developments, but 'racial' thought—the belief in distinct, hierarchical varieties—was already present.

What this chapter most importantly demonstrates, then, is that there had developed two different vocabularies for describing 'racial' difference. One was a taxonomic terminology of race, which was in flux: words such as 'kind' and 'variety' became 'race' and 'species', as observed by historians such as Nicholas Hudson and Bronwen Douglas.¹¹² The specific 'racial' categories which we would recognise as modern racist thought were also now offered by authors in a spectrum-like manner. Texts presented clearly-qualified categories into which every person on the planet could be placed. These too, however, were always in flux; no one author of racial science

¹¹² See Introduction, pp. 10-11.

agreed with any other on exactly how many races there were, and where exactly the boundaries of these groups fell. More is said of this last fact in Chapter Three. Viewed as a genre, moreover, the racial divisions of late eighteenth-century science are not significantly less vague than those displayed in earlier travel literature. The categories of 'civilised' and 'savage', displayed by the body as much as by culture, still had great influence at the end of the century—just as terminology which subsumed national varieties into essential natures, such as 'negro' and 'tartar', were commonplace throughout the early modern period.

The second vocabulary was one of description. The bodily features used to describe non-Europeans to British audiences, as well as the internal desires as depicted by travellers, novelists and racial scientists, enjoyed great stability throughout the eighteenth century. It has been seen herein that travellers such as George Adanson and Francis Moore, as well as authors such as Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe, were equally as interested in varieties of hair and scent as anatomists would be after 1770. They also invested similar metaphors upon these differences and used the same adjectives, for instance the words 'woolly' or 'offensive'. There had already emerged by the early eighteenth century a set stock of signifiers used by authors across many genres to mark intrinsic difference between Europeans and Non-Europeans, and this invariably generated a hierarchy in which the European was the pinnacle of humanity.

Chapter Two:

The Senses in 'Racial' Demarcation

Introduction

Modern historical, psychological and sociological work has identified the human senses as being more than biological configurations of nerves and organs. Instead they are culturally variable, with the peoples of various civilisations and eras giving precedence to particular sensory readings of the world: 'the five senses are given different emphases in different societies. A culture may specialise in touch, or hearing, or sight, and so on.'¹ It has already been shown in the first chapter that cultural differences could be assimilated into the developing theory of 'race'. James Burnet, Lord Monboddo took a detailed investigation of linguistic difference and created a lineal ascent from the brute animal to the divine, manifest in categorical bodily types. This chapter, therefore, continues to investigate this system by studying the perception of sensory differences in various geographical populations, with a view to exploring how the cultural construction of senses aided the formation of racial identities. The study will also engage with the current historiographical understanding of the senses in Enlightenment thought more generally.

This chapter develops the discussion in Chapter One. Animality is often intrinsic to early-modern understandings of sensory perception. George S. Rousseau notes that in the medical literature of the seventeenth century the body was said to be operated by the 'animal spirits' which were the 'sources of sensation', but which were also the 'seats of

¹ David Howes, 'Scent and Sensibility', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 13 (1989), p. 90.

temperament, i.e., especially courage and masculinity'.² It can easily be imagined just from reading these comments, then, how certain groups could thus be rendered inferior by the representation of their sensations as being heightened or lessened compared to the European standard, based upon their supposed degree of animality. This association between the senses and animalistic nature continued into the eighteenth century, as James Burnet's work emphasises well. In his *Antient Metaphysics*, the author attempted a colossal (and ultimately unfinished) history of mankind in uncivilised and civilised states. In the fifth volume of this work, published in 1797, Burnet addressed the issue of the perception of beauty by humankind. Beauty, he argued, was an abstract idea, and 'sensations and ideas are quite different, the one belonging to our animal nature, the other to our intellectual. The organs by which our animal nature perceives the external objects, and has what we call sensations, are our senses.'³ In this way, Burnet disproved the notion of a 'sense of beauty', as to perceive beauty an individual both had to have the animal organs of perception and the rational capacity to interpret the sensory data.⁴ Here, then, the senses are made part of the wider animalistic hierarchy as advocated in his earlier work on language: the more sensually-focused a person is, the nearer the brute creation they become. As in *Origin and Progress of Language*, these observations became concentrated in practice on a specific, stereotyped population. Burnet wrote,

For the brutes, who have not the intellectual mind, have no idea of the Beautiful or Deformed, nor has a man, who is so little removed from the mere animal state, that he has little or no use of intellect. This is the case of the Caribs who inhabit the Antilles Islands[...]they have not the least sense of the *Pulchrum* and *Honestum*, but eat, and drink, and do everything in the most brutish manner. And, as they are the

² George S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 20.

³ James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Antient Metaphysics. Volume Fifth. Containing the History of Man in the Civilised State* (Edinburgh, Bell and Bradfute; London: T. Cadell and J. and W. Davies, 1797), pp. 119-120.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

nearest to the animal state, they are the filthiest, and the most nasty of the human kind, that we have yet heard of.⁵

The absence of intellectual capacity described here directly corresponds to the heightening of more physical, animal desires. As represented by Burnet, the primary activities of the ‘Caribs’ were eating and drinking: what the author later calls ‘our most sensual appetites’.⁶ That the senses were used in this way across the eighteenth century, is the primary argument of this chapter. As we shall see, such ideas were invoked across the spectrum of sensual perception and often functioned in a manner which suggested an element of intrinsic bodily difference between Europeans and non-Europeans.

The first section of this chapter surveys the relationship between skin colour and the sense of touch; the facets of which were closely linked in eighteenth-century medical theory. Skin is here re-articulated—in a way not achieved before in the study of ‘race’—in the context of wider understandings of it as a functional organ rather than simply a passive signifying system. Skin was linked to emotion and expression, providing an implicit metaphor for the internal soul. The second section examines representations of the experience of touch through the medium of pain. Of special interest here are physically traumatic episodes such as childbirth and injury. ‘Racial scientists’ frequently argued that certain non-European women recovered with greater speed from labour and thus took up their roles as mothers sooner than their European counterparts. This representation, I argue, is one which conveys a sense of animalistic difference which also had profound religious connotations given the contemporary understandings of labour pain. These religious implications helped legitimise early attempts at polygenetic theory, as this section also demonstrates. It is revealed in the

⁵ Burnet, *Antient Metaphysics. Volume Fifth.*, p. 124.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

third section, moreover, that travel writers had, since the seventeenth century, been circulating reports of ‘savages’—often black African women—as functionally superior to Europeans in childbirth. This section examines the footnotes used in Charles White’s work to evidence the stereotype of easy childbirth. It examines several works of travel writing from the late seventeenth century onwards, and offers a close reading of the structure of such texts which demonstrates that impressions of the body were of primary importance to many authors. As well as demonstrating the detailed history of the above stereotypes, then, I will also offer a new perspective on the construction of ‘racial’ thought itself. Travelogues were a repetitive and rigidly-formatted body of literature, dictated by certain linguistic conventions that led to a repeated interest in common bodily types taking precedence over cultural, religious and linguistic varieties. Lastly, this chapter engages with recent historical work on the classical hierarchy of the senses. This was a significant concept in much early-modern medical and philosophical theory on the body, positing that each sense was situated on a ladder of value from touch (the most base and sexualised sense) to sight (the most artistic and intellectual). In the fourth section of this chapter this system is juxtaposed with ‘racial’ hierarchies. The animalising discourse of British authors ran counter to that classical system from at least the late seventeenth century, suggesting that the two notions were equally ingrained in the contemporary concept of knowledge. There was a duality in attempts to construct ‘racial’ categories, of classical and contemporary attitudes towards human difference. In the case of the senses, the impulse to animalise non-Europeans was stronger than that to adhere to the deep-seated influences of Hellenic knowledge. Descriptions of sensory capacities in this chapter above all demonstrate eighteenth-century ‘racial science’ to be a more complex web of intellectual traditions than current historiography shows.

Skin and Insensitivity

The use of skin colour as an empirical measurement of human variation was a fundamental part of the burgeoning concept of 'race' in the eighteenth century, and has been treated as such by academics such as Wheeler and Wahrman. More generally, however, skin has been investigated by historians not only for its symbolism but also for its capacity as a living, active organ. Mechthild Fend tells us that throughout 'the Enlightenment skin was generally regarded as the sensitive organ *per se*, transmitting emotions and, by means of the sense of touch, registering information about the body's environment.'⁷ This section, therefore, draws upon these two historiographies. I show that the understanding of skin as a living, functional organ in eighteenth-century texts expresses connotations of colour beyond the representation of variety, the faculty of touch in itself forming the basis of an animalistic hierarchy.

As seen in the previous chapter, John Mitchell's 'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colours of People in Different Climates' (1744) offered an early anatomical analysis of human variety. The essay is explicitly Newtonian in its application of physics: 'This Problem supposes the Knowledge of the Causes of Colours in general; so that if I can deduce the Colour of the Skin from its Structure, &c. in the same manner, and for the same reasons, from which the great *Newton* deduces the Colours of other Substances, it is all I can pretend to, which will be as much as that Branch of Philosophy will permit'.⁸ The primary explanation of the colour difference is thus: '*The Skins of the Negroes are of a thicker Substance, and denser Texture, than those of white People, and transmit no Colour through them.*'⁹ Although the essay is centred on differences between White and 'negroe', seen as opposite extremes stemming from a

⁷ Mechthild Fend, 'Bodily and Pictorial Surfaces: Skin in French Art and Medicine, 1790-1860', *Art History* 28: 3 (June 2005), p. 313.

⁸ John Mitchell, 'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colour of People in Different Climates' *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 43 (1744-45), p. 106.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

primary biblical humanity—of ‘a dark swarthy’ colour, ‘a Medium betwixt Black and White’—this theory on skin thickness is elaborated to elucidate differences in skin-tone more generally.¹⁰ Mitchell writes,

thus if we proceed from the swarthiest white Person to the Palest *Egyptian*, from thence to the fairest *Mustee*, *Mulatto*, *Moor*, &c. to the darkest *Indian*, we may plainly see, that they differ from one another only...according as they have more of the original White in their Colour...and, accordingly, it will be found, that all such People have Skins of a Thickness or Density proportional to their Whiteness or Darkness of their Colours.¹¹

The darker a person’s skin, we are told, the more dense or thick their skin becomes. This does not seem particularly profound, but with this density comes a ‘Callosity’ which causes the ‘Skins of Negroes [to][...]become more insensible than those of the Whites.’¹² Skin colour thus becomes paired with a difference in sensory perception: darkness of skin becomes directly proportional to a decline in the faculty of touch.¹³ In light of the comments below on contemporary philosophy from Fend, this lack of sensitivity could be said to take on more important ramifications:

While the older mechanistic view, associated with the Cartesian dualism of body and mind, conceived of the body as a machine animated by an exterior force, physiology sought to understand the functions of a living body and thus to locate life within the organism. Enlightenment thought considered the ‘irritability’ and ‘sensitivity’ of every single fibre of the body as both the cause and sign of life.¹⁴

¹⁰ Mitchell, ‘Causes of the Different Colours’, p. 146.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹³ The interconnections between skin colour and sensory capacity are also to be found in the works of anatomists who disagreed with Mitchell’s notion of callosity. Nicolas Le Cat, for instance, explained the darkness of ‘negro’ skin by invoking a ‘black substance’ called ‘ethiops’, which George S. Rousseau posits to be a theoretical forerunner to melanin. Interestingly, Le Cat decided that this ‘ethiops’ was ‘indigenous to the membrane surrounding the tips of nerve cells.’ This is anatomically inaccurate, but suggests an understanding of the same relationship between skin colour and the senses which Mitchell describes. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts*, p. 144.

¹⁴ Fend, ‘Bodily and Pictorial Surfaces’, p. 314.

The absence of sensitivity, I suggest, thus becomes an active contributing factor in the development of a hierarchy in which people are ranked by their senses, which metaphorically represents something of the liveliness and humour-like heat of their intrinsic life-essence.

The animalising effects of John Mitchell's physical observations on the thickness and 'callosity' of skin become obvious when he examines what he calls their 'remote causes'. These include the '*influence of the sun*', the 'Nature and Temper of the Country' and the 'Ways of Living in it.'¹⁵ It is here, therefore, that skin colour becomes something more symbolic of interior qualities. The quality of 'civilised' life comes to play a part in the lightening of skin, as is seen with 'The *Mosemleeks of Canada*, who wear Cloaths, and are more civilised than the other Savages their Neighbours, who go stark naked, are so much more refined in their Complexions by this Usage, as to be taken for *Spaniards*, and not *Indians*.'¹⁶ The inner qualities of 'savages' are thus linked with their external skin colour. The possible connotations of darker skin are also apparent at a linguistic level. The adjectives attached to the noun 'white' are noteworthy:

And we may daily observe, that those who have such thick and coarse Skins, are never of so perfect and pure a White, as they who have thin and fine Skin[...]But the reason why such thick-skinn'd People appear of a yellowish or tawny Colour, will be plain, from *Newton's* Observations[...]where he shews a faint yellowish Colour to be the one that proceeds from an imperfect Transmission of a White; for none can say, but that both the internal Membranes and Humours of such swarthy People are of the same Colour in time of Health with those of the perfectest white Skins. (My underlining)¹⁷

¹⁵ Mitchell, 'Causes of the Different Colours', p. 131; p. 136.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.121-122.

Words like 'pure' and 'perfect' have numerous connotations, in terms of racial, sexual and religious discourses: such language expresses the superiority of 'whiteness' and thus the 'civilised' European climate and manner. Furthermore, the 'perfect' skins are defined as such because they are not thickened and insensitive: rather they 'transmit' 'whiteness' in a nerve-like fashion through a 'thin and fine' medium. The body, in Mitchell's text, ultimately reflects not just the influences of the climate but the 'savage' desire to exist within that climate and to be free of clothing. As was seen with Burnet's work in Chapter One, climatic differences were dependent upon internal deficiencies in character which had become more stable 'racial' traits than the bodies which surround them.¹⁸ In this case the whiteness and sensitivity of skin represents an internal, religious 'purity' within Europeans, which is supposedly lacking in the 'savage' races.

Despite the apparent ramifications of skin colour in Mitchell's work, more generally the author is a great proponent of the unity of humanity. His theories are monogenetic, and interestingly the essay is apparently written in refutation of polygenetic theory. He writes,

whence we may justly infer...That there is not so great, unnatural, and unaccountable a Difference between Negroes and white People, on account of their Colours, as to make it impossible for both ever to have been descended from the same Stock, as some People, unskilled in the Doctrine of Light and Colours, are very apt too positively to affirm...contrary to the Doctrine (as it seems to be) of the Sacred Pages.¹⁹

The author did not give any references for the opinions he sought to refute, but it is quite possible he refers here to the polygenetic conclusions in John Atkins' *Navy Surgeon*, mentioned briefly during the last chapter, which was published in 1734. Mitchell's text, then, is a complex one. Like many monogenetic works it argues against

¹⁸ See Chapter One, pp. 70-71.

¹⁹ Mitchell, 'Causes of the Different Colours', p. 131.

species difference between Europeans and darker-skinned non-Europeans, and yet the darkness and ‘callosity’ of skin, through its symbolic connotations, still demonstrates categorical difference.

The theme of insensitive skin is also found in the work of other monogenetic theorists. In the 1770s, both Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in his *Anthropological Treatises* and John Hunter in *Disputatio Inauguralis* seemed much influenced by Mitchell in their explanations of skin variance, and commented accordingly on the proportional relationship to sensitivity.²⁰ It is in Oliver Goldsmith’s *An History of the Earth*, however, that the moralistic implications of this relationship arise strongly once again. Like Mitchell, Goldsmith was firmly a monogenetic theorist: he believed that, ‘[u]pon the whole[...]all those changes which the African, the Asiatic, or the American undergo, are but accidental deformities, which a kinder climate, better nourishment, or more civilised manners, would, in a course of centuries, very probably, remove.’²¹ Whilst this statement theoretically supposes the unity of humanity in Goldsmith’s doctrine, notions of comparative ‘civility’ again come to render the conception of human physical variety hierarchical nonetheless. Goldsmith’s previously-mentioned ideas on beauty, moreover, serve to compound the inferiority of most non-Europeans. With regards to skin colour, ‘whiteness’ becomes an aesthetic symbol of superiority. Goldsmith conjectures, common to several of the continental texts, and most notably advocated by Blumenbach, that white Europeans represented the primary, fundamental variety of humanity. Accordingly Goldsmith states,

²⁰ ‘The darker the reticulum the thicker it is, and the more it approaches the appearance of a membrane peculiar to itself; the more transparent it is on the contrary the more tender it becomes, and only appears to have the constitution of a diffused mucus.’ (Blumenbach, ‘On the Natural Variety of Mankind’ (third edition, 1795) in Thomas Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (London: Longman, 1865), pp. 208-209); ‘[t]he cuticle of blacks is said to be thicker and less transparent than that of the whites, and therefore, when the causes of blackness are induced, will also be blacker[...]The action of the sun and the air is a sort of stimulus to our bodies, and therefore acts according to those laws which regulate stimulants. The effect of this stimulant, burning and irritating the skin, is to render it harder and thicker[...]In the same way the air and the rays of the sun, by their stimulating action, render the skin less transparent. (Hunter, *Disputatio Inauguralis*, p. 371.)

²¹ Oliver Goldsmith, *An History of Earth and Animated Nature* (London: J. Nourse, 1774), Vol. I, p. 242.

[t]he colour, therefore, most natural to man, ought to be that which is most becoming; and it is found, that, in all regions, the children are born fair, or at least red, and that they grow more black, or tawny, as they advance in age. It should seem, consequently, that man is naturally white.²²

Implicit within this concept is also the notion that darker skin represents a degeneration or degradation of the human original. We can also see the logically polar conception of humanity, according to Goldsmith's thesis, in his opening description of black Africans, whose comments bear repeating: 'This gloomy race of mankind is found to blacken all the southern parts of Africa'.²³ This derogatory language, linked strongly to blackness, becomes even more detrimental given the passages above.

It is not only the perceived aesthetic advantages of 'whiteness' that are used to prove Goldsmith's hypothesis, however. The functional and sensational qualities of skin are also inhibited by darker complexions:

Of all the colours by which mankind is diversified, it is easy to perceive, that ours is not only the most beautiful to the eye, but the most advantageous. The fair complexion seems, if I may so express it, as a transparent covering to the soul; all the variations of the passions, every expression of joy or sorrow, shows to the cheek, and, without language, marks the mind. In the slightest change of health also, the colour of the European face is the most exact index, and often teaches us to prevent those disorders that we do not as yet perceive.²⁴

Here, then, is a confirmation of Fend's earlier observations on the skin as a signifier of life. In this instance it is conceived of not only as a register of the body's external environment, but is also sensitive to and expressive of internal conditions. Emotional

²² Goldsmith, *An History of the Earth*, p. 233.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

states and health issues are communicated through 'transparent' white skin for the benefit of both body and soul, whereas in those with darker skin this process is inhibited. The latter's skin in this instance is not more 'callous' or 'insensitive' to the outside world in a way that renders them animalistic, but rather the organ is numb to the internal self, bringing into question their harmony between body and mind. Thus inferiority in the senses is made by Goldsmith to parallel a biological degeneration away from 'primary' humanity. The ability of skin to exhibit the 'signs of life' was seen to be diminished as its tone became darker.

In the work of several of the eighteenth century's British monogenetic authors, it can consequently be seen that the nervous action of skin was implicitly united with its colour. Furthermore, the reduction of the sense of touch often corresponded with physical darkness so as to suggest a hierarchical model of humanity. Despite the theoretical equality suggested by their conclusions, it is the condition of 'savagery' which is invoked by the authors above to explain darkness. This internal proclivity displayed by darker-skinned non-Europeans towards nudity and exposure to the sun in itself becomes a 'racial' trait; the external body may be malleable to cultural practice, but the internal differences between Europeans and non-Europeans are more stable, and in themselves produce a sense of categorical division in the examples above. More is said of this latent sense of humoral difference at the beginning of Chapter Four.

Further to the evidence above, the skin's senses were also used to legitimise polygenetic theory. Charles White's *An Account of the Regular Gradation of Man* provides the most detailed example of this process. Often the anatomical observations of authors on both sides of the theoretical debate were convergent. White believed, much like Mitchell, that the

cuticle, including the *reticulum*, is much thicker in black people than in white ones[...]Wherever the cuticle is thicker, the *corpus reticulare* is thicker also[...]The office of the *rete mucosum* is to keep the *papillae*, which are immediate organs of touch, moist[...]the thicker, therefore, those integuments are, the duller must be the sense of touch. It is no wonder then, that negroes have not that lively and delicate sense of touch that the whites have, since both the cuticle and *rete mucosum* are thicker in them.²⁵

In White's work, however, the thickness and colour of the skin bears no proportional relationship to irritation from the heat of the sun. Whereas for Mitchell the thickening of the skin was a reaction to outward stimuli, White assures his reader that this is impossible. The author's assimilation of anatomical descriptions of the *rete mucosum* leads him to conclude that,

the upper layer of [it] is lighter than the lower[...]and this circumstance may be adduced as clear proof, that the colour is not owing to the heat of the sun; since, if that were the case, the upper layer would certainly be of a deeper colour than the lower, being more exposed to the action of the sun's rays.²⁶

The differences observed by White are instead utilised to express the distinct and permanent inferiority of the African, in line with his central thesis: 'In whatever respect the African differs from the European, the particularity brings him nearer to the ape.'²⁷ Accordingly the relationship between sensitivity of touch and an animalistic, polygenetic inferiority are made clear. White notes, 'In brutes this sense is still duller than in negroes.'²⁸ The evidence used by White, and even the hierarchical conclusions he draws, appear rather similar to those of monogenetic theorists. White simply pushes the established hierarchy further, into a system of binary species difference between

²⁵ Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (London: C. Dilly, 1799), p. 71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

black Africans and white Europeans. We see in the next sections, indeed, how the portrayal of sensory variation could not just legitimise but also form the backbone of biological and religious arguments for polygenesis.

Pain and Parturition

Representations of insensitivity were more than skin-deep in the eighteenth-century, and repeated portrayals of ‘savages’ who can endure great pain and trauma occur with great frequency in scientific treatises. The episode of childbirth seemed to symbolise sensory differences for eighteenth-century authors, and in this section I will explore how polygenesists explained the variable experience of labour in non-European populations. A superior ability to deal with physical trauma, rooted in insensitivity akin to that seen in the last section, was an important signifier of physical ‘otherness’ and demonstrates the detail and complexity of attempts to construct ‘race’ in the late eighteenth century.

Charles White follows his section on ‘SENSE OF FEELING’, examined above, with remarks on ‘PARTURITION’. Here White reiterates observations from a variety of travelogues, demonstrating the cultural basis of his anatomical conclusions. He wrote,

we have had frequent accounts of the very easy parturitions of the natives of Africa, the West Indies, America, and the Southern parts of Asia, by *Brookes, Bruce, Wafer, Dampier, Neuhoff, Woods, Rogers, Pitta-villiers, and Long*. These writers inform us, that the women have very easy labours, and that they retire to the woods, bring forth alone, and return directly home²⁹.

²⁹ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 71.

This comment is an excellent example of how stereotyped anecdotes found to permeate literary genres could be taken by supposedly empirical authors like White and manipulated into scientific discourse, as observed in a number of examples in the previous chapter. The references given here are explored in greater detail in the next section. For now, however, it is vital to see that whilst the author is willing to accept the accuracy of such accounts, he is critical of the common explanation for such variation in the experience of birth. Easy labours, White tells us, are one of ‘many differences in the human species, which have been attributed to relaxation, from heat; but which do not, in fact, proceed from that cause.’³⁰ White, then, attempts to problematise a climatic explanation of this supposed variation which had already been evident in monogenetic texts from the mid-century.

An examination of some of these earlier scientific texts shows how common the stereotype was. One of the primary and most influential works of ‘racial science’, *Of the Varieties of the Human Species* (1749) by Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, was based entirely on a collation of data from myriad travel accounts. M.S. Anderson’s history of Europe in the period describes Buffon’s work as ‘by far the most influential description of the natural world produced during that century’³¹, and in Britain the text was translated into English and sold in the first volume of *The Natural History of Animals* from 1775 onwards. In his discussion of human variety, Buffon generates a hierarchy in which labour-pains are connected to complexion, just as theorists such as Mitchell conceived of the sense of touch more generally. In his discussion of Asia, Buffon wrote of the ‘Moguls, and other inhabitants of the peninsula of India, [who] are not unlike the European in shape and features; but they differ more or less from them in colour. The

³⁰ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 71.

³¹ M.S. Anderson, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1713-1782* (second edition) (London: Longman, 1976), p. 373.

Moguls are of an olive complexion'.³² Despite the described anatomical similarities between Indian and European women, however, there is apparently a marked difference in the sensory experience of childbirth between the two populations. 'Mogul women', the reader is told, 'are tolerably fruitful, though exceedingly chaste. They likewise suffer little from the pains of childbirth, and are often known to be up and abroad the day following.'³³ The fact that the only major physical difference between the European and the Indian noted by Buffon is skin colour, I argue, suggests a relationship between the experience of pain and complexion.

This relationship is emphasised by Buffon's comments on the African 'negro'. The 'black' skin and 'woolly' hair of these people, he wrote, 'consists their principal difference from the rest of mankind.'³⁴ Labour-pains again come to play a role in Buffon's description of their difference, however. Whereas 'Mogul' women were only 'tolerably fruitful', Buffon tells us that 'Negro-women are very fruitful'. Here we see that the quality of fruitfulness has increased as skin tone has darkened from 'olive' to 'black'. Concurrently, the sensory experience of birthing also diminishes: 'in childbirth they experience little difficulty; they require not the smallest assistance in it; nor of its effects do they feel consequence beyond the second day.'³⁵ The ease of labour, and immunity to the pains thereof, thus seems to be even greater in the 'negro' than the 'Mogul'. They are not merely 'up and abroad' two days after the event, but are recovered entirely. It should also be noted that Buffon does not even use the word pain in the latter account, as he does for the Indian women, but opts instead to describe the 'negro' labour as a 'difficulty'. A scale of the experience of pain can thus be seen, in

³² Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (translated by W. Kendrick and L.L.D. Murdoch), *The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals* (London: T. Bell, 1775), Vol. I, p. 202.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

which sensitivity decreases as climatic temperature and thus the darkness of skin increases.

Goldsmith, as a self-professed disciple of Buffon, also displays similar ideas in his *An History of the Earth*. We can see his obeisance to the ideas surrounding heat and the 'relaxation' of the body, as mentioned above by White, in the following comment on 'Negroes of Africa': 'The climate seems to relax their mental powers still more than those of the body'.³⁶ It is in the section on the 'Southern Asiatic', however, that are found his most telling comments on childbirth. Goldsmith's physical description of these people closely mirrors Buffon's comments on the 'Moguls': 'The nations', we are told, 'that inhabit the peninsula of India[...]resemble the Europeans in stature and features; but greatly differ in colour and habit of body. The Indians are of an olive colour'.³⁷ Likewise, the stereotype of insensitivity is repeated by the author: 'they feel the pains of child-birth with much less sensibility, and are generally up and well the day following'.³⁸ Unlike Buffon, however, Goldsmith is more forthcoming on what he perceives as the cause of this sensory disparity. The following statement is notable in the context of the Marxist work examined in my introduction, as it seems to display an intimate link between racial and class theories. Goldsmith wrote,

In fact, these pains seem greatest in all countries where the women are most delicate, or the constitution enfeebled by luxury or indolence. The women of savage nations seem, in a great measure, exempt from painful labours; and even the hard working wives of the peasants among ourselves, have this advantage, from a life of industry, that their child bearing is less painful.³⁹

³⁶ Goldsmith, *An History of the Earth*, p. 228.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

For Goldsmith, it is not only the climate that serves to dull the senses and darken the skin, as seen in the previous section, but also the conditions in which a people live. Racialised explanations for the differing experiences of childbirth are absent, and instead it is the degenerative qualities of luxury in European women directly cause them more extreme suffering. Goldsmith immediately, however, complicates the issue by describing the ‘Southern Asiatics’ thus: ‘they are slothful, submissive and luxurious: satisfied with sensual happiness alone[...]The Asiatic dress also, is a loose flowing garment, rather fitted for peace and indolence, that of industry or war[...]upon the whole, therefore, they may be considered as a feeble race of sensualists’.⁴⁰ This population group are subject to stereotypes of both painless labour and a feeble, luxurious culture. Somehow the former representation has, in the space of a page, transmuted from a product of cultural difference to one essentially of ‘racial’ variation. The apparent complexities of Goldsmith’s ideas here suggest that the portrayal of easy childbirth, irrespective of its explanation, was already an accepted symbol for categorical difference. This image could operate in a number of contexts, either in describing the hierarchical divisions of a single culture or the animalistic, categorical variations between multiple societies. The above is a peculiar dichotomy which surfaces again in Charles White’s work, as is discussed shortly.

The specific effect of heat in lessening birth pains—to which Charles White so strongly objects—can be clearly observed in eighteenth-century medical theory. Colonial medicine in particular helps us to gauge how physical and sensory differences between various population groups were examined by physicians. Benjamin Moseley, respected doctor to the Duke of York and his household, in 1787 published *A Treatise on Tropical Diseases; on Military Operations; and on the Climate of the West-Indies*. Therein he noted that ‘[h]ot climates are indeed very favourable to gestation and

⁴⁰ Goldsmith, *An History of the Earth*, p. 225.

parturition. Difficult labours are not common'.⁴¹ The hot climate in Moseley's work does not seem to be the only factor in painless childbirths, however. It seems that the removal of a European to a warmer environment would not necessarily immediately ease the experience; the benefits are rather limited to native inhabitants, or those who were seen to have the necessary physical adaptations to such regions due to their lineage. Thus Moseley believed that women 'soon recover from lying-in; and Indians and Negroes often make it an affair of a few days, and sometimes of a few hours only, and then pursue their occupation.'⁴² This *Treatise on Tropical Diseases* is useful, indeed, for studying the relationship between climate and pain more generally, as Moseley adduces several incidents and anecdotes concerning such people which demonstrate remarkable expressions of the 'insensitive' representation.

In his role as a doctor, Moseley is able to comment on racial differences in the experience of surgery. He related to his readers the remarkable story of a

Negro woman (belonging to Mrs. Bland a midwife), at Mr. Campbell's grass plantation at the ferry, between *Kingston* and *Spanish Town*, in Jamaica, being in labour, she performed the Caesarean operation on herself, and took her child out of the left side of her abdomen, by cutting boldly through into the uterus.

She performed this operation with a butcher's broken knife, about two inches and an half long, the part joined to the handle.⁴³

Not only does this account portray the incredible resilience and self-control of a woman undergoing a traumatic episode, but we are also told she was 'soon cured; and the

⁴¹ Benjamin Moseley, *A Treatise on Tropical Diseases; on Military Operations; and on the Climate of the West-Indies* (second edition) (London: T. Cadell, 1789), p. 88.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

woman was well in six weeks time from the accident, and able to go to her work.⁴⁴ In accordance with his earlier comments on natural childbirth, Moseley suggests that climate had ‘a considerable share in the success of the event’.⁴⁵ Despite these insistent mentions of climate and heat, however, the representation of insensitivity to pain does seem to become fixed within a specific population group, and also to take on a more profound meaning founded in bodily difference, as is now seen.

Moseley’s basic explanation of the sensory variations we have already seen is that the warm ‘climate relaxes the muscular fibres, and debilitates the nerves.’⁴⁶ Whilst this essentially represents the monogenetic tradition of climatic theory, adhered to by authors like Buffon and Goldsmith before him, in the doctor’s tract we see the developments of a polarisation of pain in a way that is perhaps more reminiscent of the works of authors such as White and Long. Moseley thus wrote,

Negroes[...]whatever the cause may be, are void of sensibility to a surprising degree. They are not subject to nervous disease; nor does any mental disturbance ever keep them awake. They bear chirurgical operations much better than white people; and what would be the cause of insupportable pain to a white man, a Negro would almost disregard. I have amputated the legs of many Negroes, who have held the upper part of the limb themselves.⁴⁷

Again we see here the representation of general and extreme indifference of the ‘negro’ to the pain of trauma. Interestingly, there is also an apparent invocation, in the mention of ‘mental disturbance’, to the relationship Goldsmith perceived with regards to inner emotional sensitivity and external bodily insensitivity. It is the emerging polarisation in the text of White and ‘negro’, however, which is most important. In all the accounts of

⁴⁴ Moseley, *A Treatise on Tropical Diseases*, p. 91.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

trauma given by Moseley in which he suggests greater insensitivity, the sufferer is a 'negro': heat of climate is the practical explanation, but in terms of scientifically legitimising such representations to a wider audience, only the one 'racial' group is affected. Moseley does mention that other African groups, such as the 'Algerines and Moroccans are as much distinguished for privation of sensibility, as Negroes.' This statement, though, is supplied with the caveat that 'writers of romance attribute [this insensitivity] to heroism, and greatness of soul.'⁴⁸ We can therefore see in Moseley's work the beginning of a transition in representations of sensory difference, away from the universal 'savage' model propounded by Buffon and Goldsmith and towards a conception more—although not yet purely—racially focused.

This may explain why White chose to adduce Moseley's quote above on surgical operations into his section 'DISEASES'. In this segment White attempts to demonstrate the 'negro's' biological separateness through an examination of differing responses to various medical afflictions between black and white people. White also attempted to reduce the varied experience of pain to innate physical differences, as a way of attacking the older climatic model seen above. The common interest in reporting the ease of non-European childbirths in travel literature aids the author in this project. White observed that travellers did not always have to remove themselves to warmer climes to record the easy-labour story:

As the same thing happens both in warm and cold climates, we cannot attribute it to relaxation from heat. It must, therefore, either be occasioned by the infants of people of colour having smaller heads, or the mothers having large and capacious pelvises, or from their living nearly in a state of nature, or, perhaps, from all these three causes[...]Several surgeons of Guinea-ships have informed me, that, in general, the negresses have larger hips and more capacious pelvises than European women; and, as the heads of adult

⁴⁸ Moseley, *A Treatise on Tropical Diseases*, p. 478.

negroes are smaller than those of the Europeans, we may suppose that the heads of their infants are also smaller.⁴⁹

At this point, then, the easier experience of childbirth ceases to be entwined in the senses and instead becomes an expression of supposed innate and permanent physical difference between the European and ‘people of colour’.

Furthermore, it is a remarkable feature of this part of White’s work that it includes similar class-based explanations of easy childbirths to those examples used by Goldsmith to prove monogenetic theory, yet simultaneously argues for distinct, animalistically-inferior varieties of humanity. White’s evidence for the non-climatic interpretation of easy labour is the travel writer Hennepius, who writes: ‘The wives of the Livonian peasants and the savages of North America use the same custom. The women retire to some private place when the time of their delivery is at hand, and return immediately after to their work.’⁵⁰ He likewise quotes Dr. Robert Bland’s *Observations on Human and Comparative Parturition* (1794), which like Goldsmith emphasises the role of luxury in increasing the pain of childbirth. These examples would seem to deconstruct rather than support the argument for biologically-distinct races that suffuses the rest of White’s work.

Both White and Goldsmith thus convey dualistic knowledge on childbirth, it seems. They offer examples suggesting that easy labour is fixed to bodily types and yet simultaneously they give voice to the idea that lifestyle played a key role. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that this latter idea has a deep-running history in European medical thought. It was a view ‘expressed by a number of medical practitioners, as well as by midwives, that hard-working countrywomen living in poor

⁴⁹ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 72.

⁵⁰ Quoted in White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 72.

and primitive conditions did best in childbirth—a view older than Aristotle.’⁵¹ These authors could thus be seen as attempting in their work to adhere to common medical knowledge on childbirth so as to preserve their own scientific credentials. Both White and Goldsmith were writing during a period in which male authors were having an increasing impact upon a medical practice previously dominated by women: ‘[b]y the late eighteenth century men-midwives had achieved a permanent place in the management of childbirth, chiefly among the wealthy and urban sections of the population’.⁵² As a consequence of this change in fashion, the authors possibly felt a more pressing need to pay lip-service to accepted theory on the subject of childbirth, even to the detriment of their wider theories on ‘racial’ variety. This was perhaps particularly relevant for Charles White; his medical training had led to an earlier career in man-midwifery, and to his publication of a work entitled *Treatise on the Management of Pregnant and Lying-in Women* in 1772, which ‘began to criticise these traditional practices of women.’⁵³ Potentially, he was attempting in 1799 to validate the criticisms his earlier work had offered whilst wrestling with the newer, more controversial conclusions of his burgeoning polygenetic belief. In this way it can be seen that early-modern medical thought persisted in race science, even into polygenetic texts.

Despite the complex nature of White’s sources, influences and arguments, however, the author still managed to polarise the experience of childbirth between Europeans and ‘negroes’ through his observations on bodily structure. Although the result was something of a dichotomy, White tied all the representations into his central thesis: ‘But whatever be that cause or causes, the fact seems to be, that women of colour have easier parturitions, in general, than white Europeans; and that brutes have easier

⁵¹ Jean Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men* (London: Historical Publications, 1988), p. 25.

⁵² Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery* (London: University College London Press, 1995), p. 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

parturitions than the human species.’⁵⁴ The animalism of easy labour is explicit in White’s concluding statement on parturition. This last phrase emphasises one of the main points of this chapter. Despite the complexity of his evidence, White eventually comes to disregard the theoretical causes of such differences and instead justifies his own ideas using the one representational continuity that remained through all texts, regardless of abstract theoretical perspectives. The stereotype of painless parturition, as we have seen throughout this section, was consistent throughout scientific and medical discourse in spite of how it is rationalised, and thus its accuracy as a feature and fact of difference was never brought into question.

White’s References and the Prefiguring of ‘Race’

Charles White’s section on parturition allows the historian to directly examine the transmission of ideas between genre and period. As was seen at the beginning of the last section, White relied not only on medical treatises to evidence his conclusions, but also collectively name-checked many popular travel writers from across the eighteenth century—authors of texts which were certainly known to the other scientific authors investigated above also. White referenced ‘*Brookes, Bruce, Wafer, Dampier, Neuhoff, Woods, Rogers, Pitta-villians and Long*’: of the British authors in that list, ninety-one years separated the earliest, William Dampier (1651-1715) and Lionel Wafer’s (d. 1705) late 1690s publications, from the latest, namely James Bruce of Kinnaird’s 1790 account. As will be explored below, the stereotype of painless labours spans all of these works, proving deeply-held continuities in the representation of non-European people throughout the eighteenth century. A closer study of these texts, moreover,

⁵⁴ White, *Regular Gradation*, pp. 72-73.

demonstrates other shared ideas and structures within the genre of travel writing. This chapter thus now broadens its study beyond the senses to speak about how writers of early-modern travelogues contributed to the formation of 'racial' thought through a system of practices common to this genre. Bodily difference, regarding the senses or otherwise, had long been of primary importance to travel writers when communicating information about non-European peoples back to their European audiences. Moreover, the shared language of description amounts to a racialised notion of humanity evident in these texts from at least the late seventeenth century.

Dampier and Wafer both travelled to the New World in the last three decades of the seventeenth century, and met whilst working together in a squadron of buccaneering vessels operating in the Caribbean. They both also composed travel narratives which were published back in Britain during their lifetimes. Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* was published first in 1699 and saw a second, extended edition in 1704; a work which as James William Kelly notes 'retains interest for modern anthropologists because of its detailed descriptions of Darien and the Cuna Indians.'⁵⁵ With regards to childbirth, Wafer states that a recently delivered mother washes within minutes of the ordeal. What White failed to mention in his use of the text, however, is that 'another Woman takes [the child] in her Arms[...]and takes the lying-in Woman upon her Back, and goes with both of them into the River and washes them there.'⁵⁶ There is subsequently no representation of lessened sensitivity to pain within *A New Voyage*, concerning labour at least.

It is the work's general descriptions, however, which are important here. A closer inspection of Wafer's text reveals a suggestive method of describing and

⁵⁵ James William Kelly, 'Wafer, Lionel (d. 1705), surgeon and buccaneer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28392, accessed 16th June 2009.

⁵⁶ Lionel Wafer, *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (London: James Knapton, 1704), p. 126.

differentiating the native inhabitants of the Americas. Perhaps motivated, and indeed legitimised, by his previous experience as a surgeon, the primary device through which the ‘Indian Inhabitants’ are related to the audience is a generalised physical body. This is a model to be found much later, in fact, in the natural histories of authors such as Buffon and Goldsmith. The chapter ‘Of the Indian INHABITANTS; Manners, Customs, &c.’ initially ignores those two cultural categories in favour of a comprehensive bodily description. Stature is exposed first and foremost, the author claiming the ‘size of the Men is usually about five or six Foot’.⁵⁷ Next, the population is given a common type of hair: a feature which, as we saw in the previous chapter, had many connotations. We are told, ‘Both Sexes have straight, long, black Hair, lank, coarse and strong’.⁵⁸ Thirdly, skin colour is discussed by Wafer: ‘Their natural Complexion is a Copper Colour, or Orange-tawney’. Some historians have argued that at this point in history these bodily features would have been secondary in discussing non-European populations to more cultural elements such as clothing (which is not described until page 111), living conditions (from page 119) and religion (seemingly absent altogether). Already, in 1699, authors represented foreign peoples by first describing a common, generalised bodily form—a visual summation of their physical differences to Europeans. These characteristics were seen as of greater importance in primary images of non-Europeans than cultural ‘similitude’, and within such a mode of thought an understanding of some form of ‘racial’ variation was entirely possible.

Further evidence of this can be seen in the works of the other authors adduced by White. Wafer’s peer Dampier compiled several travel accounts during his lifetime, all of which share stylistic features with the former’s work. They all contain one or more ‘Of the Inhabitants’ chapter which display to a similar degree as *A New Account*

⁵⁷ Wafer, *A New Voyage*, p. 104.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

an attention towards the body. The chapter ‘*Of the Inhabitants, and Civil State of the Isle of Mindanao*’, from Dampier’s 1697 *A New Voyage Round the World*, begins with a strongly racialised statement: ‘The Island is not subject to one Prince, neither is the Language one and the same; but the People are much alike, in colour, strength, and stature.’⁵⁹ Instantly we see here that political and linguistic divisions amongst the native populations are collapsed into a common corporal nature. Then follows a description of the secondary features of belief and culture: ‘They are all or most of them of one Religion[...]and their customs and manner of living are alike.’⁶⁰ This ordering is continued and elaborated upon throughout the chapter; stature and colour are discussed initially (pages 325-326), from there onto clothes (pages 326-327) and then onto their treatment of strangers and their buildings (pages 327-330). It is seen here that the structure used by Wafer derives from something of a structural formula, to which both authors adhere—there are established literary standards at work within the genre which influence how essentialisations about non-European cultures are formed and expressed.

This formula can be seen again later in the same text, when Dampier writes ‘*Of the natural Inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, the Hodmodods or Hottantots*’, who are immediately characterised as being ‘People of a middle Stature, with small Limbs and thin Bodies, full of activity[...]Their Complexion is darker than the common *Indians*; tho’ not so black as the *Negroes* or new *Hollanders*.’ The chapter once more proceeds from there onto clothing, housing and other customs.⁶¹ This descriptive procession can be clearly seen in Dampier’s other works, including his description of the natives of ‘Tonguin’ in *Voyages and Descriptions in Three Parts* (1705) and of ‘New Guineans’ in *A Continuation of a Voyage to New-Holland, &c. In the Year 1699*

⁵⁹ William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (London: James Knapton, 1697; 1703), Vol. I, p. 324.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 324-325.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 537-539.

(1709).⁶² The repetitive nature of Dampier's ethnographical depictions is not only revealing in that bodily features are seen to be of primary importance in his discussion. It also seems that a basic comparative anatomy had at some point developed, and that the recurrent nature of stature, skin colour and hair types in these texts demonstrates an understanding of human variety through categorisation into size, shape and colour. Essentially, a vestigial form of 'racial' thought had arrived into travel writing, although the vocabulary to articulate this—as we would understand it today—had not.

These texts, therefore, show a genre operating outside of the notions summarised by Wheeler, and quoted again in Wahrman's work: 'Cultural markers of difference "were *more explicitly* important...than physical attributes such as skin color, shape of the nose, or texture of the hair. Embodied in dress, manners, and language, the concepts of Christianity, civility, and rank were not simply abstract categories of difference."⁶³ The bodily differences discussed above are, of course, still embedded in a discourse of knowledge involving geography, language, politics and culture. The prominence of generalised physical descriptions as the primary indicator of difference between European and non-European peoples, though, illustrates a strongly 'racial' strain of sentiment which was pervasive in one of the most widely-read popular genres of the eighteenth century. More than a large body of popular literature, the formulaic structure of travel writing was symbolic of the genre's attempts to gain validity as a knowledge-building science. As Neil Safier notes, '[t]he relationship between early modern travel narratives and the origins of anthropology as a coherent discipline is long-

⁶² William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions in Three Parts* (London: James Knapton, 1705); *A Continuation of a Voyage to New-Holland, &c. In the Year 1699* (London: W. Botham, 1709). The Tonquinese 'in general are of a middle stature, and clean limb'd. They are of a Tawny *Indian* colour' (p. 40). Clothes are discussed by p. 42, buildings by p. 43. The New Guineans are 'very black, strong, and well limb'd people[...]their hair naturally curl'd and short.' (p. 122) Dampier then briefly discusses their ornamentation, boat-building and weaponry before continuing a narrative of his journey (pp. 122-123).

⁶³ Roxann Wheeler, quoted in Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 92.

acknowledged.’⁶⁴ The literary conventions of travel writing were not passive and arbitrary, but rather vital to the representation of their content as accurate—and indeed dictated the adjectives which could be employed in ethnographical description. As Safier further demonstrates, in order for such texts to ‘become subsumed within the realm of universal knowledge, they had to be translated into the appropriate language and abridged to fit within a particular or generic format. These are some of the components of scientific commemoration as conceived and carried out in a public sphere’.⁶⁵ Insofar as late-eighteenth-century natural histories and anatomical texts concerning non-European ‘races’ can be discussed as ‘scientific’ within their own cultural context, so too can travelogues from at least the late seventeenth century be considered as beneath that same label. The eventual assimilation of such knowledge into comprehensive natural histories and anatomical studies, furthermore, shows that audiences largely accepted the scientific validity of travelogues. The simplistic, repetitive methodology seen above contributed to this.

The same process can be observed in representations of the experience of childbirth in travel literature. Woodes Rogers’ *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712) does not specifically give an ethnographic description of its own, but it does make use of another of White’s sources—one John Nieuhoff, Newhoff or Neuhoff—whose account the author has ‘found upon enquiry to be very good.’⁶⁶ The physical description, we see, mirrors Dampier’s almost exactly: ‘the natives of *Brazile*[...]are divided into several Nations, and speak different Languages. They are generally middling Size, well limb’d, and their Women not ill-featur’d.’ Again it can be seen that linguistic and national boundaries are collapsed into a common bodily form. Newhoff,

⁶⁴ Neil Safier, *Measuring the New World* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 309.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁶ Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (London: Andrew Bell, 1712; 1718), p. 56.

however, seems a staunch proponent of climatic theory. When discussing skin colour, the author tells us that the Brazilians,

are not born black, but become so by the Heat of the Sun. They have black Eyes, and black curl'd Hair[...]They come soon to Maturity, yet generally live to a great Age, without much Sickness; and many *Europeans* live here to above a hundred years old, which is ascrib'd to the Goodness of the Climate.⁶⁷

This in many ways challenges the assertion that the text exhibits a basic sense of 'racial' cognition. Although bodily difference is again of primary importance in delineating the native populations, these characteristics are essentially presented as mutable in the face of climatic change. Europeans residing in the area are seen to take on shared qualities with the other inhabitants as a result of the heat and exposure to the sun. The inclusion of the repetitive motif of easy parturition, however, points the reader towards an element of inherent difference between Brazilian and European. The statement is all too familiar from the scientific work we have seen which was later based upon it: 'the Brazilian Women are very fruitful, have easy labour, retire to the Woods, where they bring forth alone, and return after washing themselves and their Child'.⁶⁸ Unlike colour or long life, this facet of difference is not connected by the author at all with the climate, and the ease of childbirth is never communicated to *Europeans* in the same area. Instead the comment is slipped in between two unconnected paragraphs, and offered as if it were simply a fixed fact of nature: something which probably encouraged White to reference the text in his work.

The texts referenced by Charles White leave a gap of over fifty years after Rogers' work, but there are very obvious continuities with the early works examined above and the next. Richard Brookes published the first volume of his *A New and*

⁶⁷ Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, p. 56.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Accurate System of Natural History in 1763. Although ostensibly it is not a work of travel writing, rather an attempt at a comprehensive world-ordering in the vein of Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon before him, Brookes does make claims towards authenticity by way of demonstrating his own first-hand observations. The author, indeed, perceives this duality of his work as part scientific survey and part travelogue as a great boon. Brookes believes he has 'one advantage over almost all former Naturalists; namely, that of having visited a variety of countries myself[...]. Whatever America, or the known parts of Africa have produced to excite curiosity has been carefully observed by me'.⁶⁹ White seems to be citing Brookes through his capacity as a medically-trained observer (Brookes possessed an M.D. and had previously published *The General Practice of Physic* in 1751) rather than for his new concept of natural history, and the information gleaned upon childbirth within is very much offered from a medical perspective.

Like Buffon and later Goldsmith, Brookes includes an entire chapter called 'Of Mankind', in which the notion of 'race' is very clear. The chapter's purpose, we are told, is to challenge Linnaeus' four-way division of humanity into 'the Europeans white, the Americans reddish, the Asiatics tawny or olive coloured, and the Africans black': a division Brookes finds 'far from being satisfactory.'⁷⁰ Before establishing his own system of human variation, however, the author explicates a basic anatomy of the human body in which is included some notes on parturition. We see here that Oliver Goldsmith echoes strongly notions presented by Brookes. Just as the former notes that '[birth] pains seem greatest in all countries where the women are most delicate, or the constitution enfeebled by luxury or indolence', so Brookes noted that 'many Women suffer greatly in these parts from too delicate a regimen.'⁷¹ He notes that '*Americans*'

⁶⁹ R. Brookes, *A New and Accurate System of Natural History* (London: J. Newbery, 1763), p. xiv.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

seem hardier, and ‘the mothers, with their children, bath themselves in cold water immediately after they are brought to bed.’⁷²

As well as repeating and legitimising through his scientific claims a now well-established stereotype, however, Brookes does go on to categorise humanity into groups in a detailed fashion, notably before almost all other British attempts to do so. The author identifies three principal groups of Native Americans, two varieties of sub-Saharan Africans, many different Asian populations, and ‘Arabs’ and ‘Turks’ in the Middle East.⁷³ Although the focus in Brookes’ text has moved on from the earlier travel writing, in the sense that the author discusses humanity as a whole rather than describes populations as an incidental part of a wider narrative, we again find the formula seen in the works of Dampier and Wafer. At the introduction of each of the population groups, the title accorded them is given in capital letters. This name is followed immediately in almost every instance with an account of stature, hair-type and skin-colour, amongst other features such as facial appearance. True to form, details of clothing, customs and religion follow inconsistently afterwards. The appropriation of structure from travel literature within a text more conventionally ‘scientific’ further demonstrates the validity that the genre enjoyed during this period. Dorinda Outram writes, ‘The eighteenth century believed perhaps more strongly than any other that travel makes truth.’⁷⁴ Natural historians were utilising descriptions and format from travelogues on the basis that such knowledge had been gained first-hand, as per the Baconian, empiricist belief that close, personal observation of the universe was vital to uncovering truth.

This continuity between *A New and Accurate System* and the earlier works should by now not be too surprising, given the way natural history has already been

⁷² Brookes, *A New and Accurate System*, p. 147.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-172.

⁷⁴ Dorinda Outram, ‘On Being Perseus: New Knowledge, Dislocation, and Enlightenment Exploration’, in David N. Livingstone and Charles W.J. Withers, *Geography and Enlightenment* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 281.

seen to feed off of travel literature for its primary images of non-European ‘races’. What is significant, however, is that the assimilation of such data into different ‘scientific’ forms brought with it a new vocabulary. This process can be seen in the revising of Brookes’ work into its second edition. When turning to discuss human variety after his foray into anatomy in the 1763 edition, Brookes wrote, ‘It may not be improper here to give an account of the several sorts of people that are in the world, and how unlike they are in several particulars.’⁷⁵ This sentence, then, seems part of the ‘classical’ episteme of knowledge as described by Foucault, in which difference between categories forms the foundation of understanding the natural world. This perspective points towards an understanding of ‘racial’ variety in Brooke’s work as found in post-1770s Britain. By the second edition in 1772, indeed, Brookes’ linking paragraph has been altered tellingly to accommodate the theories emanating from continental Europe: ‘having thus described the human body in general, we shall now give some account of the several races of mankind more particularly.’⁷⁶ The timing of this change seems to agree with the traditional historiography of ‘race’. A closer inspection of the two editions, however, shows that the body of the chapter ‘Of Mankind’ is substantively unchanged. The divisions imposed upon humanity remain the same, are delineated by the same bodily features, and are supported by the same evidence: ‘sorts’ and ‘races’ in Brooke’s two editions are analogous. This underscores one of the main points of this thesis: that the creation of a new technical vocabulary through which ‘race’ is discussed should not be confused with the invention of the mode of thought itself. There are overt continuities between texts describing non-Europeans that strongly suggest a vestigial form of ‘racial’ conception which, although sometimes not expressed with the now-familiar technical language, had an older and well-established legacy.

⁷⁵ Brookes, *A New and Accurate System*, p. 147.

⁷⁶ Brookes, *A New and Accurate System of Natural History in Six Volumes* (London: T. Carnan and F. Newbery, 1772), p. 175.

Proceeding chronologically along White's list of references, by the 1770s we see that the stereotype of insensitivity to pain in labour was a widely-spread notion common to several texts. Next in White's references is a familiar author who offers the most emotive, virulent use of all, in any genre, of the childbirth representation. This usage comes from Edward Long in his *History of Jamaica* (1774), who writes of 'negroe' women that they,

are delivered with little or no labour; they have therefore no more occasion for midwives, than the female oran-outang, or any other wild animal. A woman brings forth her child in a quarter of an hour, goes the same day to the sea, and washes herself. Some have been known to bring forth twins without a shriek, or a scream; and it is seldom they are confined above two, or, at most, three days.⁷⁷

The animalism of these easy labours, for Long, is not (as in White's work) connected to skeletal difference. Rather he seems to connect the painless reaction, like monogenetic authors such as Mitchell and von Sömmerring, who we heard from in the first section, to some intrinsic quality of the nerves. Such reports for Long go beyond climatic degeneration, however, and are instead conceived of as direct evidence for polygenic theory. The author even used biblical quotations to support his claim. He wrote, 'Thus they seem exempted from the curse inflicted upon Eve and her daughters, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."' ⁷⁸ Here, then, 'negroe' people are removed from the same act of creation as the rest of humanity by their sensory differences. Long suggests that the supposed ease of their labours suggests that a second act of creation gave birth to the 'Negroe race', meaning they are thus a separate species to white people; something which in turn could be used to justify their treatment as a sub-human slave race.

⁷⁷ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica... In Three Volume* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), Vol. II, p. 380.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

In the above example it is seen how fundamental representations of insensitivity in labour became in the justification of ‘racial’ difference as a culturally-acceptable motif. It is important to note, however, that the religious understanding of pain in childbirth as demonstrated by Long was not a new conception. General histories of early-modern European childbirth have shown that labour pains were often linked to ‘discourses of martyrdom [which] were wide-ranging and widely understood [...] [pregnant women] could appropriate this powerful and adaptable discourse of Christian suffering in the service of God and humanity.’⁷⁹ The experience of labour pain took on a significant role in defining the identity of mothers within seventeenth-century communities, providing a test of faith and a ‘sign of god’s power and mercy.’⁸⁰ The fact that, by the end of the seventeenth-century, authors such as Dampier and Wafer were portraying certain non-Europeans as exempt from such agonies is thus even more suggestive. If the pain of childbirth had a commonly-held cultural meaning, it is possible that the absence of this sensitivity in other groups portrayed exactly the same sense of categorical difference voiced so explicitly in Long’s work some eighty years later.

Lastly, it can be seen in the latest text referenced by White—James Bruce’s *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790)—that the author not only continues in the vein of insensitivity, but also begins to use other features of pregnancy and childbirth to draw divisions between people. He particularly sees the period for which the women of different ‘races’ remain fertile, presented as a bodily fact, as important in deciding cultural variations such as monogamy or polygamy. Bruce believes, ‘[w]omen in England are commonly capable of child-bearing at fourteen, let the other term be forty-eight, when they bear no more; thirty-four years, therefore, an English woman

⁷⁹ Sharon Howard, ‘Imagining the Pain and Peril of Seventeenth-century Childbirth’, *Social History of Medicine* 16: 3 (2003), p. 377.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

bears children.’⁸¹ Other groups are seen by the author to have far less of a child-bearing term, however. ‘The Arab[...]begins to bear children at eleven, seldom or never has a child after twenty.’⁸² This is part of Bruce’s justification for polygamy amongst ‘Arabian’ people, based in the notion that their religious law seeks to ‘equal’ out the discrepancies delivered by bodily nature. The drawing of human variety is continuous throughout Bruce’s *Travels*, however. It can be seen again when he describes other marriage-customs of the ‘Arabs’: the Abyssinian girls, who are bought for money, are greatly preferred; among other reasons, because their time of bearing children is longer’⁸³ and once more in his third volume, when he writes of ‘black savages[...]woolly-headed’ who have ‘no such thing as barrenness known among them. They begin to bear children before eleven[...]they close child-bearing before they are thirty’.⁸⁴ The fact that the differences in fertility are perceived as constant even when culture is not—a woman is bought in from another region and presumably subject to a new diet, climate and living condition, and yet still retains her fertility—demonstrates that the conception of human variation was stable enough to be described as a ‘racial’ system. By this point, the discussion of human difference in travel writing had apparently spread to almost any feature the author could imagine. This was only possible because of the cumulative weight of representations found in the authors’ wider formative culture. In travel accounts, not only specific stereotypes but also the very notion of ‘racial’ difference itself were legitimised by the consistent use of generalised images of the body as the primary point of discrimination between European and non-European population groups throughout the eighteenth century.

⁸¹ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773* (Edinburgh: J. Ruthven, 1790), Vol. I, p. 287.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

⁸⁴ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile...* (Edinburgh: J. Ruthven, 1790), Vol. III, pp. 737-739.

Race, Animalising and the Sensorial Hierarchy

Thus far this chapter has dealt with the most corporeal of senses. Touch and pain are the human gauges of direct, bodily stimulus to the physical form as a whole. These senses have been found, in general, to be hierarchically divided amongst humankind by the eighteenth-century authors studied previously. Sensitivity of touch and pain declined in correlation with darkening skin, and thus non-European people in general have been formulated as inferior in this regard: dulled, calloused skin has been frequently associated with animalistic nature, as has an indifference to pain. The commonplace hierarchy of humanity, in which the white European stands atop the other peoples of Earth, was thus consolidated by such representations. It is curious, however, that the senses too had an established order of their own in scientific and philosophical discourse, rooted in classical Greek thought, and a comparison of the two schemas reveals that they are not mutually supportive. Sander Gilman identifies that, by the late eighteenth century, ‘the construction of touch as a social and intellectual category and as the lowest of the senses had a long intellectual history.’⁸⁵ It has been shown, then, that at this point the European has only been rendered superior in the most base of senses. The classical hierarchy of the senses is discussed in Elizabeth Sear’s article ‘Sensory Perception and its Metaphors’, in which she demonstrates how the scale was revealed through bodily configuration:

The eyes, acting as scouts[...]have the highest position; the ears and nose are placed so as to receive naturally rising sounds and odours; smell, with a role to play in taste, is located near the mouth; taste is

⁸⁵ Sander Gilman, *Inscribing the Other* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p. 36.

placed in that part of the mouth where nature made a path for reception of food and drink; touch is appropriately distributed throughout the body.⁸⁶

This statement was intended mostly to reveal the perceived wisdom of the positioning of the sense organs, but it also reveals a ladder of value: sight highest, with hearing and smelling next; but smell is bound with taste, which sits below, and then touch stretches all the way to the base ground. Gilman, furthermore, connects touch in the ‘classic aesthetic scale of the senses’ with ‘brute sexuality’ and ‘the erotic.’⁸⁷ Touch is associated strongly with lust and pleasure as well as pain, something surprising given the evidence supplied previously in this chapter and those to follow: Chapter Four of this thesis shows how eighteenth-century science frequently connected non-European ‘savages’ with animal lusts and promiscuous natures.⁸⁸ In this section, however, it becomes apparent that such groups were simultaneously rendered inferior in the very senses through which they would experience such passions. Gilman’s comment, ‘[t]hus the crude individual will perceive the world in a base manner, and this baseness will be reflected in the coarseness of his skin’, appears to be something of a dichotomy. Here Gilman is talking of the physiognomical notion of the skin as a reflection of inward qualities. The coarse skin transmits internal character, and we have seen already how ‘callosity’ of skin increases with both moral and physical darkness. In this way my evidence supports Gilman’s findings: the ‘crude’, ‘savage’ incarnations of humanity are exposed in the previous sections by the thickness of their skin. Simultaneously, however, the evidence problematises the connection between this outward coarseness and sensory perception. It is not the ‘savage’ who perceives the world in a more base way—the sense of touch declines with the callosity of the skin. Rather it is the

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Sears, ‘Sensory Perception and its Metaphors in the Time of Richard of Fournival’, in W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter, *Medicine and the Five Senses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 26.

⁸⁷ Gilman, *Inscribing the Other*, p. 38.

⁸⁸ See Chapter Four, pp. 213-224.

European who has ‘that lively and delicate sense of touch’, to use White’s words. According to the scientific community of the eighteenth century, it is Europeans who perceive the world through the experience of pain, and of sexuality, to the greatest degree.

The last section of this chapter will examine how persistent representations of the ‘higher’ senses—such as the ‘two senses whereby we perceive beautiful objects[...]the senses of feeling and hearing’⁸⁹—became complexly entwined with eighteenth-century discussions of human variety. Many non-European groups were represented as superior in their sensory capacities, and this conversely rendered them more animalistic and inferior to the European standard. There was a dual legacy of knowledge at work in ‘racial science’ and travel writing: authors throughout the eighteenth century were struggling to at once validate their texts using classical theories and adhere to an established early-modern system of human hierarchy.

Sight

As one of the means through which an individual can perceive beautiful objects, sight was of utmost importance in traditional European philosophy. Gilman tells us of the polarised scale of the senses, in which ‘the highest, [is] the realm of sight (and art), and the lowest, [is] the realm of touch (and sexuality).’⁹⁰ Sight is connected with the act of interpretive and intellectual understanding: it is the sense of art, although it is also ‘the icon of the rational but is a rationality acquired through a physical distance from the

⁸⁹ James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Antient Metaphysics. Volume Fifth. Containing the History of Man in the Civilised State* (Edinburgh, Bell and Bradfute; London: T. Cadell and Jun. And W. Davies, 1797), p. 120.

⁹⁰ Gilman, *Inscribing the Other*, p. 35.

object perceived.’⁹¹ Sight’s power is to remove the mind from the more base sensuality of close contact. It would seem logical, indeed, that the physiognomists and medical authors who consolidated ‘racial’ thought into a scientific format would especially esteem sight above all other qualities. As Ludmilla Jordanova points out, the essence of physiognomy is in the notion that interior nature directly correlates to external form, interpreted primarily through visual means: the authors were, ‘by and large, deeply committed to the idea of nature in general, and the human body in particular, as a text, to be read.’⁹² As we have seen repeatedly in this thesis, it is visual observations of colour, hair, stature, and various other forms of external measurement, that have in turn classified the internal aptitudes of non-Europeans. Perhaps this explains why the format of travel literature necessitated a visual survey of the body before all other features of a non-European culture were considered. Sight’s importance offered credence to the idea that external form could be used to investigate internal character.

The relationship between sight and rationality is of vital importance in discussing not just the sensorial hierarchy, but also ‘race’. By the end of the eighteenth century, theories of human variety had essentially removed the capacity of reason from particular populations. Edward Long frequently made comments to this effect about ‘negroes’. He writes, ‘They seem unable to combine ideas, or pursue a chain of reasoning; they have no mode of forming calculations, or of recording events in posterity, or of communicating thoughts and observations by marks, characters, or delineation’.⁹³ In a similar vein, Charles White tells us of reason that there ‘seems to be a difference in the original capacity of the different tribes of mankind.’⁹⁴ He accordingly includes an extended quote from Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, which I

⁹¹ Gilman, *Inscribing the Other*, p. 37.

⁹² Ludmilla Jordanova, ‘The Art and Science of Seeing in Medicine’, in Bynum and Porter, *Medicine and the Five Senses*, p. 132.

⁹³ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 377.

⁹⁴ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 65.

have already shown in the first chapter to engage with contemporary arguments surrounding the place of the 'negroe' in nature. Therein Jefferson writes, '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 find capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid.'⁹⁵ This being the case, it would seem reasonable to expect that representations of difference in the sense of sight would differ accordingly, and that the eyes of black Africans and other non-Europeans would be as dulled as their skins were seen to be earlier.

The general representation found in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, however, seems again to problematise the hierarchy of the senses. For Charles White, sight falls into the category of one of those 'particular respects in which the brutes excel mankind, [and] the African excels the European'.⁹⁶ Accordingly the author adduces comments from a Professor Peter Simon Pallas, who tells us that nothing 'is more astonishing than the acuteness of *sight* in most of the Calmucks, and the extraordinary distance at which they perceive very minute objects.'⁹⁷ White also quotes Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring, and ties both observations into his central animalistic premise: 'Sömmerring [*sic*] informs us, that "the olfactory and optic nerves, and those of the 5th pair, are uncommonly large in the African." Neither Calmucks nor negroes, however, can be compared with hawks, eagles, and some other birds, in acuteness of vision.'⁹⁸ Von Sömmerring's work *On the Bodily Difference between Moor and European* (1784) is so important to White as a sourcebook, in fact, that he provides in an appendix to *Regular Account* a twenty-eight page translation from the original German of selected passages, which also see sensory difference as integral to

⁹⁵ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787), p. 232.

⁹⁶ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 80.

⁹⁷ Pallas, Quoted in White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 80.

⁹⁸ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 81.

constructing the 'Moor' as 'rather closer to the apes than Europeans', although, 'he declared, they are still humans.'⁹⁹ Although apparently a monogenesisist, von Sömmerring must have appealed to White because of his extensive anatomical investigation of the 'Moor' or 'negro'¹⁰⁰, and because of this feature we can see a far more detailed description of the eyes. Not only are the nerves serving the eyes enhanced, but the 'eye-ball is perhaps larger' and that 'process in the inner canthus, which bears some analogy to the *membrane nictitans*, is, according to *Camper's* observations, and my own, larger in the Negro.'¹⁰¹ By these collated comments in White's book, then, the 'negro' is made firmly superior, in an animalistic fashion, to the European regarding eyesight, whilst being simultaneously diminished in faculties of reason.

Edward Long similarly heightens rather than lessens 'negro' senses in this instance, regardless of their imposed shortcomings in terms of rationality. He wrote, '[i]n short, their corporeal sensations are in general of the grossest frame; their sight is acute'.¹⁰² This comment, as discussed below, actually suggests their senses are universally heightened above those of the European. Particularly concerning eyesight, however, this comment again seems to question the link between sight and rationality. Long, indeed, seems to be aware of those common associations, and makes some very deliberate moves to disprove them in this instance. The sight of the 'Negroes', we have been told, is acute, but it is 'not correct; they will rarely miss a standing object, but they have no notion of shooting birds on the wing, nor can they project a straight line, nor lay

⁹⁹ Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 59.

¹⁰⁰ Sömmerring changed the title in the second edition, as investigated by Jahoda on page 59.

¹⁰¹ Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring (Dr. Holme, trans.), 'Detached Passages, Selected from Sömmerring's Essay on the Comparative Anatomy of the Negro and European', in White, *Regular Gradation*, p. cxl.

¹⁰² Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 383.

any substance square with another.’¹⁰³ The superior sight granted is thus rendered ineffectual, as the improved sensory data gathered is useless due to the racial inability to interpret and rationalise the input. European authors were aware that certain animals possessed greater eyesight than a human, and they did not expect these animals to be accordingly intellectually superior either. Black Africans were similarly considered; with regards to the senses they were not being judged entirely on a human scale of difference. The metaphorical meaning of the higher senses did not apply to them, rendering them animalistic.

Hearing

As the second sense through which beautiful objects can be perceived, hearing traditionally came next on the scale. Like sight, hearing is symbolically bound with mental qualities, and in Sears’ article we are told of the ancient ‘idea that hearing and sight are the gates of memory and [thus] these are two of man’s noblest senses.’¹⁰⁴ Consequently it would follow if we could perceive the same relationship between heightened senses and intellect that failed to materialise in the previous section on sight. Once again, however, the representational trend within scientific discussion of human difference is quite the opposite.

The comments of Thomas Jefferson are quite telling on the issue of hearing. As was seen in the first chapter, Jefferson’s work was available to a British audience in the last two decades of the eighteenth century and engaged with several of the key issues raised by the British theorists who form the backbone of my study. All in all, the ‘negroe’ is constructed as decidedly inferior in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, although

¹⁰³ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 383.

¹⁰⁴ Sears, ‘Sensory Perception and its Metaphors’, p. 23.

the debate between monogenesis and polygenesis seems unresolved in the text. He wrote,

I advance it 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 of both 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.¹⁰⁵

Despite the non-committal attitude towards polygenesis, the advocating of a racialised and hierarchical difference between two human groups seems unquestionable here. Once again we see the claims of mental and physical inferiority that have become apparent throughout much of this and the previous chapter. It is important, however, that this imposed inferiority, so flatly applied to the black African, does not stretch to the senses. We are told by Jefferson, in fact, that sensory perception is integral to 'negroe' essence: 'In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection.' With specific reference to the sense of hearing, Jefferson told his audience that in 'music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time'.¹⁰⁶ Like Long when talking of sight, however, Jefferson quickly treads on any positive implications this gift of accurate hearing may cast upon internal qualities. He admits that 'they have been found capable of imagining a small catch.' Towards more profound contributions to music, however, he is somewhat more reluctant:

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

¹⁰⁵ Jefferson, *State of Virginia*, pp. 239-240.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar oestrus of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination.¹⁰⁷

The very eminence of 'black' sensitivity in this example actually comes to subjugate their potential for the higher arts of music and poetry, rather than symbolise it. The link between the sense of hearing and the internal memory and imagination is thus broken.

Elsewhere in the 'racial' discourse, sensitive hearing is used more generically as an animalising feature of the 'savage'. Von Sömmerring, who as we saw was incorporated quite extensively into White's polygenetic thesis, again demonstrated just why this was the case:

The ear is of a more circular shape than in the Europeans; and resembles, somewhat more closely, the same organ in apes. It seems frequently to project farther than usual from the head. It is a well known fact, that savages can move their ears at pleasure, and possess the sense of hearing in great perfection.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, Edward Long, in line with his comment on the universal superiority of African 'corporeal sensations', states that 'their hearing is remarkably quick'¹⁰⁹ and Charles White likewise in *Regular Gradation* brings his anatomical methodology to bear on the representation. He wrote,

The *meatus auditorius* is wider in the Negro than in the European[...]the Calmucks have very large ears, which stand out considerably from the head; and the ears of Dr. Tyson's pigmy were constructed in the same manner[...]Professor Pallas says, the Calmucks hear, at a great distance, the trampling of horses, the

¹⁰⁷ Jefferson, *State of Virginia*, pp. 233-234.

¹⁰⁸ Sömmerring, 'Detached Passages', p. cxliii.

¹⁰⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 383.

noise of an enemy, of a flock of sheep, or even of strayed cattle[...]Certain quadrupeds[...]are still more perfect in hearing than the Calmucks.¹¹⁰

The consistent representation of superior hearing in the non-European, and most commonly the African, does not take on any further meaning concerning reason or memory, but is yet another explicitly animalising component utilised by authors of eighteenth-century science.

Smell and Taste

This section deals briefly with representations of smell and taste. In his study of the associations of smell in medicine from antiquity to the seventeenth century, Richard Palmer notes that the sense of smell was problematic for authors in terms of its relative value. He tells us, ‘smell had a double nature. It could be an aesthetic, even spiritual delight. But smell could equally be stench.’¹¹¹ This duality means that we perhaps cannot see the inward connotations with superior qualities of rationality that are evident in the representation of sight and hearing. Palmer concludes that ‘smell occupied the middle place in the hierarchy of the senses’¹¹², and due to its equal potential for beauty and disgust it cannot really be addressed with the moralistic implications the previous senses had when applied to an examination of non-Europeans.

The representations of scent, however, follow the wider animalising stereotypes observed above. Charles White observes that ‘negroes have wider nostrils than Europeans.’ He also uses Professor Pallas’ description of the ‘Calmucks’ once again:

¹¹⁰ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 81.

¹¹¹ Richard Palmer, ‘In Bad Odour: Smell and its Significance in Medicine From Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century’, in Bynum and Porter, *Medicine and the Five Senses*, p. 61.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

They find the subtilty of the sense of smell very useful in their military expeditions; for by it they perceive, at a distance, the smoke of a fire, or the smell of a camp. There are many of them who can tell, by applying the nose to the hole of a fox, or of any other quadruped, whether the animal be in or not. But dogs possess this sense in the greatest perfection.¹¹³

White's appendix provided a translation of von Sömmerring that likewise tells us,

Negroes in the Antilles can distinguish, by scent, the footsteps of a Negro and a French-man. It has been, in like manner, asserted that some inhabitants of the continent of America, that they can discriminate the effluvia of the natives of France, Spain, and Great Britain. Experience must decide whether this observation will apply to the genuine Negro of Africa[...]But that nature intended him to possess a more exquisite sense of smell than his European brethren, is evident from the size and configuration of the offa turinata superiora.¹¹⁴

From his position as a nominal monogenesist, von Sömmerring suggests through his inclusion of the Native American that the heightened sense of smell may be connected to the wider nature of the 'savage', but his subsequent anatomical comments on the 'negro' again remove this stereotype to a polarised conception of racial difference.

Inevitably, like White, fellow polygenesist Long is also keen to connect the perceived difference in sensual perception with intrinsic animalistic nature: 'their faculties of smell and taste are truly bestial, nor less to their commerce with the other sex; in these acts they are libidinous and shameless as monkeys, or baboons.'¹¹⁵ This comment is significant, as the introduction of the sense of taste and thus the movement towards the lower senses is twinned with a comment on sexuality, just as Gilman connected touch to animal lusts. Taste has connotations with the wider sensualist realm of food and gluttony, and as such is one of the senses in which we might expect the non-

¹¹³ White, *Regular Gradation*, pp. 81-82.

¹¹⁴ Sömmerring, 'Detached Passages', p. cxlviii.

¹¹⁵ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 383.

European to be represented as superior. Long's comment, '[t]hey have no moral sensations; no taste but for women; gormondizing, and drinking; no wish but to be idle', has clear sensual connotations, for example.¹¹⁶

It is strange, therefore, that the sense of taste is the most neglected in White's comprehensive text on comparative human variety. He writes simply that 'Negroes have stronger powers of MASTICATION than Europeans: and most quadrupeds have them still stronger.'¹¹⁷ And in von Sömmerring's work, as condensed in White, taste is only mentioned in a general statement professing the heightened senses of the 'negro' more generally: 'The nerves of the basis of the brain, on a comparison with those of Europeans under like conditions, appear somewhat thicker.'¹¹⁸ These nerves relate to all the sensory organs above the skin: 'the eye, ear, tongue, nose, and muscles of mastication, require, as being constructed on a larger scale, a greater supply of sensorial power'.¹¹⁹ This disproportion in evidence on taste perhaps represents the senses' lowly status in the sensory hierarchy, or the difficulty of obtaining anecdotal evidence in the same form as was used to prove visual, aural and olfactory superiority. In general, though, the animalising effects of heightened sensation were consistently invoked for the upper four senses of the hierarchy, and the only mode of perception in which the European was continuously represented as superior is the lowest and most sexualised capacity of all.

The Persistence of Binary Knowledge

The hierarchy of the senses as explored in the last section can trace its roots right back to Ancient Greece, and although the precise metaphorical implications of each sense

¹¹⁶ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 353.

¹¹⁷ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 82.

¹¹⁸ Sömmerring, 'Detached Passages', p. clxii.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. clxv.

were subject to some degree of change during the intervening time, there are evident continuities present in several eighteenth-century genres. As we have also seen above, however, the burgeoning racial science was not one of these genres. Although some of the authors seem well aware of the symbolic implications of sight or hearing, for instance, they persisted with stereotypes which contravened the classical mode of thought on the subject. This is especially notable given that classical thought and figures were of great importance in expressing and legitimising European superiority elsewhere in the discussion of human variety. Petrus Camper and Charles White, for example, both drew hierarchies based upon physical measurement which ended at their peak with the ‘perfect’ form of classical Greek and Roman statues.¹²⁰ In his linguistic theories, James Burnet likewise found the Ancient Greek language the most ‘perfect’, and in the last section we also read how Thomas Jefferson used the comprehension of Hellenistic mathematician Euclid as a barometer for ‘racial’ intelligence.¹²¹ In these texts can be seen both the heralding of classical figures and knowledge as indicative of ‘white’ superiority and also an unwillingness to articulate the sensorial theories of people such as Aristotle within the authors’ science. ‘Racial’ theorists are deliberately selective in the influences they incorporate within their work, picking and choosing established philosophies to suit their own purposes.

It is evident from research into pre-existing travel writing and fictional literature that this duality can decidedly not be explained by a new way of understanding human difference originating from the 1770s, serving to outdate existing older theories on sensory interpretation. As is seen in this next section, the images found in the later science can be seen to stem from at least the seventeenth century. A variety of descriptions of a difference in the capacity for sight is telling in this case. William

¹²⁰ See pp. 63-64 of Chapter One.

¹²¹ Chapter One, pp. 70-71.

Dampier, whose work I earlier argued to express a notion of 'race' in its opening accounts of various populations, does likewise for the 'tall, well made, raw boned, lusty' Moskito Indians 'of a dark Copper-colour Complexion.'¹²² As we saw earlier, White used Dampier in proving the insensibility to pain of Native Americans during childbirth. At the other end of the sensory scale, though, White could also have drawn upon Dampier for evidence. The Moskito people 'have extraordinary good Eyes, and will discry a Sail at Sea farther, and see anything better than we.'¹²³ The statement is given without any further elucidation or qualification, to be taken by the reader simply as a fact of nature.

Dampier's contemporary Lionel Wafer also utilised representations of visual difference in describing the populations of the Isthmus of America. Of special interest is Wafer's image of a group he calls White Indians—'though[...]not of such a White as those of fair People among *Europeans*'—whose eyes 'see not very well the Sun, poring in the clearest Day[...]yet when Moon shiny Nights come, they are all Life and Activity[...]running as fast by Moon-light, even in the Gloom and Shade of the Woods, as the other Indians by Day'.¹²⁴ The image generated in this particular example, seemingly of a kind of nocturnal, faun-like people, is by no means a clear statement of a general 'savage' visual superiority, as offered to some extent by Dampier and more strongly by White later. It still serves, however, to highlight a fundamental point of this section. By the late seventeenth century, the need by some authors to articulate a comparative, bodily basis for the animalistic inferiority of non-Europeans was becoming more integral to their ethnography than any element of classical philosophy. Wafer compounds the animalism in his text, indeed: in the woods at night, the 'White

¹²² Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*, p. 7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁴ Wafer, *A New Voyage*, pp. 107-108.

Indians' are said to be 'skipping about like Wild-Bucks'.¹²⁵ In this instance, the representation of superior eyesight at night presents a very similar impression as 'woolly' hair or an 'offensive' scent were shown to in the first chapter: that of an intrinsic and natural difference, which is frequently coupled with a superior/inferior binary relationship.

This is certainly not to say that this feeling of innate animal difference, nor sense of 'race' in the travel literature examined earlier, was pervasive at this stage. John Lawson's *A New Voyage to Carolina* (1709) is an example of a work which perpetuates many of the stereotypes discussed above without consolidating them into a bodily form. He attributes the easy labours of the 'Savage Women of *America*' to 'several Medicines that *Carolina* affords'¹²⁶, whilst the claim that '[n]o People have better Eyes, or see better in the Night or Day, than the *Indians*' is explained by the 'Smoke of the Pitch-Pine, which they chiefly burn, [which] does both preserve and strengthen the Eyes.'¹²⁷ In this text the notion that sensorial difference may be linked to a fixed 'racial' difference is clearly unsupportable, but just as in the debate between the climatic monogenesisists and the 'biological' polygenesisists late in the century, certain representations remained constant between texts, in spite of the varying rationales proffered, which served to give them a common 'factual' basis within the various 'scientific' genres.

By the 1760s, explanations for the supposed sensorial differences between population groups were no more developed or complex within travel writing. The chapter 'Reflections on the War with the Savages of North America', taken from a 1767 compendium of travelogues, voices the thoughts of Colonel Henry Bouquet, who marched against the 'Ohio Indians' in 1764. Bouquet brings to the fore the issue when

¹²⁵ Wafer, *A New Voyage*, p. 108.

¹²⁶ John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina* (London: 1709), p. 189.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

he talks of the ‘advantages of these savages over civilised nations’, which he breaks into two categories: ‘natural and acquired.’¹²⁸ Amongst those qualities the author perceives as being ingrained in the ‘Indian’ nature are their ‘piercing eye and quick ear, which are of great service to them in the woods.’ Here the senses of sight and hearing, occupying the highest two places on the classical hierarchy—those ‘icons of the rational’ and ‘gates of memory’—are represented as enhanced within the ‘savage’ Americans precisely because of their ties to nature, to their profound link with the woods: an animalistic environment. Furthermore, amongst those traits Bouquet call ‘acquired’ we find further support of the alternate sensory model seen throughout this chapter. The reader is told that, ‘[s]ome of them destroy the sensation of the skin by scratching it with the short and sharp teeth of some animal, disposed in the form of a curry-comb, which makes them regardless of the briars and thorns in running through thickets.’¹²⁹ Although here the sensory difference is not ‘racial’, the image generated offers an equivalent animalistic meaning, with the animal tooth-comb and thicket-running making a greater proximity to nature apparent.

The interconnectedness of insensitive, dull flesh with alert and superior eyes and ears, like ‘beasts of prey’¹³⁰, is a pattern repeated in several scientific and literary contexts. Articulating sensory difference through its particular benefits, as seen in the section above, is a common motif of eighteenth-century travel literature and creative writing. One particular use is for greater success in hunting: a practice which further compounds an impression of animalistic ‘savages’. John Lawson describes how artificial contrivances caused the Native American to have stronger eyesight. This practice was not accidental, but rather an intentional device: ‘they being ask’d the

¹²⁸ Henry Bouquet, ‘Reflections on the War with the Savages of North America’, in *A New Collection of Voyages, Discoveries and Travels: Containing whatever is worthy of Notice in EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA and AMERICA* (London: J. Knox, 1767), Vol. II, p. 212.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Reason why they practis'd this Method, reply'd, the Indian's Sight was much strengthened and quicker, thereby, to discern the Game in Hunting at larger Distance, and so never miss'd of becoming expert Hunters, the Perfection of which they all aim at'.¹³¹ In several texts the act of and aptitude for hunting, at least out of necessity rather than sport, seems to emphasise a closer proximity to the animal, to nature and to natural environments. A good example comes from this passage below about the 'Taypoyers':

They dwell for the most part among the woods, and live upon hunting, in which perhaps they excel all other nations; for they will shoot a bird flying with their arrows. So soon as a woman has conceived, she abstains from her husband; after she is brought to bed, she goes into the next wood, where she cuts the child's navel string, with a shell, boils it afterwards with the after-burthen, and eats them both.¹³²

This excerpt is taken from John Newhoff's *Travels to Brazil*, which were undertaken as far back as the 1640s. The information available on sensory perception is significant: we see a repeat of the hunting motif immediately linked to a scene of quick recovery from labour. The heightened hunting senses and immunity to pain and trauma are united only by the common surrounding of the woodland—both are a fundamental part of the 'savage' body, environment and culture. The passage ends with a sensual act in the eating of afterbirth; a form of victimless cannibalism that seems to offend the author's senses as much as his morals.

The readily-available nature of such representations informed fiction writers as well as the later scientists. The influence of such persistent stereotypes can perhaps best be seen in popular prose literature, which appropriated such impressions and repeated

¹³¹ Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, p. 34.

¹³² John Nieuhoff, 'Remarkable voyages and travels into *Brazil*, and the best parts of the *East-Indies*', in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts* (London: John Walthoe, 1732), p. 143.

them again uncritically. In the first chapter, I used descriptions of the ‘noble savage’ character Oroonoko, from Aphra Behn’s 1688 novel of the same name, and Friday, from Defoe’s 1719 *Robinson Crusoe*, to investigate the use of hair-types in expressing innate difference. They too offer comments on sensory difference which inevitably both absorbed and then informed their wider cultures. Oroonoko, later renamed Caesar when taken as a slave in Suriname, is in Behn’s novel stirred to hunt a tiger which has ‘long infested that part’ and which many people claimed to have ‘shot her with several bullets quite through the body’. Caesar, however, merely needs a bow and quiver of arrows to kill the beast: ‘he took so good aim, that, as he intended, he shot her just into the eye, and the arrow was sent with[...]so sure a hand, that it stuck in her brain’.¹³³ This feat of skill and perception, coupled with the character’s unforgettable denial of pain at his own dismemberment during the climax of the story, through which he ‘smoked on [his pipe], as if nothing touched him’, shows that the dynamic demonstrated to be widespread in travel literature is similarly present here. Friday, in marching out in arms against the other savages with his ‘master’ Crusoe, is similarly an accomplished hunter: ‘Friday took his aim so much better than I that on the side that he shot he killed two of them and wounded three more; and on my side, I killed one and wounded two.’¹³⁴ These texts both present simple, memorable images of ‘savage’, non-European people involved in scenes of stirring action and tragic loss. In the context of the surrounding travel literature, furthermore, they also support a sense of disparity which is fixed in nature and common to specific ‘kinds’ of human being. Awareness of sensory difference as a facet of establishing wider categorical varieties had spread throughout eighteenth-century British culture, informing artists and scientists alike.

¹³³ Aphra Behn, ‘Oroonoko’, in *Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works* (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), pp. 118-119.

¹³⁴ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1719; 1994), pp. 229-230.

Conclusion

To observe descriptions of the senses in 'racial science' and travel writing is to observe the development of 'race' thought itself. Representations of bodily insensitivity, painless childbirth and heightened eyesight and hearing have been part of imagining non-European communities for as long as discussion of skin colour or hair-type. Discrepancies between the ancient sensorial hierarchy and the new, explicitly-racial hierarchies of the late eighteenth century did not have their basis in a new form of understanding humanity, nor indeed in any new comprehension and conceiving of knowledge itself. Sensory differences were clearly and frequently articulated, in a recurrent methodological format, within travel writing and fictional literature from at least the mid-seventeenth century, and similar investigation of earlier texts may well reveal even deeper-reaching roots.

The use of the sensorial hierarchy in this chapter has demonstrated that there were older and far more evidenced, established ways for travellers, doctors, artists and scientists to explore sensory difference. To perpetuate the metaphorical implications of superior sight, or hearing, or touch in ethnographical description, however, would have been to undo the underlying conviction of animalism—which is the fundamental basis of natural human divisions, or of 'race'—that is frequently found in texts of the nature investigated here. The 'race science' of the eighteenth century thus seems to have operated upon a binary system of knowledge, in which classical thought is at once heralded as a symbol of European superiority and modified by the pressing needs of scientific culture and by the influence of its informing literature. It seems that in these texts, although the authors seem often aware of the classical hierarchy of the senses, the animalising, categorising desire to which all the authors in some way adhered was an intensification of much older concepts operating in parallel with classical philosophy. It

must not be forgotten that, as Gustav Jahoda reminds us, the animality of the 'savage' other also had its roots in the minds of the ancient world.¹³⁵ By the eighteenth century, that mode of thought had been so long used to understand non-European populations that when the first inklings of comparative anatomy and physical anthropology arrived in travel literature, probably at some point in the seventeenth century—perhaps along with the onset of the 'classical' episteme as described by Foucault—the notion that 'American Indians' or 'negroes' might be included in the hierarchy of the human senses had already become unthinkable. Instead such groups were granted with superiorities and inferiorities in the sensorial regard only insofar as it demonstrated their separateness from a European benchmark and their greater proximity to animal nature, more often than not rooted in the forms and functions of the body.

¹³⁵ See Introduction, p. 52.

Chapter Three:

‘Miscegenation’, Hybridity and the Evidencing of Difference

Introduction

The previous two chapters have examined the recurrent representations by which ‘racial’ categorisation was inscribed in certain eighteenth-century texts. This third chapter now investigates what happens when the categories established by these representations are broken down by the practicalities of life. Sex and reproduction between individuals of different human groups was in many ways the ultimate refutation of the burgeoning notion of ‘race’. It offered a challenge to the ancient boundaries of ‘civilisation’ and ‘savagery’—ideas which had been profound in the European consciousness for centuries—and also to the biological distinctions which, by the end of the eighteenth century, relied so heavily on the fixed bodily differences that interbreeding seemed to erode.

As Kenan Malik notes, by the nineteenth century, ‘from the standpoint of race...intermixing was fatal because it caused racial degeneration and the creation of a “mongrel race”’.¹ The demonization of such ‘mongrel’ people was a conscious part of these beliefs, aimed at the ‘creation of barriers between human groups to minimise the impact of cultural mongrelisation.’² Tensions over the erosion of British culture had become manifest in, and perhaps even prompted the need for, a biological system of segregation. It should perhaps not be surprising, then, that the antipathy white European

¹ Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p. 168.

² *Ibid.*

writers held towards ‘miscegenation’³ has been written into the argument for the dramatic notional shift in post-1770 Britain.

Felicity Nussbaum suggests that it was ‘not until the later decades of the eighteenth century that the concern about interracial mixture became a more consistent topic of impassioned public debate in England’.⁴ The coda to her book *The Limits of the Human*, ‘Between Races’, describes the interrelation of ideas about race and social status, with Nussbaum arguing that antipathy towards ‘interracial’ sex consolidated ‘especially as the rank of the participants became more co-equal.’⁵ Accordingly, Nussbaum believes the strongest objections to ‘hybridity and mongrelization’ did not arise until the early nineteenth century, when the ‘abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and[...]emancipation in 1833 correspond[ed] to increasingly public attempts to clarify black inferiority.’⁶ Although ‘Between Races’ does admit that antipathy towards ‘miscegenation’ was recognisable from the end of the seventeenth century, it holds that the evolution of a concept of fixed bodily difference towards the end of the eighteenth century fundamentally alters the nature of this sentiment. Roxann Wheeler’s chapter ‘Romanticizing Racial Difference’ also specifically investigates ‘racial’ intermixture, studying a genre she describes as ‘avidly read intermarriage novels’ from the midcentury.⁷ Wheeler demonstrates that the portrayal of interracial relationships before the 1770s was morally multivalent. She argues that ‘miscegenous’ relationships could in fact be regarded in a positive light under certain circumstances, especially in colonial

³ Although the word ‘miscegenation’ was not coined until 1863 and thus had no meaning in the eighteenth century, I use it critically in this chapter as I aim to demonstrate that the terminology coined by nineteenth-century racialists was in essence also applicable to earlier thought; that in theoretical terms a mixture (*miscere*) between different categorical kinds (*genus*) was possible according to contemporary knowledge. Other historians, such as Winthrop Jordan, have also seen fit to use this word when discussing sources prior to its own origin.

⁴ Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 250.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁷ Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 139.

situations. European males who sexually interacted with ‘other’ women, she claims, could at times portray a British cultural and sexual superiority to the non-European world it sought to conquer and colonise. The intermarriage novels, we are told, repeatedly ‘show the British being vindicated in their religion, governance, and national integrity at the same time that they imaginatively construct an England accepting of diversity—within conventional codes of rank and religion.’⁸ In other words, Wheeler perceives an acceptable degree of ‘inter-racial’ mixing in the mid-eighteenth-century which only later became intolerable to British society.

Historical accounts of this period in many ways mirror these interpretations, taking the act of ‘miscegenation’ to be more important in forging national and gender identities than racial categories. Bridget Orr’s work on the theme of ‘miscegenation’ during James Cook’s and Joseph Banks’ voyages on the *Endeavour* argues that the taboo about such relationships was still only developing even in the early 1770s.⁹ Similarly Susan B. Iwanisziw’s study of intermarriage in late-eighteenth-century literature adheres to the general trends seen above, and illustrates them by picking up upon the inconsistencies of colonial, legal legislation governing the practice. She notes,

Although white Britons reconsidered their attitudes toward interracial sexuality and biracial children at the close of the century, earlier behaviours had varied considerably in the Anglophone world, ranging from the de facto assimilation of blacks and their mixed-race progeny in the metropolis, to the de jure exclusion of blacks, and their consignment to slavery, in North America.¹⁰

Dror Wahrman’s *The Making of the Modern Self* likewise identifies several instances of permissible ‘intermixture’ prior to the 1770s: ‘Earlier in the eighteenth century[...]one

⁸ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 173.

⁹ Bridget Orr, “‘Southern Passions Mix With Northern Art’: Miscegenation and the “Endeavour” Voyage’, *Eighteenth Century Life* 18: 3 (1994), pp. 212-231.

¹⁰ Susan B. Iwanisziw, ‘Intermarriage in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Literature: Currents in Assimilation and Exclusion’, *Eighteenth Century Life* 31: 2 (2007), p. 57.

can repeatedly[...]find instances of gender boundary-crossing and successful gender passing that had been intertwined with analogous racial boundary-crossings.’¹¹ Wahrman believes the antipathy towards ‘interbreeding’ mutated from the fear of cultural erosion in pre-1770 Britain to alarm at biological ‘degeneration’ afterwards. As in Nussbaum’s work, the increasing proximity of non-Europeans to everyday British experience, and the changing legal and social statuses of these peoples, is of utmost importance in this transformation.

If the precise physical limits between ‘races’ were yet to be set prior to the 1770s, however, it is harder to understand the logic behind antipathy towards ‘mixed-race’ couples and their offspring. If the difference between ‘civilised’ and ‘savage’ was a matter of acculturation in the minds of early eighteenth-century authors, then what exactly was the objection to sexual ‘intermixture’? And indeed, how can such liaisons be considered ‘intermixing’ when the bodily categories did not exist to be mixed? It is certain, as many studies in English literature have shown, that such antipathy did exist prior to the late eighteenth century. Scholars have noted even in Elizabethan drama the fear of a ‘polluting and inferior blackness’; something that would suggest at least a vestigial concept of intrinsic ‘racial’, bodily difference.¹² This can be found in some of the most canonical works of this period, such as Shakespeare’s *Othello* (1604), in which Patricia Parker notes the ‘vividly racialized rhetoric of Iago and Roderigo...focused on an unseen sexual coupling...involving the “monstrous” opening of a Venetian virgin by a “lascivious Moor.”’¹³ In Arthur Little’s discussion of *Othello*, the very positioning of a black man into a position of power—as a general in the Venetian army—and his

¹¹ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 12.

¹² Jean E. Howard, ‘An English Lass amid the Moors: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and National Identity in Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West*’, in Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (eds.), *Women, ‘Race’ and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 113.

¹³ Patricia Parker, ‘Fantasies of “Race” and “Gender”: Africa, *Othello* and Bringing to Light’ in Hendricks and Parker, *Women, ‘Race’ and Writing*, p. 94.

marrying of the white, virginal, 'prized daughter' of that city, forms a larger metaphor in which 'the Venetian Empire finds itself compromised, sexually and culturally opened up, made "pliant" (I.3.152), by the very martial and marital exigencies that are supposed to protect it.'¹⁴ Thus we see that the 'monstrous', bodily act of 'miscegenous' sex is given the potency of a wider cultural threat, much as we saw in Malik's above comments on 'intermixture' in the nineteenth century.

The historical works above contradicted assumptions made in previous academic investigations, which projected a 'modern' sense of race back into the early modern period. Winthrop D. Jordan, for instance, described feelings towards 'intermixture' which were largely negative throughout the entire period of his study, although varying in intensity depending upon the specific conditions of each colony. Jordan explains, '[n]o one thought intermixture was a good thing. Rather, English colonials were caught in the push and pull of an irreconcilable conflict between desire and aversion for interracial sexual union.'¹⁵ 'Miscegenation' was something, therefore, that when permissible in society was so in spite of a cultural antipathy, rather than in the absence of such feeling. Developed notions of human variety are observable throughout the colonial period, according to Jordan: 'Without the perception of difference[...]no aversion to miscegenation nor tension concerning it could have arisen. Without the perception of difference, of course, the term miscegenation had no meaning.'¹⁶ The sentiment of this quote is at the heart of this chapter: that some notion of categorical bodily difference between human varieties was necessary for a notion of 'interbreeding' or 'intermixture' to exist in the first place.

¹⁴ Arthur Little Jr., *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 70.

¹⁵ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Williamsburg: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 137.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

This general sense of an immutable physical difference between Europeans and non-Europeans has been noted elsewhere in colonial literature. Joyce Chaplin's *Subject Matter* (2001), for instance, focuses on seventeenth-century accounts of colonial interaction with American natives, and significantly it illustrates an alternative theoretical shift to that identified in the 1770s: 'In the second half of the seventeenth century[...]the English used both Africans and native Americans to identify their own bodies as optimally suited to rule America. From this tentative racial definition of hierarchy, which emerged in the mid-1660s, the English elaborated ways to denigrate Indians' mental and technical capacities'.¹⁷ Thelma Wills Foote's book *Black and White Manhattan* (2004), which examines 'racial' interaction throughout the history of colonial New York, likewise formulates the understanding of fixed difference as being fundamental to maintaining national identities in the burgeoning colony. An antipathy towards sexual 'intermixture' is seen as integral to this process. Foote writes,

the taboo on miscegenation became the "principal of closure, of exclusion" that demarcated the limits of national belonging. In this way, the application of the miscegenation taboo in colonial New York became integral to intergroup boundary maintenance in the settler population and, importantly the racialization of the concept "nation" in that overseas settler colony.¹⁸

This book in general portrays an impression of human variety that seems well-developed in the context of the wider literature on 'race' as a concept. Foote's language is notable. Take, for example, her description of 'the colonialist fear of miscegenation and the threat that interracial sexual desire posed to the racial purity of the colonial port town's white settler community', which is said to exist in the city by the early 1740s at

¹⁷ Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 9.

¹⁸ Thelma Wills Foote, *Black and White Manhattan: The History of Racial Formation in Colonial New York City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 155.

the latest.¹⁹ The claim that a notion of ‘racial purity’ could exist at this point is in itself controversial given both the works examined above and also the wider historiography of New York. Sara S. Gronim, for instance, argues that it was not until the 1760s that New Yorkers ‘recast the meaning of the human landscape of the colony[...]shift[ing] from categorizing inhabitants of New York as Christian and heathen to categorizing them as white, black, or red, categories that increasingly seemed innate, natural.’²⁰ Studies of these colonies thus demonstrate that there is no consensus in historiography of the Colonial Americas as to when racial cognition began. Given the effusive way colonial literature and travel writing on the Americas was communicated back to the British Isles, it is significant that the fear of ‘miscegenation’ was discussed in widely-spread and popular literary forms. This process of translation from the wider colonial context, it is argued in this chapter, was integral in not only forming the staunch antipathy to ‘miscegenation’ found in some of the later ‘biological’ texts, but also in generating a consistent strand of aversion which suffused a variety of British literary forms throughout the eighteenth century.

One of the main concerns of this chapter, therefore, is to investigate the representation of—and antipathy towards—‘miscegenous’ relations in the science of late-eighteenth-century Britain. Specifically, I will investigate the influence of previous genres of knowledge, both from within and outside Britain, upon that science. The chapter is divided into three substantive sections. The first studies the later scientific texts, addressing the common conception that the burgeoning polygenesists of the late eighteenth century were instrumental in articulating a new antipathy towards ‘miscegenation’. I argue there was a continuous tolerance of miscegenation within monogenetic texts, intrinsic to their definitions of species. This first section also

¹⁹ Foote, *Black and White Manhattan*, p. 183.

²⁰ Sara S. Gronim, *Everyday Nature: Knowledge of the Natural World in Colonial New York* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2007), p. 165.

examines the polygenetic sources which display such ardent disdain for 'miscegenation', emphasising the striking similarities between this later rhetoric and that found in earlier travel writing, novels and dictionaries—sources that comprise the basis of the rest of the chapter. The second section examines the evidence provided by scholars for positive attitudes towards intermixture during the early-to-mid-eighteenth century. Developing claims made in Chapter One, this section investigates human categorisation systems from as far back as the late seventeenth century, arguing that some 'races' were more firmly constructed than others across the genres of travel writing and natural history, and a consensus was never reached on certain groups. Thus 'intermixture' with some non-European groups could be legitimate whilst others were continually taboo—signifying that there were both static and shifting boundaries of difference during the period. Lastly this chapter concentrates on the terminology applied to 'mixed-race' people, looking at how terms such as 'mulatto'—long used in English language sources—contained innately animalistic, hierarchical overtones. Beginning with a study of early-modern dictionaries and continuing into early-eighteenth-century colonial literature, these terms are shown to display pronounced fear of the erosion of set categorical human variety. Translation from other national and imperial contexts is seen to be central. Overall this chapter will demonstrate that a project of human categorisation had been underway amongst many British authors throughout the eighteenth century, and that 'miscegenation' was perceived as a threat to this scientific process as much as it was to cultural or religious barriers.

The Polygenetic Perspective

The growth of polygenetic thought in the science and philosophy of the late eighteenth century has been seen as one of the most obvious signs of a shift in thought on human variety. The theory was believed to originate in textual form first in the work of Edward Long and Henry Home in 1774, and it is integral to understanding representations of ‘miscegenation’ in post-1770s British publications.²¹ It is no coincidence that polygenetic authors, such as Long and Home, as well as their sympathisers like Thomas Jefferson, are also the sources frequently selected by historians to demonstrate that antipathy towards ‘interbreeding’ arose specifically during this period. Dror Wahrman, for instance, points to the *History of Jamaica*’s ‘unrelenting emphasis on essential racial difference[...][which] was extraordinary in its elaborate detail’, but which it also ‘drew on the same conceptual shifts evident elsewhere at the same time.’²² Long’s clear polygenetic statements are frequently quoted in the history of this subject, no doubt because of the plain assertions of ‘race’ as a physical, bodily reality: ‘I think there are extremely potent reasons for believing that the White and the Negroe are two distinct species...this idea enables us to account for those diversities of feature, skin, and intellect, observable among mankind; which cannot be accounted for in any other way, without running into a thousand absurdities.’²³ Pre-emptively responding to the religious backlash this argument would incur—polygenesis being directly contrary to

²¹ For previous discussion on the importance of polygenetic theory, see Chapter One, pp. 72-84.

²² Wahrman, *Modern Self*, p. 113. Other academics point towards a similar importance for *History of Jamaica*. Wheeler’s treatment of Long’s work characterises it as containing ‘substantial truth claims that typify the range of contemporary racial ideology in the 1770s’, and highlights its role as ‘one of many 1770s texts that contribute to refining an increasingly racialised British identity that prized Englishness because of its superiority to remnants of past unrefined images of savages and present profligate planters.’ (Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 177; p. 229).

²³ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica... In Three Volumes* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), Vol. II, p. 336.

the Christian law which dictated that the whole of humanity originated from Adam and Eve—Long immediately after mentions examples in which biblical sources have been proven wrong in the past, demonstrating precedent for his controversial theories. Rather bombastically, the first example he offers is that of the Copernican system, which he notes was ‘pronounced[...]damnable and heretical for anyone to maintain the doctrine of the antipodes, and the annual motion of the earth around the sun.’²⁴ In this statement Long was trying to present polygenesis as a demonstrable law of nature, as much a matter of physics as the movements of celestial bodies. It also suggests that Long saw himself as something of a trailblazer, comparing himself to Galileo and attempting to evoke a similar sense of defiance in the face of church doctrine to that which the Pisan had suffered over a century beforehand.

In relation to the notion of ‘miscegenation’ particularly, the polygenetic thesis had extreme consequences. Sex and reproduction between black and white individuals under this theoretical assumption became far more than ‘interracial’—in essence Long sees it as tantamount to bestiality. In support of his polygenetic claim, and as a demonstration of this last point, Long invokes abusive language about ‘mixed-race’ offspring that wholly dehumanises them. The author frequently refers to Spanish colonies as precautionary examples of what rampant ‘racial’ intermixture can do to a colonial society. In these colonies he describes a ‘vicious, brutal, and degenerate breed of mongrels...produced, between Spaniards, Blacks, Indians, and their mixed progeny.’²⁵ That this ‘intermixture’ is construed as a threat to Long’s own society is clear in this text, and not only because it serves to corrupt the power binary between black and white but also because it is biologically deplorable, harming the division between two different species demarked by ‘two tinctures (black and white) which

²⁴ Long, *Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 337.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

nature has dissociated, like oil and vinegar.’²⁶ The dual corruption of both political and natural polarities is summarised well in a comment which comes after a long sequence criticising white Europeans of Jamaica who would rather ‘riot in these goatish embraces’ with black and ‘mulatto’ women, ‘than share the pure and lawful bliss derived from matrimonial, mutual love[...].Of these men, by far the greatest part never marry after they have acquired a fortune; but usher into the world a tarnished train of beings, among whom, at their decease, they generally divide their substance.’²⁷ The ‘power’ within this statement, in the fortunes and property of the white male, is seen to filter down to their illegitimate children and thus away from the ‘pure’, morally able rulers and into the hands of inferior individuals who are not accorded even the status of human by Long, but are rather simply ‘beings’. ‘Miscegenation’ here is also a temptation away from the practice of marriage, thus meaning intermixture is also a threat to good religious practice.

Such is Long’s fear of interaction between black and white people that the concept of ‘miscegenation’ in his text goes beyond sexual relations. When discussing the varieties of Jamaica’s white inhabitants, Long strongly chastises ‘creole’ women for ‘their disdain to suckle their own helpless offspring!’ Instead, the reader is told, the ‘creoles’ pass their children on ‘to a Negroe or Mulatto wet nurse, without reflecting that her blood may be corrupted, or considering the influence which the milk may have with respect to the disposition, as well as health, of their little ones.’²⁸ Here the close contact between black and white—their exchanging of bodily fluids—provokes in Long the terror of degeneracy and corruption by an inferior black taint that goes beyond the spread of disease from the wet-nurses, of whom he writes, ‘[t]here is scarcely one[...]who is not a common prostitute, or at least who has not commerce with more

²⁶ Long, *Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 332.

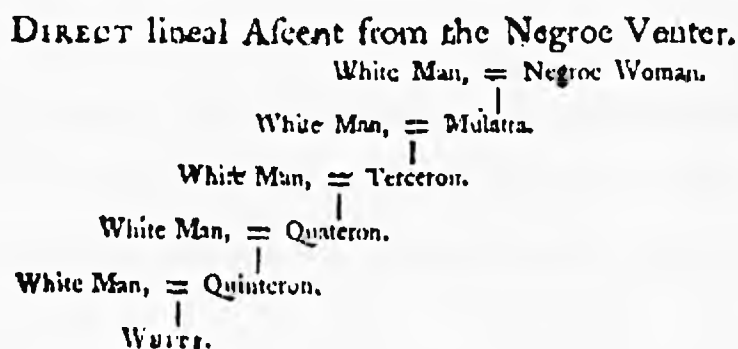
²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

than one man; or who has not some latent taint of venereal distemper, or *scrofa*, either hereditary, or acquired, and ill-cured.’²⁹ In Long’s work, we can consequently see, difference between black Africans and white Europeans spreads to the entire body, and the melding of such different bodies in any form is perceived as contrary to an innate law of nature.

As we saw in the first chapter, Edward Long held a high position in Jamaican society and was a prosperous plantation owner. His pseudo-scientific work should thus not be treated as an abstract theory, but also as revealing the nature of thought behind colonial power. Figure 3, for instance, demonstrates a schema borrowed from Spanish colonies: ‘The intermixture of Whites, Blacks, and Indians, has generated several different casts, which all have their proper denominations, invented by the Spanish, who make this a kind of science among them.’ The system is made for judging the distance of children resulting from owner/slave relationships from a theoretical ‘whiteness’, and labelling them with racialist terms. Long, who as we saw above utilised ‘miscegenation’ in the Spanish colonies as a precautionary example to Jamaican authorities, shows how complex the classifying project in Spanish theory had become:

Figure 3.³⁰

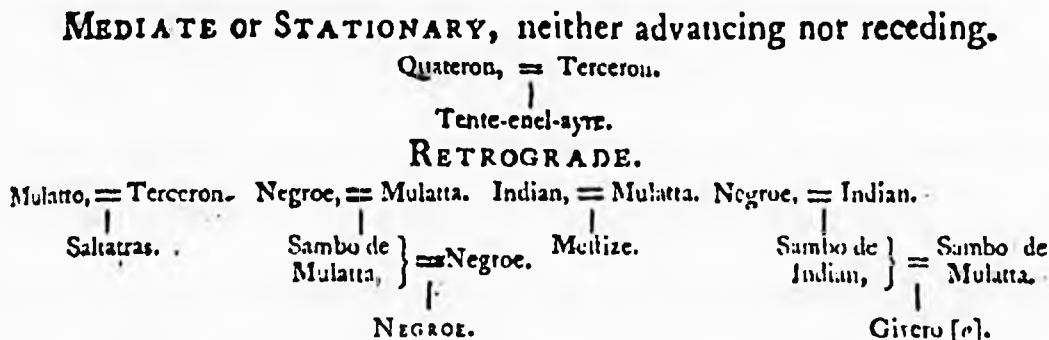


²⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 277.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

A second table (Figure 4), complicates the issue even further, demonstrating Spanish terminology designed to deal with interbreeding both with black African slaves and the American Natives:

Figure 4.³¹



Wheeler claims that Long adduces these charts to ‘distinguish between Spanish and the British approaches to dealing with interracial sex in the colonies.’³² It is true that Long’s own system of classification for Jamaica is far more simplistic. Long’s work does not comprehensively discuss the varieties of humanity in the same way as contemporary natural historians such as Oliver Goldsmith or anatomists such as John Hunter, but his chapters hold much interesting information on the various inhabitants of the island, whom he divides into ‘The native white men, or Creoles’, including Irish, Scottish, English and Jewish colonists, the ‘Freed Blacks and Mulattos’, and in much greater detail the ‘Negroes’.³³ Long only breaks from these schemas, however, because he does not perceive Jamaica to have ‘degenerated’ to such a confused state at that time. Long appears to be responding in his work more to the threat of ‘degeneration’ away from what he sees as an observable set of human categories, rather than inventing such categories for himself.

³¹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 261.

³² Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 212.

³³ Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 261; p. 320.

The use of Spanish colonies as a warning to English colonialists, coupled with the vitriolic and dehumanising language he levels at the Spanish ‘mongrels’, however, shows that Long saw the Spanish Empire as a kind of theoretical progenitor. The assimilation into his own classification system of terms such as ‘mulatto’ and ‘negro’, indeed, is a product of the legacy that Spanish and Portuguese thought on Africans and ‘Miscegens’—gleaned through their being the forerunners of the European slavery/colonisation system—had on informing the English colonists and plantation owners who followed in their footsteps. More shall be said on the history of the term ‘mulatto’ later in this chapter, as the continuity of its use in English sources throughout the eighteenth century is significant, but for now I wish to concentrate on the decaying boundaries of difference in Spanish colonies. For the charts above do not represent the consolidation in Spanish thought on human difference into precise bodily categories, but rather the opposite: they show that the pre-existing classificatory systems were collapsing in such situations. In a reversal of the transition observed in recent historiography by Nussbaum, Wheeler, Wahrman and others, Leon G. Campbell’s study of Spanish America, and particularly the colony in Peru, tells us,

social rank or status was based largely upon phenotype, i.e. color and physiognomy, with a whitish skin indicating[...]purity of the blood from Moorish or Jewish ancestry[...][By] the eighteenth century[...]miscegenation, or race mixture, had caused racial lines in Peru and elsewhere to become hopelessly blurred. Definition for the purposes of maintaining social stratification on the basis of race alone became virtually impossible, so that Spaniards perforce adopted sociocultural indices to maintain intact the social system.³⁴

This comment is supported by work such as J.H. Elliot’s *The Old World and the New*, which found that Native American inferiority was articulated in the sixteenth century by

³⁴ Leon G. Campbell, ‘Racism Without Race: Ethnic Group Relations in Late Colonial Peru’, *Studies in Late Eighteenth-Century Culture* 3 (1973), p. 324.

Spanish authors, and thought to be demonstrated bodily ‘in the size and thickness of their skulls, which indicated a deformation in that part of the body which provided an index of a man’s rational powers. This assumption indicates that there existed, at least among the Spanish colonialists, a crude biological theory’.³⁵ Long appears to be aware of this transition—away from a consolidated sense of innate difference fixed in the body and towards cultural demarcations such as ‘language, dress, the wearing or non-wearing of shoes, diet, and sleeping arrangements’³⁶— and feared the same thing happening to his own colony. Long’s vocal and prolific demonization of ‘interbred’ individuals and ‘miscegenation’ as a practice, therefore, was not the result of cultural trends insisting on new forms of consolidated difference between ‘races’. Rather, this ‘miscegenation’ threatened specifically to demolish an already established project of such bodily categorisation, which was widespread in colonial thought regardless of national background.

Other texts were produced around the same time as *History of Jamaica*, however, which were formed in circumstances far less ‘racially’ polarised than Long’s colony. Many of these have also been used in supporting arguments for the 1770s epistemic shift. As we saw in the first chapter, Henry Home, Lord Kames’ moral and legal history *Six Sketches on the History of Man* (1774; 1776) clearly expressed that permanent degrees of difference existed between various groups of humans, which indicated a particular adaptation to one specific climate from which, once removed, the group or individual would be caused to degenerate. These ‘adaptations’ were not seen by Home as temporary conditions brought about by climate, but instead as obvious demarcations of species difference: the implication in his text was that a benevolent higher power had placed each ‘species’ in its optimum habitat, and to move from that

³⁵ J.H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 43-44.

³⁶ Campbell, ‘Racism Without Race’, p. 328.

climate would be to offend a natural law.³⁷ The work quickly became controversial, much as Long believed his own would, generating several extended replies from authors including David Doig, John Hunter and Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith.³⁸

Home, like Long, has been regarded as an author who brings together different intellectual trends into one central thesis, and his work is viewed as accordingly significant. Roxann Wheeler states that his ‘intellectual meandering and revisions encapsulated the conjunction of color prejudice and civil anatomy characteristic of the 1760s and 1770s’, whilst Dror Wahrman notes that his ‘general emphasis on the innateness of racial identity resonated with a wider cultural trend, which brought to the fore a mounting skepticism about the role of either climate or culture in the making of race.’³⁹ Home’s treatment of ‘intermixture’ between ‘species’ of human is of primary importance in how he goes about validating his polygenetic argument. His first ‘sketch’, later renamed ‘The Diversity of Men, and of Languages’, is mostly dedicated to deconstructing arguments made by the monogenesist Buffon on the unity of humanity. As we shall see in greater detail later, Buffon believed that ‘a beneficent law of nature

³⁷ See pp. 85-86 in Chapter One for more details.

³⁸ John Hunter’s arguments against Home’s polygenetic theory are discussed in more detail shortly. In brief, though, the other objectors approach the issue from two different directions. Smith, talking of the causes of human variation in complexion and stature, claims that ‘Lord Kames[...]writes with infinite weakness on this subject’, and refutes him with a detailed account of Buffonian climatic theory. Their debate is, testament to the profound similarities between monogenetic and polygenetic theory previously discussed, essentially about terminology: ‘This power of the climate to *change the person* which his Lordship confesses, when he calls it the *degenerating* of mankind, is the principle for which I plead ; and which, united with the influence of the state of society, is sufficient to explain all the changes that are visible in the different nations of earth.’ (Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Edinburgh: C. Elliot, 1788), p. 157; p. 171.) Both authors essentially believe climate to alter the body over the course of generations, but for Home this is degeneration away from innate species whilst for Smith the changes are simply natural adaptations all humans are capable of. Doig makes a more religiously-motivated attack, primarily on the notion that different branches of humanity were placed into their intended environments in a state of universal savagery: ‘if mankind were originally savages,’ Doig writes, ‘the Mosaic history [of the Old Testament] must unquestionably be false.’ (David Doig, *Two letters on the Savage State, Addressed to the Late Lord Kaims* (London: G. G. J. And J. Robinson, 1792), p. xii). Since the accepted Christian narrative holds that all peoples were descended from individuals once in a state of civilisational perfection in Eden, Doig writes at length to demonstrate that all peoples of the Earth have at one time or another demonstrated the capacity for civilisation, and to prove that all languages share a common, Hebrew ancestor (pp. 25-36).

³⁹ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 188; Wahrman, *Modern Self*, p. 110.

ensured that cross-fertilization led to the accumulation of good qualities'.⁴⁰ Home's contrary opinions on such 'miscegenation' are telling. He writes,

men are not all of one kind; for if a White mix with a Black in whatever climate, or a Hottentot with a Samoide, the result will not be either an improvement of the kind, or the contrary; but a mongrel breed differing from both parents. It is thus ascertained beyond any rational doubt, that there are different races or kinds of men, and that these races or kinds are naturally fitted for different climates: whence we have reason to conclude, that originally each kind was placed in its proper climate, whatever change may have happened in later times by war or commerce.⁴¹

The term 'mongrel' is profoundly dehumanising, especially in the light of how Long used the term earlier. Furthermore, the sub-human, 'mongrelised' by-product of 'interracial' reproduction is configured as of primary importance in evidencing Home's polygenetic thesis. It is true that Home uses the analogy of animal husbandry—particularly dog breeds—to equate to human variety and intermixing throughout the essay, perhaps leading critics to interpret Home's use of terms like 'mongrel' as more scientific than offensive. Home writes, for instance, that 'there are different races of men as well as dogs: a mastiff differs not more from a spaniel, than a white man from a negro, or a Laplander from a Dane.'⁴² The author, however, offers extra moral justification to his dislike of inter-breeding, which demonstrates undoubtedly the antipathy such language use expresses towards 'miscegenation'. 'There are mongrels', we are told, 'among dogs, from want of choice, or from depraved appetite: but as all animals prefer their own kind, mongrels are few compared with animals of a true breed. There are mongrels also among men.'⁴³ The language throughout this passage demonises the act of 'miscegenation': it requires a 'depraved appetite' amongst dogs,

⁴⁰ Hannah F. Augstein, *Race: The Origins of an Idea, 1760-1850* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. xvi.

⁴¹ Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Six Sketches on the History of Man* (Philadelphia: R. Bell and R. Aitkin, 1776), p. 44.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

which are in this instance a metaphor for human beings. Similarly, those bred from their own kind are a 'true' breed, and thus conversely any 'mixed-race' people are rendered in some way false, or below human. Here the collision of two representational motifs, a fear of 'miscegenation' and animalism—as studied in my first two chapters—shows why works such as *Six Sketches* and *History of Jamaica* appear to show a growing fear of 'miscegenation' in the late eighteenth century.

Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, which followed in the wake of Long's and Home's work in 1781, took a more cautious approach to polygenetic theory—possibly because of the strong and detailed written responses that the above authors received, from both British and American critics alike. Although they are not precisely configured by Jefferson to be a separate species, black Africans are nonetheless in his work represented as inferior in a very physical, biological way. As in Home's essay, this essential difference is articulated through an account of 'miscegenation'. Whereas Home perceived no noticeable improvement from 'interbreeding', however, Jefferson admits that the act does generate beneficial qualities of a kind, but only to the black African. We are told by Jefferson that 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.'⁴⁴ This comment places the cause of human variety and hierarchy firmly in the body, as would be expected of a text written at this time. The converse side of the above comment is that 'miscegenation' also serves to 'degenerate' white bloodlines, transforming Jefferson's notion of 'intermixture' into one of a threat. One of the author's primary concerns about the abolition of slavery is founded in a clear rhetoric of 'racial' purity: 'Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master.

⁴⁴ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787) p. 235.

But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be moved beyond the reach of mixture.'⁴⁵ Just as Long feared for the 'purity' of both the power and 'racial' balance of Jamaica, so Jefferson shows alarm at the potential erosion of established boundaries through 'interracial' reproduction.

Jefferson's fear of wide-spread 'amalgamation' with black Africans was possibly inspired by his own observations of various Native American peoples who were, by the late-eighteenth century, on the verge of extinction. He writes of the '*Mattaponies*' that there remain 'three or four men only, and they have more negro than Indian blood in them. They have lost their language, have reduced themselves, by voluntary sales, to about fifty acres of land[...]and have, from time to time, been joining the *Pamunkies*, from whom they are distant but 10 miles. The *Pamunkies* are reduced to about 10 or 12 men tolerably pure from mixture with other colours.'⁴⁶ As in the work of Home, 'miscegenation' is not delimited to the binary of black and white, but operates between several distinct varieties of humankind. Furthermore, it is plain that such 'intermixture' is framed as generally a negative, degenerative force featuring in the degradation of linguistic, cultural and national boundaries. Whilst *Notes of the State of Virginia* perhaps lacks the particularly animalistic terminology of the other works studied above, the general representation of 'miscegenation' is one of overwhelming antipathy. It is not surprising, then, that Home, Jefferson and Long have all been used to demonstrate the consolidation of such aversion during the last three decades of the eighteenth century.

The Monogenetic Continuity

⁴⁵ Jefferson, *State of Virginia*, p. 240.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

The concept of the classification of ‘species’ is a fundamental issue within the history of eighteenth-century race science. Much of the wrath directed at ‘miscegenation’ seems to be largely fuelled—in linguistic terms—by allusions of bestiality: species rather than ‘racial’ difference is the issue in question for polygenetic theorists like Long and Home. Even Jefferson seems to have had his sympathies with such writers, of ‘[negro][...]judgement in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own species’⁴⁷—a comment that suggests a staggered hierarchy of animalistic difference founded in the desire towards inter-species sex. As was mentioned in an earlier discussion of bestiality, indeed, the definition of species had long been connected to reproduction and interbreeding. To some of the most widely-read naturalists of the eighteenth century, such as Linnaeus and Buffon, the ability for a couple to produce fertile offspring was the one overarching quality that unified them as a species.⁴⁸ Buffon in particular had a lasting legacy in eighteenth-century attempts to categorise mankind, with most English-language authors on the subject in some way arguing for or against his notion of species.

Buffon treated ‘miscegenation’ not with fear, as Long and Jefferson after him, but instead extolled its virtues in preventing—rather than causing—degeneration. ‘Interbreeding’ was used by Buffon not as a symbol of innate variety, but rather of the common origin of humanity. Buffon certainly did express fixed notions of difference in his work—in fact almost all the representational motifs discussed within this thesis are corroborated in some way by Buffon’s chapter ‘Of the Varieties in the Human Species’ (1749). The antipathy towards ‘miscegenation’ was absent in his work, however. This

⁴⁷ Jefferson, *State of Virginia*, pp. 229-230. Also see Chapter One, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁸ See the Chapter One section ‘Bestiality: Continuous Stereotypes and Differing Conclusions’, pp. 72-84, for more details.

can be seen, for instance, in the argument for the unity of mankind made in his chapter 'Of Domestic Animals':

If the negro and the white could not procreate together, if even their offspring should remain unfruitful, there would be two very distinct species; the negro would be to man, what the ass is to the horse[...]and we might with reason think, that the white and the negro had not the same common origin; but[...]since all men can communicate and produce together, all men come from the same stock, and are of the same family.⁴⁹

Although this segment contains many 'racist' assumptions about the relative states of black and white people, no offensive language is levelled towards the human produce of 'miscegenous' breeding. This may support the conventional historiography on the subject, suggesting a transition of thought occurring somewhere between Buffon's generation and the next.

Comments elsewhere have served to strengthen this interpretation. Academics such as H. F. Augstein, as we saw earlier, have even suggested that Buffon's natural history of the horse represents 'intermixture' between 'races'—in humans as well as other animals—as something laudable and even biologically necessary. Buffon writes, 'Spanish or Barbary horses, from which so many generations spring, become, in France, French horses, frequently in the second generation, and always in the third: we are therefore obliged to cross the breed instead of preserving it, and renew the race at each generation.'⁵⁰ This comment is expanded to include humanity, and the process is said to become manifest in even the most primeval natural laws, such as the apparently transcultural fear of interbreeding: 'men formerly knew the misfortunes which resulted from alliance with the same blood; since, in the most uncivilised nations, it has rarely

⁴⁹ Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, (translated by W. Kendrick and L.L.D. Murdoch), *The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals* (London: T. Bell, 1775), Vol. 1, pp. 432-434.

⁵⁰ Buffon, *Natural History*, pp. 399-400.

been permitted for brother to marry the sister.⁵¹ In this last example the custom of breeding between only one variety of human or animal is akin to incest, showing the confusion between terms such as family, race, and species which was prevalent at the time. It also suggests a tolerance and even enthusiasm for ‘racial’ mixture which would compound the cases made by Nussbaum, Wahrman, Wheeler and others. There is a legacy of these comments by Buffon in subsequent work on human variety, however, which constitutes telling continuities in monogenetic theory.

This legacy can be seen even in those texts which sought to directly contradict Buffon’s monogenetic conclusions. To compound the distance between ‘species’ that Edward Long perceived, he used metaphors taken from animal biology to support his case. From his extensive survey of Jamaica’s ‘mulattos’ Long concludes, ‘[t]hey seem in this respect to be actually of the mule-kind and not capable of producing from one another as from a commerce with a distinct White or Black.’⁵² The evidencing of species difference, that black and white people and their offspring can intermix indefinitely, opposes the assertions made by Buffon. Ultimately, however, Long only argues for the polygenetic thesis in a theoretical manner entirely accounted for within Buffon’s work. Buffon’s definition of species, indeed, persists in polygenetic literature until the end of the century at least. Charles White, who is surprisingly quiet on the subject of miscegenation—perhaps because it disrupts the basis of his gradational hierarchy of incremental difference—nonetheless suggests the innate species difference of black Africans in a peculiarly ‘Buffonian’ manner. Concerning reports that black Africans had sexual contact with apes, and subsequently produced children, he writes: ‘Supposing it be true, it would be an object of enquiry, whether such offspring would

⁵¹ Buffon, *Natural History*, p. 401.

⁵² Long, *History of Jamaica*, Vol. II, p. 335.

propagate, or prove to be mules.’⁵³ The mule stereotype is important in the history of representing ‘mixed-race’ individuals, as shall be investigated later in this chapter. For now it should be noted that this theoretical foundation of species-definition had worked its way even into the polygenetic texts which drew such contrasting conclusions to Buffon. White, with his use of interbreeding as the accepted benchmark for species definition, thus carried within his work the same criteria for identifying species as Buffon, but called upon different anecdotal evidence to draw his distinctions.

These same criteria can also be seen to continue into British monogenetic work which upheld Buffon’s attitudes towards miscegenation. Throughout this thesis it has been seen that Oliver Goldsmith’s *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* drew extensively on the work of Buffon, and he rarely developed any theory of his own. Accordingly on the ability to interbreed between animals, Goldsmith writes,

If the mule, or the monster bred between two animals whose form nearly approaches, is no longer fertile, we may then conclude, that these animals, however resembling, are of different kinds.—nature has providently stopped the fruitfulness of these ill-formed productions, in order to preserve the form of every animal uncontaminated: were it not for this[...] every creature would quickly degenerate; and the world would be stocked with imperfection and deformity.⁵⁴

It is vital to note here the use of the word ‘monster’ to depict the infertile offspring of two different species. Just as Long, Home and Jefferson all sought in their own way to dehumanise ‘mixed-race’ people, so here Goldsmith renders the infertile mules and animals like them to something less than natural; an aberration against natural law. Other monogenetic authors do likewise, as will be discussed below.⁵⁵ The polygenesists

⁵³ Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (London: C. Dilly, 1799), p. 34.

⁵⁴ Oliver Goldsmith, *An History of Earth and Animated Nature* (London: J. Nourse, 1774), Vol. I, pp. 374-375.

⁵⁵ R. Brookes, *A New and Accurate System of Natural History* (London: J. Newbery, 1763), p. xlii.

were operating within a pre-existing tradition of representation when they used certain terminology, but it was a mode of thought not readily applied to human beings within scientific work at that point. Goldsmith, who wrote his text in the same year as both Long and Home, and presumably under the same new zeitgeist of antipathy towards ‘miscegenation’ of which those two are supposed to have partaken, in fact displays very little fear of human ‘interbreeding’ in his chapter on the varieties of humankind. Goldsmith understood, like Long, that the act of ‘miscegenation’ fundamentally problematised the categorising project of natural history and burgeoning ‘racial’ science by eroding their physical boundaries. After offering his five-branched division of humanity, Goldsmith went on to mention that ‘[t]o one or other of these classes, we may refer the people of every country[...]On the contrary, in those places where trade has long flourished, or where enemies have made many incursions, the races are usually found blended, and properly fall beneath no one character.’⁵⁶ Rather than resorting to the demonization of those people who damage his categories, however, Goldsmith seems to accept them as an inevitable part of human interaction, and assigns them no negative vocabulary at all:

Thus, in the islands of the Indian ocean, where trade has been carried on for time immemorial, the inhabitants appear to be a mixture of all the nations upon the earth; white, olive, brown, and black men, are all seen living together in the same city, and propagate a mixed breed, that can be referred to none of the classes into which naturalists have thought proper to divide mankind.⁵⁷

Goldsmith, as with Buffon before him, does have a very clear notion of bodily difference between ‘races’ as being deterministic of character, but the mixing of these bodies seems of very little concern, at precisely the time when fearful sentiments were allegedly becoming permissible in wider society. Neither can Goldsmith be said to be

⁵⁶ Goldsmith, *History of the Earth*, p. 231.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

an anachronism, clinging too strongly to a notion of natural history in Buffon's work that had since passed away. Monogenesists for the next two decades would demonstrate a similar tolerance of 'miscegenation', and particularly in direct response to the arguments of authors like Home and Long.

In his *Disputatio Inauguralis* of 1775, little over a year after the release of Henry Home's *Sketches*, John Hunter described that author's work as 'superstition' and begins his dissertation with a brief but virulent attack on polygenesists. As seen above, the same evidence found in 'miscegenation' polygenetic theories is used by Hunter as proof of the opposite conclusion—something which highlights the often confusing workings of eighteenth-century science. The author is quick to demonstrate his monogenetic conclusions: 'The definition of species may be conveniently illustrated[...]Take, of all who bear the name of man, a man and a woman most widely different from each other: let one be a most beautiful Circassian woman and the other an African born in Guinea, as black and ugly as possible.'⁵⁸ Hunter continues this thought experiment by demonstrating that successive generations of selective breeding will restore the original 'racial' characteristics of either parent. He writes,

Take, moreover, as you certainly may, the males and females sprung from this pair, and join the children of the latter marriage with their maternal race and the former with the paternal, and then, if after several generations the offspring of the female becomes in all things to resemble the mother, and the offspring of the male the father, we may come to the definite conclusion that the parents were of the same species. That this is a fact, is proved every day by the unions of the black and the white.⁵⁹

In contrast to the animalistic comparisons made by Home and Long, this statement, which intimately details interrelations between black and white people, seems relatively

⁵⁸ John Hunter, *Disputatio Inauguralis Quaedam de Hominum Varietatibus, Et Harum Causis Exponens* (Edinburgi: Apud Balfour et Smellie, 1775); English translation in: Thomas Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), 'The Inaugural Dissertation of John Hunter, M.D. on the Varieties of Man', *The Anthropological Treatises* (London: Longman, 1865), p. 363.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

free from any effort to demonise such couplings. Although his comments above about the ‘beautiful Circassian’ and the ‘ugly as possible’ Guinean certainly adhere to a prejudiced aesthetic hierarchy, as discussed in Chapter Two, this work is an example of the continuation into the 1770s of neutral attitudes towards ‘interracial’ reproduction.

Over a decade later, in fact, the identical thought can be seen to persist in the scientific discussion of human variety. When Samuel Stanhope Smith published *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* in 1788, he added an extended segment comprising of ‘Strictures on [Henry Home] Lord Kames’s Discourse on the Original Diversity on Mankind’, which criticises Home’s ideas in extensive detail. Once again, the example of ‘miscegenation’ is adduced as evidence of essential human unity. Of Home’s idea that every adaptation to a climate is a God-given and irreconcilably permanent indicator of species difference, Smith asks ‘were the species of men made capable of blending together, contrary to the nature of other animals, so that they can never be discriminated, proving, thereby, that these diversities were unnecessary to the end for which they are supposed to be created?’ He then goes on to demonstrate briefly a system of incremental difference dependent upon habitat, very similar to Buffon’s, by which he concludes ‘by pursuing this progression, we shall find but one species from the equator to the pole.’⁶⁰ Smith’s text also demonstrates congruencies with other notions from earlier work, describing the ‘result from the conjunction of a savage with an ape’ as ‘a monstrous birth [which] should never be dignified as a species in the writings of philosophers.’⁶¹ This form of language, however, is entirely absent from Smith’s discussion of human ‘miscegenation’, showing once more that two parallel modes of thought on the subject lasted into late-eighteenth-century theory with equal prominence.

⁶⁰ Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Edinburgh: C. Elliot, 1788), p. 49 (fn). A similar attack is made again on Home, using the same theoretical basis, on pp. 141-142 (fn).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

The vitriolic sentiments demonstrated by authors such as Long and Jefferson, I have argued, were part of a long-standing legacy of colonial representation, and this is a point I return to in the last section of this chapter. Furthermore, the continued tolerance of 'miscegenation' in scientific theory seen throughout the later period suggests the extension of a longer-running debate over physical human variety than is allowed in the recent historiography of 'race'. This chapter presents a diachronic duality in thought on 'miscegenation' during the eighteenth century: both antipathy towards intermixture and approval of or at least neutrality towards interbreeding persisted throughout this period. Consequently the following sections examine how this duality was also present in earlier artistic and scientific discourses.

The Shifting and Static Boundaries of Difference

The vast majority of the examples in the last section dealt with polarised examples of black African and white European intermixture. What, though, of those Non-European populations subject to far fewer claims of species difference? One of the issues raised by the above section is a certain vagueness as to what exactly constituted 'miscegenation' during the eighteenth century. This section explores the limitations and boundaries of 'intermixture', showing that long before the later scientific work there existed particularly strong taboos pertaining to mixture with certain peoples, whilst others were more 'permissible' to British society.

Roxann Wheeler's argument for the shift in perception of 'miscegenation' rests largely on her study of the 'intermarriage novels' she considers a 'literary phenomenon of the mid-century', which had a large audience and were frequently reprinted.⁶² The majority of her chapter 'Romanticizing Racial Difference' rests upon her analysis of seven novels published between 1736 and 1767. Conclusions drawn from these sources

⁶² Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 139.

attracted the praise of Wahrman: 'Wheeler's most interesting evidence[...]finds a rather different world in these eighteenth-century stories, one in which interracial relationships could be looked straight in the eye—indeed, often with a sanguine gaze.'⁶³ Yet the novels examined by Wheeler are largely influenced by the geographical backgrounds of the people they represent, and other important evidence exists for continuity in the perception of 'interbreeding' in other contexts which has been overlooked by recent historiography.

Of the seven novels treated by Wheeler, three describe relationships between Europeans and North African or, Near- and Middle-Eastern Muslims, two between Europeans and Native Americans, one between a European and an Indian, and one between a European man and a woman from a fictional island populated with 'Amazonian' women. The fundamental issue I take with this selection is that all the population groups displayed in these texts were, to different degrees, occupying ill-defined positions in the 'racial' schemas available to the authors of the mid-century, and thus the representation of 'interbreeding' is ambivalent—and sometimes even 'sanguine'—as much because of this as any other reason.

The classification of the people occupying North Africa, the Near East and the Middle East proved particularly troublesome for the progenitors of racial science, with little consensus on the anatomical boundaries between Europe and Asia being reached throughout the entire eighteenth century. Physician and traveller Francois Bernier (1625-1688) is commonly viewed as one of the first authors to develop an exhaustive system of 'racial' categorisation, and through the popularisation of his travelogues became 'persuasive to his European audience because he had firsthand experience with the people he described.'⁶⁴ Bernier stipulated in his article *Nouvelle division de la terre*

⁶³ Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, p. 92.

⁶⁴ John P. Jackson Jr. and Nadine M. Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction* (Santa Barbara, California, 2004), p. 15.

par les différentes espèces ou races qui l'habitent (1684) that across the whole globe there were essentially but 'four or five species or races of men in particular', the first of which 'races' is 'generally all [the population] of Europe'. This classificatory group, however, is extended beyond the geographical confines of Europe and into several neighbouring regions, with important consequences for the notion of 'miscegenation'. Bernier wrote:

To this may be added a small part of Africa[...]from the kingdoms of Fez, Morocco[...]up to the Nile; and also a good part of Asia[...]Arabia[...]the whole of Persia, the States of the Grand Mogul[...]For although the Egyptians, for instance, and the Indians are very black[...]that colour is only an accident in them[...]that does not seem enough to make them a species apart.⁶⁵

Bernier also accommodated the Native Americans within his division of the Earth, concluding that 'they are in truth most of them olive-coloured, and have their faces modelled in a different way from ours. Still I do not find the difference sufficiently great to make them a peculiar species from ours.'⁶⁶ Bernier's system of classification, which went largely unchallenged by another formalised categorisation for over fifty years, calls into question if any of the relationships portrayed in Wheeler's intermarriage novels as being 'miscegenous', since all the individuals fall under the same theoretical human variety.

There were, of course, conflicting categorisations originating around the time the novels were being published which demonstrate different modes of thought on North Africa, Arabia, India and the Americas. Nonetheless, these works also display considerable confusion over the drawing of certain boundaries. Wheeler notes that 'Muslims or Moors' were allocated to the 'Asiaticus' branch of Linnaeus' four-way division of mankind, along with Indians in general, whilst Native Americans were now

⁶⁵ Francois Bernier (Trans. Thomas Bendyshe), 'A New Division of the Earth by the Different Species of Races which Inhabit it' (1684), *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London* 1(1863-64), p. 361

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

afforded a category of their own, in the Swede's *The System of Nature* (1735).⁶⁷ Buffon also chose to construct the inhabitants of America, India and North African as 'racially' 'other' in his chapter on human variety, which in 1749 'offered a division of humanity into six types: the Lapp Polar, Tartar, South Asian, European, Ethiopian and American.'⁶⁸ This classification by Buffon, however, was not as concrete as some of the other distinctions he draws, especially concerning 'Moguls' or 'Moors'. Of these peoples, indeed, Buffon offers sentiments often demonstrating their similarities to the Europeans in form and features. He notes, for instance, that the 'greatest part of the Moorish women would pass for handsome, even among ourselves. Of their children in general, the skin is exceedingly fair and delicate', and also that the 'Moguls, and the other inhabitants of the peninsula of India, are not unlike the Europeans in shape and in features; but they differ more or less from them in colour.'⁶⁹ Furthermore, as well as making some of their neighbours to be more 'Europeanised' than some other 'races', Buffon also stretches the biological definition of 'European' itself beyond the geographical borders of the continent and into Asia. Demonstrating the classical signs of beauty, as noted in Chapter Two, was an important feature in classifying 'races' in eighteenth-century theory, and Buffon observed a continuity in appearance which is significant:

If we now examine those who live in a climate more temperate, we shall find, that all the people northward of Mogul and Persia, as the Armenians, the Turks, the Georgians, the Mingrelians, the Circassians, and the Europeans at large, are of all the others the most beautiful, the most fair, and the most shapely; and that, however remote Cachimire may be from Spain[...]the resemblance between the natives[...]between those of the two latter, is singularly striking.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 151; Jackson and Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science*, p. 15.

⁶⁸ David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 64.

⁶⁹ Buffon, *Natural History*, p. 216; p. 202.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

These examples show that at the time of writing for the novels Wheeler utilises, the 'racial' classification of people from North Africa, the near East, the Middle East, and the Indian sub-continent was widely varied in scientific theory, and consequently the attitudes surrounding 'interbreeding' with these nations were inevitably going to be more complex than with groups more firmly defined as 'other'. This 'racial' ambiguity surrounding Europe's neighbours, indeed, does not mean the notion that 'race' had yet to consolidate into a recognisable idea. The categorisation of these places and people always posed a problem for authors, and certainly never reached a state of consensus in European science during the last three decades of the eighteenth century.

Racial classifications contemporary to the later novels in Wheeler's chapter furthermore demonstrate that categories were in no way consolidating into a single recognisable concept. Richard Brooke, author of the highly Buffon-esque *A New and Accurate System of Natural History* (1763), portrays a confusing image of the regions in question, and one which also contradicts his forefather in several ways. Like Buffon, he grants that the 'INDIANS in the *Mogul's* empire, and the other people in the two penninsula's of the *East-Indies*, resemble the Europeans in shape, size, and features'.⁷¹ In his system, however, the 'Circassians' and 'Georgians' are discussed under the banner of 'ARABS' and are discussed as Asians, whilst the 'TURKS, who buy a great number of slaves, are a people composed of several nations, as *Armenians, Georgians, and Egyptians*; even not excepting the *Europeans*'.⁷² The boundaries between Europe and the Islamic world already seem blurred by sexual interaction, and under the auspices of some of the classificatory schemes above could not be termed 'miscegenation' in any specific sense. Some final evidence that these distinctions were not getting any clearer as the century progressed can be found in the work of Johann

⁷¹ Brookes, *A New and Accurate System of Natural History*, p. 168.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

Blumenbach, who in his hugely-influential 1775 treatise *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* shifted the boundaries of difference once more:

The first and most important [human variety] to us (which is also the primitive one) is that of Europe, Asia this side of the Ganges, and all the country situated to the north of the Amoor, together with that part of North America, which is nearest both in position and character of the inhabitants.⁷³

This statement seems to turn the categories back almost full-circle to the model held by Bernier over a century beforehand, with Europeans being constructed as the same 'race' as people from the Middle-East and India, along with some peoples in the Americas. Sex with a variety of different population groups was permissible in European thought before it became technically a 'miscegenous' infringement of categories, and especially with people from North Africa, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. Significantly, it is this evidence that predominates in Wheeler's analysis of 'intermarriage'.

The 'racial' boundaries between Europe and the immediately surrounding area, therefore, were problematic for authors of classificatory systems at best, and thus the attitudes towards 'miscegenation' with these peoples are intricate in European culture more generally. But there were also clearer articulations of 'racial' difference to be found pertaining to the more distant regions of Earth. These operated far more consistently within European theory, and with a concomitant increase of negative attitudes towards 'interracial' reproduction. It should be noted, indeed, that the classification of the majority of Native Americans in the work of the theorists already discussed is for the most part constant: only Bernier denied their being a separate branch of humanity to the European, although he did emphasise their physical

⁷³ Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 'On the Natural Variety of Mankind' (1795 edition) in Thomas Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (London: Longman, 1865), p. 99.

differences from that standard. Subsequently Linnaeus 'othered' them in an 'Americanus' category of their own, along with Buffon, Brooke, Blumenbach and the vast majority of 'racial' scientists afterwards. Native Americans were therefore defined in British culture in a clearer way than the occupants of the nations surrounding Europe.

This firmer categorisation may well account for a certain curious feature surrounding portrayals of Native Americans in 'intermarriage' novels as noted by Wheeler herself. Of the novel *The Female American* (1767), one of Wheeler's core texts in that chapter, she claims that it 'differs from other intermarriage novels because of the Indian heroine's death, an event that is typically generated by plots with Native American women.'⁷⁴ Whilst the other works studied are shown to depict largely successful and positive images of 'intermarriage' between Europeans and Muslims or Indians, this book results in a tragic ending: something Wheeler puts down to the real-life political conflict between Europeans and Native Americans. Joyce Chaplin, however, suggests in her study of seventeenth-century New York that more than political tensions may have been at work in negative attitudes towards sex between Americans and Europeans in British colonies. She notes that a vestigial conception of 'racial' degeneration can be observed in such sentiment: 'The abhorrence of intermarriage grew along with the conviction of the English that Indians were weaker in body. Further, sexual relations with Indians and amalgamation of the two peoples seemed to represent the ultimate engulfment of Englishness, with[...]their children losing English bodily distinctiveness.'⁷⁵ The threat of intermixture here is to English identity; an identity made manifest in set bodily forms which are understated in Wheeler's work.

⁷⁴ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 167.

⁷⁵ Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, pp. 159-160.

The tragic ending of *The Female American* seems to have greater implications given the pervasiveness of this motif not just in representations of ‘intermixture’ with Americans, but also with another ‘racial’ group which was subject to an even more consistent classification throughout the eighteenth century. One particular group is noticeably absent from the books Wheeler studies, on which fact she comments: ‘The absence of black Africans in intermarriage plots suggests a narrative avoidance. In as much as enslaved Africans were crucial to bolstering the British economy, not to mention being the other population with whom the British were most likely to have sex, they were banished from the pages of novels’.⁷⁶ Wheeler once again seeks a cultural explanation for something that could perhaps be more easily accounted for by the presence of a consolidated notion of ‘racial’ difference. All of the theorists mentioned in this section, for instance, treat black Africans as a separate and distinct people: from Bernier in 1684⁷⁷ to Brooke in 1763⁷⁸, there is a remarkable and profound continuity in the language used to depict this group as categorically different to Europeans—and not just on the basis of skin colour, but through a multitude of features, as discussed in Chapters One and Two. This period, furthermore, saw the introduction of the word ‘race’ in its modern form to the English language, by John Atkins in 1735, who through his capacity as a medical doctor and experienced traveller offered one of the first anatomical depictions of humanity as polarised between two extremes of black and white, with the essential difference being between two permanent species.⁷⁹

The few late-seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century works that do depict sexual relationships between black Africans and white Europeans thus generally seem

⁷⁶ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 141.

⁷⁷ ‘What induces me to make a different species of the Africans, are, 1. Their thick lips and squab noses. 2. the blackness which is peculiar to them, and which is not caused by the sun, as many think;’ Bernier, ‘A New Division of the Earth’, p. 361.

⁷⁸ ‘The BLACKS or NEGROES of *Africa*[...]their chief distinction from all other Blacks is their woolly heads, not to mention their flat noses and thick lips;’ Brooke, *Natural History of Quadrupeds*, pp. 158-159.

⁷⁹ See Chapter One, pp. 101-102, for more details.

to adhere to the same literary motif Wheeler identifies in ‘intermarriage’ novels involving Native Americans. As was seen previously, Aphra Behn’s novel *Oroonoko* (1688) described black Africans as ‘racially’ different in various ways. The novel was adapted for the stage after its publication by Thomas Southerne in 1695. In that popular version of the story, the titular prince marries the white Imoinda and, as in the novel, the story ends tragically: Imoinda is willingly killed by Oroonoko to avoid a worse fate at the hands of the Governor of Surinam. Oroonoko then kills the Governor and himself in a bloody finale.⁸⁰ Another pertinent source is Daniel Defoe’s *Captain Singleton* (1720), which simultaneously depicts functional, even positive ‘intermarriage’ between Europeans and non-Europeans and ‘interracial’ sex which jeopardises the stability of colonial society in a way that Edward Long would have understood.⁸¹ One of only two sexual relationships between black Africans and white Europeans nevertheless once again results in the brutal death of one of the participants, whilst the other relationship is only featured in the novel at its inception, and the reader is left to imagine for themselves what becomes of the two individuals involved. *Captain Singleton* goes so far as to suggest of slavery ‘that the Law of Nature dictated it to’ black Africans, framing an important sense of intrinsic difference.⁸² The frequency of death when linked to sexual relationships between Europeans and black Africans or Native Americans shows how ‘miscegenation’ between these categorically different peoples was destructive for those involved. The fact that these relationships tend to terminate tragically before a child is conceived, furthermore, is important; it precludes the evidence which ‘interbreeding’ provides for the biological unity of humankind.

Further literary criticism, moreover, suggests a somewhat different mode of thought on ‘race’ in general in the early modern period to the one this section has

⁸⁰ Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko: A Tragedy* (1696: London: T. Johnson, 1712), pp. 107-108.

⁸¹ Wheeler, *Complexion of Race*, p. 131.

⁸² Daniel Defoe, *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* (London: J. Brotherton, 1720), p. 204.

sought to complicate. As was mentioned briefly in the introduction to this chapter, work on Elizabethan drama has highlighted several sentiments that we can now perceive as comparable to those expressed by authors like Jefferson and Long two hundred years later. A fear of ‘miscegenation’ with Africans, for instance, led to ‘[t]he black man [having] an almost omnipresent place in early modern rape drama’.⁸³ Joyce Green McDonald’s study of Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra* (c. 1608) also demonstrates very real boundaries between European and African, made apparent through his ‘interracial’ affair: ‘Anthony’s crossing of borders, his miscegenous joining with Cleopatra, threatens the survival of the categories of barbarous and civilised’.⁸⁴ Other academics working on literature in the period have noticed a transition in attitudes towards ‘miscegenation’, but one that does not align itself with the epistemic shift depicted by Nussbaum, Wheeler, Wahrman and others. Sujata Iyengar’s comprehensive text on ‘race’ in the early modern period, for instance, demonstrates that throughout ‘the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ethnic prejudice and mythologies of color decline in favour of racialism and the fear of miscegenation.’⁸⁵ A fear of ‘miscegenation’ with particular groups was seen to be prominent in English thought at least by the end of the seventeenth century. This fear was not limited to black Africans. Margo Hendricks’s study of Aphra Behn’s *The Widow Ranter* (c.1688-89) shows congruent representational practices with regards to Native Americans also. The play is set in a colonial situation in New World, in which the European settlers seek to exploit the Virginian land and people. One character, Bacon, pursues a native woman sexually, and the issues raised by this, according to Hendricks, represented common fears of the time. In the play, she writes, ‘miscegenation can (and often does) result in the proliferation of “natives” who reject “civility”...if miscegenation erases the boundaries between English and the

⁸³ Little Jr., *Shakespeare Jungle Fever*, p. 59.

⁸⁴ Joyce Green MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 41.

⁸⁵ Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Colour in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 15.

American Indians, what then becomes of the ineradicable measure of “difference” required to justify the colonising project?”⁸⁶ The rhetoric of this statement is similar to that of Edward Long’s *History of Jamaica*, and his comments on what became of the Spanish colonies in particular. Furthermore, the participants in ‘miscegenation’ in Behn’s text are, Hendricks believes, tainted by their practice: Bacon was seen as having ‘succumbed to “Indian savagism”’, representing a failure to ‘remain a “true” Englishman’.⁸⁷ The idea of being a ‘true’ member of one’s ‘kind’ is particularly analogous to the polygenic constructions of later scientists such as Henry Home, who as we saw termed the desire to reproduce outside of one’s own ‘kind’ as a ‘depraved’ act caused by ‘want of choice.’

There seems plenty of evidence in English literature for a manifest and repeated antipathy towards ‘miscegenation’. In talking about the novels in that chapter as if they could possibly depict ‘racial’ ‘intermarriage’, Wheeler projected a visage of ‘racial’ difference that was not a reality in classificatory science for the territories in North Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent. This is not to say, however, that ‘racial’ difference and ‘racist’ stereotypes were not present in British thought at the time: rather these notions were fixed to a more simplistic system of division. In this vague system, ‘racialist’ stereotypes could also be disproportionately applied to particular groups. Bodily barriers such as skin colour, for instance, were seen as more explainable—and more homogenous with European physical type—in the inhabitants of the nations immediately surrounding Europe than in Africa or America. Consequently attitudes towards ‘miscegenation’ with these groups too were better understood and tolerated. The next section more thoroughly evidences the point that there was a ‘biological’ sense of intermixture present in the early eighteenth century by examining

⁸⁶ Margo Hendricks, ‘Civility, Barbarism, and Aphra Behn’s *The Widow Ranter*’ in Hendricks and Parker (eds.), *Women, ‘Race’ and Writing*, p. 237.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

the details of the early terminology of ‘miscegenation’ in British travel writing and also wider culture.

‘The *Mulatto* Race’:

Appropriated Vocabulary and the Racialisation of ‘Miscegenous’ Individuals

Just as the terminology used to categorise ‘races’ was in place in the English language long before those groupings became formalised in scientific literature—such as ‘negro’, ‘Moor’ and ‘Tartar’, for instance—so the vocabulary used to depict ‘mixed-race’ people also had a long history by the turn of the eighteenth century. The word ‘mestizo’ is recorded by the *OED* as entering the English language in 1598, whilst its shortened form ‘Mustee’ arrived a century later in 1699. The word ‘mulatto’, most pervasive of all, finds its first usage in 1591, only thirty-four years after ‘negro’ itself was appropriated from Spanish and Portuguese slave traders. Both ‘mestizo’ and ‘mulatto’, indeed, originated from Spanish terminology: this is highly significant, given Edward Long’s appropriation of ‘interbreeding’ schema from Spanish colonial law. ‘Mestizo’ as a technical term meant specifically ‘a man with a Spanish father and an American Indian mother; (later) a person of mixed American Spanish and American Indian descent’.⁸⁸ Whilst this word was often used in travel writing and other sources beforehand, it seems to have found its way into English dictionaries by the mid-eighteenth century: demonstrating a theoretical awareness during that period of ‘interbreeding’ as something intertwined with categorical differences. *The Pocket Dictionary or Complete English Expositor*, published in 1753, records ‘Mestizo’ as ‘the

⁸⁸ ‘Mestizo, *n.* and *adj.*’, *Oxford English Dictionary (OED Online)*, www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/117138, accessed 1st October, 2009.

breed of Spaniards with Americans': a statement which shows a sense of animal biology in its use of the word 'breed' as an alternative to 'children', or even 'progeny'. This classificatory term aligns with the understanding of human variety as outlined by the last section, with Native Americans and Africans inhabiting largely-consolidated classes of difference, and the combination of these categories warranted a specific classification of its own.

It is in a study of the word 'mulatto', however, that the animalistic and 'racialist' implications of such categorisation can best be seen. The term was in common usage far earlier than 'mestizo', and is frequently found in dictionaries at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The word specifically relates to the 'interbreeding' of a black African and a white European, again supporting the general model of human difference during that period, although a few divergent interpretations do occur. The *Glossographia Anglicana Nova* (1707), for instance, defines a 'Mulatto' as 'one born of Parents, of whom one is a Moor, and the other of another Nation.'⁸⁹ This, however, seems to be an anomaly, probably brought about by the vague 'racial' understanding of North African and Near-Eastern people in the century, as previously highlighted, and in general other dictionaries display a great continuity in how they represent this term. *Cocker's English Dictionary* (1715) brings the full implications of the word to the fore, defining a 'Mulatto' as 'a Mule that use to carry Burdens. In *America* Children born of a *Spaniard* and a *Negro* Woman, are called, *i.e.* a little Mule.'⁹⁰ The use of the word 'mulatto', we see, becomes a full animalistic analogy, given further meaning by the mule's common use by man as a beast of burden. 'Mulatto' is a term which demonstrates the full connotations of the Spanish slavery culture.

⁸⁹ *Glossographia Anglicana Nova: Or A Dictionary* (London: Daniel Brown, 1707), Letters: MU, Entry: 'Mulatto'.

⁹⁰ Edward Cocker, *Cocker's English Dictionary* (London: T. Norris, 1715), Letters: MUS, Entry: 'Mulatto'.

As noted earlier, ‘mules’ themselves were prone to negative connotations, with several eighteenth-century naturalists describing them as ‘monstrous’, sterile beasts trapped between two separate species. Every time the word ‘mulatto’ is invoked it also draws upon this legacy, summoning an impression of an inferior creature which somehow contradicts the boundaries imposed by nature. Other dictionaries present a very deliberate sense of this. Samuel Johnson’s famous mid-century work offers overtones of polygenetic thinking, defining the word as ‘one begot between a white and a black, as a mule between different species of animals.’⁹¹ Species was fairly well defined by this time, and Johnson offers the summation ‘Class of nature; single order of beings’⁹², which certainly propounds a sense of innate boundaries which, in the ‘mulatto’, are crossed. Similar sentiment can be seen in earlier dictionaries, such as John Stevens’ *A New Spanish and English DICTIONARY* (1706), a useful text that displays the full range of thought from Spanish sources being translated into British culture. To Stevens a ‘Mulatto’ is ‘the Son of a *Black* and of a *White*, so call’d by reason of the mixture, from *Múla*, a Mule, which is a mixt breed.’⁹³ Furthermore, the text translates the more detailed vocabulary of ‘interbreeding’ which had yet to reach English authors. The term ‘Grifo’ for instance, seems to be borrowed from the Spanish ‘science’ of delineating ‘miscegenation’ which Long would adduce seventy years later: ‘a griffin; also the Son of a Black Woman and a Mulatto.’⁹⁴ The use of the same word for a mythical monster comprised of several distinct animal species and for a ‘mixed-race’ individual serves to compound the general sense of incomplete animality which the vocabulary to describe ‘miscegenous’ individuals engenders.

⁹¹ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. II (Second ed.), Letters: MUL, Entry: ‘*MULATTO. n.f.*’

⁹² *Ibid.*, Letters: SPE, Entry: *SPE’CIES. n.f.*, meaning 2.

⁹³ John Stevens, *A New Spanish and English DICTIONARY* (London: George Sawbridge, 1706), Letters: MUL, Entry: ‘*Muláto, a Mulatto*’.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Letters: GRI, Entry: ‘*Grifo, or Grifón*’.

Stevens' Spanish to English dictionary is also interesting in that it carries the translations of numerous Spanish proverbs, which if studied properly allow us to examine the further connotations of the animal-allusions contained in the word 'mulatto'. The mule seems to occupy a prominent and consistent space in Spanish proverbial culture, commonly receiving a pejorative representation which seems to chime with 'racist' vocabulary seen previously. Take, for instance, Steven's translation and subsequent explanation: 'The Bastard Son, and the Mule do one every Day; that is, do some unlucky Trick. Because Mules are generally vicious, and Bastard Sons for the most Part ill bred.'⁹⁵ This proverb ties a 'vicious' nature together with 'ill breeding', in both mules and humans, and furthermore shows one stereotype later to be articulated by Long with regards to 'the vicious, brutal, and degenerate breed of mongrels' which he found in the Spanish colonies. The same motif is repeated often: Stevens translates further, 'Neither deal by the Sea, nor trust to Mules, because the Dangers of the Sea are many, and Mules vicious' and also 'A Mule must be sooth'd and a Horse beaten, because the Mules are vicious, and if beaten, grow resty, or mischievous.'⁹⁶ Every invocation of the word 'mulatto' carried with it the burden of implicit notions of difference and also many stereotypes which served in themselves to demonstrate a largely negative impression of 'miscegenation' between black Africans and white Europeans persistently throughout the eighteenth century.

The influence of Spanish colonial thought on 'racial' intermixture can also be seen in travel writing. When Edward Long adduced the charts depicting the Spanish 'science' of categorising 'miscegens' (Figures 3 and 4) he was not the first to bring that complex system to the attention of British readers. He was rather lending further evidence to a line of English travellers who, upon their return from various colonies,

⁹⁵ Stevens, *A New Spanish and English DICTIONARY*, Letters: HIJ, Entry: '*El hijo búrde, y la mûla, cada día bâzen úna.*'

⁹⁶ Stevens, *A New Spanish...*, Letters: MAR, Entry: '*Ni en mar tartar, ni en mûlas fiar*'; Letters: MUL, Entry: '*A la mûla con balágo, y al caválo con el pálo.*'

included this hierarchy in their publications as a feature of note. William Betagh's journey around the globe in 1719 records a visit to colonial Lima in Peru, which even at that time was populated with 'sixty or seventy thousand persons[...]all sorts and colours included'.⁹⁷ This gives the impression of a morass of people beyond the limits of classificatory systems, and yet Betagh, like Long would after him, offers a table which greatly simplifies the situation into a fixed system of difference:

Figure 5.⁹⁸

The Inhabitants are thus distinguisht.

<i>Spaniards</i>	————	Natives of <i>old Spain</i> .
<i>Creolians</i>	————	Born in <i>America</i> of <i>white</i> parents.
<i>Mulattas</i>	————	Issue of <i>white</i> and <i>nigro</i> .
<i>Mestizos</i>	————	Issue of <i>white</i> and <i>indian</i> .
<i>Quartton nigros</i>		Born of <i>white</i> and <i>mulatta</i> .
<i>Quartton indians</i>		Born of <i>white</i> and <i>mestizo</i> .
<i>Sambo de mulatta</i>		<i>Nigro</i> and <i>mulatta</i> .
<i>Sambo de indian</i>		<i>Nigro</i> and <i>indian</i> .

The act of 'miscegenation' in this schema is evidently imparted with antipathy: the further an individual is regressed from their original white European parent, the lower a space in the hierarchy they occupy. Not even included on this chart, moreover, are the '[i]ssue of *Sambo mulatta*, and *Sambo indian*', who are labelled '*giveros*'. Such is the extent of 'interbreeding' required to produce such an individual, that they are 'lookt on as having the worst inclinations and principles; and if the cast is known, they are banisht the kingdom.'⁹⁹ A similar mechanism can be observed elsewhere in travel literature, for instance in the popular and widespread translation of Don George Juan and Don Antonio de Ulloa's *A Voyage to South-America* (1753), which details the transition from white to 'mulatto' and through to 'Quinteron', and then back to white again, as demonstrated graphically in Long's work (Figure 3).¹⁰⁰ This text also emphasises the

⁹⁷ William Betagh, *A Voyage Round the World* (London: T. Combes, 1728), p. 259.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁹⁹ Betagh, *A Voyage Round the World*, p. 259.

¹⁰⁰ Antonio de Ulloa, *A Voyage to South-America* (London: L. Davids, 1753), pp. 31-32.

prestige of white or even close-to-white ancestry in Spanish colonial situations, so that 'if you call them by a degree lower than what they actually are, they are highly offended, never suffering themselves to be deprived of so valuable a gift of fortune.'¹⁰¹ What is described, then, is a mode of European thought in which the fear and antipathy towards 'miscegenation' on both the basis of cultural decay and genetic degeneracy seems very real, and existing long before the 1770s. Admittedly this is not in an English context, but the wide dissemination of Spanish pseudo-scientific theory in English-language texts goes to show that the sentiment was certainly not alien to British thought. Furthermore, the above systems offer a precedent for an important feature of representations of 'mixed-race' people: namely their 'othering' through both classificatory systems and more general representations into a distinct 'race' of their own by many authors.

When Captain Nathaniel Uring wrote of his travels around the Americas in 1726, he recorded an account of a ship carrying a cargo of 'Negroes by Accident cast away on the Coast, and those who escaped drowning mixed among native *Muschetto* People, who intermarried with them, and begot a Race of *Mulattoes*.'¹⁰² Although the definition offered here for 'mulatto' differs from those seen previously, used as it is to describe the progeny of black Africans and Native Americans, the notion that these 'inter-bred' people form a 'race' of their own is evidence of a trend endemic among representations in eighteenth-century travel writing. 'Mulattoes' are frequently given a consolidated physical type of their own, and are also often distinguished from other non-Europeans by the smallest degrees by authors. Uring notes that this '*Mulatto Race*' was offensive within its own culture, being 'People that Society could not brook should bear any kind of Command amongst them.' This, though, seems strange to the author,

¹⁰¹ de Ulloa, *A Voyage to South-America*, p. 32.

¹⁰² Nathaniel Uring, *A History of the Voyages and travels of Capt. Nathaniel Uring* (London: W. Wilkins, 1726) p. 227.

who notes, 'All the Difference I observed between 'em was, the Native *Indians* had long black Hair, and the Mulatto race had strong bushy curled Hair, a little changed in their Skin; the Copper and Black mixing made some Alteration.'¹⁰³ A few decades later, Griffith Hughes also found it necessary to distinguish for his audience between Native Americans and 'mulattoes', explaining:

the *Indians*, tho' they resemble the *Mulattoes* in Colour, yet they are a distinct Race, and far from deriving their Origin from a Mixture between a *white* man and a *black* Woman; for such a Mixture which are called *Mulattoes*, hath always very curled hair, with *Indians* always lank and strong.¹⁰⁴

This statement simultaneously addresses confusion in English thought between 'mulattoes' and other non-Europeans and also serves to fix the 'mulatto' physical type into a category of its own, much like the gradational charts offered by the Spanish colonies did. 'Miscegenous' difference, it seems, was also being quantified and classified in British thought.

It should be no surprise that this theoretical effort to 'other' 'mulattoes' as something 'racially' distinct in their own right led to many more general pejorative associations in travel writing. 'Mulattoes' often appear in this genre as simply a different type of 'negroe', possessing the same stereotypical characteristics and the same continuity in representation that has been demonstrated throughout this thesis. In the 1718 text *A Voyage to and From the Island of BORNEO, in the EAST-INDIES* the author describes that island thus: 'The Country is exceeding pleasant, and abounds with all Things necessary for the use of delight of Man; but the natives are a poor, lazy, ignorant sort of People, prodigious Thieves, and most of them as black as Negro's, or at

¹⁰³ Uring, *A History of the Voyages*, p. 227.

¹⁰⁴ Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London: G. Hughes, 1750), p. 14, fn. 18.

least Mulatto's.'¹⁰⁵ The derogatory comments made towards Borneo's natives seem to draw upon stereotypes commonly associated with 'negroes', as evidenced widely and throughout the eighteenth century. The association of these qualities with skin colour at the end of the statement, and specifically with that of 'Negro's' and 'Mulatto's', certainly seems to project a collective representation of these peoples as embodying negative characteristics thought to deviate from European standards equally.

This close proximity in thought was doubtlessly encouraged by the fact that, in many colonies, black Africans and 'mulattoes' frequently came to live together due to the social prejudice they faced from white European society and the resulting poverty. In accounts of abandoned and failing colonies this proximity is made particularly apparent. William Symson's *A New Voyage to the East-Indies* (1715) records a visit to the 'Island of *Annolon*', which produced goods such as Sugar-Cane and Cotton but which also is represented as something of a backwater, degenerated in terms of its economy and occupants. Symson claims that 'Provisions[...]are so cheap, that a roasting pig was bought there for a Sheet of Paper,' whilst most white Europeans have apparently abandoned the island already: 'The Inhabitants are most of them *Blacks* and *Mulatto*'s, and very poor.'¹⁰⁶ Woodes Rogers' 1712 description of a much larger colony, Mexico City, is similar in the way it twins a preponderance of 'Blacks and Mulattos' with cultural and economic stagnation. He notes that the city's women 'prefer *Europeans* to their own Country-men; this occasions irreconcilable Prejudices betwixt them, so that an *European* can scarce pass the Streets without being insulted.'¹⁰⁷ The favouring of Europeans by women was entwined with the complex hierarchy of the Spanish colonial system, but the overall image is rather of a society hostile for Europeans. Rogers goes on to note, 'The Inhabitants are about 100000, the major part

¹⁰⁵ *A Journey To and From the Island of BORNEO, in the EAST-INDIES* (London: 1718), p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ William Symson, *A New Voyage to the East-Indies* (London: H. Meere, 1715), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁷ Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (London: Andrew Bell, 1712; 1718), p. 327.

blacks, and Mulatto's, because of the vast Number of Slaves carried thither. Europeans seldom marry there, because [of] finding no way to get real Estates'.¹⁰⁸ The 'Blacks and Mulattoes' again are homogenised into a closely-associated group and the undesirability of the city, and indeed any colony, to Europeans increases proportionately with the growth of a 'miscegenous' population.

The negative connotations of 'miscegenation' become even more apparent in other travel narratives, which texts exhibit a sentiment approximating Long's and Jefferson's perception of the act as a threat, politically and genetically, to the integrity of their colonies. That 'interbreeding' in some way causes the degeneration of a people towards an inferior form is suggested in George Shelvocke's *A Voyage Round the World* (1726). The author, commander of the ships *Speedwell* and *Recovery* during his voyage between 1719 and 1722, recalls how he desired 'taking either *Chacao* or *Calibuco*', two small Spanish-owned ports in South America.¹⁰⁹ A Frenchman who had visited the former town informed Shelvocke that 'there was indeed at Chacao what they called a fortress, but it did not deserve that name[...]being in perfect peace with the *Indians*[...]and what garrison that had, consisted chiefly of a mixed breed of *Creolian Spaniards*, who are worse soldiers than *Indians* themselves.'¹¹⁰ This description is accepted by Shelvocke readily, the assertion that 'mixed breed' individuals are innately inferior being in no way objectionable to him, and he concludes that he 'could have met but a feeble opposition in rendering my self master of the place.'¹¹¹ This negative representation of 'miscegenation' in colonies is not limited to Spanish colonies in English texts, furthermore. John Atkins, who as we have seen was one of the first authors to express polygenetic conclusions, depicts in 1735 an image of Jamaica not far

¹⁰⁸ Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage*, p. 327.

¹⁰⁹ George Shelvocke, *A Voyage Round the World By Way of the Great South Sea* (London: J. Senex, 1726), p. 95.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

removed from its Spanish contemporaries. The 'creole' inhabitants of that island, he believed, were 'a spurious Race', and he described a caste system similar to those observed to be in place within the Spanish colonies: 'The first Change by Black and White, they call *Mulatto*; the second a *Mustee*, and the third a *Castee*.' Atkins was fully understanding, in the same way Long would be forty years later, of the fear that 'intermixture' with, and even close proximity to, black Africans could 'corrupt' white Europeans away from their seat at the pinnacle of civilisation: 'They are half *Negrish* in their Manners, proceeding from the promiscuous and confined Conversation with their Relations, the Servants at the Plantations.'¹¹²

The need to preserve categorical difference between groups was enduringly important within English thought. The fear of the influence that 'intermixture' with Africans could have on white colonials was repeated—literally, the passage is an uncited quote from Atkins—again in 1760, in *A New Geographical Dictionary*. The entry for Jamaica claims again that the 'Creoles, namely, those born in Jamaica[...]are said to be a spurious race;¹¹³ a statement which serves once more to construct the act of 'interbreeding' as creating a separate, 'other' 'race' in itself, and furthermore portrays that 'race' with obvious antipathy. The word 'spurious', indeed, had several meanings at the time, all of which are negative given the context: 'Not genuine; counterfeit; adulterine[...]not legitimate; bastard.'¹¹⁴ Whilst the latter two words key directly into the sense that 'miscegenation' is contrary to the supposed 'natural law' maintaining the boundaries between 'races' and 'species', the first three also invoke the sentiment proffered by Henry Home, whose rhetoric held that to deviate from one's own 'pure' 'kind' was 'depraved' and created incomplete, sub-human 'mongrels'. In short, the highly-vitriolic fear of 'miscegenation' found in post-1770 'science' was widely

¹¹³ *A New Geographical Dictionary Containing a Full and Accurate Account of the Several parts of the Known World* (London: J. Coote, 1760), Vol. II, Letters: JAM, Entry: 'Jamaica'.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, *A Dictionary*, Letters: SPU, Entry: 'SPU'RIOUS'.

informed by cultural assumptions found in both travel literature and classificatory texts such as dictionaries, and was not in fact indicative of a sea-change in thought on 'race'. Dictionary literature and common linguistic trends in travelogues show that a notion of animalistic difference was implicit in the terminology used to describe 'interbred' individuals from the outset of the eighteenth century.

Conclusion

The 'knowledge' of 'race' as a physical, delineating category was present in some degree throughout the eighteenth century, and where this mode of thought existed so too was the fear of 'miscegenation' frequently found. Categorisation, assimilated through both the borrowed Spanish vocabulary and also through older divisions taken from classical thought concerning the 'civilised' and the 'savage', was important for travel writers and natural historians right across the period. It enabled them to reduce the vast complexities of the new human cultures they experienced into something communicable via language. And given the Baconian imperative for plain, repetitive and simple language, classification and essentialisation, the foundations of both 'race' and 'racism', effectively legitimated their texts. 'Interbreeding', conversely, threatened this legitimacy by blurring the boundaries; by eroding the physical stereotypes which they needed to present as concrete in order to have any hope of describing the wider world to a European audience. 'Miscegenation' was not just a threat to empire and colonialism, but also philosophically to the categorising project in itself, and many authors often found the need to cope with this by realigning the boundaries of the 'other' to incorporate 'mixed-race' individuals into established 'racial' thought as a separate 'race' in their own right. This was not the case for all authors, of course: the continuity

amongst certain monogenesist authors of relatively neutral, nonjudgmental attitudes towards 'miscegenation', carrying on well into the latter decades of the eighteenth century, demonstrates this, as does the considerable evidence gathered in recent historiography on the topic. There was a consistent duality of thought at all times. Some authors, though, borrowed 'racist' stereotypes directly from the 'negro' or the Native American and imparted them directly onto the 'mulatto'. On Portuguese settlers in Brazil, for example, one author wrote: 'The *Portuguese* here are darker than those of Europe[...][from] their Intermarriages with the Negroes[...]*the Women here, like the Mulatto Generation every where else, are fond of Strangers; not only the Courtezans[...]*but also the married Women.'¹¹⁵ If this sounds familiar, it is because we have already seen authors such as Edward Long say of black Africans, '[t]here is scarcely one[...]*who is not a common prostitute.*' A fixed nature, a racialization of the 'Mulatto Race' or 'Generation', was often achieved by directly connecting 'mulatto' nature with established 'negro' qualities, in this case concerning sex and desire. Attitudes towards sex, and also the physical configuration of sexual organs and internal animal natures, are the last feature of stereotyping dealt with in this thesis. We shall see that comments like those above were persistent in the eighteenth century, and that the parallels between sexual and 'racial' bodily difference are central to a full understanding of the complex representations of non-Europeans during this period.

¹¹⁵ Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Lives and Adventures of the Most Famous Highwaymen, Murderers, Street-Robbers, &c.* (London: J. Janeway, 1734), p. 230.

Chapter Four:

The Lust, Fetish and Gender of Non-European Bodies

Introduction

Several historians have examined the interconnections between sex and race, especially with regards to the ‘scientific’, epistemic consolidation of difference. Dror Wahrman’s depiction of the rise of modern selfhood is comprised almost entirely of discussion on sexual and racial modes of thought. Although claiming that the connection is ‘messier’ than a simple mirror of a single transitional process, Wahrman suggests that ‘gender, [like] race underwent a transformation beginning in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, replacing malleability and fluidity with increasing emphasis on innate and essential nature[...]in key ways their eighteenth-century histories display significant homologies that allow us[...]to speak of meta-patterns pertaining to them all.’¹ Wahrman here is building on other work that suggests that the last three decades of the eighteenth century were integral in the invention of the modern conception of gender.

Thomas Laqueur’s *Making Sex* (1990) is the seminal work of history on this subject. Laqueur names in his first chapter those theorists who have also identified the transition he examines: ‘in or about the eighteenth century[...]human sexual nature changed. On this point, at least, scholars as theoretically distant from one another as Michel Foucault, Ivan Illich, and Lawrence Stone agree.’² Foucault’s influence is particularly notable: the shift in episteme, from a ‘similitude’- to a ‘differentiation’-

¹ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 86-87.

² Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 5.

based concept of knowledge, seems to form the basis of Laqueur's analysis.³ For Laqueur, the invention of biological gender is the construction of 'incommensurable' variation between man and women: 'by around 1800, writers of all sorts were determined to base what they insisted were fundamental differences between man and woman, on discoverable biological distinctions and to express these in a radically different rhetoric.'⁴ The primary evidence presented for this change is a selection of reproductive science from ancient Greece to the late nineteenth century. These sources demonstrate the prevalence of Galenic 'one-sex' theory—in which women were simply inverse versions of men, with too little internal, humoural heat to force their genitals outside the body—for the majority of the period examined. A shift to a new regime of thought during the eighteenth century, however, led to a new degree of investigation into the sex-specific form and function of male and female genitalia, thus meaning the 'reproductive organs went from being paradigmatic sites for displaying hierarchy...to being the foundation of incommensurable difference.'⁵

The language of such arguments shows how much crossover there is between this historical investigation of gender and the work on race conducted by authors such as Felicity Nussbaum and Roxann Wheeler. The overlaps between sexual and racial theory are, however, not addressed in *Making Sex*, with Laqueur only hinting that further research may well show congruencies, and that in general 'there are important parallels between *post*-eighteenth-century discussions of sexual and racial differences, since both seek to produce a biological foundation for social arrangements'.⁶ Laqueur's work was an important theoretical and historical spur to much of the secondary literature engaged with in this thesis.

³ For a longer discussion of Foucault's ideas, see pp. 13-14 of my Introduction.

⁴ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 282 [my emphasis].

In contrast to the historiography on ‘race’ theory, however, Laqueur’s argument has generated considerable critical response. The shift he proposes has been attacked on several grounds. Both his claims that ‘[s]ometime in the eighteenth century, sex as we know it was invented’ and that prior to this, in the early modern period, to ‘be a man or a woman was to hold a social rank, a place in society, to assume a cultural role, not to *be* organically one or the other of two incommensurable sexes’, have drawn detailed commentary from historians.⁷ On this latter comment, for instance, Ulinka Rublack notes in her study of early-modern childbirth that ‘gestation and parturition thus made sexual difference an “ontological category”’: they gave essentially different meanings to sex which were rooted in contemporary perceptions of bodily processes.’ She goes on to suggest that ‘Laqueur only discusses the role of sexual reproduction...ignoring gestation and parturition as part of female reproductive labour.’⁸ Rublack’s argument for deeply-held continuities in bodily representation can be aligned with the evidence I have already used to show ‘racialised’ accounts of parturition as portraying set physical variety.

Historical studies focused specifically in the eighteenth century, furthermore, have also found good reason to question the shift in understandings of sexual difference. Robert B. Shoemaker notes that ‘we should be careful not to overemphasise change at the expense of evident continuities in gender roles’.⁹ It has become apparent, indeed, that Laqueur’s limited scope of texts, founded primarily on elite medical knowledge, was only one of many source-types in which contemporary attitudes towards gender roles and sexual reproduction were expressed. Karen Harvey, for instance, notes in *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century* (2004) that a ‘cultural state cannot be deduced

⁷ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 8; p. 149.

⁸ Ulinka Rublack, ‘Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany’, *Past and Present* 150 (Feb. 1996), p. 86.

⁹ Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: the Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), p. 61.

from one set of evidence, because neither 'culture' nor any single genre was monolithic or univocal.'¹⁰ Her in-depth study of erotic literature consequently offers a much more varied image of gender roles than is to be found in the works of Laqueur and his supporters, notably including the fact that 'eighteenth-century erotica displayed considerable persistence in its discussions of female bodies'.¹¹

In these contexts, the purpose of this chapter is threefold. Firstly it reexamines the connections between sex and race in the late eighteenth-century scientific treatises in the light of studies in gender history. Part of this process will involve discussing the wider genres from which data for 'racial science' were drawn. Nancy Leys Stepan, in her work on nineteenth-century race and gender concepts, briefly notes that 'the analogies used by scientists in the late eighteenth century[...]were products of long-standing, long-familiar, culturally endorsed metaphors.'¹² Investigation into the informing culture of this scientific research will reveal continuities in ideas about gender and race throughout the eighteenth century. The second function of this chapter is thus to expand the range of sources used in research into 'race' theory to include genres such as travel writing and popular literature, in the same way that has been already achieved for gender. In eighteenth-century descriptions of non-European people there exists a largely untapped collection of representations of the body which allow historians to view gender constructions from a different perspective. The third aim is consequently to examine the important representations of sexual difference they contain.

The chapter begins by exploring representations of the sexual attitudes of people in Africa, the Americas and briefly Australasia, establishing a connection between the

¹⁰ Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 101.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹² Nancy Leys Stepan, 'Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science', in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Anatomy of Racism* (London; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 41.

supposedly universal libidinousness exhibited by such peoples and the general representation of European women as more susceptible to their internal passions. This correlation is founded in ancient humoral theory, which retained a high level of credibility throughout this period, despite the evolving epistemological requisites of eighteenth-century science. The second section examines how descriptions of sexual organs and characteristics came to mirror these imagined inward natures and emphasise sexualised identities. This section engages critically with Stuart Hall's notions of 'fetishism', considering wider sources not yet broached in sociological writing. The third section, primarily using the work of Oliver Goldsmith, will show that late-eighteenth-century works of natural history often represented non-European groups by reducing the sexual differences, relative to the European standard, between their women and men, creating a homogenous stereotype. The system of homogenous representation is then used to examine European culture itself, revealing a set of relatively clear, and in many instances continuous, sexual differences which were deemed to be natural in European bodies. This last observation allows my thesis to engage in the debate instigated by Laqueur, as seen above, over historical constructions of sex and gender.

Humoural Lust: 'Savage' Sexual Attitudes

Chapter One argued that the propagation of accounts of promiscuous African/ape interrelations in 'race science' was a powerful evocation of animality, dependent upon a long tradition of description and aimed at reducing the theoretical distance between them. The closer proximity to the animal world that such representations suggested, however, further implies that similar instinctive drives govern both the apes and black Africans. The belief in the 'savage's' promiscuity was, as we shall see, a popular one in the early modern period, but it should not be conceived only of as an animalistic

stereotype. It was also one of the fundamental representations through which the metaphor of gender difference was imparted onto 'racial' thinking.

The general sentiment that certain non-Europeans are more libidinous than Europeans is well documented. In modern sociological work, for instance, Stuart Hall has written on the perceived 'super-masculinity' of black people. This is the term given to a representational process by which 'whites often fantasized about the excessive sexual appetites and prowess of black men—as they did about the lascivious, over-sexed character of black women—*which they both feared and secretly envied.*'¹³ Hall only investigates these representations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts, but this stereotype is not the legacy of a specifically enforced 'racial' identity; rather it is the product of more general 'savage' stereotypes which have been informing European culture since the ancient Greeks.

Thomas Laqueur likewise speaks of the persistence of ancient Galenic, humoral theory into early-modern gender regimes. The contention that certain population groups are closer to their base lusts was also a familiar refrain in theories concerning sexual difference. Because of their humoral balance, lacking the internal heat to fight their instincts, Laqueur writes of women 'whose desires knew no bounds in the old scheme of things, and whose reason offered so little resistance to passion'—a stereotype which, along with many facets of gender construction, changed correspondingly with the shift in biological theory. Women, he contends, 'became in some accounts creatures whose whole reproductive life might be spent anesthetized to the pleasures of the flesh...in the late eighteenth century.'¹⁴ What Hall describes as 'super-masculinity', then, was present in culture long before the nineteenth century, but in that historiographically pre-modern context it might more accurately be described as

¹³ Stuart Hall, 'The Spectacle of the "Other"' in Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1997), p. 262.

¹⁴ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 4.

‘super-femininity’; the quality of excessive lustfulness being largely a quality—often expressed through humoural difference—associated with women in scientific discourse since classical antiquity.¹⁵ To use either term, however, would be to strongly associate the image only with one sex or the other. The stereotype of heightened lust is thus referred to as ‘super-sexuality’ for the remainder of this chapter.

Just as men and women in the Galenic sexual scheme were characterised by their humoural balance, ‘arrayed according to their degree of metaphysical perfection, their vital heat,’ classical humoural notions also characterised non-Europeans.¹⁶ Sidney N. Klaus notes that ancient Greek and Roman medicine ‘regarded the skin as an amorphous membrane made from the congealing of “moist exhalations” driven to the surface of the body by internal heat. They believed that the color of skin was imposed[...]by some inner humor.’¹⁷ Variations of this basic idea persisted in medical theory throughout the early modern period. John Mitchell, who as seen earlier offered a detailed comparative anatomy of skin colour in 1744, even dedicated a chapter of his essay to demonstrating that ‘The Colour of Negroes does not proceed from any black

¹⁵ That ‘super-femininity’ rather than ‘super-masculinity’ may be a more accurate term when discussing the early modern period is demonstrated a number of times in common literature. An eighteenth-century translation of Diodorus the Sicilian’s works thoroughly entwines the qualities of effeminacy and lasciviousness. Discussing Sardanapalus, King of the Assyrians, he writes, ‘he led a most effeminate Life: For wallowing in pleasure and wanton Dalliances, he clothed himself in Women’s Attire[...]and not only daily inured himself such Meat and Drink as might incite and stir up his lascivious Lusts, but gratify’d them by filthy *Catamites*, as well as Whores and Strumpets, and without all sense of Modesty, abusing both Sexes.’ G. Booth (Trans.), *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian* (London: W. Taylor, 1721), p. 65. Here an insatiable sexual appetite is firmly an ‘effeminate’ trait—a connection continued by eighteenth century authors of history and travel writing. D. Fenning, for instance, describes the inhabitants of Sierra Leona as being ‘at the same time extremely lascivious and effeminate’, a phrase also used to depict the French King Childeric I in the introduction to the Earl of Oxford’s collection of travelogues. D. Fenning and J. Collier *A New System of Geography* (London: S. Crowder, 1764), p. 437; *A Collection of Voyages and Travels...From the Curious and Valuable Library of the Late Earl of Oxford*, (London: Thomas Osborne, 1745), Vol. I, p. xliii. The above description offered by Diodorus, indeed, found its way into geography texts in the late eighteenth century, which similarly depicted Sardanapalus as ‘luxurious and effeminate[...]and passed all his time in his seraglio.’ Charles Theodore Middleton, *A New and Complete System of Geography* (London: J. Cooke, 1777), p. 59.

¹⁶ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 5.

¹⁷ Sidney N. Klaus, ‘A History of the Science of Pigmentation’, in James J. Nordlund (ed.), *The Pigmentation System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 5.

Humour'¹⁸, showing a profound and persistent link between the bodily understanding of race and sex across many genres.

The consistent importance of classical thought persisted in texts written in the late eighteenth century, often generating a notable duality alongside empiricist science. As we have seen previously, James Burnet's *Origin and Progress of Language* (1772-1793) brought together travel accounts from both ancient and modern sources to construct a linguistic hierarchy of humanity which was fixed by incommensurable difference. In *Origin and Progress*, Burnet uses several reports on African peoples by different writers which display a good deal of continuity in their depictions. Fifth-century BC Greek historian Herodotus, we are told, was 'a man of great curiosity and diligence, and whose authority may be depended upon, when he relates a thing simply as a historical fact[...].He speaks of herds of people in this peninsula that coupled together promiscuously like cattle[...]and of men and women absolutely wild.'¹⁹ Likewise Burnet utilises fifteenth-century writer Leo Africanus' 'very accurate account' to compound these comments.²⁰ Africanus is said to agree 'as to the savageness of some of the people of Africa[...]particularly, he says, that, in the inward parts of the country[...]there are people that live a life entirely brutish[...]copulating promiscuously with their females, after the manner of brutes.'²¹

Discussion of 'herds' and 'cattle' and 'brutes' serves to paint an animalistically 'other' impression of the African peoples, but these 'promiscuous' tendencies are further extended to the 'savage' across the world by Burnet. The classical and antiquated knowledge of African nature is broadened out to subsume the newer, unknown 'others' of the American continent. In his paraphrasing of the 'very diligent

¹⁸ John Mitchell, 'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colour of People in Different Climates' *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 43 (1744-45), p. 114.

¹⁹ James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and W. Creech, 1773), Vol. I, p. 244.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

and accurate writer[...]Garcilasso de la Vega,' Burnet tells his readers of some people 'of Peru[...]under no kind of government, living together in herds or flocks, like so many cattle or sheep, and, like them, copulating promiscuously.'²² This perception was further spread through the New World by Burnet's reference to Americus Vesputius, who 'found a people who, tho' living together in herds, had neither government, religion, nor arts, nor any property; and every one of them had as many wives as he pleased.'²³ This invocation of liberal sexual desire amongst certain non-Europeans is repeated frequently, to the point where it gains the gloss of scientific fact. The author's acceptance of knowledge from authors such as Herodotus and early-modern travellers working in the same tradition creates a clear line of continuity still vigorous at the time *Origin and Progress* was written.

Like Burnet's work, John Millar's *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, published first in 1771 and followed by another two editions before 1779, is inherently monogenetic, and although Millar was not too enamoured with the climatic explanation of human variety by the third edition—claiming in a new introduction that 'national character depends very little upon the immediate operation of climate'²⁴—humanity is consistently considered as a single, although hierarchical, whole. His text frequently equates the non-European 'savage' with the ancient inhabitants of Gaul, Britain and Germany, as recorded by Greek and Roman authors, and the physical variations between such groups seem to be of negligible significance. In a similar way to Burnet's text, however, the polarised descriptions of 'civilised' and 'savage' societies offer an insight into late-eighteenth-century scientific thought on contemporary non-Europeans.

²² Burnet, *Origin and Progress*, Vol. I, pp. 246-248.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁴ Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1779 ed.), reprinted in William C. Lehman, *John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801* (Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 180.

Origin of the Distinction of Ranks is a troublesome text to define, being somewhere between a natural history of man and a legal history. The author's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* calls it a 'pioneering attempt at a historical sociology of social authority, taking up, in turn, familial relations, age, work relations, and political and marital leadership.'²⁵ As was seen in the Introduction, Millar used a detailed synthesis of travel literature to support his assertions, adopting the guise of rigorous scientific method.²⁶ Millar thus represented his work as objective, and the stereotypes it assimilated from its literary sources were compounded by this scientific gloss. Millar was responding in his text to the contemporary requirement for quantification; to the need for objective evidence to support truth claims rather than simply a deductive, logical line of thought.

Origin of the Distinction of Ranks, however, does not forward a new regime of difference-based knowledge, but instead simply articulates in a new way age-old prejudices. Of particular relevance here is the first section of the text, on the 'rank and condition of women in different ages'.²⁷ Millar uses examples of animal coupling to demonstrate that 'savage' relationships similar to marriage are created through an instinctive need to preserve children, rather than recognition of proper morality. 'Savages' in general are said to have 'lost all knowledge of the original instructions, which, as the sacred scriptures inform us, were communicated to mankind by an extraordinary revelation from heaven.'²⁸ Consequently they are represented as ignorant of the concept of chastity in women, much like the promiscuous 'savages' described by Burnet. Millar wrote, '[f]rom the extreme insensibility, observable in the character of all savage nations, it is no wonder they should entertain very gross ideas concerning those

²⁵ Knud Haakonssen and John W. Cairns, 'Millar, John (1735-1801), *Jurist*', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18716, accessed 24th January 2009.

²⁶ See Introduction, p. 39.

²⁷ Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, p. 183.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

female virtues which, in a polished nation, are supposed to constitute the honour and dignity of the sex.’²⁹ The weaknesses of inferior ‘savage’ humans are thus the same weaknesses of women: the internal failure of both groups is that they have been unable to prevent temptation from overriding their rational and religious faculties. Furthermore, the general promiscuity of savages is investigated by Millar in the context of several specifically referenced cultures: the Lydians, who ‘earned their Dowries by prostitution’, and the ancient Babylonians—who ‘had a public regulation[...]probably handed down from very remote antiquity, that every woman, of whatever rank should, once in her life submit to a public prostitution’—are compared to modern ‘Indians of America’ who,

think it no stain upon a woman’s character, that she has violated the laws of chastity before marriage: nay, if we can give credit to travellers who have visited that country, a trespass of this kind is a circumstance by which a woman is recommended to a husband; who is apt to value her the more, from consideration that she has been valued by others’.³⁰

The ‘promiscuous’ nature is again not a ‘racial’ quality. It is not localised to any particular geographical area, but is a general stereotype of many non-Europeans: ‘But though it must, perhaps, be admitted that particular climates have some influence upon the passions of sex, yet, in most parts of the world, the character of savages, in this respect, exhibits a remarkable uniformity.’³¹ The contention that there is a universal ‘savage’ nature is thus extended into the last three decades of the eighteenth century; irrespective of the increasingly refined nature of racial thought, there remained a constant standard of polarised difference between Europeans and the majority of non-Europeans.

²⁹ Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, p. 187.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

An element of this continuity can even be seen in Edward Long's work, despite the fact that *The History of Jamaica* is traditionally conceived as the 'watershed'³² in the transition to the new racialism. Disdain for black African chastity was seen in the last chapter, and yet takes on new meaning in this present discussion. Long is clear and brutal in his criticism of the black slave lovers of plantation owners:

In regard to the African mistress, I shall exhibit the following, as no unsuitable portrait. All her kindred, and most commonly her very paramours, are fastened upon her keeper like so many leeches; while she, the chief leech, conspires to bleed him *usque ad deliquium*. In well-dissembled affection, in her tricks, cajolements, and infidelities, she is far more perfectly versed, than any adept of the hundreds of Drury.³³

In this passage, African women are portrayed as naturally more lascivious than even white prostitutes, and there is an animal comparison made with the reference to 'leeches'; a simile that obliquely references not only the economic benefits the women would attain from such relationships, but also a demonised threat, sexual and moral, in the 'animal' joining of such couples. This connects with Long's comment that in 'their commerce with the other sex...they are libidinous and shameless as monkeys, or baboons'.³⁴ The supposedly heightened appetites of black Africans are adduced by Long to compound his proposition that they are an inferior, ape-like species—and furthermore the immediate equation of such sexual drives to animals brings to mind the statements made by travellers and regurgitated in Burnet's *Origin and Progress of Language*. Long's summary of his observations is equally telling:

In general, they are devoid of genius, and seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility or science. They have no system of morality among them. Their barbarity to their children debases their

³² Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 55.

³³ Long, *The History of Jamaica... In Three Volumes* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), Vol. II, p. 285.

³⁴ Quoted above, p.69.

nature even below that of brutes. They have no moral sensations; no taste but for women; gormondizing, and drinking to excess; no wish but to be idle.³⁵

As in Burnet's work on Americans, their sexual impulses, their apparently collective desires for nothing but women, form an immediate foil to the statement 'they have no moral sensations'. The representation of heightened or more liberal lusts thus not only directly renders them animalistic, but also simultaneously diminishes their capacities in the other areas requisite for 'civilised' humans.

These comments from Long are strongly racial in nature: they are applied specifically to one population group who are represented as biologically separate to the rest of humanity, and support Felicity Nussbaum's study of eighteenth-century literature which claims that only '[s]tereotypic blackness is often associated with hypersexualized virility.'³⁶ In his description of other inhabitants of Jamaica, however, the species boundaries advocated so strongly in his text are confused by the ubiquity of generic stereotypes. This can be seen particularly in the author's depiction of Jamaica's 'native white men, or Creoles.'³⁷ Although for the most part complimentary of their stature and health, Long does note that the 'effect of climate is not only remarkable in the structure of their eyes, but likewise in the extraordinary freedom and suppleness of their joints'.³⁸ Long, then, has not completely abandoned the theoretical makeup of his climatic predecessors: his polygenetic system is not entirely coherent. More importantly still, this latent climatic thinking stretches beyond the body and into 'Creole' internal characteristics. Long writes of their 'strong natural propensity to the other sex, [meaning] they are not always the most chaste and faithful of husbands. They are liable to sudden transports of anger; but these fits, like hurricanes, though violent while they

³⁵ Long, *History of Jamaica*, p. 353.

³⁶ Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 204.

³⁷ Long, *History of Jamaica*, p. 261.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

last, are soon over and subside into a calm'.³⁹ This description seems to equate such lusts to a 'super-femininity' rooted in an internal, 'humoural'-like inability to control lust and anger and other passionate emotions. The 'Creoles', indeed, are subject to further description, much of which could be imagined as stereotypes of contemporary women: 'They are fickle and desultory in their pursuits[...]they have some tincture of vanity, and occasionally of haughtiness[...]They are too much addicted to expensive living, costly entertainment, dress, and equipage.'⁴⁰ They are made 'effeminate' by the influence both of the climate and of their intercessions with the 'negroes' and 'mulattos', which intermixing Long disparaged and feared so strongly, as discussed in Chapter Three. The 'Savage' qualities, then, are brought out of the 'White Creoles' in a way that suggests that Long's understanding of heightened promiscuity was not entirely racial in nature, but dependent upon a much older and persistent mode of thought.

Fellow polygenesist Henry Home, who likewise propounded a system of biologically-distinct 'races' derived from separate points of origin, was similarly contradictory in his thinking. Despite the strong claims of permanent bodily difference made by Home, he also believed that 'male savages, utter strangers to decency or refinement, gratify animal love with as little ceremony as they do hunger or thirst.'⁴¹ It appears that polygenesist authors in the last few decades of the eighteenth century were serving two masters, at once trying to obey the need for 'scientific' evidence of biological hierarchy and also show obeisance to an ancient body of knowledge on human variety still functioning within their cultures.

This 'super-sexual' motif is recurrent in English eighteenth-century travel writing, and applied to almost every conceivable population group. We have already seen how travel accounts concerning Africans and Americans were absorbed into

³⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, p. 265.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁴¹ Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Six Sketches on the History of Man* (Philadelphia: R. Bell and R. Aitkin, 1776), p. 213.

scientific discourse, but by the eighteenth century reports of these places had become commonplace. Exploration of new frontiers now became the primary source of new ethnographic information. One of the most famous travelogues of the century was George Forster's collection of Captain James Cook's voyage around the world in the early 1770s. This produced some of the first European descriptions of many new populations on the South Sea Islands and the Australian mainland. It must be observed, though, that some of these ethnographies seem highly derivative when juxtaposed with comments on Africans and Americans made in the scientific treatises examined previously. The passage describing Cook's reception at 'Tonga-Taboo' illustrates this:

Among them were a considerable number of women, who[...]were easily persuaded to come on board, perfectly naked, without professing greater chastity than the common women at Tahitee, and the Society Isles. Our seamen took advantage of their disposition, and once more offered to our eyes a scene worthy of the Cyprian temples. A shirt, a small piece of cloth, nay a few beads, were sometimes sufficient temptations, for which some of the women[...]prostituted themselves without any sense of shame[...]they suffer any unmarried women to admit the promiscuous embraces of a multitude of lovers. Can they imagine, that after giving such an unlimited course to the impulses of nature, they will make better wives, than the innocent and the chaste?⁴²

Not only is this passage remarkably similar to Millar's contention that American 'savages' are more likely to value a sexually-experienced wife, 'from consideration that she has been valued by others,' but the last sentence again ties sexual difference to some internal deficiency, rendering the South-Sea Islanders incapable of resistance to their animal impulses.

The representation of 'super-sexuality' was thus a general non-European stereotype in eighteenth-century culture—and consistently so into its last decades. It certainly

⁴² George Forster, *A Voyage Round the World* (London: B. White, 1777), Vol. I, p. 457.

reached further than the confines of the black African image. In the late eighteenth century the representation incorporated accepted classical wisdom to validate and perpetuate itself, and was so accepted a condition of the 'savage' that it remained in the minds of even those authors who are supposed to have moved beyond the simplistic 'savage' versus 'civilised' conception of humanity to a regime of specific racial identities. Although the scientific authors above had stopped speaking explicitly about the humours in their work, their arguments often reflected that system of bodily knowledge. Tendencies towards strong passion were still grounded in a humoral-like understanding of internal, 'savage' weakness, a way of thinking that persisted well into the late eighteenth century with little discredit to the new, 'empirical' texts. The internal effects of 'racial' difference in itself became—and perhaps had been for a long time—just another 'racial' trait alongside skin-colour or hair-type. Charles White, who built probably the most stratified, incommensurably fixed system of human 'species' difference of the century, still in 1799 saw fit to include 'the natural temperatures of their bodies as indicated by a thermometer' in his breakdown of 'negro' bodies. Unsurprisingly, he discovered that, just like women were classically cooler, so too 'it has been said that negroes are two degrees colder than Europeans. The practice of the luxurious Turk gives countenance to this, as he prefers a negress for summer, a fair Circassian for spring and autumn, and an European brunette for winter.'⁴³ The notion of fixed difference is intrinsic here in the apparently empirical measurement of temperature, and yet—as if the act of measurement itself is mistrusted—it is validated by historical knowledge gleaned from travel accounts. Classical modes of thought concerning sexual difference were therefore still possible and even commonplace throughout this period, supported by both representational language and the theoretical understandings displayed above.

⁴³ Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (London: C. Dilly, 1799), pp. 59-60.

The 'Fetishism' of Human Variety

The continuing resonance of classical knowledge of non-European cultures into the late eighteenth century should not be taken as an indication that specific 'racial' identities did not also exist simultaneously, and that sexualised stereotypes were not important in constructing them. On the contrary, just as Laqueur claimed that sexual organs were reinvented as a 'new foundation for gender', so also did those body parts become one of the most discussed facets of 'racial' difference.⁴⁴

Such stereotypes were noted in earlier sociological work on racism. 'Fetishism', as Stuart Hall labels it, is a process of representing people as both physically and morally defined by their sexual features. As an illustration, Hall writes about the famous case of Saartjie Baartman, a Khoisan or 'Hottentot' woman brought to England in 1810 and made to perform naked to audiences as a 'curiosity'. As Hall comments, 'Saartjie Baartman did not exist as "a person". She was "fetishized"—turned into an object. This substitution of a *part* for the *whole*, of a *thing*—an object, an organ, a portion of the body- for a subject, is the effect of a very important representational practice—*fetishism*.'⁴⁵ Racial science functioned by reducing people to bodily characteristics: this is the essence of comparative anatomy. 'Fetishism', however, denotes an investment of greater aesthetic and sexual meaning than required by scientific discourse, even as it was understood in the late eighteenth century. Saartjie Baartman was renowned not for her nudity but because of her apparent sexual distinctiveness. Hall continues, '[w]hat attracted...audiences to her was not only her size...but her *steatopygia*—her protruding buttocks...and...her "Hottentot apron", an enlargement of the labia'.⁴⁶ She was dehumanised not only because of the focus on individual parts of her body, but also

⁴⁴ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Hall, *Representation*, p. 266.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

because of the sensationalist, moralistic implications of the embellished physical features of her sexuality. As much as other features, such as skin colour or hair type, observable sexual organs could form profound bodily indications of internal moral and biological inferiority.

Describing ‘fetishism’ as a specifically racial mode of representation, however, is erroneous. Throughout the eighteenth century practitioners of anatomy, fiction and a variety of other genres were fascinated with the role of genitalia as a demarcation of difference—albeit sexual and national rather than racial in nature. The metaphors connecting sexual components with internal dispositions which are important in Hall’s depiction of ‘fetishism’ were articulated not only with regards to Africans, or even particularly against non-Europeans. Rather, sexual difference was one of many widespread features of representation used to think about forms of human variety. Such distinctions were a preoccupation in eighteenth-century reflection on nature and ‘biology’, and ‘racial scientists’ and travel writers across this period were drawing upon a larger stock of imagery than is acknowledged by Hall. Investigating perceptions of ‘racial’ variety in genitalia allows a closer examination of how eighteenth-century people thought about categorical difference between humans in many different contexts.

Male Genitals

Londa Schiebinger sees the detail paid to female genitalia in ‘race science’ in the late eighteenth century as a symptom of ‘the incommensurable condition of being female in a male world’, a mark of the intrinsic sexual bias in the minds of male anatomists.⁴⁷ A detailed study of ‘racial science’ texts, however, makes it apparent that there was

⁴⁷ Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Sexual Politics and the Making of Modern Science* (London: Pandora, 1993), p. 161.

profound interest in male genitalia too. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's (1752-1840) name has appeared a few times already in this thesis. Although a respected professor of medicine and natural history at the University of Göttingen, his value to the development of 'race science' had ramifications far beyond German-speaking states. Laqueur describes him as 'one of the most distinguished physicians of Europe', whilst the English translation of Blumenbach's *An Essay on Generation* (1792) bills him as 'Aulic Counsellor to his Britannic Majesty'.⁴⁸ His work impacted much on the construction of British racial theory, indeed. He had an 'extensive correspondence', for instance, with Joseph Banks, who provided Blumenbach with non-European bones and ethnographical information through his voyages and who also helped to subsequently 'assimilate such work in the British world.'⁴⁹ It is important, given his widespread popularity, to examine Blumenbach's ideas with regards to comparative anatomy, especially in light of the fact that discussion of genitalia was highly prominent in his *Anthropological Treatises* (1775-1790).

Blumenbach's claim to fame is as 'the founder of physical anthropology'.⁵⁰ He became a particularly important figure for nineteenth-century racial science. Due to his influence, it is now claimed, Blumenbach was one of the 'founding fathers of comparative racial taxonomy'.⁵¹ Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, nineteenth-century author of *La Classification Anthropologique* (1841), called Blumenbach 'the illustrious naturalist, in whom, after Buffon, we ought to acknowledge the father of anthropology.'⁵² To Saint-Hilaire, Blumenbach was a hugely significant figure. He conceived of a set of ideas that were, to the nineteenth-century scientific community, as

⁴⁸ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 186; Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *An Essay on Generation* (London: T. Cadell, 1792), title page.

⁴⁹ John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 112.

⁵⁰ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p. 64.

⁵¹ David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 12.

⁵² Quoted in Thomas Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), 'Editor's Preface', *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (London: Longman, 1865), p. ix.

natural and essential as Biblical tenets to a preacher. As Saint-Hilaire wrote: '[t]hus it has happened that these races, after having been introduced into science by Blumenbach, have been retained there; and we may assert that they will always be retained'.⁵³ Despite this clear influence on subsequent theory, however, modern academics have claimed that Blumenbach does not fit into their arguments for the consolidation of racial and sexual identity in the late eighteenth century. David Bindman believes he 'in no way resemble[s] that dismal creature the "race scientist", resident in the nineteenth century in many academic institutions'.⁵⁴ Blumenbach, we are told, was 'fervently opposed' to slavery and to 'many of the arguments for European superiority over the rest of humanity.'⁵⁵ Londa Schiebinger likewise believes that 'Johann Blumenbach...dismissed reports of sexual differences in the skull and other parts of the skeleton (except for the pelvis) as exaggerated...Blumenbach[']s efforts to diminish sexual and racial difference ran counter to the larger effort to fix racial and sexual types.'⁵⁶ Moreover, Laqueur notes that Blumenbach's work on sexual reproduction meant he 'ended up even more committed to the importance of sexual excitement [to conception] than Galen was'⁵⁷, thus legitimating the older, homogeneous mode of sexual difference in which men and women played an equally active role. Blumenbach, indeed, has largely been described by historians as emphasizing 'the unity of humankind as a species'⁵⁸, never really convincingly reconciling this with the fact that he altered 'the mental geometry of human order to a scheme that has promoted conventional racism ever since'.⁵⁹ When placed into the surrounding cultural and scientific context, however, Blumenbach's comments on genitals in particular reveal

⁵³ Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), 'Editor's Preface', p. x.

⁵⁴ Bindman, *Ape to Apollo*, p. 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Londa Schiebinger, 'The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23: 4, Special Issue: The Politics of Difference (Summer, 1990), pp 389-391.

⁵⁷ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p. 186.

⁵⁸ Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, p. 64.

⁵⁹ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (revised and expanded edition) (New York: Norton, 1996), p. 405.

how some important hierarchical stereotypes came to be fundamental to the works of an author who was otherwise egalitarian in nature.

In the third edition of his *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1795), Blumenbach 'enumerate[s] here shortly what seem to me worthy of mention about some racial varieties of the genitals.'⁶⁰ What now follows, therefore, is what he believed to have bearing on the scientific variation of mankind. The first genitals Blumenbach discusses belong to the 'Æthiopian' race. He states, '[i]t is generally said that the penis in the Negro is very large. And this assertion is so far borne out by the remarkable genitory apparatus of an Æthiopian which I have in my anatomical collection.' The account quickly moves beyond scientific concerns and into hearsay, however. Blumenbach continues, '[i]t is said that women when eager for venery prefer the embraces of Negroes to those of other men.'⁶¹ This sounds close to the fantasy of 'excessive prowess' that Stuart Hall sees as a common white conception, connected to that of 'super-masculinity', and that suggests a bodily-based insecurity amongst white males; a point to which I shall return. For the moment, however, it should be noted that these assertions hardly seem to represent the modern view of Blumenbach as emphasising 'similarity rather than difference.'⁶² Blumenbach acknowledges that these comments stem from a longer tradition. It is noteworthy that Blumenbach states 'it is generally said' that the 'negro' penis is of a particular size, whilst he bases his 'scientific' confirmation of this on a single specimen. He admits that whether 'this prerogative be constant and peculiar to the nation, I do not know', and yet his inclusion of this assertion as something 'worthy of mention' in a scientific text legitimised it for a wider audience as a valid fact.⁶³

⁶⁰ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, p. 249.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Bindman, *Ape to Apollo*, p. 162.

⁶³ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, p. 249.

Although Oliver Goldsmith was also a monogenesist, like Blumenbach he sensationalised sexual difference in a way that professed a greater degree of incommensurable difference than accounted for in his theory. In his section on the ‘Negroes of Africa’ he began by describing a common physical form, the subject quickly becoming sexualised:

they are said, in general, to be well shaped; but of such I have seen, I never found one that might be justly called so; their legs being mostly ill formed, and most commonly bending outward on the shin-bone. But it is not only those parts of their bodies that are obvious, that they are disproportioned; those parts which among us are usually concealed by dress, with them are large and languid.⁶⁴

To this comment is attached a footnote in Latin, purporting to be from Linnaeus, claiming that ‘[i]n hominibus etiam penis est longior et multo laxior.’⁶⁵ Furthermore, these extreme sexual characteristics are immediately linked to inadequate mental capacities. Goldsmith writes, ‘[a]s their persons are thus naturally deformed, at least to our imaginations, their minds are equally incapable of strong exertions. The climate seems to relax their mental powers still more than those of the body; they are, therefore, in general, found to be stupid, indolent, and mischievous.’⁶⁶ The reduction of Africans to their body parts also seems indicative of internal moral qualities, much as in the example offered by Hall above.

Although there is a vague claim to climatic logic behind the stereotype in Goldsmith’s work, an author who does not make such concessions is polygenesist Charles White. His systematic measurement of bones in *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man* (1799) seems the essence of fetishism in their reduction of people to a set of racialised bodily components, in turn creating a denial of their existence as

⁶⁴ Oliver Goldsmith, *An History of Earth and Animated Nature* (London: J. Nourse, 1774), Vol. I, p. 227-228.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 228. [Translation: ‘penis in men is also longer and much wider.’]

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

complete individuals. The comparative measurement readily becomes sexualised: ‘That the PENIS of an African is larger than that of an European, has, I believe, been shewn in every anatomical school in London.’⁶⁷ This statement hints at the much wider currency the stereotype had outside of text-based science, and it is made a greater spectacle by White’s giving a legitimised voice to the more sensationalist rumours in his ‘scientific’ work: ‘A surgeon of reputation informs me, that about forty years ago, when he was pupil to the late *William Bromfield*, Esq. he assisted at the dissection of a negro, whose *penis was ad longitudinem pollicum duodecium.*’⁶⁸ White also revisits the same Latin quote utilised by Goldsmith above, but this time adding to it an even greater investment of enhanced sexual prowess: ‘I say, *Multo firmior & durior.*’⁶⁹ Once again this stereotype brings White back to his favourite refrain, that ‘[i]n *simiae* the *penis* is still longer, in proportion to the size of their bodies.’⁷⁰ Sexual organs here become a very direct qualification of the notion that there are biologically distinct ‘racial’ varieties.

The fact that penis size already had implicit cultural meaning with regards to sexual difference is important here. The depiction of another ‘race’ as bigger than the white male is especially significant given that in wider literature such representations were a device which could metaphorically describe not only sexual prowess, but also a man’s potency as an individual. Karen Harvey argues that ‘[m]ale genitals stood for whole male bodies’, pointing out that to compare male genitals is not just to compare sexuality but to compare a whole range of traits. ‘These depictions,’ she writes, ‘exposed concerns about nationhood, military threats and the relative strength and potency of the male population, and demonstrate how male sexuality and male bodies were rooted in the social and political.’⁷¹ Some of these concerns were operating within

⁶⁷ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 61.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* [Translation: ‘the penis was twelve thumbs in length’.]

⁶⁹ [Translation: ‘Much stronger and harder.’]

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷¹ Harvey, *Reading Sex*, p. 126.

'race science' too, as both the English authors above try in their own way to diminish the suggestion that a bigger penis in any way equates to a better kind of man.

Goldsmith grants the larger size but diminishes the implications of this by questioning the functionality of such organs: he likens them to 'languid' deformities 'incapable of strong exertions', whilst his evidence—the Latin phrase from Linnaeus, and specifically the word 'laxior'—could mean either simply 'wider' or, as Charles White seemed to believe, 'slacker', 'looser' or 'weaker.'⁷² As Harvey suggests, these concessions are likely to be important: 'Women were believed to find vigour very attractive in men, and strength and energy were distinctively male traits[...]Vigour could be prized more highly than size.'⁷³ Thus size in itself does not directly indicate potency and masculine superiority, but rather seems to reference a sense of degeneracy and monstrosity. And although White saw fit to remove this sense when he re-wrote the stereotype in 1799, upgrading 'luxior' to '*firmitior & durior*' (stronger and harder), he conversely sought to lessen the masculinity of African genitalia in another way. After his discussion on comparative penis size, White speaks of his 'surprise, that, the TESTES and SCROTUM are less in the African than in the European. They are still less, proportionally, in the ape. That the *penis* should be larger, and the *testes* and *scrotum* smaller, in the order thus stated is another remarkable instance of gradation.'⁷⁴ This comment brings into question the functional, reproductive capacities of Africans whilst simultaneously allowing them the greater penis size: something which supports Harvey's claim that 'fertility depended upon geographical difference'⁷⁵ and also the notion that representations of genitals could be symbolic of insecurities around constructing white masculinity—an anxiety that both of the above authors tried to alleviate. In Blumenbach's work the greater penis size of Africans is directly linked to

⁷² Elisha Coles, *A Dictionary, English Latin, and Latin-English* (London, 1707), Entry: LAXUS, ior.

⁷³ Harvey, *Reading Sex*, p. 133.

⁷⁴ White, *Regular Gradation*, pp. 61-62.

⁷⁵ Harvey, *Reading Sex*, p. 133.

their supposedly 'promiscuous' nature through the suggestion that they may be more sexually pleasing to women, and the fact that both English authors try to dispel this notion in some way perhaps reveals the particular concerns of their national context.

The most important facet of these representations is that they are revealed to be specifically racial in nature. Enlarged African genitals are not simply a bodily metaphor for the increased 'savage' libido, as seen in the last section; rather they are evidence of particular body parts being indicative of distinguishable geographical types. This can be seen in the fact that other groups to whom the 'savage' label was applied are believed to possess inadequate and diminutive genitals. Such stereotypes are not as common within 'racial science' as the discussion of African genitals, but generally the Native Americans are attributed such diminished qualities. Winthrop Jordan tells us that '[e]ventually and almost inevitably a European commentator announced the Indian's penis was smaller than the European's[...]. A number of Europeans, notably De Pauw, Lord Kames, Buffon, and William Robertson, eagerly seized upon this supposed deficiency in Indians for disparaging the new Americans.'⁷⁶ It is significant that both Georges Leclerc, Comte de Buffon and Henry Home, Lord Kames are present on this list, representing as they do opposing sides of the argument over the origins of human variety—shared stereotypes undoubtedly gained greater of legitimacy.

The comment offered by Home was simply a rehash of Buffon's original. They share the sentiment that the 'savage of the New World[...]' is little different in stature from the man of our own world; but this is no reason why he should form an exemption to the general remark, that over the whole of that continent all animated nature is comparatively diminutive. In the savage, the organs of generation are feeble and

⁷⁶ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Williamsburg: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 162-163.

small'.⁷⁷ For Buffon this comment is symbolic of the degeneration of life to be found on the American continent, whilst for Home it is a symbol of the innate bodily inferiorities of Native Americans. Yet both are unconditional in the totality of the statement: the genital stereotype in itself becomes a fixed entity. Buffon's above stereotype was also 'borrow[ed] extensively and verbatim'⁷⁸ in William Robertson's *The History of America* (1777), which helped to build a physical type of North American men which seems to work against the internal qualities of the common, libidinous 'savage'.⁷⁹ The point is, however, that the penis in these texts was not only operating as a means of sexual differentiation between non-Europeans, but also as an ineffaceable marker of variation from European body-standards.

What is described above is grounded firmly in Blumenbach's 'new' discipline of comparative 'racial' anatomy, and these texts certainly demonstrate that this sense was prevalent during the late eighteenth century. A close study of travel literature in particular, however, shows that this was not a novel articulation of human difference but the manifestation of comparisons of European and non-European bodies—often with regards to sexual features—which had been present in British culture for well over a century. Margaret Hunt noted that throughout eighteenth-century travel writing, authors who visited Africa 'inevitably remarked upon the nakedness and heathenish character of Africans'.⁸⁰ The supposed predilection to nudity represented as part of 'African' culture,

⁷⁷ Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (translated by W. Kendrick and L.L.D. Murdoch), *The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals* (London: T. Bell, 1775), Vol. I, pp. 361-362; Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man. Considerably Enlarged by the Last Additions of the Author* (Edinburgh: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1788), Vol. III, pp. 152-153.

⁷⁸ Gilbert Chinard, 'Eighteenth Century Theories on America as a Human Habitat', *Proceeding of the American Philosophical Society* 91: 1 (Feb. 25, 1947), p. 38.

⁷⁹ There is a parallel representation of Native Americans, in fact, which runs counter to the 'libidinous' trend seen in the last section which, although much less prominent in race theory, stipulates that this group was less sexually-inclined than the European, or rather 'promiscuous but not lascivious' (Jordan, p. 163). This indicates that certain authors were willing to break with classical tradition to promote 'racial' difference in 'animal lust'.

⁸⁰ Hunt, 'Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveller's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England', *The Journal of British Studies* 32: 4 (Oct., 1993), p. 340.

indeed, served to confirm the promiscuous 'savage' stereotypes and also provide plenty of opportunity to turn description towards sexual organs.

The passage below, taken from Jordan's *White Over Black*, displays well a variety of instances in which the comparative anatomy of the stereotype described above could be manifested in the accounts of travellers:

Negro men, reported a seventeenth-century traveller, sported "large Propagators." In 1623 Richard Jobson, a sympathetic observer, reported that Mandingo men were "furnisht with such members as are after a sort burthensome unto them"[...]Another commentator[...]thought Negroes "very lustful and impudent, especially, when they come to hide their nakedness, (for a Negroes hiding his Member, their extraordinary greatness)." ⁸¹

Nor was this idea particularly original in the seventeenth century. Jordan provides several precedents of the genital comparison which are continuous across the centuries. He argues that, 'the idea without question antedated the settlement of America and possibly even Portuguese explorations of the West African coast. Several fifteenth-century cartographers decorated parts of Africa with little naked figures which gave the idea graphic expression'. ⁸² This last example offers a proto-racial evocation of the body providing the basis for geographical boundaries, and it is apparent from this that the racialists of the late eighteenth century were working in a very well-established tradition of representation. The stereotype also commonly functioned outside of travel literature: London physician John Bulwer's *Anthropometamorphosis* (1650) offered a medical examination of bodily 'peculiarities' to be found across the globe. Therein it is written that '[t]hey of Guinea have a great privy member, much surpassing our countrymen, whereof they make much account.' Bulwer also goes on to make a very clear statement on the active use of penis size to denote 'racial' difference: '[the size of the penis] varies

⁸¹ Jordan, *White Over Black*, pp. 34-35.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

much according to the race of families and course of life; for there are certain families, (and as you see) nations, who have an ill or good report according to this very thing.’⁸³ Although the author himself puts such variety amongst the Guineans’ down to cultural practice—to a ‘subtle indulgency of their midwives’⁸⁴—the last statement leaves little doubt that variety in penis size had for some time been used as a method of differentiating between ‘families of nations’.

Regardless of the example of Saartjie Baartman as given by Hall, or the suggestion by Schiebinger that the racialist study of genitalia was primarily a male investigation of female subjects, male genitals were clearly also the subject of close scrutiny. The late eighteenth century ‘scientists’ seen above replicated much older hearsay concerning penis size with very little variation upon the theme: there was little element of empirical measurement offered beyond what had already been established in travel accounts. Furthermore, climatic or cultural reasoning was rarely used specifically to explain genital size in the racial science. Authors seldom made new claims as to the rationale behind male racial genital variation; the feature instead was largely reproduced verbatim as simply a fact of nature.

Female Genitals

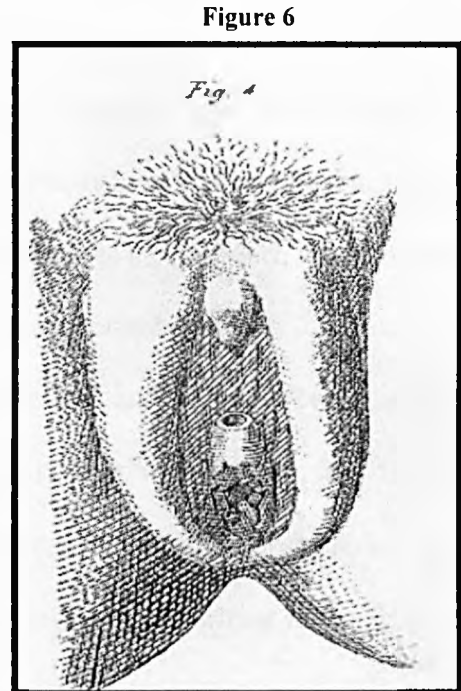
Blumenbach’s 1775 text *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* likewise displays an attention to female genitalia which questions the notion that the author was working against the classifying trend. Figure 6 is taken from this volume’s ‘scientific’ illustration

⁸³ John Bulwer, ‘Anthropometamorphosis: man transform’d or, the artificial changeling’ (London: J. Hardesty, 1650) in Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton (eds.), *Race in Early Modern England: A Documentary Companion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 244.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

plates.

The picture is described as ‘the clitoris of an Arabian girl, circumcised.’⁸⁵ Blumenbach later expands on this, writing of the ‘drawing of the genitals of a circumcised girl of eighteen drawn from life when a ‘famous company went to travel in Asia’.⁸⁶ Any aspect of her individuality is absent from the text or the image: in short this image is performing the very definition of



‘fetishism’. Furthermore, the purpose of the drawing is somewhat ambiguous. It is included in a section entitled ‘Mutilations...those things which, besides the shape of the head, are apt to be changed by the aid of art in the other parts of the body amongst various nations.’⁸⁷ It seems conceivable that, under the guise of scientific enquiry, Blumenbach was seizing upon interest in sexual organs to simply make his text more exciting to the reader. The fact that such ‘mutilations’ are included in a text specifically examining ‘the *Natural Variety of Mankind*’ (my emphasis) is important, however: even culturally-based variations in genitalia are seen as relevant in characterising and contrasting population groups.

Other elements of Blumenbach’s text lend the image further moral implications—suggesting the outward ‘mutilation’ is simply the manifestation of inward variations in intrinsic nature. The professor’s anatomical description of the circumcision tells us that ‘you can see the body itself of the clitoris, bare and deprived of its

⁸⁵ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, p. 68.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

prepuce'.⁸⁸ This could be read as a scientific description, with no hint of racial implications. Earlier in the text, however, he describes the clitoris not stolidly but emotively as 'the obscene organ of brute pleasure'.⁸⁹ The prominence of Figure 6, with its memorable depiction of the 'bare' clitoris, is thus displaying a more sensual nature within the 'Arabian'. The fetishism not only dehumanises an Arab girl, but also uses the practice of female circumcision to stereotype 'many oriental people'.⁹⁰ By so doing, Blumenbach imparts a racial stereotype of heightened and obvious 'brute' sexuality: although this form of 'circumcision' is recognised as a cultural practice, it is one which reflects 'racial' intellectual variety. The animalistic, humoural-like deficiencies of both women and non-European groups are here configured as manifesting in the flesh. That Blumenbach is building upon an established legacy of representation in this instance seems certain. Such sentiments have been noted before in academic work in the tradition of Edward Said: the 'Orientalist' tradition, we are told, 'denotes a discourse of power that is always and inescapably systematic, repetitive, and unchanging. It perpetuates stereotypes of the Middle East and Middle-Eastern people that...hardly changed over a millennium. These include the image of...the lascivious oriental female'.⁹¹ As this chapter has already shown, this stereotype stretches far beyond the Middle East in highly consistent forms.

Further to his comments on 'Arabian' genitals, Blumenbach's 'fetishism' often reduces the women of entire nations to their breasts. The precise role of breasts in constructing gender identities is debated. Karen Harvey claims that 'breasts...were secondary sexual characteristics of opposite sexes defined by genitals',⁹² whilst Simon Richter believes that the female breast's functionality means that 'eighteenth-century

⁸⁸ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, p. 126.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁹¹ Billie Melman, 'The Middle East/Arabia: "The Cradle of Islam"' in Peter Hulme and Tim Young (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 107.

⁹² Harvey, *Reading Sex*, p. 96.

physiology established and maintained a radical analogy between the penis and the breast; in some instances...the breast becomes more phallic than the penis itself.'⁹³ This analogy is borne out by eighteenth-century 'race' theory: the stereotype of the enlarged African penis, for instance, is most commonly echoed by representations of female breasts rather than reproductive organs.

Blumenbach frequently talks of human variation as manifested through breast size, claiming '[t]here is a cloud of witnesses to prove that the breasts of the females in some nations, especially of Africa...are very long and pendulous.'⁹⁴ That there is specifically a 'racial' variation in size, however, the author denies: 'this excessive size is by no means peculiar to barbarous nations alone, but has been observed frequently in Europeans, as amongst the Irish...the Portuguese women have very large breasts, whilst those of the Spanish on the contrary are thin and small.'⁹⁵ The implication that large breasts are most common in Africa, though, is important here. To finish his segment on breasts he asserts that the variation in breast size between nations may be a man-made phenomenon, rather than a natural variation. He writes, '[t]hat by taking pains the circumference of the breasts can be increased is indubitable. How far, moreover, precocious venery may operate in that direction is shown by the remarkable instances amongst the immature and girlish prostitutes who flock to London'.⁹⁶ It is sex at a young age, then, that Blumenbach believes could account for such variations between nations in physical size. The representation of Africans is here supporting a notion of heightened sexuality; Blumenbach implies a greater level of 'precocious venery' in areas where women have larger breasts. Individual attitudes towards sex are denied in place of a shared, innately lascivious nature.

⁹³ Simon Richter, 'Wet-Nursing, Onanism, and the Breast in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7: 1 (Jul., 1996), p. 22.

⁹⁴ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, p. 247.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Blumenbach's contemporaries were not so willing to attribute racialised features such as breast size to cultural practice. To Oliver Goldsmith it was 'false to say that their features are deformed by art; since, in the Negroe children born in European countries, the same deformities are seen to prevail'.⁹⁷ Thus in his theory even climatic explanations of human variety seem to be obviated. This sense of fixed and incommensurable difference is generated and subsequently supported, moreover, by his comments upon breasts. He writes, 'the women's breasts, after bearing one child, hang down below the navel; and it is customary, with them, to suckle the child at their backs, by throwing the breast over the shoulder'.⁹⁸ Charles White repeats this image. He writes of 'Hottentot women' with 'long flabby breasts; and that they can suckle their children upon their backs, by throwing their breast over their shoulders.' It seems that both White and Goldsmith share at least one common source in their work, a point to which I shall return later. Another of White's sources is also interesting here, however, as the author uses a direct quotation from a previously studied author to provide 'objective' anatomical measurements: '[Edward] Long, in his *History of Jamaica*, says, "Negresses have larger nipples than Europeans."—brutes have still larger nipples.'⁹⁹ White's animalistic refrain once again suggests the familiar biological separateness of black Africans, but more than this the enhanced functionality of African breasts, allowing them to feed children upon their backs, is also providing a sexual distinction based upon the perceived biological function of women. Such women are 'super-feminised' in that their role in child-raising is enhanced, much as it was in the representations of parturition, as seen in Chapter Two.

Although it is generally African women's breasts which form the parallel to the male stereotype, there is also plenty of keen interest to be found, in several texts, in

⁹⁷ Goldsmith, *Animated Nature*, p. 227.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-229.

⁹⁹ White, *Regular Gradation*, p. 63.

variety in female reproductive organs. Edward Long's work is a rich source of fetishized descriptions of female genitalia. As well as repetitions of comments similar to that above, we also find more vivid genital depictions of African peoples. 'After leaving Benguela', he writes, 'we arrive among the Hottentots, whose women are so remarkable for a natural callous excrescence, or flap, which distinguishes them from all others of the same sex in the known world.'¹⁰⁰ It should be noted that this is not a secondary part of a wider portrayal of the 'Hottentots': it is Long's first description and the reader's primary contact with these people, and thus the 'fetishism', the dehumanisation, seems all the more potent. Furthermore, a depiction of their interior qualities follows close by: 'They are a lazy, stupid race'.¹⁰¹

This style seems congruent to Goldsmith's portrayal of 'negroes' generally. His previously-mentioned Latin quote from Linnaeus in the footnotes makes it apparent that the 'large and languid' stereotype found previously was applied not just to breasts or penises, but also to the 'Africanas[...]labia pudendae'.¹⁰² Likewise Charles White's central thesis on African women is perpetuated through sexual components. Although White admits that he personally never found any difference between African and European 'CLITORIS and NYMPHAE' in the 'four or five instances [he] had occasion to examine', he reproduces comments from a Dr. Spaarman, who claims '[t]he women have no parts uncommon to the rest of the sex; but the clitoris and nymphae, particularly of those who are past their youth, are much elongated.'¹⁰³ White also claims that '[t]his has been confirmed to me by several surgeons of Guinea-ships.'¹⁰⁴ In this segment, White is eager to bear out the 'fetishized' stereotype in spite of his own research, as it in turn bears out his central animalistic thesis: 'In the females of the ape and the dog, the

¹⁰⁰ Long, *History of Jamaica*, p. 374.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

¹⁰² Goldsmith, *Animated Nature*, p. 228 (fn.).

¹⁰³ White, *Regular Gradation*, pp. 62-63.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

clitoris is still longer.’¹⁰⁵ This last link, between animality and the clitoris—described by Blumenbach as an organ of ‘brute pleasure’—offers another connection between black African women and animal desire and demonstrates that description of female genitalia was central in reproducing bodily the cultural qualities of the ‘savage’.

The evidence above indicates that there existed a notable gender divide in representations of Africans in particular. Black African women were in English texts seen largely as more ‘functional’ than black African men. Whereas the enhanced penis of the latter was diminished in importance by scientific authors such as Goldsmith, who criticised strength and virility, or White, who criticised fertility through his comments on the testes, the large breasts of African women were actually seen as an advantage enabling them perform tasks with both hands whilst simultaneously feeding a child. The ‘functionality’ seen in the above texts, moreover, seems to draw upon a generally positive representation of black African women as mothers. Buffon, for instance, demonstrates this: not only does he note that it is ‘general practice among the Negroe women, when travelling, to carry their children on their backs’ but also that they are ‘extremely prolific[...]They make excellent nurses, and manage their children with great tenderness and affection. They are also more lively and alert than then men’.¹⁰⁶ This impression, coupled with the wealth of description presented in Chapter Two on the ease of childbirth for such women, creates a picture decidedly more laudable than that of black African men’s ‘burthensome’ and dysfunctional penises.

This positive image of black African women, furthermore, can be placed in the context of discussion of European mothers. Texts which operate by examining the ‘otherness’ of non-European groups by the same token also express the author’s conception of their own social standards. In this instance, then, the functionality of

¹⁰⁵ White, *Regular Gradation*, pp. 62-63

¹⁰⁶ Buffon, *Natural History*, Vol. III, p. 142.

African women as nurses and mothers is simultaneously a criticism of English women for their distance from such instinctive skills. Several historians have noted that there was a long-running debate over the use of wet nurses stemming from medieval medical practices. By the middle of the eighteenth century this debate was reaching a conclusion. Due in part to advances in the medical understanding of colostrum, doctors came to insist universally upon maternal breastfeeding when previously it had been common practice for women in the elite classes to hire wet nurses: 'Medical writers praised breastfeeding mothers and criticized harshly women who declined their maternal duty[...]In giving birth women fulfilled only half their duty as women. A second, equally burdensome duty was breastfeeding, for without it infants were immediately placed at great risk.'¹⁰⁷ The presence of women in natural history and anatomy who are constructed both as giving birth with great ease and breast feeding their children more effectively is thus significant. African mothers are superior to Europeans in this fashion, however, precisely because of their imagined animalistic simplicity. Breastfeeding for many medical practitioners was an extension of innate roles decreed by the order of nature: 'The mother could pass on her love and also her character through the milk even as she had done via her blood in the womb[...]God created a woman with breasts [so] she could and should nourish her newborn baby until the child could tolerate solid food.'¹⁰⁸ This model of women's position in nature, indeed, had been popularised by Puritan theologians during the seventeenth century, who emphasised 'the maternal rather than the sensual nature of women, [and] castigated those women who chose not to nurse their own infants as vain, Eve-like, and sinful in nature[...]women's breasts were created to provide milk for infants, not as erogenous

¹⁰⁷ Marylynn Salmon, 'The Cultural Significance of Breastfeeding and Infant Care in Early Modern England and America', *Journal of Social History* 28: 2 (1994), p. 248; p. 255.

¹⁰⁸ Sünje Prühlen, 'What was the Best for an Infant from the Middle Ages to Early Modern Times in Europe? The Discussion Concerning Wet Nurses', *Hygiea Internationalis* 6: 2 (2007), p. 203.

zones'.¹⁰⁹ Certain non-European women were thus favoured by scientific authors as they were considered to be more instinctive mothers: they were portrayed as essentially classless and, perhaps unknowingly, conformed to the religious order of the universe by suckling their children even as they worked with their hands, rather than passing responsibility for them to a wet nurse.

The representation of black African men as dysfunctional tells us much about the social concerns of the British travel writers in question, about their need to denigrate the threat to their masculinity which such men posed. Some historians would similarly argue that the representation of black African women was part of the effort to denigrate the threat to British masculinity posed by British women. Ruth Perry, for instance, believes that the fixing of maternal roles in natural order was a process by which all women were reduced to a single common body: 'the effect of erasing class difference among women in this matter was to universalize the meaning and purposes of the female body and to reduce the degrees of freedom in interpreting women's sex roles.'¹¹⁰ Perry sees the insistence upon maternal breastfeeding was a process of 'colonization' of the female body by male authors. What better way for eighteenth-century scientists and physicians to do this, indeed, than to suggest that European women should be more like an inferior, enslaved race of people?

Interestingly, however, the demands supposedly made by medical authors of European women do not apply to African women. Perry, for instance, notes that 'maternity came to be imagined as a counter to sexual feeling, opposing alike individual expression, desire, and agency in favour of a mother-self at the service of the family and

¹⁰⁹ Paula A. Treckle, 'Breastfeeding and Maternal Sexuality in Colonial America', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 20: 1 (1989), p. 32.

¹¹⁰ Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2: 2 (1991), p. 234.

the state[...]the asexual mother, a contradiction in terms.’¹¹¹ In the representation of black African women, though, the two qualities are not incommensurable. This is apparent not only from the observations in the first section of this chapter, in which we saw a common British fear of sexually aggressive African women. Take, for instance, these comments from Buffon who, although valuing them highly as mothers, believed that ‘[negroe] females are generally handsome, gay, active, and extremely amorous: they are particularly fond of white men, whom they caress with ardour, both to satisfy themselves, and in hopes of obtaining presents.’¹¹² This passage repeats the ‘savage’ link to lasciviousness and further insinuates that this quality is caused by the same instinctive, internal drives which made them loving and caring mothers: these two facets of ‘negro’ women’s nature are not mutually exclusive, and share the same roots in the minds of European authors. This commensurability of sexual and maternal instincts shows again how authors saw Africans as animal-like and separate from Europeans. As discussed below, however, portrayals of African women’s large-breasted functionality stemmed from travel literature to an equal extent as their supposedly heightened libidos.

Precedents

This section began by examining the dichotomous influence of Blumenbach on the development of racial theory, arguing for environmental causes of racial and sexual difference whilst simultaneously configuring the basis of racial division for generations to come. My work suggests that this appears to be a tension only because previous historians have given too much weight to the explanations behind the claims made by Blumenbach and too little to the fact that he legitimised profound traditional bodily

¹¹¹ Perry, ‘Colonizing the Breast’, p. 209.

¹¹² Buffon, *Natural History*, Vol. III, p. 140.

metaphors as scientifically valid, irrespective of the forces he supposed to have generated them. Moralistic meaning was often inherent in comments he and his contemporaries made on the body. Take, for instance, this particular description of female genitalia: '[w]omen have something peculiar, which seems to be denied other animals, even if they remain untouched; I mean the hymen, which has been granted to women-kind perhaps much more for moral meanings, than because it has physical uses.'¹¹³ The hymen, supposedly specific to women out of all other beings in creation, was historically well understood as one of the bodily 'markes of virginity'¹¹⁴—a genital symbol of virtue to Blumenbach in the same way large breasts were seen as evidence of 'precocious venery'. Although in physical terms an invisible or entirely absent feature of female anatomy, the mental space it occupied and metaphorical meaning it possessed for some anatomists was significant. The belief that 'untouched' women possessed such a marker whilst men did not, indeed, likely provided legitimacy to bodily sexual difference as operating beyond the level of humoral theory: gender was decreed by God as ineffaceable, much as 'racial' difference was according to polygenetic theory.

With regards to 'racial' variety, Blumenbach and others in his mould were not providing a new regime of empirical knowledge, but rather were by and large rearticulating ancient symbolism in a new rhetorical form. This symbolism—of the connections between the body and psychological and emotional condition—was not simply a makeshift collection of prejudices, however; it was a system of thought legitimised as logical and rigorous within its own epistemological conditions. Thus in the example above Blumenbach's reading of religious meaning into a bodily component is demonstrative of a fundamental prejudice of eighteenth-century science. He was building upon a tradition of anatomical knowledge in which the universe was moralistic,

¹¹³ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, p. 89.

¹¹⁴ Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia a Description of the Body of Man* (London: William Iaggard, 1615), Contents Table.

filled with signifiers of God's will. The human body, created in God's image, was but one of these signifiers. The ideas of 'racial scientists' gained success and notoriety mostly because they built themselves into established modes of representing non-Europeans, forming not a new monolithic voice of their own but adding to a tapestry of thought, whose audience could strip out the nuanced explanations of the individual and retain the choral voices insinuating racial and sexual incommensurability founded in the nature of creation.

Taking a broader view of the genre of travel literature, it can be seen that the profound interest in female sexual characteristics displayed in late eighteenth-century science was founded upon the observations of travellers. At least as far back as John Leo Africanus' sixteenth-century account of Africa—which was regarded as rigorous and authentic by authors such as James Burnet, as discussed earlier—there was similar linguistic and metaphorical interplay between the female body and internal nature. In his 1526 account of the Libyan desert Leo noted that '[t]he women of this nation be grosse, corpulent, and of a swart complexion. They are fattest upon their breast and paps, but slender about the girdle-stead'.¹¹⁵ It is important that the women of this area are described first to the audience in physical terms: bodies, and especially obvious sexual characteristics, function in this text as the primary point of cultural interaction. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the first depiction of their character to follow their corporal description turns them further from subjects into objects. Leo writes, 'Very civill they are, after their manner, both in speech and gestures: sometimes they will accept of a kiss',¹¹⁶ showing that the observer's immediate concerns are the use of these women for sexual gratification.

¹¹⁵ John Leo (Africanus), 'The History and Description of Africa' (1526; trans. John Pory, 1600) in Andrew Hadfield (ed.), *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2001), pp. 141-142.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

The prominence of sexual characteristics in the relation of non-European women to European audiences was probably influenced by the fact that the vast majority of travel writers were men. Travellers were using sexual features such as breasts and genitals to differentiate groups both from European women and, through their perhaps latent heterosexual desire, from men too. As with Blumenbach's work, furthermore, the 'fetishism' of the women transmutes into a statement on their morality. On the same people described above Africans Leo continues, 'their young men may goe a wooing to divers maides, till such a time as they have sped of a wife. Yea, the father of the maide most friendly welcommeth her suiter: so that I thinke scarce any noble of gentleman among them can chuse a virgine for his spouse.'¹¹⁷ Women with enlarged breasts were thus further endowed with a stereotype of sexual experience.

This mode of representation lasted from Leo's time and was firmly ensconced in accounts of Africa by the eighteenth century: a few important examples of the 'cloud of witnesses' referenced by Blumenbach evidence this. Francis Moore's collection of various journeys, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (1738), prefigures Blumenbach's notions of 'precocious venery', mentioning that 'LARGE breasts, thick Lips, and broad Nostrils are by many reckon'd the Beauties of the Country' on the same page it mentions that they 'generally take their Wives very young'.¹¹⁸ Spanish explorer and colonial administrator Don Antonio de Ulloa's widely translated accounts of eighteenth-century South America conversely explain the full ramifications of larger, more 'functional' breasts. He writes of 'Negroe' populations, both free and enslaved, that,

[t]hose who have children sucking at their breasts, carry them on their shoulders, in order to have their arms at liberty; and when the infant is hungry, they give them the breast either under the arm, or over the

¹¹⁷ Leo (Africanus), 'The History and Description of Africa', p. 150.

¹¹⁸ Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: D. Henry and R. Cave, 1738), p. 131.

shoulder, without taking them from their backs. This will perhaps appear incredible, but their breasts being left to grow without any pressure on them, often hang down to their very waist.¹¹⁹

Female reproductive genitalia too provided a measure of difference approaching 'race' in certain texts long before the 1770s. Buffon's mid-century 'Of the Varieties of the Human Species' notes, like Long's account, that the 'Hottentots, moreover, form a species of very extraordinary savages. Their women, who are much smaller than the men, have a kind of excrescence, or hard skin, which grows over the os pubis, and which descends to the middle of the thighs in the form of an apron.'¹²⁰ In this instance the genital variation attributed to 'Hottentots' is providing the precise criteria of differentiation from other 'savages', essentially classifying this group as a 'species' or 'race' of their own.

Buffon forms this opinion not from his own observations, however, but from the subjective accounts of travellers. He references seventeenth-century French tourist Jean de Thévenot, who 'says the same thing of the Egyptian women,'¹²¹ and also uses as evidence the early-eighteenth-century voyages of Dutch explorer Peter Kolben. This latter account was highly influential, widely translated, and is considered by Nicholas Hudson as a 'pioneering' attempt at a 'genuinely anthropological approach' towards assessing 'Hottentot' culture.¹²² Furthermore, Kolben displays in equal degree to the 'race scientists' who followed him a deep interest in the anatomical variation of genitalia:

¹¹⁹ Don George Juan and Don Antonio De Ulloa, 'A Voyage to SOUTH AMERICA', in *A New Collection of Voyages, Discoveries and Travels* (London: J. Knox, 1767), Vol. I, p. 416.

¹²⁰ Buffon, *Natural History*, (1775 ed.) p. 247.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹²² Nicholas Hudson, "'Hottentots' and the Evolution of European Racism", *Journal of European Studies* 34 (2004), p. 318.

I must here mention (what I omitted under the general Description of the *Hottentots*, where it would have stood much better) a strange Excrescence upon all the *Hottentot* Women. This is a broad callous Part, growing just above the *Pudenda*, and flapping over and hiding them. It seems intended by Nature for the Concealment of those Parts; and is, in some, so large that it can hardly be cover'd by the *Kult Krosse*, as they call it[...]WHATEVER the Reader may think of this Excrescence[...]as a Deformity, not a Hottentot, or either Sex, regards it as any[...]They will let you, for a little Tobacco or so, handle and examine it.¹²³

The depth of interest in anatomical indications of sex, and variations thereof, is clearly presented. It can even be seen that payments were made to obtain first-hand observation, a practice which surely aided the largely unquestioning assimilation of the 'excrescence' stereotype into later theory.

Assessments of theorists such as Blumenbach and his English contemporaries need to take into account the degree to which they provided pseudo-scientific legitimatisation of travel literature. As noted by Hudson, and indeed by Bindman and Schiebinger earlier, such scientists could often reduce 'racial' differences to malleable, environmental factors on a theoretical level. Because of his profound interest in genital variety, however, Blumenbach also served to give 'Hottentot' sexual distinctiveness a greater degree of 'scientific' backing than ever before. He noted that the travel writer Steller,

says that many of them are remarkable for long and protruding nymphae; which some say in Hottentot women come to be appendages like fingers. But this *sinus pudoris*, as Linnaeus called it, seems rather to consist in the elongation of the labia themselves, which is said to be due to artifice.¹²⁴

The fact that Blumenbach believed the enlarged labia to be artificial is less important than his confirmation of the stereotype itself: irrespective of theoretical causations,

¹²³ Peter Kolben (Mr. Medley, Trans.), *The Present State of the Cape of Good-Hope* (London: W. Innys and R. Manby, 1738), Vol. I, p. 119.

¹²⁴ Blumenbach, *Treatises*, pp. 249-250.

which were the most debated and discontinuous components found within racial science as a genre, the intrinsic body-metaphors of enlarged sexual features were maintained.

To assume that travel literature was a valid source for scientific observation was, in fact, to continue the ratification of cultural prejudices in a 'racial' manner. The profound influence of such information on the body upon later anatomy underlines this argument: within travel writing there had developed a form of comparative physiology which was highly structured and repetitive, and which was tantamount to 'race' theory. Blumenbach and his contemporaries were not simply codifying the random prejudices of their informing culture into scientific study; rather they were translating and collecting an older form of scientific knowledge into a new technical vocabulary. This could also be said to be true of gender: differences between the sexes of non-Europeans had long been of interest to European observers, who drew up hierarchies of value not only based upon size and shape but also on functionality. In many of the texts, the dysfunctionality of African penises revealed inferiority whilst the effectiveness of African breasts and fertile wombs revealed animality. Genitalia had been read as conveying a wide range of information on the intrinsic nature of both individuals and population groups for at least a century before Blumenbach arrived. He did not always oppose the new regime of gender classification in his work, as claimed by Schiebinger and others. Blumenbach's text was inconsistent, like many other works examined in this thesis. He confirmed existing stereotypes from travel literature and natural history with new, alternate explanations, rather than dismissing the basis of that knowledge altogether.

Oliver Goldsmith, 'Racial' Homogenisation and the Self-Fashioning of European Sexes

The last section argued that stereotypes attributed to certain African women concerning their ability as mothers also revealed how authors engaged with and conceived of maternity in their own culture. The work of 'racial scientists' and travel writers can thus be used as a source both depicting ethnographical difference of non-European peoples and also self-fashioning their own gendered identities within Europe. This section examines efforts to homogenise the sexes of non-European groups, reducing the bodily and emotional distances between them, which also offers new data on the secondary characteristics used as evidence for sexual difference by Europeans throughout the early modern period and into late-eighteenth-century 'race' theory.

In her article on the links between sexual and racial theory, Londa Schiebinger notes that in the late eighteenth century the racialised capacity to grow facial hair became symbolic of inferiority: 'Some linked reports of Indian males' beardless chins to reports that native American females do not menstruate—and for that reason both were seen as defective.'¹²⁵ Schiebinger's observation, however, functions in another way too. By both perpetuating the notion that Native American men do not possess beards and that women do not menstruate, such representations also reduced the conceptual difference between the Native American sexes which were, for Europeans, usually provided by such bodily characteristics. Non-European groups, we shall see, could often be sexually homogenised by such discourses in opposition to a well-established European sexual difference. The beard in particular has many symbolic meanings which were important to the construction of both racial and sexual identities. Karen Harvey identifies an instance in erotic literature, for example, in which a man is

¹²⁵ Schiebinger, 'The Anatomy of Difference', p. 392.

able to disguise himself and infiltrate a female group simply because he had little beard.¹²⁶ Facial hair provided a physical indication of masculinity when reproductive organs were not available for inspection, and the denial of this trait to the men of some population groups had profound symbolic connotations.

Oliver Goldsmith's chapter 'Of the Varieties in the Human Race' (1774) contains particularly prominent examples of this representational device in the genre of 'race science'. His primary description of his fifth 'racial' variety, the inhabitants of America, certainly follows the model described by Schiebinger. He wrote of a people who were 'as different from all the rest in colour, as they are distinct in habitation...They are nearly all of one colour; all have black thick straight hair, and thin black beards.'¹²⁷ Not only are their beards described as thin, but furthermore they are said to 'take care to pluck out by the roots' this hair altogether.¹²⁸ Schiebinger believes that Blumenbach's own use of this last statement shows that the physician was once again working counter to the regime of racialization, he suggesting instead that 'Europeans were mistaken in their belief that Indians are naturally beardless' and again blaming a rigorous cultural tradition of facial depilation for the popular misconception.¹²⁹ This, however, seems to have little effect on the resultant representational connotations given that Robert Bartlett points to an even older tradition of symbolism in the removal of beards: 'Many observers have noticed the importance of hair treatment in conveying sexual information[...]the usual social meaning of hair removal is sexual renunciation.'¹³⁰ Correspondingly Goldsmith further minimises the difference between male and female Native Americans. Stature becomes important: 'Their limbs are generally slighter made than those of Europeans; and I am assured,

¹²⁶ Harvey, *Reading Sex*, p. 99.

¹²⁷ Goldsmith, *Animated Nature*, p. 229.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Schiebinger, 'Anatomy', p. 392.

¹³⁰ Robert Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Sixth Series) 4 (1994), p. 57.

they are far from being so strong.’¹³¹ This deficiency in physical strength, furthermore, inevitably comes to symbolise internal nature. The Native American men are said to be ‘cowardly; they seldom are known to face their enemies in the field, but fall upon them at an advantage.’¹³² That these characteristics are considered distinctly feminine by Goldsmith is further evidenced by his comments upon the inhabitants of southern Asia, who ‘have long been remarkable for their cowardice and effeminacy[...]they are slothful, submissive and luxurious[...]and, from the times of Alexander to the present day we have scarce any instances of their success in arms.’¹³³ Accomplishment in ‘masculine’ activities such as warfare is here dependent upon internal ‘racial’ nature, which is communicated visually by bodily signifiers.

A combination of stature and beardlessness is similarly important in Goldsmith’s portrayal of ‘the second great variety [of humanity]...[which] seems to be the Tartar race...The Tartar country, taken in general, comprehends the greatest part of Asia; and is, consequently, a general name given to a number of nations, of various forms and complexions. But...they all agree in being very unlike the people of any other country whatsoever.’¹³⁴ The ‘Tartars’ are constructed as ‘racially’ different from the rest of humanity, and thus the exact qualities of their sexual homogenisation are a subtle variation on the theme discussed above. Like the Native Americans, ‘Tartars’ in general are said to ‘have but little beard, which grows stragglingly on the chin.’¹³⁵ The stereotype is repeated three times in his segment on ‘Tartars’ to establish a racialised connection between the Chinese—who ‘have scarce any beard[...]and rather less in

¹³¹ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 229.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

stature than Europeans’—and the Japanese—who are of ‘a short stature, a broad flat face, a very little beard’—to the rest of the inhabitants of Asia Major.¹³⁶

In an expression of their particular ‘racial’ distinctiveness, the ‘Tartars’ are not physically feeble like the Native Americans in Goldsmith’s text, but rather ‘extremely strong, and very robust’ because of their generally ‘erratic life’ and nomadic culture. Instead of a ‘feminine’ frailty, however, they are imparted with another telling stereotype of general ugliness, and ‘the ugliest of all are the Calmoucks, in whose appearance there seems to be something frightful.’¹³⁷ Given the role that the aesthetic judgements of beauty were seen to play in differentiating ‘races’ from the classical, European model in Chapter One—and also the role beauty played in consolidating sexual distinctions¹³⁸—the stereotypical ugliness is highly significant. More importantly for the current theme, however, is the fact that Goldsmith wrote that ‘Tartar’ women, ‘are as ugly as the men’.¹³⁹ Ugliness as a stereotype here comes to homogenise the ‘Tartar’ sexes in a similar way to thin beards and stature, reducing the conceptual difference between men and women of that ‘race’ using secondary sexual signifiers whilst simultaneously increasing their common bodily variance from the European ideal.

An History of the Earth and Animated Nature offers six categories into which all of the inhabitants of Earth fall. Differing gendered stereotypes are applied to several of these ‘races’, as we have seen. The group found in the ‘polar regions’ are remarkably homogenised by Goldsmith: ‘The Laplanders, the Esquimaux Indians, the Samoeid Tartars, the inhabitants of Nova Zembla, the Borandians, the Greenlanders, and the

¹³⁶ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 221; p. 222

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹³⁸ Harvey, for instance, notes that the aesthetic value of the penis was important: ‘In the hierarchical relationship established between male and female bodies, this beauty was a trait that distinguished men.’ *Reading Sex*, p. 131.

¹³⁹ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 220.

natives of Kamskatka, may be considered as one peculiar race of people, all greatly resembling each other in their stature, their complexion, their customs, and their ignorance.’¹⁴⁰ Stereotypes are immediately generated by the principal ‘racial’ description of the numerous nations listed here. The resemblance between these peoples, however, goes beyond ‘race’ in Goldsmith’s text, describing fundamental similarities between the sexes too. A rhetoric similar to that of the ugliness seen with the ‘Tartars’ can here be found in the invocation of ‘deformity’: ‘They are short in stature, the generality not being above four feet high, and the tallest not above five. Among all these nations the women are as deformed as the men, and resemble them so nearly that one cannot, at first, distinguish the sexes among them.’¹⁴¹ It is debatable whether the men are being ‘effeminised’ or the women made ‘masculine’ in their appearance, although generalisations in other texts, such as Samuel Stanhope Smith’s *Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion* (1788), suggest the former: ‘Men will therefore be found in the highest latitudes, for ever small and of low stature.’ Smith sees these ‘northern tribes’ as ‘not only small, but weak and timid’, demonstrating some continuity between his and Goldsmith’s work.¹⁴²

It is clear in Goldsmith’s text that the stereotype of outward appearance reflects in some way their ‘superstitious[...stupid[...][and] cowardly’, or in other words ‘effeminate’, interior, as the two descriptions, from physical to mental, come within three lines of each other.¹⁴³ They are also, like the Native Americans and Indians, diminished in terms of their military might: ‘although these nations are robust, and nimble, yet they are so cowardly that they can never be brought into the field.’¹⁴⁴ There

¹⁴⁰ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 213.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁴² Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Edinburgh: Philadelphia printed, and Edinburgh reprinted, for C. Elliot and T. Kay, London, 1788), p. 61.

¹⁴³ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 214.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

are several instances, furthermore, of the homogenisation process working both ways; 'Laplander' men are made more 'effeminate' whilst the women are made more 'masculine', both in their bodies and in their cultural practices. Goldsmith describes the 'Laplander' methods of travel across their wintery habitat: 'Upon these skates they descend the steepest mountains, and scale the most craggy precipices; and, in these exercises, the women are not less skilful than the men.'¹⁴⁵ Likewise the physical capacities of the women are made closer to that of men, since their 'strength is not less amazing than their patience; a woman among them will carry a piece of timber, or a stone, near double the weight of what a European can lift.'¹⁴⁶

Also noteworthy is that the beardless stereotype is introduced in the text to compound the homogenisation. Figure 7 below presents a figure supposedly symbolic of the entire 'Laplander' 'Race'. Not only is this figure beardless, but it is largely androgynous in every other way. It seems short and stout, but as related above this could be a general depiction of both the sexes of this 'race'. Similarly there are no other obvious secondary sexual characteristics, and the primary indicators, genitals and breasts, are well padded with clothing. Given that the remainder of Goldsmith's ethnographical images utilise male figures to define their 'races', it seems likely that the image displays a man, though this is not altogether apparent.

In these different depictions of the non-Europeans, Oliver Goldsmith also symbolised and qualified sexual differences between European men and women. A number of secondary sexual characteristics are examined, which although not reproductive organs, still provide information in making categorical distinctions between people. Beards, stature, strength and aesthetic ugliness were used by Goldsmith to homogenise certain non-European groups, and these physical traits often had the

¹⁴⁵ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 215.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

further result of forming a bodily metaphor: of providing physical evidence of internal deficiencies like 'cowardice' and 'superstition', often held to be 'effeminate' traits. At the same time, moreover, Goldsmith reveals precisely the opposite image of European gender divisions.

Figure 7¹⁴⁷



The Laplander.

¹⁴⁷ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 213.

The overall image is one of European men being bearded, larger and stronger than women, and more beautiful with regards to the classical ideal: features which result in their physical superiority over a cowardly and feeble femininity characterised by hairlessness and delicacy. Given that Goldsmith, like several other 'race scientists', believed the whiteness of the European to be 'not only the most beautiful to the eye, but also the most practical' as seen in Chapter Two—and also that other 'races' are degenerated from 'that whiteness [which] is the colour to which mankind naturally tends'—he also provided a validation of bodily sexual difference as an innate, and even ordained, system.¹⁴⁸ The lack of categorical variation between men and women perceived in non-European 'races' provides further evidence of their degeneration from the biological perfection found in the European form of mankind. Non-European 'racial' varieties thus enabled the established schema of separate European sexes, whilst that sexual difference itself concurrently vindicated the inferiority of the 'other'.

Variations in secondary sexual characteristics had been of interest to European travellers for a long time before *An History of the Earth* above was written in 1774. Goldsmith himself, I argue, was as embedded in a tradition of representation as other British 'scientists'. Goldsmith's homogenous representations mirror information in popular travelogues from as far back as the early seventeenth century. The sources below appear to have a perhaps surprisingly developed sense of 'racial' difference, given their existence in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and are further evidence that 'racial science' was dependent upon a broad range of disciplines from different chronological and national contexts. This early racialisation, indeed, has not gone unnoticed in historiography. Joyce Chaplin has noted a sense of 'racial' difference between European and Native American bodies in her work on seventeenth-century natural philosophy and colonial literature. She tells us that this difference was

¹⁴⁸ Goldsmith, *History of Earth*, p. 240.

rooted in explanations for the Native Americans' susceptibility to disease in the wake of European colonisation: 'From the assumption that diseases in America were indigenous to America, part of the New World atmosphere of contagion, the settlers concluded that Indian suffering resulted from some constitutional failing—either the inadequate seasoning to their native climate or a propensity within their bodies.'¹⁴⁹ Chaplin does not, however, equate this internal delicacy of the Native Americans with other, gendered stereotypes of their bodies which were available at the time.

As with much of the early eighteenth-century antipathy towards 'interracial' sex seen in Chapter Three, the clearest precedents to Goldsmith's thinking were translated into English culture from other colonial and national contexts. Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan's travel accounts regarding North America are particularly telling in this fashion. The French marine lieutenant journeyed to the continent in 1683 and took part in several military campaigns against the various Native American nations there. His letters and narratives were collected and published in English as early as 1703, and two further reprints followed over the next thirty years. The most surprising thing about this text is that it contains a remarkably early description of polygenesist theory and, although the author distances himself from the claims, the text demonstrates as clearly structured a description of the notion as anything from post-1770 Britain. Lahontan relates a debate he claims to have had with a Portuguese physician,

who had made many Voyages to Angola, Brezil, and Goa. He maintain'd, that the People of the Continent of *America, Asia, and Africa*, were descended from three different Fathers, which he thus attempted to prove. The *Americans* differ from the *Africans*, for they have neither Hair nor Beard[...]That the *Africans*

¹⁴⁹ Joyce E. Chaplin, 'Natural Philosophy and an Early Racial Idiom in North America: Comparing English and Indian Bodies', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser., 54: 1 (Jan., 1997), p. 246.

being black and flat nos'd, had such monstrous thick Lips, such a flat Face, such soft woolly Hair[...]that he thought it impossible, that these two sorts of People should derive their Original from *Adam*.¹⁵⁰

Lahontan rebuts this claim with the standard climatic rhetoric of sun and diet, but this above passage notes two things of great interest. The first is that polygenetic notions were present in Europe and available to an English-speaking audience long before John Atkins' work in 1735. The original date of the letter in which this argument is presented, indeed, is 1693. The second point of interest, specifically for this chapter, is that the lack of beard in the Native American is the first feature used to establish them as a separate species.

Although Lahontan is able to account for skin colour difference in his argument against the Portuguese physician by talking of exposure to the sun, he is at a loss to explain the stereotyped absence of beard. The physician is allowed to go on unchallenged,

these who are descended from the first Savages of *Brazil*, that were transported into *Portugal*, above an Age agoe, have as little Hair and Beard as their Ancestors, and on the contrary, those who are descended from the first Portugueze, who peopl'd the Colonies of *Brazil*, are as hairy, and have as great Beards, as if they had been born in *Portugal*[...] 'Tis certain, that the Savages of *Canada*, and all other People of *America*, have not naturally either hair or beard; that the features of their Face[...] show a vast difference between them and the *Europeans*. What is the cause of these things I know not, and yet I cannot believe them to be the effect of their Air and Food.¹⁵¹

The stereotype that Native Americans have little or no beard was clearly widespread.

Variation in hair, indeed, seems a difficult subject for monogenetic theorists since they

¹⁵⁰ Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (London: S. Bonwicke, 1703), Vol. I, p. 190.

¹⁵¹ Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (London: S. Bonwicke, 1703), Vol. II, pp. 190-191.

make little connection between features like beards and the surrounding climate, as was explored in the section on 'woolly' hair in Chapter One. Even though the above comments are a second-hand representation of Native Americans, elsewhere in the text Lahontan displays similar descriptions which possess a *de facto* acceptance of the beardless stereotype. In his second volume he wrote that,

those who have represented the Savages to be as rough as Bears, never had the opportunity of seeing them; for they have neither Beard nor Hair in any part of their Body, not so much as under their Arm-pits. This is true of both Sexes, if I may credit those who ought to know better than I.¹⁵²

The absence of body hair as well as beard in this passage is particularly relevant to the process of homogenisation, denying even the secondary sexual distinctions which may still have been active, such as a hairy chest. Bartlett, for example, notes a tradition in which since the medieval period in Europe 'the most important biological differentia were that adults and not children had body hair and that only adult males had facial hair. The beard was thus of general importance as a biological marker and body hair was also occasionally significant.'¹⁵³ The absence of body hair reduces the Native Americans to a pre-pubescent androgyny defined in opposition to the European post-pubescent sexual standards.

Lahontan's work, furthermore, shows even clearer parallels with Goldsmith's text. The author includes a detailed conversation with a representative of the '*Huron*' natives, called Adario, in which a sense of difference is propounded by the American which is decidedly 'racial' in nature:

¹⁵² Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America*, Vol. II, p. 4.

¹⁵³ Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair', p. 44.

Ay, most certainly, you are of a different mould from us; for your Wines, your Brandy, and your Spices, make us Sick unto death; whereas you can't live forsooth without such Drugs: Besides, your Blood is Salt and ours is not; you have got Beards, and we have none. Nay farther, I have observ'd that before you pass the Age of thirty five or forty, you are Stronger and more Robust than we; for we can't carry such heavy Loads as you do till that Age.¹⁵⁴

This is a strong statement of support for the previous polygenetic statement attributed to the Portuguese physician, suggesting that Lahontan is putting such controversial words into the mouths of others so as to protect himself from any possible recriminations. The comment again renders the beard central in establishing incommensurable difference. Furthermore, both the European's greater strength and constitution—much as observed in Chaplin's work—contribute to the homogenisation of Native American people.

A similar precedent in homogenisation can be seen in the case of the people classified by Goldsmith as 'Tartars', although perhaps because of the longer exposure to European explorers the similar representations of this group set an even older precedent than Lahontan's work above. Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Revisited or Purchas His Pilgrims* (1625) was the second great early-modern English-language collection of travel literature and was at the time of seminal importance. The work collected English accounts into its four volumes, but also translated for the first time texts from across Europe into a mass-produced and accessible book. A letter from Spanish missionary Father Diego De Pantoia was therein disseminated which paid particular attention to the 'effeminate' qualities of Chinese men. The priest first conveys their frivolous vanity:

All men, even to the very Souldiers, weare their apparell long downe to the in-step of the foot...They be so well contented and pleased with their manner of apparell, that they think there is none in the World

¹⁵⁴ Lahontan, *New Voyages*, Vol. II, p. 166.

comparable to theirs...All men and women let their Hayre grow long, and the men trusse it up, and wind it on a knot on the top of their crowne.¹⁵⁵

And as before, the missionary, when describing the people physically, notes first of all that the 'Chineses have commonly little Beards, small Eyes, and Noses'.¹⁵⁶ The rest of the letter focuses on their 'effeminate' superstition. The priest records their reaction to his grey eyes (apparently unheard of in China), stating that 'they find many secrets in them, and very commonly they say, that these eyes of mine know where stones and precious things are, with a thousand other mysteries...the Chinois are much given to Divinations to know things to come'.¹⁵⁷ The Chinese in this letter, then, are constructed in this and other contemporary sources much as Goldsmith's 'scientific' text two hundred years later.¹⁵⁸

This traditional representation of the people of Asia, furthermore, was persistent throughout the eighteenth century. One important use of the image can be found in Aubrey de la Motraye's *Travels through Europe, Asia, and into Part of Africa* (1723). Therein the author relates that the nomadic 'Tartars' possess a symbiotic connection to the horses they so depend upon to survive, to the extent that not just men and women are homogenised but human and animal too; their horses are 'indefatigable, but as ugly for horses, as their Masters are for Men.'¹⁵⁹ Once again, aesthetic beauty was used in defining the 'Tartars' bodily. The common refrain relating to beards, however, in this instance becomes a strange invocation of animalistic difference. The 'Tartars' are,

¹⁵⁵ Father Diego De Patoia, 'A Letter of Father Diego De Patoia...to Father Luys De Guzman...written [from] the Court of the King of China (9 March 1602)', in Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages and Machiavel*, p. 199.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-206.

¹⁵⁸ These images also correspond accurately with the observations of Englishman Sir Henry Middleton, who travelled to China at the dawn of the seventeenth century: '[t]hey are surely the most effeminate and cowardliest people that live[...]verie few have any haire on their faces.'(Middleton, 'Two Accounts of his Voyage to the Moluccas (1604-6)' in Hadfield, *Amazons... and Machiavels*, p. 217).

¹⁵⁹ Aubrey de la Motraye, *Travels through Europe, Asia, and into Part of Africa* (London: Printed by the Author, 1723), p. 42.

not only flat and square-visaged, but have such little Eyes, so far sunk into their Heads, and such short Noses, that one wou'd think at a certain Distance from them they had none at all; besides which their Beards are so straggling and so thin, that one may count the Hairs in a little time; and these Hairs are so stiff, so strait, and so large, that one wou'd take them for those of some Horse, or some old Goat.¹⁶⁰

Much as the figuratively 'woolly' hair of black Africans was utilised to impart an animalistic metaphor, so here does the horse-like hair of 'Tartars' conjure an impression of distinct, biological difference between them and Europeans. The profound interest in and subsequent homogenisation of the secondary sexual characteristics of non-Europeans, moreover, highlights the sexual hierarchies at work in the minds of European travel writers. A system of multiple features, both internal and external, formed a core of European values. Variance from these qualities constituted a categorical distinction of natural, innate and often scientifically-validated status.

The evidence considered above demonstrates that racialised comparisons of the body appeared across the gamut of early-modern travel literature, and were then assimilated into natural history by practitioners such as Buffon and Goldsmith. These texts, I argue, drew conclusions on categorical difference between varieties of humankind to an equal degree as the later anatomical studies conducted by authors such as Blumenbach. This develops historical understandings of 'race' theory: Londa Schiebinger, for instance, noted that 'eighteenth-century comparative anatomists and anthropologists were overwhelmingly male. What is especially revealing, however, is that they developed their theories about race by examining male bodies. Females were studied, but only as a subset of any particular race.'¹⁶¹ By demonstrating that male form was the 'touchstone' of racial comparison, Schiebinger suggests that women 'did not fit

¹⁶⁰ de la Motraye, *Travels through Europe*, p. 42.

¹⁶¹ Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, p. 146.

comfortably in the great chain of being': rather they were largely obviated from it, subject to 'fetishised' anatomical study but only as a dehumanised echo of their male counterparts.¹⁶² Schiebinger's work, however, only considers the tradition of continental anatomical thought as expressed by authors such as Blumenbach, Camper and von Sömmerring. 'Race' theory was not a genre within itself but a dialogue between several different traditions of thought, and the stereotypes portrayed continually in this dialogue were firmer because of this intellectual variety.

Natural history as well as comparative anatomy thus offered highly detailed physical description and comprehensive systems of categorisation. Male bodies were perhaps the 'touchstone' of comparison in these non-anatomical systems too, but it was a variable, alternate masculinity that such non-Europeans possessed. Many of the homogenised groups were not seen to display the strict gender divisions observed by Schiebinger. Both men and women, in any 'European' sense at least, were absent altogether from the texts above due to the variance in their secondary sexual characteristics from the European norms. Europeans, with their established sexual differences and gender roles, were the religiously and scientifically 'correct' version of humanity. Androgynous 'others' were seen to provide examples of the degeneration away from a historic European standard which had been in place within natural history for centuries, and in so doing they validated that standard.

Conclusion

The connections between theories of race and gender difference were many, but this last chapter has isolated some of the most important ways in which the two modes sustained each other throughout the eighteenth century. Interest in bodily indications of sexual

¹⁶² Schiebinger, *Nature's Body*, p. 160.

difference, such as genitalia and a host of other secondary characteristics, was apparent in attempts by both travellers and scientists to investigate 'racial' difference from at least the early seventeenth century. At the same time as such distinct bodies were constructed in texts, there were also marked continuities in the explanations behind such differences. Humoural systems were prevalent, as was explored in the first section of this chapter. Racial features were simply manifestations of internal imbalance: '[The] colour of skin is[...]gendered and cometh sometime of humours inward, and sometime from the passions of the soul[...]Also in men of the nation of the Moors, the black colour cometh of the inner parts, and whitish colour in Almaines and Dutchmen.'¹⁶³ Thus a range of non-European peoples, and also women as in Laqueur's work, were just variations upon a singular theme of core humours.

It is the alternative explanations behind the varying humoural balances themselves, however, which mean that that model of difference did not preclude a sense of categorical difference. Polygenesists, who argued for a fundamental species difference between black Africans and white Europeans, still insisted on the former's heightened lust in a manner which was as much humoural as it was animalistic, being the result of some imagined and unelaborated-upon internal, 'racial' inability to control their passions. Crucially for this thesis, even at the dawn of the nineteenth century anatomical constructions of 'race' were still dependent upon older branches of knowledge to retain and express their meanings. Not one of these texts should be thought of as univocal; even a text so single-mindedly driven as Charles White's contains within it a mixture of arguments garnered from traditions of knowledge both classical and early modern in origin.

¹⁶³ Stephen Batman, 'Batman upon Bartholome, his booke De proprietatibus rerum', in Loomba and Burton (eds.), *Race in Early Modern England*, pp. 110-111.

'Race science' in the late eighteenth century must be read with close regard to its informing culture, especially given the crossover it shares with scientific constructions of sexual distinction. This exchange with knowledge on sexual difference, indeed, is central to understanding how early-modern scientists thought about difference between individuals and groups in many contexts. Genitals were of considerable interest throughout the period. Their relative functionality was of utmost importance in representing both Europeans and non-Europeans, whilst simultaneously the religious and cultural metaphors of genital size and shape frequently offered further evidence to the internal, emotional differences implicit within humoral theory. Just as in sexual theory the internal sexual organs of women reflected a lack of internal heat, so too did the 'languid' penises and small testicles of African men. Genitals had for a long time been thought to display the interior qualities of individuals and groups: this did not change as the anatomical science of 'race' developed in the late eighteenth century. In fact, it is likely that the theories of 'racial scientists' were accepted within British culture precisely because they utilised the established, moralistic metaphors of investigating bodily difference between the sexes. And by constructing non-European groups through the use of these metaphors, authors throughout the early modern period also served to consolidate the European sexual schema through its contrast with 'savage' degeneracy.

Chapter Five:

Conclusion

Between 1562 and 1568, English buccaneer Sir John Hawkins (1532-1595) made three sea voyages—each time first to the coast of Guinea and subsequently to the West Indies. These journeys marked an important juncture in British history; they were the earliest instances of sanctioned British involvement in the transatlantic slave trade.¹ More significantly still, this involvement was apparently not spontaneous commercialism on the part of Hawkins, but rather a state-supported act of economic expansion. Queen Elizabeth, we are told, eventually ‘lent Hawkins money and a ship in which to continue his depredations, promoted him to treasurer of the navy, and allowed him a hideous new addition to his coat-of-arms—the figure of a shackled black man.’² Written accounts of the first three of his voyages are collected in Richard Hakluyt’s canonical collection of Elizabethan travel writing, *The Principal Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589). These travelogues described both the events of the journeys and the people met along the way by Hawkins and his crew, and offer important information in investigating how early English slavers utilised language as a justification of the economic exploitation of other human beings.

Within these texts there are distinctions drawn between the peoples of Africa that demonstrate a developed sense of ‘racial’ difference. Around the Canary Islands, on November 15th 1564, Hawkins spotted ten Caravels fishing, which ‘fled into a place of Barbarie, called Cape de las Barbas.’³ Ten days later Hawkins landed on the mainland,

¹ Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Colour in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 200.

² *Ibid.*, p. 201.

³ John Sparke, ‘The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire...to the coast of Guinea, and the Indies of Nova Hispania, begun in An. Dom. 1564’ in Richard Hakluyt (ed.), *Principal Navigations* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1589; 192), p. 11.

at Cape Blanco: a place in which ‘the Portugals have no holde for their defence, but have rescue of the Barbarians, whom they[...]doe pay a certaine tribute to the king of the Moores.’⁴ The Africans depicted here, then, are ‘Barbarians’. This term is, of course, largely negative: in early-modern dictionaries both Edmund Coote and Robert Cawdrey simply characterise a Barbarian as ‘a rude person.’⁵ John Baret compounds this, offering the definition ‘rudely...*Impolitè*’ for the word ‘Barbarously’.⁶ ‘Rude’ was a word with many possible meanings in the early modern period, all of which were in some way negative and would have served to characterise a ‘place of Barbarie’ as a place of uncivilised, rustic rudeness.⁷ The *OED* also, however, tells us that—quite commonly in the time at which this source was written—the proper noun ‘Barbarie’, or ‘Barbary’, was also a collective name for ‘the Saracen countries along the north coast of Africa’⁸—although none of the contemporary dictionaries mention this possibility. ‘Barbarian’ was additionally, therefore, a term for the people who lived in that area. These people were moreover labelled ‘Moores’, which is a word even more specifically tied to religion, a ‘Moor’ being a ‘member of a Muslim people of mixed Berber and Arab descent inhabiting north-western Africa’.⁹ Although these terms had many pejorative connotations, then, they also did something that racial nomenclature such as ‘negro’ did not: they carried some sense of a history and identity for the people they represented. The differentiation between the peoples of Africa in this text, however, was not only predicated upon relative values of culture and religion, but much as in the later travel

⁴ Sparke, ‘The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire’, p. 11.

⁵ Edmund Coote, *The English School-Maister* (London: Printer by the Widow Orwin, for Ralph Iackson and Robert Dextar, 1596), p. 77; Robert Cawdrey *A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes* (London: I.R. for Edmund Weauer, 1604).

⁶ John Baret, *An Alevarie, or Quadruple Dictionarie, containing foure sundrie tongues...* (London: Henry Denham, 1578; 1580), Letter B, Entry 151.

⁷ Baret takes ‘rude’ to mean a ‘stile without eloquēce...rough’ and also as a description of a state ‘lacking civilitie’ and ‘somewhat rusticall’ (Baret, *An Alevarie*, Letter R, Entries 363-365). The *OED* gives more emotive definitions, such as ‘unlearned or ignorant’ and ‘[d]evoid of, or deficient in, culture or refinement’, both of which can be traced back to the middle ages (‘Rude, *adj.*’, *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/168501, accessed 11th December, 2007).

⁸ ‘Barbary, *n.*, *OED*, www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/15400, accessed 11th December, 2007.

⁹ *Ibid.*

literature examined within this thesis, bodily signifiers were intrinsic in establishing categorical difference.

John Sparke, one of Hawkins' officers who narrated the second voyage, writes of the 'Moore's': '[t]he people of that part of Africa are tawnie'.¹⁰ Roxanne Wheeler tells us that, in the early modern period, the word 'tawnie' was somewhat ambivalent: it 'could mean black, brown, reddish brown, or even olive green, and it could be a descriptive term or an insult, depending on the context and user.'¹¹ 'Tawnie', then, could be an applicable description to many different peoples. In the context of Sparke's text, however, it is obviously not describing 'black', but rather is differentiating the 'Moore's' from the people Hawkins found further south, on November 26th, 1564, who 'are all blacke, and are called Negros, without any apparell, saving before their privities: of stature goodly men'.¹² Unlike 'tawnie', the adjective 'blacke' was not ambivalent. Instead it had numerous important and implicit connotations to the early-modern European mindset.

Several historians and literary critics have commented on the diverse meaning of the word 'black' in European cultural traditions. Michael Banton and Jonathan Harwood, for example, note that the implications of blackness were profoundly psychological: 'There was a basic idea, grounded in European thought, that black was the colour of sin and death.'¹³ Through the visual, superficial connotations of their skin, then, the 'negro' Africans were characterised morally, their exterior appearance being symbolic of their interior selves. The dictionary definitions and etymology support these comments. In the year 1581 the *OED* records the first use of the adjective 'black' to

¹⁰ Sparke, 'The voyage made by M. John Hawkins', p. 11.

¹¹ Roxanne Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 31.

¹² Sparke, 'The voyage made by M. John Hawkins', p. 11.

¹³ Michael Banton and Jonathan Harwood, *The Race Concept* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1975), p. 14.

mean '[f]oul, iniquitous, atrocious, horribly wicked', and in 1583 as meaning '[h]aving dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister.'¹⁴ Evidence garnered from contemporary religious rhetoric supports these connotations. John Foxe's colossal religious text *Actes and Monuments* went through four editions between 1563 and 1583, and according to John N. King, the text came 'to exert a greater influence on the consciousness of early modern England than any other book aside from the English Bible and Book of Common Prayer.'¹⁵ It is telling, then, that the text repeatedly associates 'black' with vile and wicked acts and natures.

In particular, one of the primary uses of the word 'black' in Foxe's work—in a sense other than at the basic descriptive level—is in connection with curses imparted by senior religious figures. In the 1563 edition, Foxe talks of laws imposed by Prelates to control the reading of supposedly seditious texts, the result for those flouting these laws being that 'thei shalbe in so doing excommunicate from God and all his saintes, & cursed as black as pitch'.¹⁶ This passage reoccurs right up to the 1583 version, and Foxe used similar phrases often, throughout all editions.¹⁷ In book four of the 1570, 1576 and 1583 editions, we are told Otho Boius was excommunicated and 'cursed as black as al the rest' for turning from the Pope, while the robbers of the baggage train of two of Pope John XII's legates were 'first excommunicated & cursed as black as sooute'.¹⁸ 'Black' here is not only emphasising the atrocious, malignant nature of the curse, but also has a more literal meaning that borders with certain concepts of 'racial' blackness

¹⁴ 'black, *adj.*', *OED*, www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/19670, accessed 11th December, 2007.

¹⁵ John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 2.

¹⁶ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments [...]* (1563 edition) [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield, 2004), www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe, accessed November 2010, Book 3, p. 537.

¹⁷ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments [...]* (1583 edition) [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield, 2004), www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe, accessed November 2010, Book 8, p. 1102.

¹⁸ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments [...]* (1570 edition) [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield, 2004), www.hrionline.shef.ac.uk/foxe, accessed November 2010, Book 4, p. 393; Book 4, p. 463.

that existed at the time. In the introduction to this thesis, the work of David M. Goldenberg was quoted to illustrate extra-biblical explanations of African blackness through the stories of the 'Curse of Ham' and the 'Mark of Cain'. In each instance the title character of these stories had been punished by God for their transgressions with a curse which both turned their skin black and marked them and their descendants out to be slaves for the rest of mankind.¹⁹ The fact that this motif of blackness as a religious curse recurs in Foxe's work shows how widely disseminated this idea was, and how it was repeatedly invoked within a highly influential work of religious history.

'Tawnie', in its ambivalence, was a word which allowed for a certain level of variety within the people of Northern Africa in the account of Hawkins' voyage. Accordingly, a measure of religious and historical information was also bestowed upon them within the text. Although North Africans were certainly configured as inferior to Europeans, they were still at least comparable upon the same axes of culture and religion. The Southern Africans, however, were 'all blacke': a description it seems which was taken to refer not just to skin colour, but also to some inward quality of the soul. The 'negroes' taken by Hawkins as slaves were demonised by their absence of faith. Sparke wrote, '[f]or their believe, I can heare of none that they have, but in such as they themselves imagine to see in their dreames, and so worshippe the pictures, whereof we sawe some like unto devils.'²⁰ The worship of images, irrespective of the likeness to the devil, is enough in itself to convey a sense of religious infidelity which reflects the internal 'blackness' of supposedly cursed 'negroe' nature. Sub-Saharan religions are thus entirely collapsed into a stereotypical idolatry, and in some instances they are even equated to a kind of devil-worship.

¹⁹ For more information, see Introduction, pp. 9-10

²⁰ Sparke, 'The voyage made by M. John Hawkins', p. 16.

The use of the word 'negro' itself, moreover, 'racially' reduced the cultural differences between nations, languages and cultures to a single identity. Initially Sparke wrote of the 'sundry sortes of these Guyneans', and indeed perceives a variety in their natures and levels of civilization. The inhabitants of Cape Verde, for instance, are 'called Leophares, and counted the goodliest men of all other, saving the Congoes'.²¹ They are 'more civill then any other,' however, 'because of their dayly trafficke with the Frenchmen', showing that 'negro' civility only exists relative to other 'negros', and is still decidedly inferior to that of the Europeans. The 'Sapies', for example, 'be more civill then the Samboses: for whereas Samboses live most by spoile of their enemies, both in taking their victuals, and eating them also. The Sapies doe not eate mans flesh, unlesse in the warre they be driven by necessitie'.²² This civility imparted by Sparke, however, does not protect any of the various Guineans from Hawkins' slavers. Two boats were sent to the 'Island of the Sapies...to see if they could take any of them,'²³ just as readily as Hawkins anchored at the 'Island of Sambula' where a number of Samboses were enslaved.²⁴ The label of 'negro' in itself is a justification of slavery, regardless of the perceived variation between communities. The ships did not sail from Sambula Island carrying 'Samboses' in Sparke's text, but rather they had 'taken certain Negros',²⁵ as if the act of taking the Guineans into possession erased their culture and history. Furthermore, all elements of African identity are muted once Hawkins' ships leave Africa for the West Indies. Although their cargo of slaves was comprised of people from many different regions, they are afterward universally described using their racial signifier. The voyage left African shores 'but reasonably watered, for so great a companie of Negros, and our selves...many never thought to have reached to the Indies,

²¹ Sparke, 'The voyage made by M. John Hawkins', pp. 11-12.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

without great death of Negros.’ And later, after finding water on the island of Dominica, Sparke tells us ‘wee filled for our Negros.’²⁶

From these uses of the word ‘negro’, we see an intrinsic bond with the act of slavery and possession. It is a signifier that differentiates ‘negros’ from other Africans, such as ‘Moors’ and ‘Barbarians’, used ‘as a mark of [their] potential to be enslaved.’²⁷ This meaning is not only revealed by the word’s usages, but also in its etymology. ‘Negro’ as a noun entered the English language only seven years before Hawkins’ first voyage, with its first occurrence recorded as being Richard Eden’s *The Decades of the New World* (1555). This text, as explained by William H. Sherman, was a translation, ‘based on the history of Columbus and his successors by Pietro Martire d’Anghiera (or Peter Martyr).’²⁸ ‘Negro’, indeed, is a word that came to English through the two earliest colonising and slaving nations of early-modern Europe: both in Portuguese and Spanish the word was used to mean a ‘black person’ by the end of the fifteenth century.²⁹ In those languages, furthermore, the root of the word came from classical Latin, in which form it meant ‘black’. Not only did the word thus still contain all the connotations of blackness previously discussed, but upon entering English, its invocation in place of the word ‘black’ also summoned a new legacy by continuing its use from the Portuguese and Spanish voyagers who developed European slavery of ‘black’ Africans from its genesis. The category ‘negro’ offered a ‘racial’ categorisation; the people falling within this category were deemed sufficiently inferior, upon the basis of their colour and the metaphorical implications thereof, to be used as slaves by other peoples.

²⁶ Sparke, ‘The voyage made by M. John Hawkins’, p.20.

²⁷ Iyengar, *Shades of Difference*, p. 213.

²⁸ William H. Sherman, ‘Stirrings and Searchings (1500-1720)’, in Peter Hulme and Tim Young (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.19.

²⁹ ‘Negro, n.’ *OED*, www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/125898, accessed 11th December, 2007.

By the time Hawkins came to join the slave trade, then, the conviction of 'negro' inferiority was deeply rooted. This was largely due to the legacy of both Britain's European mentors in slavery and also a number of far older concepts and stereotypes, which promoted the dehumanisation of certain African peoples with a perceived—though inaccurate—religious foundation. Sub-Saharan Africans were already black, 'negro' Africans: their imagined polarity of colour had come to symbolise them wholly. Other peoples, such as those in North Africa, were seen to be religiously and culturally inferior, but their bodies were ambivalent enough in such discourses to avoid the stigma of slavery. They were deemed too similar to the European benchmark for this to even be considered.

It may seem odd that I begin the conclusion to a thesis on eighteenth-century 'racial science' with an extended section examining a short piece of Elizabethan travel writing. The accounts of Hawkins' voyages, however, allow us a telling snapshot of 'racial' sentiment at the dawn of Britain's involvement in the slave trade, thus providing a significant forerunner to many of the texts examined in this thesis. The strength of racialised thinking in the accounts of Hawkins' voyages points to considerable continuities in thought on non-Europeans which lasted throughout the early modern period and into 'modern' race science. Ideas on 'racial' difference throughout this period shared many complex, occasionally conflicted roots in older theory. One root that becomes most apparent in Hawkins' travelogues is a tradition of investing bodily symbols of difference with pseudo-religious qualities. As this thesis has demonstrated, this was not only an early-modern phenomenon. Although not overly prominent in eighteenth-century British sources, the traditional 'Curse of Ham' and 'Mark of Cain' refrains stemmed from medieval times and lasted well into the nineteenth century in the

rhetoric of American slave owners.³⁰ This idea had been lent a measure of validity in the intervening time through its adoption by some prominent doctors and scientists, such as the eminent seventeenth-century anatomist Marcello Malpighi, who suggested that ‘all men were originally white, but that sinners among them had degenerated into black.’³¹ Although mentioning particular curses by name had apparently become unfashionable by the eighteenth century, several authors studied in this thesis invoked a sense of these traditions in their arguments for polygenetic theory. For example, Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan's late seventeenth-century travelogue, examined in Chapter Four, implied that the bodily varieties of humankind suggested a separate act of biblical creation for Africans, Americans, Asians and Europeans. This idea was echoed in 1735 by navy surgeon John Atkins, before being seen again in the work of authors such as Edward Long and Henry Home, Lord Kames in the early 1770s. Long was particularly forthright in his religious imagery. The imagined absence of trauma in labour for ‘negro’ women in his thesis denied them their very humanity, since in Genesis 3:16 God had decreed to the children of Eve that ‘in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.’ The canonisation of polygenetic theory into scientific debate in the late eighteenth century thus could be said to have, if anything, strengthened the religious imagery inherent within ‘race’. Even in monogenetic literature, moreover, the notion of blackness as a curse continued to resonate throughout the period. Oliver Goldsmith, Johann Blumenbach, John Hunter and Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon all in some way believed white skin to be the original or ‘purest’, most perfect condition of humanity. By the eighteenth century, the religious implications surrounding the polarity of black and white were no less evident. Religious meaning did not decline in the study of human variety, but was rather incorporated fully into new scientific forms.

³⁰ Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p. 109.

³¹ George S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 148.

This thesis has also demonstrated that there was great continuity in the use of classical Greek and Roman knowledge in manufacturing conceptions of racial difference. Several studies, most notably David Bindman's art history *Ape to Apollo* (2002), have already highlighted the role that ancient aesthetic concepts played in establishing European bodily superiority over non-European groups. This can be seen in the facial angles used by Petrus Camper and later Charles White. Mirroring this, however, was a faith in classical culture which also suffused linguistic analysis and travel accounts. It was seen in Chapter One how James Burnet, Lord Monboddo heralded Ancient Greek as the most perfect language, and that variance from this standard suggested a greater proximity of animal nature. It was also argued in Chapter Four that humoral models of 'racial' difference persisted on into the nineteenth century. Unlike with representations of women, whose highly-sexualised natures were seen by Thomas Laqueur to decline along with the popularity of Galenic models of sexual difference, non-Europeans remained highly lascivious in medical and scientific theory. Travel literature too had since Herodotus depicted groups of Africans as 'herds' who copulated freely and promiscuously amongst each other. This internal failing to control passions was still observed amongst population groups in sixteenth-century accounts of Africa, seventeenth-century accounts of the Americas and once again Long's and White's descriptions of 'negroes'. Travel writers, anatomists, natural historians and philologists all continued to rely on classical knowledge to validate their texts as scientific, the result being a duality within texts on 'race': whilst striving to engage with a new era of classification within the human sciences, they still gave concession to many older ideas which—to the modern observer—occasionally seem contradictory to the author's intent.

These deeply-held roots to the discussion of 'racial' variety go some way to explaining why there are many incontrovertible beliefs shared between authors who

were otherwise firmly on different sides of theoretical divides. One of the key observations of this thesis, indeed, is that neither monogenetic nor polygenetic theory should be considered any more profoundly 'racist' than the other. In much historical literature, the increase in polygenetic beliefs—which suggest a divinely-decreed permanence in 'racial' divisions which cannot be eroded by civility or climate—has been linked to the invention of modern racism itself in the late eighteenth century. What this thesis has intended to make clear, however, is that the potential for 'racial' improvement offered by climatic theory was so distant and abstract as to be irrelevant in most examples. Monogenesists still frequently believed in highly hierarchical structures of mankind, in which the European stood proudly at the pinnacle. They also validated the same 'racist' stereotypes as polygenetic authors: inferior intellects, senseless skin, large genitals and sexually-heightened natures were all still an intrinsic part of climatic theory. A black African individual was no less inferior to Goldsmith than to Long, as the inferiorities of a race could only be removed by generations of carefully selective breeding within a civilised culture and climate. The essential permanence of 'racial' variety within climatic theory itself has a long tradition in philosophy. Although ancient Greek and Roman philosophy believed in climatic, humoural explanations of difference, authors of those cultures also coined the proverb of 'Washing the Ethiopian'. To attempt to do this was to attempt the impossible, according to the anecdotes: it was to strive in vain. The notion persisted into the writings of influential early-modern authors. Desiderius Erasmus wrote of, 'that inborn blackness of the Ethiopian, which Pliny thinks to be the result of heat from the nearness of the sun, cannot be washed away with water nor whitened by any means whatever.'³² The image also found its way into biblical traditions of thought, from Jeremiah 13:23: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin,

³² Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagorum collectanea*, cited in Jean Michel Massing, 'From Greek Proverb to Soap Advert: Washing the Ethiopian', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995), p. 182.

or the leopard his spots?’³³ Racial difference had been effectively permanent since Antiquity, as had any surrounding hierarchical metaphors that difference possessed.

The bodily components through which ‘race’ was demonstrated, moreover, were not merely limited to skin. Another root of ‘racial science’ could be said to be an anatomical continuity. Throughout the early modern period there was a consistent interest in the comparative sizes, shapes and qualities of a huge range of bodily features, in so far as they varied between European and non-European populations. As this thesis has shown, the scrutiny of the body during this period was comprehensive. Hair type, facial features, sensory capacity, skull shape, genitalia, breasts, stature and even smell were subject to prolonged discussion in various genres from at least the mid-seventeenth century, and Sir John Hawkins’ accounts suggest this tradition ran even deeper within European culture. The emphasis on body parts, furthermore, was of primary importance within texts which discussed human variety. It was seen in Chapter Two that the accepted formats of travelogues in themselves helped to legitimate racial thinking. Just as in Sparke’s narrative, in which sub-Saharan African populations were instantly ‘all blacke’, a traveller before all else when describing a new population would list a set of key bodily features with reference to how they varied from the European norm. The comments that followed on the culture, habits, politics and language of that people, thus appeared to proceed from that bodily form: culture to these authors derived from the symbiosis of outer body and inward nature.

Not only was the discussion of bodily components simply highly detailed, however. There was also a specific, profound interest in features which had already been acknowledged within European science and culture to evidence categorical difference. It was seen in Chapter Four that especially in the case of genitalia and

³³ Erasmus, *Adagorum collectanea*, p. 182.

secondary sexual characteristics, such as beards, breasts and buttocks, travel writers and later 'racial scientists' drew upon bodily metaphors which had already established difference between (superior) men and (inferior) women. Such features had attached to them a host of metaphors which generated a hierarchical system of variety: travel writers simply appropriated these connotations to convey non-European inferiority also. The enlarged, yet dysfunctional, penises of certain groups had thus, by at the latest the 1750s, come to demonstrate both their greater animality and their functional inferiority to European men. The enlarged breasts of African women marked out their imagined lustiness whilst at the same time rendering them 'natural' mothers who could look after children whilst still working with their hands, confirming to European observers their position as an innately labouring class of (sub)human. The secondary sexual differences between men and women of non-European 'races' were reduced in the same texts, showing European social values and sexual roles to be the most optimal and correct. In this way, 'race' and sex were mutually-supporting systems of categorisation. They relied on similar bodily metaphors and representations, and through criticism or praise of non-European communities a traveller could also extol or condemn the qualities of their own society. The interest in the features of sexual difference amongst other 'races' was continual during the period studied, with little variation in the language used.

More than any of the above representational continuities, however, this thesis has demonstrated that the desire to animalise non-European populations was as strong in the early eighteenth century as it was after 1770. Portraying the inferiority of a group through their greater proximity to the base animals was fundamental to the vast majority of attempts to generate a hierarchical image of humanity. As seen above, difference in sexual features and behaviour was also configured to demonstrate bestial desires and natures. Where physical features varied from the European standard, they frequently did so in a manner that demonstrated degeneracy away from perfection and towards the

apes and other animals. African hair was ‘woolly’, whilst ‘Tartar’ beards were so ‘stiff and straight’ that they resembled the hair of horses. The heightened senses seen so commonly in eighteenth-century literature in Chapter Two were symbolic of the more ‘natural’, ‘wild’ habitats the ‘savage’ non-Europeans were imagined to dwell within. In this instance, indeed, authors opposed established classical knowledge on the senses to depict heightened eyesight and hearing within non-Europeans and yet still impose stereotypes of stupidity and inability in the arts—breaking a metaphorical connection which had been apparent in philosophy for centuries.

Animality was furthermore integral to polygenetic attempts to construct particular ‘races’ as different species. Clearly the implication that a people were closer to apes than Europeans could also suggest that that people were in fact more ape *than* European. Polygenesis has herein been traced back in textual form to the late seventeenth century, although the repetitive language of such claims used by authors suggests that the topic was widely talked about amongst both colonial authorities and travellers. As was seen in Chapter Three, sexual intermixture was the most serious threat to such philosophies. The accepted method of defining species was a rule based on interbreeding: any creatures which could produce fertile offspring were considered to be of a single species, regardless of the physical differences which may have existed between them. Consequently there was a considerable effort made by many authors aimed at dehumanising the children of mixed-race relationships. The word ‘mulatto’ had since the late sixteenth century been used in English to describe people of mixed African and European descent. Animality was implicit within the term: it conjured the image of the ‘little mule’; an infertile and dysfunctional offspring of a horse and a donkey. The prevalence of this term even in the Elizabethan era, indeed, shows the extent of ‘racialised’ thinking. Even then it carried the implication of categorical boundaries between different kinds of animal being crossed, and its persistence into

colonial literature and later into 'racial science' is symbolic of a continuous interest in preserving such intellectual boundaries against a trend of intermixture, generated by the economic, cultural and social circumstances of Britain and its colonies throughout the period. Early eighteenth-century authors such as Woodes Rogers and John Atkins were as concerned by the erosion of 'racial' categories within colonies as Edward Long would be sixty years later, and expressed the animalistic inferiority of the 'spurious races' such intermixture generated accordingly.

The profound continuities within 'racial' theory which this thesis has demonstrated should not of course blind us to the changes which did occur to the genre across the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment is a period which has been ascribed with important revolutions in the nature of scientific discovery and knowledge-forming customs. It has been argued within this thesis that travel literature in the early modern period was, according to the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-centuries' epistemological foundations, a scientific endeavour: it was perceived as the act of gaining factual knowledge about the universe through objective observation. It was essentially an extension of natural history, utilising a form of 'linguistic technology' borrowed from Baconian and Boyleian philosophies of representing the 'truth' of nature. In this way, I argue, travel literature literally formed a discourse of 'racial science'. This tradition of knowledge did not diminish across the eighteenth century. Edward Long's *The History of Jamaica* and Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* continued in this tradition, working their analysis of 'racial' difference into a much wider network of thoughts on geography and politics. Texts such as these were supplemented, however, with new studies which did not include 'race' merely as a component of a text but which were rather wholly dedicated to delineating and investigating in detail the varieties of human kind. On the Continent, Blumenbach and Camper devoted whole texts to anatomy-style breakdowns of non-European bodies.

These studies influenced works such as John Hunter's *Disputatio inauguralis quaedam de hominum Varietatibus* and Charles White's *On the Regular Gradation of Man, and Other Animals* in Britain. These texts were still hugely influenced by travel literature, but they also offered a new level of systematisation of 'racial' difference. These works forged 'racial science' into a genre in its own right, rather than a body of knowledge patched together from theories displayed in numerous disciplines.

The changes above also reflected concerns about the nature of evidence in science generally. Simple observation alone, represented in plain style, was no longer enough to validate claims about the nature of the universe. In 'racial science', the description of a group by an individual was no longer wholly trusted; rather a synthesis of descriptions drawn from a wide discourse was necessary to legitimate a single stereotype. Thus in natural history, authors such as John Millar began to set detailed criteria by which a fair implementation of information from travel literature could be achieved. National and religious contexts had to be considered carefully and expunged.³⁴ In anatomical studies, tables such as Figure 8 (below) began to appear. The study of average measurements taken from numerous examples became a common methodology. The investigation of 'race' in many cases became an act of collecting and owning, rather than observing. Camper and Blumenbach would boast to each other about how many non-European skulls and bones they possessed in their cabinets. These authors rarely travelled abroad themselves, but had explorers such as Sir Joseph Banks obtain body parts for them.³⁵ They similarly celebrated their collections of travel writing, believing that the larger the sample basis of their studies became, the more accurate their conclusions would be.³⁶ That such accounts had themselves been

³⁴ See Introduction, p. 39.

³⁵ John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 149.

³⁶ Professor K.F.H. Marx's personal recollections of Blumenbach, for instance, notes of 'his familiarity with voyages and travels' that '[a]ll the books of the sort in the library of [Göttingen University] he had

collecting linguistic representations of non-Europeans stemming back centuries escaped them entirely.

Figure 8³⁷

[89]

T A B L E
Of the Proportions of all the Heads in Profile.

	Height a d	Length a b	Distance of the eye from the crown, a m	Breadth h k	Nose.	Upper Lip.	Chin.	Neck.	Ear.
Calmuck - - -	4	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		$1\frac{1}{2}$
Negro - - -	4	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		1
European - - -	4	$3\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Antique - - -	4	$3\frac{1}{2}$	2	2	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	1
Child just born -	4	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		1
Child one year old -	4	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		1
An aged person -	4	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	3	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Apollo - - -	4		2	$2\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	
De Wit - - -	4	$3\frac{1}{2}$	2	$2\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Alb. Durer - - -								$1\frac{1}{2}$	2
Vitruvius - - -	4				1				

N

This thesis has demonstrated that, as a consequence of the above methodological changes, the technical vocabulary of 'race' itself began to change. New categories were invented and older ones were remodelled. Early in the eighteenth century, the divisions of humanity had been quite simple. Chapter Three showed that late seventeenth-century author Francois Bernier believed there to be four distinct varieties of human. This notion was still common in the early eighteenth century, when Carolus Linnaeus forwarded his model of humanity divided by colour, into white-, yellow-, red- and

read through over and over again[...]To this occupation, as he frequently took occasion to mention, he owed no small part of his knowledge'. K.F.H. Marx, 'Life of Blumenbach', in Thomas Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (London: Longman, 1865), p. 21.

³⁷ Petrus Camper, *The works of the late Professor Camper, on the connexion between the science of anatomy and the arts of drawing, painting, statuary, &c. &c.* (London, 1794), p. 89.

black-skinned varieties. As the century moved on, however, and people began to study ‘racial’ difference in greater detail, these categories became inevitably blurred. Around the mid-eighteenth century Buffon suggested six varieties, and was followed closely by Richard Brooke and Oliver Goldsmith. Those latter authors, however, complicated the issue by introducing sub-genera: they now, for instance, distinguished carefully between ‘Turks’ and ‘Arabs’, whilst the Chinese and Japanese were imagined to be a ‘civilised’ subset of ‘Tartars’. John Hunter’s 1775 attempt to delineate humanity by colour, meanwhile, was far more complicated than that of Linnaeus forty years earlier:

*Table of Colours.*³⁸

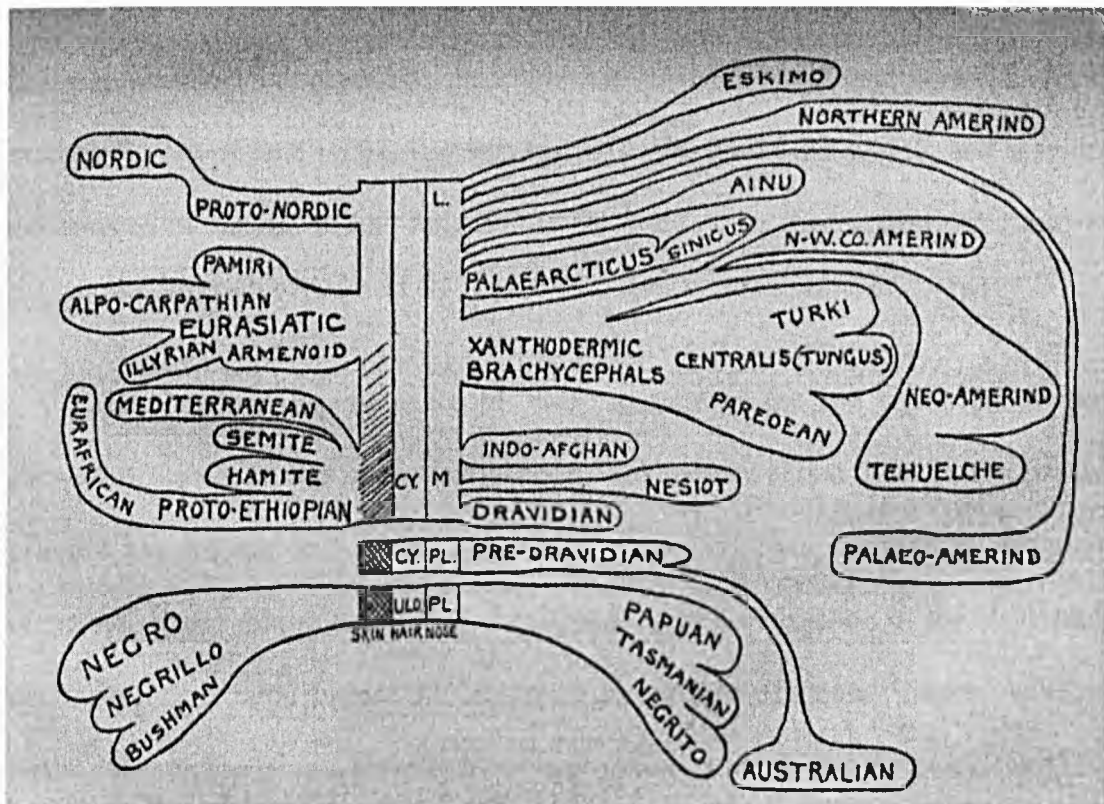
Black.	Africans under the direct rays of the Sun. Inhabitants of New Guinea, and of New Batavia.
Sub-black.	The Moors of Northern Africa. The Hottentots, dwelling towards the south of the Continent.
Copper-coloured.	The East-Indians
Red.	Americans.
Brown.	Tartars. Persians. Arabs. Africans dwelling on the Mediterranean Sea. Chinese.
Light brown.	Southern Europeans. Sicilians. Abyssinians. Spanish. Turks and others. Samoeides and Laplanders.
White.	Almost all the remaining Europeans, as Swedes. Danes. English. Germans. Poles and others. Kabardinski. Georgians. Mingrelians.

The more detailed the analysis of non-European bodies became, the more it became apparent that the simplistic ‘racial’ divisions of the early eighteenth century were insufficient to explain the complexity of human form. This trend continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Just as early-modern Spanish colonies had struggled with increasingly-complex caste systems in an attempt to keep control of

³⁸ John Hunter, *Disputatio Inauguralis Quaedam de Hominum Varietatibus, Et Harum Causis Exponens* (Edinburgi: Apud Balfour et Smellie, 1775); English translation in: ‘The Inaugural Dissertation of John Hunter, M.D. on the Varieties of Man’, Bendyshe (ed. and trans.), *The Anthropological Treatises*, pp. 366-367.

'inter-racial' breeding, so too did later 'racial' scientists struggle to cope with the increasing physical variation, demonstrated by their own studies, amongst the 'races'. A particularly effective demonstration of this is seen in Figure 9 below, taken from A.C. Haddon's *The Races of Man* (1924):

Figure 9³⁹



'Race' was never an entirely satisfactory system of scientific knowledge. No two authors could ever agree on precisely what the 'races' were or how many existed. This, then, has been one of the central points of this thesis, first outlined in Chapter One: that there were two different vocabularies used to discuss 'race'.⁴⁰ One was a system of technical nomenclature, providing a variety of words which served to generalise entire continents of people beneath a single banner, such as 'negro' or 'Caucasian'. These terms were continually in flux throughout the early modern and modern periods; their boundaries could stretch or contract to include or exclude

³⁹ A.C. Haddon, *The Races of Man*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924) p. 157.

⁴⁰ See Chapter One, pp. 102-104.

particular peoples. In parallel to this, however, operated a second vocabulary of description, which was common to both scientific and literary genres. This second vocabulary comprised of consistent representations of non-Europeans, recording which parts of the body were of intrinsic interest to travellers and anatomists, and also prescribing the qualitative adjectives used when discussing these features. Thus black African hair was as equally 'woolly' to mid seventeenth-century travellers as it was to late eighteenth-century theorists; their skin was always 'black' and correspondingly insensitive. The second vocabulary was highly stable across this period, and provided the essence of 'racial' beliefs long before the word 'race' had consolidated into its modern meaning.

The heightened prominence of 'race' in texts of the late eighteenth century shows that the notion was increasingly important to authors at that time. This is because of a few key political and cultural issues which have long been identified by historians of 'racial' issues during this period. The debate over the abolition of the slave trade obviously had a large impact on the public importance of 'racial' issues. Although recent research has shown abolitionist thought to have a much longer history, the 1770s are regarded as a watershed moment in the movement. The 1772 legal case in which the slave James Somerset successfully appealed against his master's right to deport him to Jamaica and return him to slavery is 'widely misinterpreted as signalling the emancipation of all slaves in Britain.' Nonetheless, the popular interest captured by this case and others during that decade 'drew attention to the conduct and continuation of the slave trade in Britain's Caribbean colonies.'⁴¹ From this point on momentum grew quickly for the abolitionist movement, and the question of 'race' received more public attention as a consequence. Many historians have thus linked the debate with the

⁴¹ Brycchan Carey, Markman Ellis, and Sara Salih (eds.), *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition: Britain and its Colonies, 1760-1838* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), p. 3.

‘emergence’ of ‘race’, as Peter Kitson notes: ‘there is a congruence between the development of a systematised sense of human difference in the natural sciences and the period of the most sustained debate about the validity and morality of the Atlantic slave trade.’⁴² It is not simply a case of the pro-slavery camp inventing a spurious pseudoscience in order to justify their ongoing depredations. As Kitson goes on to demonstrate, ‘it is surprising that many of the notable proponents of notions of racial inferiority seldom supported the slave trade[...]though all such discourses[...]were infiltrated by racist thinking in other ways.’⁴³ Although it is often configured by historians as a flashpoint in the invention of ‘modern’ racism itself, I believe the abolition debates rather served to popularise notions of human difference which were already well developed, in the ways this thesis has demonstrated. From the 1770s on there was a need to refine and develop these ideas to suit a multitude of personal opinions on contemporary issues, as well as to suit the new epistemological methods outlined above, but the groundwork of ‘racial science’ had already been laid a long time ago.

The ever-widening scope of colonialism served the same effect, I believe. One of several examples of a colony causing greater interest in ‘racial’ issues is the case of India. Peter Fryer notes that the:

pseudo-scientific mythology of race[...]arose in the 1770s, precisely when the British government first had to face the problem of ruling a territory with ‘natives’ in it. In 1773 the Regulation Act asserted

⁴² Peter Kitson, “‘Candid Reflections’”: The Idea of Race in the Debate over the Slave Trade and Slavery in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century’, in Carey, Ellis, and Salih (eds.), *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition*, p. 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

parliamentary control over the East India Company for the first time; Warren Hasting was appointed first governor-general of Bengal and a supreme court was set up in Calcutta.⁴⁴

In this instance, the qualities, cultures and religions of non-European people suddenly became the very real concerns of metropolitan ruling elites in Britain. The very public trial of Hastings for corruption forced more attention to relations between the British and Indians still, as his poor treatment of the native population stirred similar waves of popular sentiment as the treatment of slaves in the Caribbean. Racial ideas were again not explicitly part of this discussion, but attention was inevitably drawn towards comparisons of culture and kind, and of the right for 'white' Britons to rule abroad. It is as if the more political and cultural uses for scientific racism arose, the greater the need became for a diversity of 'racial' notions and categories which were disparate and flexible enough to fit any particular argument. Whereas before more simplistic models of 'racial' difference had stood valid for decades at a time, now authors were correcting each other year-after-year with increasingly complex methods of measurement. But always the new theories were dependent upon older, established theories to portray themselves as factual.

Having summarised my main arguments for the existence of 'racial' thought prior to the late eighteenth century, it is important to consider why there were such recurrent and consistent representations of non-European peoples. One answer may be that there were important continuities in European culture and politics too. Throughout the early modern period there was a deep interest in, and reverence towards, biblical and classical knowledge about the wider world, which as we have seen greatly influenced thought on 'race'. Not all 'racial' prejudices were the unconscious intellectual by-

⁴⁴ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 165.

product of culturally-dominant ideas inherited from older knowledge, however. As seen throughout this thesis, authors could deliberately select representational motifs and ignore others so as to fit a purpose. To return to Sir John Hawkins, for instance, we saw that his dehumanising, mercantile language regarding Africans reflected his desire to profit from his assaults on the Gulf of Guinea coast. He and his crew would frequently acknowledge the national and tribal differences between black Africans, and yet once possession of these peoples had been achieved 'racial' language was instantly invoked. Later Edward Long would argue 'negro' inferiority specifically to support the caste system of Jamaica and white colonial power elsewhere. Even with authors who opposed slavery and imperialism, furthermore, it was still profitable for them to believe that European bodies and values exceeded those abroad. The vast majority of the authors examined in this thesis considered themselves scholars and scientists, all of whom proudly worked within an ancient, and specifically European, tradition of thought. To herald a non-European people as of equal merit to themselves intellectually would have been to undo the foundations of their own lives' work. Historical 'racism' should never, therefore, be put down only to the prejudices of the individuals involved, as forced upon them by their culture. Each travel writer, novelist, natural historian and anatomist considered, from Hawkins to Daniel Defoe to Buffon to White, had their own individual needs and agendas. These factors determined how extensively they drew upon the established, repetitive, 'racialised' vocabulary available to them.

The 'Age of Enlightenment' has by its nature been configured by historians of the eighteenth century as a period of change; as a transition within Europe from one body of beliefs to something new and altogether more 'modern'. Fundamental worldviews are said to have dramatically shifted—a process observable even within the lifetime of an individual. The sciences, philosophy, politics, religion and identity are all perceived to have undergone a series of changes which have recently become highly

historicised. Of course, historiography of this period has now become more complex than simply believing the Enlightenment to be a new 'desire for human affairs to be guided by rationality, rather than faith, superstition or revelation, a world view based on science, and not tradition' which arose spontaneously and ousted the old regime for good.⁴⁵ Instead it is now suggested that we 'think about the Enlightenment as a series of interlocking, and sometimes warring problems and debates[...]a group of capsules or flashpoints where intellectual projects changed society and government on a world-wide basis.'⁴⁶ Despite this increasingly intricate understanding of how Enlightenment, or 'modernity', happened to European culture, however, it has been seen throughout this thesis that much historiography examining 'race', gender, class, nationality, religion and identity in general still operates from the initial assumption that there was a profound intellectual shift during the eighteenth century. It has not been my intention in this thesis to challenge the notion that there was 'Enlightenment', although of course the moralistic overtones of that label clash with the patterns often perceived in 'racialised' thought, whereby such offensive and prejudiced beliefs became only more acceptable due to the consolidation of 'rational' science. Rather, this thesis suggests that, with regards to much eighteenth-century intellectual historiography in general, the implicit narrative of transition has dictated that historical change has been the focus of research. The continuities present within culture across this century, conversely, are still relatively unhistoricised and incompletely understood. With regards to 'race', this thesis has shown, to undervalue or ignore the continuities spanning epistemological divides is to misunderstand the ways in which contemporary scientists used older texts in validating their theories. Authors well into the nineteenth century could depart from 'racial' beliefs altogether in passages, slipping between classical, early-modern and 'modern' notions with ease. They could argue for the permanence of 'race' on one page and its

⁴⁵ Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; 2007), p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

malleability on the next, to suit whichever argument they were making. It was not because of a recently-found desire for rationality that they were able to do this and retain their scientific credibility. Instead they were enabled by the collective experience of a British culture which had for centuries been consuming a mixture of travelogues, classical works and pseudo-Biblical traditions which were continually accepted and trusted irrespective of the changing demands for accurate, truthful knowledge.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

'Racial Science' Sources Displayed by Genre

Genre	Author	Title	Date
Anatomy	John Mitchell	'Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colour of People in Different Climates'	1744
	John Hunter	<i>Disputatio Inauguralis Quaedam de Hominum Varietatibus, Et Harum Causis Exponens</i>	1775
	Petrus Camper	<i>The works of the late Professor Camper, on the connexion between the science of anatomy and the arts of drawing, painting, statuary, &c. &c...</i>	1794 (English translation)
	Charles White	<i>An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables</i>	1799
	Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring	'Detached Passages, Selected from Sömmerring's Essay on the Comparative Anatomy of the Negro and European'	1799 (English translation)
Anthropology	Francois Bernier	'A New Division of the Earth by the Different Species of Races which Inhabit it'	1684
	Johann Friedrich Blumenbach	<i>The Anthropological Treatises</i>	1774-1794
	A.C. Haddon	<i>The Races of Man</i>	1924
Linguistics	James Burnet, Lord Monboddo	<i>Of the Origin and Progress of Language, Vol. I</i>	1773
		<i>Of the Origin and Progress of Language, Vol. II</i>	1774
		<i>Of the Origin and Progress of Language, Vol. IV</i>	1787
Medicine	John Atkins	<i>The Navy-Surgeon. Or, A Practical System of Surgery</i>	1734
	Benjamin Moseley	<i>A Treatise on Tropical Diseases; on Military Operations; and on the Climate of the West-Indies</i>	1789
Natural History	Carolus Linnaeus	<i>Systema Naturae</i>	1735-1758
	Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon	'Of the Varieties in the Human Species'	1749; 1775 (English translation)
	R. Brookes	<i>A New and Accurate System of Natural History</i>	1763
	Oliver Goldsmith	<i>An History of Earth and Animated Nature</i>	1774
	R. Brookes	<i>A New and Accurate System of Natural History in Six Volumes</i>	1777
	Samuel Stanhope Smith	<i>An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species</i>	1788
Philosophy & History	John Millar	<i>Origin of the Distinction of Ranks</i>	1771-1779
	Henry Home, Lord Kames	<i>Six Sketches on the History of Man</i>	1776
		<i>Sketches of the History of Man. Considerably Enlarged by the Last Additions of the Author</i>	1788
	James Burnet, Lord Monboddo	<i>Antient Metaphysics. Volume Fifth. Containing the History of Man in the Civilised State</i>	1791
Political History	Edward Long	<i>The History of Jamaica, Vol. I</i>	1774
		<i>The History of Jamaica, Vol. II</i>	1774
	Thomas Jefferson	<i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i>	1787
Published Correspondence	William Dickson	<i>Letters on Slavery</i>	1789

Appendix 2:

Travel Literature Sources Displayed by Publishing Date

Author	Title	Date
John Leo (Africanus)	'The History and Description of Africa'	1526
Richard Hakluyt (ed.)	<i>Principal Navigations</i>	1589
John Sparke	'The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire...to the coast of Guinea, and the Indies of Nova Hispania, begun in An. Dom. 1564'	1589
Henry Middleton	'Two Accounts of his Voyage to the Moluccas '	1604
Richard Ligon	<i>A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes</i>	1657
William Dampier	<i>A New Voyage Round the World, Vol. I</i>	1697
Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan	<i>New Voyages to North-America, Vol. I</i>	1703
	<i>New Voyages to North-America, Vol. II</i>	1703
Lionel Wafer	<i>A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America</i>	1704
William Dampier	<i>Voyages and Descriptions in Three Parts</i>	1705
	<i>A Continuation of a Voyage to New-Holland, &c. In the Year 1699</i>	1709
John Lawson	<i>A New Voyage to Carolina</i>	1709
Woodes Rogers	<i>A Cruising Voyage Round the World</i>	1712
William Symson	<i>A New Voyage to the East-Indies</i>	1715
Anonymous	<i>A Journey To and From the Island of BORNEO, in the EAST-INDIES</i>	1718
Aubrey de la Motraye	<i>Travels through Europe, Asia, and into Part of Africa</i>	1723
George Shelvock	<i>A Voyage Round the World By Way of the Great South Sea</i>	1726
Nathaniel Uring	<i>A History of the Voyages and travels of Capt. Nathaniel Uring</i>	1726
William Betagh	<i>A Voyage Round the World</i>	1728
Anonymous	<i>A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts</i>	1732
John Nieuhoff	'Remarkable Voyages and Travels into Brazil, and the Best Parts of the East-Indies'	1732
John Atkins	<i>A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies</i>	1735
Peter Kolben	<i>The Present State of the Cape of Good-Hope, Vol. I</i>	1738
Francis Moore	<i>Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa</i>	1738
Anonymous	<i>A Collection of Voyages and Travels...From the Curious and Valuable Library of the Late Early of Oxford, Vol. I</i>	1745
Griffith Hughes	<i>The Natural History of Barbados</i>	1750
Antonio De Ulloa	<i>A Voyage to South-America</i>	1753
M. Adanson	<i>A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia</i>	1759
Anonymous	<i>A New Geographical Dictionary Containing a Full and Accurate Account of the Several parts of the Known World..., Vol. II</i>	1760
Anonymous	<i>A New Collection of Voyages, Discoveries and Travels: Containing whatever is worthy of Notice in EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA and AMERICA, Vol. I</i>	1767
	<i>A New Collection of Voyages, Discoveries and Travels: Containing whatever is worthy of Notice in EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA and AMERICA, Vol. II</i>	1767
Henry Bouquet	'Reflections on the War with the Savages of North America'	1767
Don George Juan and Don Antonio De Ulloa	'A Voyage to SOUTH AMERICA'	1767
James Bruce	<i>Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773, Vol. I</i>	1790
	<i>Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773, Vol. III</i>	1790
M. Le Vaillant	<i>Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa, by the Way of the Cape of Good Hope; in the Yeares 1780, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85</i>	1790
Abbé Rochon	<i>A Voyage to Madagascar, and the East Indies</i>	1792

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