Appendix

The University of Edinburgh, Theories of Race and Civilization, and British Imperialism

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Introduction

The eighteenth century is widely recognised as the period during which Scotland transformed from a relatively marginal kingdom on the fringes of Europe to a place of central importance for Britain and its expanding empire. Incorporated into the British state as a result of the Union of 1707, Scotland provided large numbers of ambitious young men eager to make their names and fortunes as the administrators and foot-soldiers of Empire.[1] One of the keys to Scotland's eighteenth-century transformation was a new wave of intellectual energy centred in its universities and cities, known since about 1900 as the 'Scottish Enlightenment'.[2] At its heart was the University of Edinburgh (UoE), through which many of these young men passed on their way to careers as politicians, imperial administrators, soldiers, merchants, industrialists, lawyers, doctors, and other positions of power and status in British society.

While 'the Enlightenment' across its various geographical locations and spheres of intellectual activity has often been celebrated as having generated the ideas that underpin modern liberal democracy,[3] it has been increasingly recognised since the middle of the twentieth century that Enlightenment thinkers were also responsible for nurturing some of the most damaging ideas

[1] See, e.g., John M. Mackenzie and T.M. Devine (eds.), *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2011); T.M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire, 1600-1815* (London, 2003).
[2] William Robert Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1900), 257-70, esp. 261, 265-6.
[3] For defences see Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment and Why it Still Matters* (Oxford, 2013); Steven Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress* (London, 2018).

in human history.[4] It was in the Enlightenment that 'civilization' became systematised as a hierarchical progression through which all societies passed, from 'savage', to 'barbarous', to 'civilized', a scheme often linked to distinct modes of subsistence.[5] Europeans invariably placed themselves at the pinnacle of civilization, and the standard according to which the various cultures and societies around the world that they depicted beneath them should be measured. It was also within related Enlightenment currents of thought that the idea of 'Race' emerged in its modern form, in which the physical features of individuals and populations became linked to their supposed intellectual aptitude and moral characters, all of which were tied to their genealogy. Races were arranged along the civilizational ladder and it was hypothesised by some European thinkers that some races might be incapable of ascending further than the 'savage' or 'barbarous' stage; in other words, that they were seen as naturally inferior to civilized Europeans. Historians have shown that ideas of gender were conceived within the same ideological matrix, rendering the white European male as the normative standard by which all others were measured.[6] Civilizational hierarchies and racial theories provided powerful intellectual justifications for the systems of inequality that already existed, notably the transoceanic trafficking and enslavement of African and other colonised peoples, and would underpin the rapid expansion of European empire around the world in the nineteenth century.[7]

Through its professors, students, and alumni, the UoE played a disproportionate role in the development and proliferation of these civilizational and racial modes of thought. During the period examined in this appendix, no institution in Britain contributed more to the systematic and harmful development of racial theories than the UoE, which rivalled other European leaders in this unfortunate arena, such as the Universities of Göttingen and Königsberg. Drawing on the extensive record in the archives of the UoE, the National Library of Scotland, the British Library, the Wellcome Collection, and other repositories, this appendix surveys the manifold ways in which those associated with UoE shaped the development of hierarchical theories of human difference from *c.*1750 to *c.*1850. The issue of the transoceanic trafficking and enslavement of African peoples loomed in the background of these discussions, and there was a notable abolitionist current running through the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment; however, as will be seen, abolitionist principles in no way precluded viewing non-European races as inferior, either originally or through circumstance.[8] The subsequent two sections will lay the preliminary intellectual groundwork for understanding the significance and usage of ideas of 'Civilization' and 'Race', respectively, in Scottish Enlightenment thought, before the rest of the appendix outlines how these ideas were adopted and deployed by Edinburgh professors, students, and alumni through the middle of the nineteenth century. Although it concludes at that point, the ideas examined here continued to structure thought about much of the rest of the world well into the twentieth century, helping to uphold systems

[4] See, e.g., Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1944: London, 2016); Richard H. Popkin, 'The Philosophical Basis of Modern Racism', in Harold E. Pagliaro (ed.), *Racism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cleveland, 1973), 245-62; Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Oxford, 1997).
[5] Ronald Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1976); J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion* (6 vols., Cambridge, 1999-2015), esp. vols. 2 and 4.
[6] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2003); Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice de la race: Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la nation française* (Paris, 2006). Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (Basingstoke, 2013).
[7] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago, 1999); Onni Gust, *Unhomely Empire: Whiteness and Belonging, c.1760-1830* (London, 2021).
[8] See esp. Julia Jorati, *Slavery and Race: Philosophical Debates in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2024), 99-160.

of imperial domination in particular. This appendix uses the original language in which ideas of race were expressed at the University of Edinburgh in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unavoidably, it contains racist ideas and illustrates their development by professors, students, and alumni. Revealing as clearly as possible the racist attitudes that underpinned much of the thinking about different cultures around the world is the purpose of citing the language directly.

Enlightenment Social Theory: Savagery, Barbarism, Civilization

At the centre of Enlightenment thinking about human societies was a systematisation of the idea of 'Civilization', to which Scots and especially those based at UoE made arguably the largest contribution.[9] Civilizational theories posited a scheme by which human societies progressed along a social scale from 'savage' to 'barbarous' to 'civilized'. These theories were therefore by their nature hierarchical and it is vital to get a sense of their form and content in order to understand how they were deployed in support of racial ideas and other systems of discrimination, many of which continue to impact society to this day.

The categorisation of people and societies as savage, barbarous, or civilised – although not in as rigidly progressive a form as this might suggest – extends at least back to ancient Greece, and to a considerable extend Enlightenment thinkers merely systematised a device that already existed within European thought.[10] Ideas associated with both the process and condition of civilization were therefore common in European thought long before the Enlightenment, but the word itself was coined in this sense in the 1750s and 60s, in French and English, respectively.[11] Adam Ferguson, Professor of Moral Philosophy at UoE, popularised the use of 'Civilization' in English print in 1767, and it became increasingly common from this time.[12]

One of the distinctive Scottish contributions to this civilizational scheme was to reconceptualise the underlying grid of social progression more firmly as a uniform series of stages based upon the prevailing mode of subsistence. This 'stadial theory' or 'stadial history', as it is alternatively called, came with attendant conjectures about when private property would have developed (which was in many ways the point of the exercise), when legal systems would have arisen, etc., and the moral effects these institutions would have had. The most famous example of stadial theory is that of Adam Smith (1723-1790), who gave its clearest formulation in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* at Glasgow: '1st the Age of Hunters; 2^{dly}, the Age of Shepherds; 3^{rdly} the Age of Agriculture; and 4^{thly}, the Age of Commerce'.[13] Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy at UoE (1785-1810), pointed out that this 'conjectural' or 'theoretical' history was developed simultaneously in France, but was a noticeable and distinct feature of Scottish thought in the late eighteenth century.[14] He employed it in his lectures and

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[9] George Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987), 8-45; Meek, *Social Science*.
[10] Roger L. Emerson, 'Conjectural Histories and Scottish Philosophers', *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* 19 (1984), 63-90; Meek, *Social Science*, 7-12.
[11] Lucien Febvre, 'Civilisation: Évolution d'un mot et d'un groupe d'idées', in *Civilisation: Le mot et l'idée* (Paris, 1930), 1-55; Silvia Sebastiani has recently synthesised this history in Silvia Sebastiani, 'Civilization and Perfectibility: Conflicting Views of the History of Humankind?', in John Robertson (ed.), *Time, History, and Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2023), 194-215.
[12] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History and Progress of Civil Society* (London, 1767), 2, 111, 133, 303, 348, 363, 365, 372.
[13] Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, ed. R.L. Meek, D.D. Raphael, P.G. Stein (Oxford, 1978), 14.
[14] On conjectural history see, e.g., Meek, *Social Science*; H.M. Hopfl, 'From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies* 17 (1978), 19-40; Emerson, 'Conjectural Histories'; Robert Wokler, 'Anthropology and Conjectural History in the Enlightenment', in Christopher Fox,

taught it to his students, many of whom then deployed the framework in their subsequent careers.

As Silvia Sebastiani his written, stadial theory created a 'grid with which to interpret sources and established facts', across which was plotted a vector of progressive civilisation along which different societies around the world could be hierarchically arranged.[15] Since the social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment was premised upon the universality of human nature, the civilizational scheme could be, and was, readily applied to any society found around the world. Most of Europe was deemed to live in the civilized age of commerce, while many non-European societies were ranged in the savage or barbarous stage. Relegating much of the rest of the world to these lower stages – often in contradiction to actually available evidence – created intellectual justifications for various arguments about the morality and legality of imperial and colonial ventures, including enslavement. We will see below how this played out in specific contexts, especially in South Asia, North America, Africa, and Australia. Enlightenment theorists depended on the burgeoning genre of travel literature for their information of non-European cultures; however, many of the Enlightenment-era travellers who shaped views of the rest of the world at the end of the eighteenth century had been educated according to stadial theory thus creating an instant feedback loop.[16] UoE alumni were strongly represented among travel writers of this era, in particular because of the status of the Medical School, which actively sought to secure graduates jobs on vessels in the navy, merchant marine, and on slave ships. Many of them published accounts of their travels on return to Britain.

By the end of the eighteenth century, as Bruce Buchan and Linda Andersson Burnett have shown, the scheme of savage/barbarous/civilised was 'increasingly being correlated with the emerging terminology of racial characteristics', and physical features above all, including 'skin colour, hair, facial characteristics, skull morphology, or physical stature'.[17] Those educated at UoE were at the forefront of this reconceptualisation.

Race

Between the middle of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century, 'race' became the dominant idiom in Europe and its empires for denoting and discussing physical, intellectual, and moral differences between human populations. Although consideration of and speculation about human difference are basically as old as the literary record itself, 'race' only emerged in the European languages during the late middle ages.[18] Between that point and the eighteenth century 'race' was used in various contexts, usually to refer to the descent of various

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Roy Porter, and Robert Wokler, *Inventing Human Sciences: Eighteenth-Century Domains* (Berkeley, 1995); Aaron Garrett, 'Anthropology: The "Original" of Human Nature', in Alexander Broadie and Craig Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2019). 74-89. For Stewart's development of the concept see, e.g., See Dugald Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* 3 (1794), Part 1, 55-137, at 86; Dugald Stewart, 'Lectures on Moral Philosophy', (1789-90), Edinburgh University Library, Gen 1987; *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, Vol. X (1858), 32-4; 'Notes on Moral Philosophy, Being the Substance of a Course of Lectures on that Subject. By Profr Dugald Stewart', vol. 4 (1809), EUL Gen 1385, f. 43r.

[15] Sebastiani, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 8.

[16] Bruce Buchan, 'Scottish Medical Ethnography: Colonial Travel, Stadial Theory and the Natural History of Race, *c*.1770-1805', *Modern Intellectual History* 17 (2020), 919-49.

[17] Bruce Buchan and Linda Andersson Burnett, 'Knowing savagery: Australia and the anatomy of race', *History of the Human Sciences* 32 (2019), 115-134, at 115. See also Bruce Buchan and Linda Andersson Burnett, *Race and the Scottish Enlightenment: A Colonial History,* c.*1750-1820* (New Haven, 2025).

[18] Lexicologically, 'race' has no classical history and only entered into European vernaculars during the late Middle Ages, in reference to animal populations and the blood descent of noble families.

populations, whether vegetable, animal (often horses), or human.[19] However, several factors came together in the middle of the eighteenth century, forming the basis for the modern idea of race as one of the major divisors of humanity.[20] The key development is known as the 'naturalisation of the human', or the process by which humans began to be studied as a part of nature and therefore comprehensible by the same 'scientific' methods as the rest of the natural world.[21] One of those was the taxonomizing systems according to which organisms were classified by type. This was first applied to humans in 1684 by the French traveller François Bernier (1620-1688), who wrote that the world could be reconceived along a human geography of four or five distinct races. But it was the leading eighteenth-century naturalists Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) and George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), who classified humans along geographical lines into distinct 'races' according to their physical appearance as well as their perceived level of civilisation (the size, complexity, and refinement of their societies and institutions). Buffon made the key intervention of aligning the older genealogical understanding of 'race' that already existed in European thought with the new emphasis on external appearance, identifying six human races.[22] As will be seen below, Buffon's influence on Enlightenment Scotland, including many Edinburgh professors and students, was considerable.

Sebastiani has shown in sophisticated detail the three main outcomes of the eighteenth-century naturalisation of humans as 'civilisation', or the hierarchical ladder from savage to civilised along which human societies were placed; 'perfectibility', or the capacity of individuals and societies to ascend through this hierarchy; and 'reproduction', or the biological reality that meant the qualities by which these things were measured passed along genetically.[23] Sebastiani emphasises that the placement of humans in the same natural tableau as plants and animals led to the barriers between humans and animals – most obviously primates – being lowered, but a corresponding increase in the importance of the hierarchical scale of civilisation.[24] That the ideas of 'civilisation' and 'race' crystallised at the same time is therefore not a coincidence. In many cases they were co-constitutive, and there are multiple examples in this essay supporting her argument.

Studying human populations in this way led to one of the main questions of 'race' over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: whether all human races had developed from the same

[19] For an overview of different understandings of 'race' during this period see Jean-Frédéric Schaub and Silvia Sebastiani, *Race et histoire dans les sociétés occidentales (xv-xviii^{e} siècle)* (Paris, 2021). On the development of 'race' in relation to animal and esp. horse breeding see Mackenzie Cooley, *The Perfection of Nature: Animals, Breeding, and Race in the Renaissance* (Chicago, 2022).

[20] Historians have generally agreed that the eighteenth century was the crucible for the modern idea of race for some time, with the 1770s and 1780s singled out as especially significant. The earliest argument I know of is Théophile Simar, *Étude critique sur la formation de la doctrine des races au XVIII^{e} siècle et son expansion au XIX^{e} siècle* (Brussels, 1922), but a spate of recent books has reinforced this chronology. See, e.g., Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, 2000); Justin E.H. Smith, *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference* (Princeton, 2014); Sarah Reimann, *Die Entstehung des wissenschaftlichen Rassismus im 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2016); Devin Vartija, *The Color of Equality: Race and Common Humanity in Enlightenment Thought* (Philadelphia, 2021).

[21] See, e.g., Nicholas Hudson, 'From "Nation" to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29 (1996), 247-64; Smith, *Nature, Human Nature*.

[22] Claude-Olivier Doron, 'Race and Genealogy: Buffon and the Formation of the Concept of "Race"', *Humana mente* 22 (2012), 75-109; Claude-Olivier Doron, *L'Homme altéré: races et dégénérescence (xvii^{e}-xix^{e} siècles)* (Ceyzérieu, 2016).

[23] Schaub and Sebastiani, *Race et histoire*, 377-8; Silvia Sebastiani, 'Taxonomic Crisis in the Enlightenment, and How it Matters for the History of Humankind', lecture delivered at the International Society for Intellectual History Conference, University of Edinburgh, 6 September 2023.

[24] Shaub and Sebastiani, *Race et histoire*, 321.

root and were therefore genealogically related, or whether each race arose separately and independently and should therefore be considered separate species. Retrospectively labelled 'monogenism' and 'polygenism' in the nineteenth century, there followed serious entailments for the debate around race in each position.[25] The monogenist view, dominant in the eighteenth century and aligned with the Christian understanding of the world, accorded with the idea that the physical differences between races (and the imputed mental and moral characteristics that accompanied them) were the result of differences in climate, situation, food, and institutional differences, all of which were usually seen to be linked in some way.[26] Polygenists got around these vague mechanisms of change by arguing that the differences between populations had always existed as a result of their separate origins and were thus permanent. The polygenist position lent itself easily to hierarchisation, and the most famous polygenists of the eighteenth century often expressed openly racist views on this basis. However, while the monogenist position held more potential for the view that humans were equal (because the differences between them were not original), it must be emphasised that monogenist assumptions were often just as hierarchical and racist. Buffon, for example, held that the other five races around the world had 'degenerated' from an original white population, implying that they were inferior to Europeans. Many at the UoE adopted a similar position.

Most of the foregoing themes can be seen brought together in the 'notorious footnote' of David Hume (1711-1776), who studied at the UoE in the early 1720s. In the 1753 version of his essay 'Of National Characters', Hume wrote:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient German the present Tartars have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negroe slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.[27]

In this passage Hume condemned non-white races within the civilisational scale, suggesting that the disparities in intellectual aptitude and achievement were so vast and so consistent over time that it seemed likely that between the two races there was 'an original distinction' that could not be bridged.[28] Hume rejected the idea that climate provided the mechanism by which races changed, instead averring that of much greater effect were the 'moral' causes that worked on the mind and 'render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us'. This remained a subject of

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[25] The terms 'monogenesis' and 'polygenesis' were coined by the pro-slavery American polygenists J.C. Nott and G.R. Gliddon, *Indigenous Races of the Earth* (Philadelphia, 1857), 402-602.

[26] On mono and polygenesis and their religious implications see Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge, 2006).

[27] David Hume, 'Of National Characters', in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (4 vols., London, 1753), I, 291n.

[28] In a later edition of the essay Hume removed the other non-white races but still condemned Black Africans.

contention throughout the period examined in this report. It is true that 'race' as such features very little in Hume's work; however, this is beside the point for our purposes, because Hume's footnote generated debate in Scotland, Europe, and at the UoE for decades. Even if they did not believe there existed 'an original distinction' between white people and non-white people, many of those at the UoE still agreed with Hume that the non-white races were inferior at the point in time in which they lived.

Moral Philosophy: Adam Ferguson

Adam Ferguson (1723-1816) is considered one of the major figures of the Scottish Enlightenment and an important thinker in the history of political thought. He was Professor of Moral Philosophy at UoE from 1764 until his retirement in 1785, during which time he produced one of the most influential early works on the origins and development of human society and civilisation, *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, which has occasionally won him the title of 'founder' of sociology. It has recently been shown by Bruce Buchan and Silvia Sebastiani that Ferguson was an early incorporator of racial theories into his moral philosophy lectures.[29] When considered in context, it can be seen that including race was both an original and consequential intervention, signalling the beginning of a period of four decades during which racial theories were taught within the moral philosophy curriculum at the UoE.

Importantly, Ferguson had first occupied the Chair of Natural Philosophy at UoE from 1759 until 1764, when he took up the Moral Philosophy Chair. It is likely that Ferguson would have become familiar with Buffon's racial theories at this time, if he was not already acquainted with them through Buffon's general popularity in Scotland.[30] In any case, upon switching to the Moral Philosophy Chair, Ferguson's innovation was to include Buffon's understanding of 'race' as denoting genealogical descent and signalled by distinct physical features within his moral philosophy lectures oriented around ethics and the aims of political society.[31] If there were natural racial differences between humans, the logic went, these would be important to take note of when considering the rise and fall of civilizations and the reasons behind these processes.

New manuscript evidence in the form of lecture notes taken by a student and examined for the first time in this project shows that by 1768 Ferguson had incorporated a short section on racial variety into his lectures.[32] A devoted follower of the Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755) – (the primary figure associated with the climatic argument) – Ferguson stated that 'The air and climates change the complexions. The northern climates to Brown the temperate fair.' The climate also shaped 'the passions', and in the warmer regions especially those 'which serve to enfeeble mankind.' The student noted from Ferguson that 'Some diversities are derived from the race. The stature, form, complexion & aspect. European, Laplander, Tartar, Hindou, Negro, American.' Ferguson then went on to give the statures, skin colour, and other physical features deemed relevant of each race.[33] It should be noted that this six-race classification is that of Buffon. In the following year Ferguson published his *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (1769), a

[29] Bruce Buchan and Silvia Sebastiani, '"No distinction of Black or Fair": The Natural History of Race in Adam Ferguson's Lectures on Moral Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 82 (2021), 207-229.
[30] Paul B. Wood, 'Buffon's reception in Scotland: the Aberdeen connection', *Annals of Science* 44 (1987), 169-90.
[31] I have found no mention of 'race' or related ideas in the works of Ferguson's predecessor James Balfour (1705-1795), Professor of Moral Philosophy at UoE from 1754 to 1764.
[32] This is the earliest surviving evidence (that we know of) for Ferguson's inclusion of racial theory within his lectures.
[33] [Adam Ferguson], 'Heads of Lectures', EUL Coll-1848/20-0060.

textbook for students. He repeated the sixfold racial classification and averred that races were altered by 'influences of climate, situation, and soil.' He attributed great influence to climate: 'The animal and rational temperament, is comparatively phlegmatic and dull in cold climates; is more ardent and quick in warm climates; but has always possessed a distinguished superiority in the temperate.'[34] In other words, the temperate climate had acted to make the 'temperament' of those who lived there, i.e. Europeans, superior to those who lived in other climates found around the world.

We do not have records of Ferguson's engagement with 'race' from 1769 until 1778, when his surviving lecture notes begin. Buchan and Sebastiani have drawn a picture of Ferguson's focus on race and the natural history of man in these lectures of the late 1770s and 1780s in convincing detail.[35] His racial theory had expanded and can be summarised as follows. Unlike Hume, Ferguson was a monogenist who believed humankind was one species united by its 'intellectual nature', but that races had developed over time through climatic, historical, and geographical factors. In racial classification, physical features were the main criteria: 'The Principal Distinctions of the Race are taken from the Complexion, Features, & Statures.'[36] Ferguson then repeated the six races that we have seen before giving detailed descriptions of each of them. The 'Peculiarities' of the European Race were 'familiar but stated as the standard to which we must refer in describing other Races.'[37] In other words, the European race was that by which all others were measured. Even if this was in part because Europeans were the best known by Ferguson and his students, there was an implicit hierarchy in place. For example, the next race described were the 'Samoyed' (Inuit), who 'May be a European degenerated under the Effects of Climate and Manner of Life.'[38]

By placing racial theories at the foundation of his moral philosophy lectures already in the 1760s, Ferguson signalled the shift to a more systematic interest in race at the UoE and the Scottish Enlightenment more generally. To take a popular comparator, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), only began to lecture about race in his lectures at Königsberg in the middle of the 1770s. Ferguson is doubly significant more broadly for fusing the concept of race then emerging in natural history as comprised of physical features with the scheme of civilisational stages that characterised the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment. This understanding would be adopted and expanded by his student and successor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy, Dugald Stewart.

Moral Philosophy: Dugald Stewart

When Adam Ferguson retired from the Moral Philosophy Chair in 1785, he was replaced by Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), who lectured from it until 1810. Stewart is recognised to have been the most popular lecturer at UoE during this period, and in 1792 a guide for UoE Medical Students recommended that they also attend his classes, as he was 'a man of the first abilities,

[34] This passage remains the same in the revised edition of the *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 1786), 12-13. This is dropped in the *Principles of Moral and Political Science* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1792), although in Vol. I Ferguson briefly speaks of 'all the varieties of the human race. These, however, different from one another, in statute, complexion, or features, are still, in their persons distinguishable from the other animals, which in the slow gradations of nature, seem to approach them the most.' (Vol. 1, 50-1).
[35] Buchan and Sebastiani, '"No distinction of Black or Fair"'.
[36] Adam Ferguson Lectures, 30th November 1780, Dc.1.84, Vol I No 107-202, f.127r.
[37] Adam Ferguson Lectures, 30th November 1780, Dc.1.84, Vol I No 107-202, f.127v.
[38] Adam Ferguson Lectures, 30th November 1780, Dc.1.84, Vol I No 107-202, f.128r.

perhaps, in the university of Edinburgh'.[39] Consequentially, Stewart taught many future leaders in British politics, civil society, and imperial administration.[40]

Research undertaken for this project shows that Stewart lectured consistently about race and at much greater length than Ferguson.[41] The length and depth at which Stewart lectured to his students about racial theories has previously gone unrecognised because it – accidentally – remained unpublished. During his lifetime Stewart only published the epistemological and ethical sections of his lecture course, but always planned a separate publication for the third, political, section in which race appeared. The political section never appeared, though Stewart prepared the materials for publication before his death, only for his mentally ill son to destroy swathes of them decades later. The outline included by the editor of Stewart's collected works, William Hamilton (1788-1856), shows that the 'Lectures on the Varieties of the Race' stretched to at least 86 pages.[42] This was therefore a serious, substantial, and consistent subject in his lecture course, which nevertheless fell through the historiographical cracks. It has been recovered for this project through consulting and collating lecture notes left by students.

Stewart's racial theorising can be divided into two periods based on the surviving lecture notes, from 1779 until 1789 and then from 1789 until his retirement. Before Stewart took up the Chair permanently in 1785, he covered for Ferguson in 1778-9 and in 1782-3. In these early lectures – which were adapted from the notes Ferguson passed on to him while he was away – it is notable that Stewart lectured about race within the context of arguing for the abolition of the institution of slavery. Stewart rejected outright Hume's 'inhuman opinion that the negroes being inferior to the Whites ought to be Slaves.'[43] However, Stewart nevertheless agreed that – at the point in time at which he was lecturing – Black Africans were inferior to Europeans. The principle that underpinned Stewart's view was that 'racial' features were mutable: 'The bodily constitution undergoes some change, in the progress of civil society'. Physical and intellectual features accordingly became altered as a people moved up or down the civilisational scale. Responding to Hume's thrust in the notorious footnote that 'Negroes' were incapable of complex thought, Stewart gave his qualified agreement because 'The bodily constitution of a savage hinders him from refined speculation'; *however*, 'in time the Negroes may be as refin'd as we are.'[44] In other words, peoples supposedly in the 'savage' state were constructed in a certain way that meant abstract thought was more difficult for them – because their needs were primarily the immediate ones of sustenance, shelter, protection etc. – but as they advanced up the civilisational ladder over time their 'bodily constitution' would change in such a way that corresponded with intellectual improvement and refinement. Stewart's point was that Black Africans were not *naturally* inferior to Europeans as Hume had suggested; nevertheless, he accepted that at the moment in time in which he was writing they were inferior to Europeans through a result of different circumstances, but that this could change over time.

Stewart returned to the topic of race in the lectures he delivered in 1782, again covering for Ferguson. On 20 November he lectured about the 'Varieties of the human race', which were

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[39] J. Johnson, *A guide for gentlemen studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh* (London, 1792), 74.
[40] Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That noble science of politics: A study in nineteenth-century intellectual history* (Cambridge, 1983), ch. 1; Charles Bradford Bow, *Dugald Stewart's Empire of the Mind: Moral Education in the Late Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2022).
[41] See Ian Stewart, 'Dugald Stewart and Racial Theory at the University of Edinburgh in the late Scottish Enlightenment' (forthcoming).
[42] William Hamilton (ed.), *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart* (11 vols., Edinburgh, 1854-60), VIII, p. xv.
[43] [Dugald Stewart], Josias Walker, 'Abbreviation's from Lectures on Moral Philosophy, Vol: II, 1778-9', EUL Gen 2023, f. 360.
[44] [Dugald Stewart], 'Abbreviation's', EUL Gen 2023, f. 360.

'very considerable' but explainable 'by the influences of Climate, situation, & soil.'[45] Here Stewart largely repeated Ferguson's section on race that combined Buffon and Montesquieu, surveying the 'six different races' of Mankind. Each race had a particular stature and physical features. Europeans stood between 5 and 6 feet, and generally had a 'Carnation complexion', while the 'Samoeide' peoples, 'the Eskimaux, Laplanders &c' were 'in general from 4 to 5 feet' in stature, with 'rigid skin' and an 'Olive' complexion. The 'civilisation' of these races matched their needs. The 'Samoeide' (Sami), for example, knew nothing of Arts or Science, but were 'skilful in hunting, & in the management of their instruments of War', while the Tartars – in line with their nomadic lifestyle in the pastoral stage – had 'riches…in live stock & in the breed of horses'.[46] These two early moral philosophy lecture sets reveal the two main strands that would come together in the racial theory that he put forth as Professor of Moral Philosophy after 1785: a reflection on slavery and Black Africans in particular, which would be placed within a wider focus on human races as a subject in natural history.

Stewart reformulated his lecture programme for the academic year 1789-90.[47] It was in the third, political, section of the course that Stewart included lectures on racial theory, which greatly expanded in these years as new information came to him. We have lecture notes surviving from the course of 1789-90, 1793-4, 1797-8, 1801-2, 1806-7, and 1808-9. Stewart was by this point much more interested in broader racial questions for their own sake, and positioned his lectures on the subject directly in relation to the larger philosophical and political questions of which race was now a part. The lectures were broken into four sections: the first addressed the question of particular temperaments, the second outlined the sixfold racial theory and the qualities of each particular race, before the third and fourth sections addressed the mono vs. polygenesis question, and whether climatic or moral causes had a greater impact on shaping characters, respectively. While the structure remained the same in Stewart's lectures on race, data was added and dropped (though this may also reflect the laziness or errors of student recorders), and sometimes shifted around to different sections. The lectures on race themselves also occasionally moved around, but because the subject was a 'digression…of so interesting a nature, in a course of Lectures on Moral Philosophy, it can scarcely be considered or misplaced anywhere.'[48] In other words, the question of race was so essential to moral philosophy and the political issues with which it was concerned that it could be fruitfully addressed anywhere in the course.

Stewart always began the racial portion of the lecture course with a discussion of the four 'temperaments' that stretched back to Galenic medical philosophy: sanguine, bilious, melancholy, and phlegmatic. He covered the theory fleetingly and seems to have included this first section to introduce his students to the ways that differences in character had previously been considered, but referred them all to UoE medical professor James Gregory's (1753-1821) *Conspectus medicinae theoreticae.*[49] In the second part of his lectures on race, Stewart moved onto the racial division of humanity. He maintained the six races of mankind, 'according to D^{r} Ferguson' (really Buffon), through all of his surviving lectures from 1790 through 1807, in

[45] [Dugald Stewart], Moral Philosophy Lectures, 20 November 1782, EUL MS 5835, ff. 10-11.
[46] [Dugald Stewart], Moral Philosophy Lectures, 20 November 1782, EUL MS 5835, ff. 12-13.
[47] Bow, *Dugald Stewart's Empire of the Mind*, 38-41.
[48] [Dugald Stewart], 'Notes from M^{r}. Stewart's Lectures on Moral Philosophy, read in the University of Edinburgh Winter 1801-2; Taken by James Bridges', EUL.Dc.5.88, 381.
[49] James Gregory, *Consepctus medicinae theoreticae* (3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1788), I, 519-21.

which the different races were aligned to axes of the civilizational scheme, with Europeans invariably at the top of the ladder.[50]

The longest portion of the lectures was devoted to discussion of Black Africans, in part because 'We are better acquainted with & so much more able to give a particular account of this last Race of Men viz. the Negroes than of the other Races', he said in 1790.[51] The unsavoury fact that the comparatively greater volume of information was because of the transoceanic trafficking and enslavement of African peoples either went unsaid by Stewart or unrecorded by all of the student note-takers. Stewart clarified that he would draw most of his information from 'anatomical observations'. In 1789 he repeated the theory – probably picked up from Jefferson – that Black skin was such because of a layer under the epidermis, and related also that 'The medullary part of the Brain & the Blood are also Black.'[52] However, though he repeated these lines, Stewart seems not to have been sure about them and in 1807 – by which time he was stressing natural African equality – he adduced the opinions of Thomas Winterbottom (1766-1859) that the blood of Africans was no blacker than that of Europeans.[53] Rather than the anatomical view, Stewart was always more interested in the question from the moral philosophical perspective, considering the features of Africans within the stadial scheme. This discussion followed a formula through the lectures in the 1790s: Stewart would repeat the information related by Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), which laid out many 'real distinctions nature has made' between Africans and Europeans, agree with Jefferson that Europeans were superior to Africans, but then reject the notion that this relationship was one truly made by nature.[54] Jefferson's infamous passage predicted a race war if the enslaved were freed and settled into American society, and built such political arguments on top of inherent 'physical and moral' differences. Of great interest here to Stewart were the intellectual differences, as related in the lectures of 1790: 'They are not capable of much Reflection & their intellectual powers are very Blunt…They are equal to us in memory, but much inferior in Judgement…Their imagination is languid.'[55] Stewart knew this was an 'unfavourable account…of this Race of Men', but at this stage he did not challenge Jefferson – he had no other information on which to draw – except on the major point that this situation arose 'from the unhappy situations in which we find them generally placed than from any natural defects…However inferior they are in these Respects which have been mentioned or however inferior they may be, many of them possess in an Eminent degree, good Moral Qualities'.

The other author from whom Stewart drew information on the subject was the Princeton theologian (and owner of enslaved people) Samuel Stanhope Smith (1751-1819).[56] An

[50] [Dugald Stewart], 'Lectures on Moral Philosophy delivered by Professor Dugald Stewart Session 1789 & 1790', EUL Gen 1987, np.
[51] [Stewart], EUL Gen 1987, np. Already in 1749 Buffon remarked that 'The origin of Blacks has at all times been a large question' [see Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*, III, 481]. For examinations see Philip Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison, WI, 1964); Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science & Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, 2011); Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Andrew S. Curran (eds.), *Who's Black and Why? A Hidden Chapter from the Eighteenth-Century Invention of Race* (Cambridge, MA., 2022).
[52] [Stewart], EUL Gen 1987, np.
[53] [Stewart], EUL Gen 843, 358. Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone* (London, 1803), 180-204.
[54] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London, 1787), 229.
[55] [Stewart], EUL Gen 1987, np.
[56] On Smith see William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59* (Chicago, 1960), 3-10; Silvia Sebastiani, 'Anthropology beyond Empires: Samuel Stanhope Smith and the Reconfiguration of the Atlantic World', in László Kontler, Antonella Romano, Silvia Sebastiani, and Borbála

American medical student (discussed further below) had edited Smith's text and published it in Edinburgh in 1788, this being the version of the book that Stewart owned.[57] Smith's overarching purpose in *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (1787) was to refute the theory of polygenesis, or the 'arbitrary hypothesis that men are originally sprung from different stocks, and are therefore divided by nature into different species.'[58] His main target was the Scottish judge Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), an Edinburgh powerbroker who argued in the second edition of his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774) that distinct races had been created and fitted for particular geographies and climates (like Hume's note, this was a point of debate within the UoE for the rest of the century). Smith argued that climate and the 'State of Society' along the civilizational scale were the two main factors that altered physical features. Stewart essentially repeated Smith's arguments:

> D[r] Smith of New Jersey is of opinion that the State of the Human Mind has considerable effects in this respect…He says that in several provinces of North America, the field Slaves, who live in Huts where their work is, who suffer hard treatment, & Live Remote from the Habitation of their Master, retain much longer the Manners & customs of the Native Africans, & are even slow in changing the aspect of the inhabitants in that Quarter of the Globe, whereas the Domestic Slaves, who live near their Masters persons, see more of polished life & are better informed, Change the aspect much sooner. Those who are thus civilized, get even a different shape of features from a different set of ideas occupying their minds. They acquire the European nose & mouth in a great degree & their face undergoes a considerable change. D[r] Smith numbers an Indian who was placed as a student at the University, where the D[r] was, at the age of 15 & who gradually as he advanced in his studies became more like even in Countenance to his fellow students, tho not so much so, as he w[d] have done had he been placed then at an Earlier period of Life.[59]

Simply being closer to their more civilised masters – whose manners and ideas they would apparently absorb and eventually seek to emulate – was thought to lead to a change in the physical appearance of some of the enslaved. Here it should just be emphasised that through the 1790s Stewart largely accepted the assertions of African inferiority by the enslavers Jefferson and Smith while tweaking them within his own overarching structure. Stewart ranged widely over these topics in the third and fourth sections of the lectures, in which he defended the monogenetic position – against Hume – that all races came from one source, and argued that the influences of climate and morals had played the main roles in differentiating them over time.

Stewart's racial theory was complicated. He adhered to the sixfold division of human races established by Buffon but largely divorced physical appearance from intellectual and moral character. He was at pains to stress that darker-skinned races, and Black Africans in particular, were not naturally inferior to Europeans. And yet, by using racial theory to undermine the justifications for slavery, Stewart ironically strengthened the idea and explanatory power of

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Zsuzsanna Török (eds.), *Negotiationg Knowledge in Early Modern Empires: A Decentred View* (New York, 2014), 207-33.

[57] EUL D.S.h.12.4.

[58] Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species. To which are added Strictures on Lord Kaims's Discourse, on the Original Diversity of Mankind* (Philadelphia, 1787), 1.

[59] [Stewart], 'Lectures on Moral Philosophy', EUL Gen 1987.

race. He also strengthened the civilisational scheme by mixing it with racial theory. Though considered mutable, Stewart identified great civilisational differences between societies, which allowed them to be arranged according to perceived civilisational refinement. Precisely because all humans were equally perfectible, it fell to those more advanced to help those lower down. This became the refrain of the nineteenth-century civilising mission and the basis of the utilitarian case in British India.[60]

Stewart's influence will be seen throughout the subsequent sections, but it is worth raising a suggestive example here of his impact. The future Prime Minister, Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston (1784-1864), studied with Stewart in the early 1800s to whom he later attributed 'whatever useful knowledge and habits of mind' he possessed.[61] His political thought bears a clear resemblance to Stewart's in such justifications for free trade 'that commerce may go freely forth, leading civilization with one hand, and peace with the other, to render mankind happier, wiser, better.'[62] The civilisational scale, with the highest stage of commerce, created implicit arguments for imperial paternalism.

Natural History: Rev. Dr John Walker

John Walker (1731-1803), alumnus of the UoE's Divinity School, was the Regius Professor of Natural History, located within the Edinburgh Medical School, from 1779 until 1803.[63] Matthew Eddy, Linda Andersson Burnett, and Bruce Buchan have all shown the influence on Walker of Linnaeus, who as discussed above was one of the first to taxonomise humans into distinct varieties, and who emphasised the necessity of gathering anatomical 'specimens' – physical remains of deceased people – from non-European peoples.[64] Lecture notes show Walker declaring that 'the system of the celebrated Linnaeus must be our guide in preference to all others. It is a system the best adapted to use, and the least discordant to nature.'[65] In line with his Linnaean foundations was therefore Walker's interest in debates about race.[66] He subscribed to a monogenist position, holding that 'alteration in external characters is at first produced by climate and manner of life, and afterwards entailed by habit upon our own species.'[67] These factors explained the differences he perceived in his vision of (idealised) Europeans compared to Africans:

> I know not of any two varieties in the human race more widely different than the fair-haired European and the Angola Negro. But I am certain that, upon the principles of Hippocrates, I can account for all the peculiarities in the aspect of the African. That the

[60] Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford, 1959); Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire.*
[61] David Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography* (New Haven, 2010), 16.
[62] *Hansard*, 3rd series, LX, c.619, 16 February 1842.
[63] For a biographical study see Matthew D. Eddy, *The Language of Mineralogy: John Walker, Chemistry and the Edinburgh Medical School* (Farnham, 2008).
[64] Eddy, *Language*, 27; Linda Andersson Burnett and Bruce Buchan, 'The Edinburgh connection: Linnaean natural history, Scottish moral philosophy and the colonial implications of Enlightenment thought', in Hanna Hodacs, Kenneth Nyberg, and Stéphane van Damme (eds.), *Linnaeus, Natural History and the Circulation of Knowledge* (Oxford, 2018), 161-186.
[65] John Walker, 'Lectures on Natural History', taken by Thomas Charles Hope during the winter of 1783?4, EUL Dc.2.17.
[66] Eddy, *Language*, 32-3; Amiria Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge, 2005), 78-9.
[67]Walker to Lord Kames, 18 February 1773, reprinted in Alexander Fraser-Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames* (Edinburgh, 1807), 23-37, quote at 31-2.

> difference in his hair proceeds from the climate; his splay-feet from the soil; and his colour, his flat face and features, and prominent belly, from his manner of life.[68]

Baked into Walker's understanding of racial differences, therefore, was also an implicit assumption of White aesthetic superiority. Manuscript notes on 'Mixture of the different Races of Mankind' list 10 varieties of humans found in Peru – 'Spaniards, Creolians, Negroes, Indians, Mulattos, Mestizos, Quartron Negroes, Quartron Indians, Sambo de Mulatto, Sambo de Indian' – show that he was interested in the effects of race-mixing in colonial societies.[69]

However, Walker's lengthiest treatment of race ideas appears in an essay on 'The Natural History of the Inhabitants of the Highlands', which was the particular geographical area of his expertise.[70] It was increasingly common in this era to conceive of the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders of Scotland as a separate 'Celtic' race to the dominant Lowland English and Scots speaking populations.[71] Walker considered the Highlanders 'aborigines' of Scotland derived from the ancient 'Celtae, the original natives of western Europe'. It must be said that negative conclusions were not drawn about Highlanders in the same way that they were about non-European races, but they were racialised all the same. Walker explained that the complexion of 'any race of men' changed over time, noting that the population of the 'Western Islands' was generally 'black; many indeed are of a dark brown', and explained their appearance as a result of climate, manners, and the lower level of civilization that prevailed there.

Walker kept the class lists of the over 700 students that he taught natural history between 1782 and 1800, among which are listed many figures who would advance racial theory themselves and will appear below.[72]

Medical School: The Monros

Several generations of the Monro family held the Chair in Surgery at UoE. The second and third of these, Alexander Munro Secundus (1733-1817) and Alexander Monro Tertius (1773-1859), both lectured on racial theories as part of their comparative anatomy courses. The Monros had helped to build up anatomical collections in the University, including numerous human skulls, for which they were known around Europe. Monro Secundus promised to help procure eight Highland skulls for the Göttingen anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), one of the most influential racial theorists in Europe.[73] Monro explained that this was a difficult thing to accomplish because Highlanders were very 'superstitious', but that a Highland regiment was quartered in Edinburgh at the time and might provide the desired specimens. This example shows, like that of John Walker, that the Gaelic Highlanders were racialised along with the rest of the humanity.

Alexander Tertius wrote that he had collected skulls of different nations because he had been impressed by the importance of the subject as related by Edinburgh alumni such as Prichard,

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[68] Walker to Lord Kames, 18 February 1773, in Tytler, *Memoirs*, 33.
[69] John Walker, 'Mixture of the different Races of Mankind', EUL, Dc.2.39, f. 155r.
[70] John Walker, *Essays on Natural History and Rural Economy* (London and Edinburgh, 1812), 93-110; John Walker, 'Natural history of the inhabitants of the Highlands', Walker Papers, Dc.1.18 EUL.
[71] Colin Kidd, 'Teutonist Ethnology and Scottish Nationalist Inhibition, 1780-1880', *Scottish Historical Review* 74 (1995), 45-68; Ian Stewart, *The Celts: A Modern History* (Princeton, 2025).
[72] Matthew Eddy, 'The University of Edinburgh Natural History Class Lists, 1782-1800', *Archives of natural history* 30 (2003), 97-117.
[73] Norbert Klatt (ed.), *Brosamen zur Blumenbach-Forschung* 7 (2015), 260-61.

Barton, and Morton (all discussed below).[74] Secundus and Tertius together lectured with skulls on racial theories. Lecture notes from 1801-2, show that they lectured according to the facial angle established by the Dutch physician Petrus Camper (1722-1789), in which the 'gradation' was supposed to accord with beauty and intelligence: 'I set before you in the order of Gradation the skulls of different countries; European or Grecian, Asiatic; Negro, very white colour being confined to the rete mucosum; the Carib, whose skull is depressed and distorted by the practice of lying sand on the forehead of the infants head.'[75] Tertius later wrote that he had lectured 'that the Negro skull, and consequently the brain, is smaller than that of the European, an opinion still held by different medical gentlemen who have resided in the West Indies, or our different settlements on the coast of Africa.'[76] The implication here was that smaller brain size meant less intelligence.

Natural History: Robert Jameson

Robert Jameson (1774-1854) took over the Chair of Natural History from John Walker in 1804, having studied with him at UoE in 1792-93. Although Jameson's interests lay primarily in geology, he gave a wide-ranging lecture course on natural history to UoE students, which was very popular, with about 400 students taking it a year.[77] Within this Jameson included a hierarchical racial scheme emphasising brain size and intelligence.

Jameson taught a monogenetic natural history of five human races, influenced by figures like Buffon and Blumenbach.[78] The 'Caucasan' was the original type from which the other four, 'Mongol, Malay, American, Negro' degenerated. This was rendered in hierarchical form with the 'Caucasan' at the top of a pyramid, with the 'Mongol' and 'Malay' races forming an intermediate step and the 'American' and 'Negro' at the bottom level.[79] Another set of lectures from the academic year 1816-17 show that Jameson thought these racial distinctions were directly related to intelligence: 'The Differences existing between these various races are very great. For example the Brain is most developed in the Caucasan and in the Negro least of all.'[80] Figure 1 shows a sketch 'made to represent the comparative development of the brain in the difference races', illustrating the relative size of the brain according to Jameson's racial pyramid.

[74] Alexander Monro, 'Memoir of Alexander Monro Secundus', in Alexander Munro, *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, and Surgery* (Edinburgh, 1840).
[75] 'An Edinburgh Students Notebook. Lectures on Anatomy and Surgery by Alex Muonro (Secundus) and possibly by Alexander 'Tertius', Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh, 31.
[76] Monro, 'Memoir', c-ci.
[77] Thomas Brown to Henry Dundas-Melville, 24 May 1819, Wellcome Collection, Robert Saunders-Dundas collection, MS. 5122
[78] [Robert Jameson], 'Sketches of Lectures on Natural History', EUL MS Dc.10.32: 'on the whole Buffon's and Blumenbach's divisions may easily be made to harmonize.'
[79] Robert Jameson Natural History Lectures EUL, CC-BY.
[80] [Robert Jameson], 'Sketches of Lectures on Natural History', EUL MS Dc.10.32.

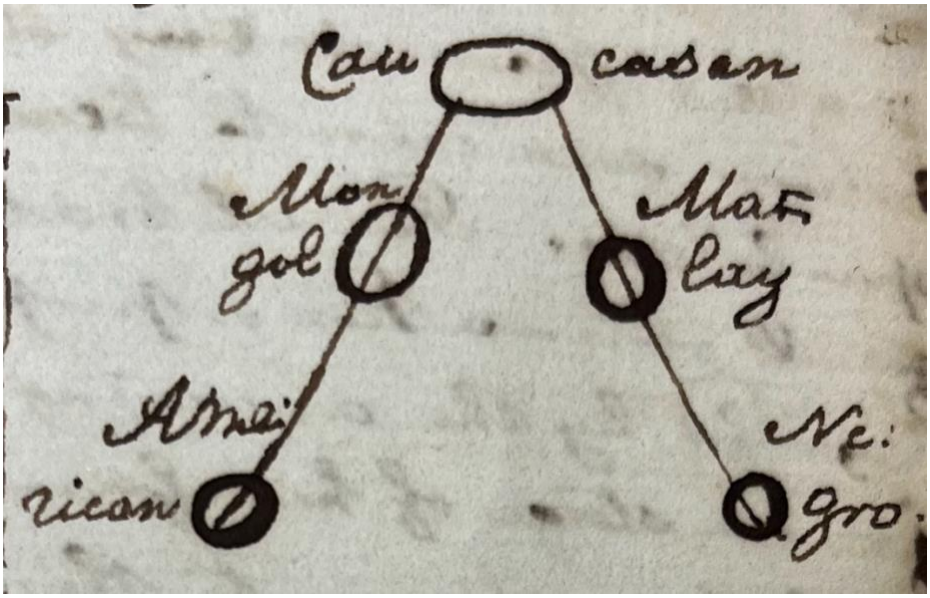

Figure 1, ‘‘Sketch…made to represent the comparative development of the brain in different races’, in ‘Sketches of Lectures on Natural History’, EUL, MS Dc.10.32.

Along with these observations, Jameson listed the qualities ascribed to these particular races and noted in one set that ‘Negroes smell particularly offensively.’ In a later set of lectures a student also noted explicit assumptions of white aesthetic superiority (bearing a resemblance to Camper’s theories): ‘At one extremity of the scale of Form is the Grecian, the most perfect. & at the other extremity some of the Negro Race, the least perfect. Europeans are the strongest. Savages the weakest Race.’[81] Elsewhere Jameson noted some ‘degraded habits in regard to food which exist among some nations. Thus Negroes in the West Indies & some South American tribes are very much addicted to the eating of clay. The same practice prevails too among the Malays.’[82] He neglected to note the Edinburgh alumnus John Hunter’s observation in Jamaica that enslaved people were said to ‘eat dirt’ out of ‘discontent with their present situation, and a desire of death in order to return to their own country, for they are well aware that it will infallibly destroy them.’[83] In other words, Jameson turned desperate suicide attempts into another proof of the inferiority of non-White races.

The Natural History Museum

John Walker and Robert Jameson were, during their respective tenures of the Natural History Chair, also in charge of the University’s Natural History Museum.[84] Created in 1697, the Museum was built up over the years by Edinburgh professors and students, many of whom sent back material – including human remains, from all over the world.[85] A recent wave of studies have examined European museums in this era as embedded in and shaped by European

[81] [Robert Jameson], ‘Notes from Lectures on Natural History delivered in the Edinburgh University by Professor James during the winter of 1830-31’, Wellcome Collection, MS. 3358.
[82] Robert Jameson], ‘Sketches of Lectures on Natural History’, EUL MS Dc.10.32.
[83] John Hunter, *Observations on the Disease of the Army in Jamaica* (London, 1788), 310-11.
[84] Anand C. Chitnis, ‘The University of Edinburgh’s Natural History Museum and the Huttonian-Wernerian Debate’, *Annals of Science* 26 (1970), 85-94; Charles WJ Withers, ‘“Both Useful and Ornamental”: John Walker’s keepership of Edinburgh University’s Natural History Museum, 1779-1803’, *Journal of the History of Collections* 5 (1993), 65-77.
[85] Linda Andersson Burnett, ‘Collecting humanity in the age of Enlightenment: The Hudson’s Bay Company and Edinburgh University’s natural history museum’, *Global Intellectual History* (2022), 6.

colonialism, a pattern into which the UoE fits snugly.[86] Among other natural specimens, ethnographical material was valued for the evidence it provided of 'savage nations'.[87] It is difficult to trace with certainty material in the museum from its donation down to the present day, because imperfect preservation practices meant material decayed and had to be thrown out, and parts of the collection were sold off at various times.

In addition to the many materials sent back to Edinburgh from abroad, the Museum's collections also came from other sources such as Monro Secundus, various professors, and travellers.[88] Under Jameson's tenure the museum expanded dramatically. Jameson later wrote that after he took it over in 1804 the collections were just 'specimens…of birds, serpents, minerals and dresses and weapons of savage nations.'

The University's Principals carefully cultivated the museum.[89] Principal George Baird (1761-1840; principal, 1793-1840) promoted the Museum to powerful patrons such as the manager of Scottish interests Robert Saunders-Dundas (1771-1851), a UoE alumnus. Among many other things, as part of his duties at the Admiralty, Dundas was responsible for organising scientific voyages of exploration to the North Pole and Australia, and Baird repeatedly reminded him of the Museum's need for specimens.[90] Robert Jameson had drawn up special instructions for travellers to guide them in the collection of specimens. Among these, it was requested that skeletons, including those of humans be included:

> Of man, the skull is the most interesting part, as it varies in the different races of the human species, and is also frequently singularly altered by the practices of savage tribes. The best way of cleaning bones, is to expose them to the air, and allow the insects to eat off the flesh. This being done, they ought to be washed with sea water, and afterwards freely exposed to the sun. The best skulls are obtained by putting the whole head in rum or whisky, or a strong solutions of alum; and both male and female heads ought if possible to be preserved.[91]

Baird sent these instructions to Dundas to pass on to his captains on at least two occasions. Baird also liaised with East India Company directors in order to acquire duplications from its museum in London.[92] It is clear that professors taught with Museum materials.[93]

Edinburgh Student Societies and Dissertations

Students at the UoE during this period were intensely interested in ideas of race (unsurprisingly, given the emphasis on race by their teachers).[94] They hosted debates about the subject in various clubs and devised their own racial theories in essays and dissertations.

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[86] See, e.g., Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*.
[87] Andersson Burnett, 'Collecting humanity', 395.
[88] Alexander Monro (Secundus) to Robert Saunders-Dundas, 16 September 1808, Wellcome Collection MS. 5122; Withers, '"Both Useful and Ornamental"', 68.
[89] Withers', '"Both Useful and Ornamental"', 66.
[90] Baird to Dundas-Melville, 11 Nov 1820, Wellcome Collection, Robert Saunders-Dundas collection, MS. 5122
[91] Jessie M. Sweet, 'Instructions to Collectors: John Walker (1793) and Robert Jameson (1817); with Biographical Notes on James Anderson (LL.D.) and James Anderson (M.D.)', *Annals of Science* 29 (1972), 397-414, at 403.
[92] Baird to Melville, 6 Feb 1821, Wellcome Collection, Robert Saunders-Dundas collection, MS. 5122.
[93] Sir William Turner, 'Address', *The Museums Journal* 1 (1902), 11-12 (of 7-23).
[94] Bill Jenkins, 'Race before Darwin: Variation, adaptation and the natural history of man in post-Enlightenment Edinburgh, 1790-1835', *British Journal for the History of Science* 53 (2020), 333-50; Colin Kidd, 'Medicine,

The most famous of the student societies was the Royal Medical Society (RMS). Founded in 1737, the Society was given a Royal Charter in 1778. Bill Jenkins explains that, of the surviving dissertations from the period 1790-1835, one-third were devoted to philosophical subjects, and of these, race was the second most popular topic addressed.[95] Racial theories were discussed in dissertations read to the RMS at least once, and often twice or more, a year over this period. Historians have examined these in detail and shown that the overarching question debated was the mono-vs-polygenesis question, and that students tended to favour the monogenetic explanation. However, it is worth stressing again that monogenetic opinions existed easily alongside Eurocentric racism. My own reading of these dissertations shows that they often simply regurgitated the arguments of Samuel Stanhope Smith or, less often, those of Lord Kames (in some cases simply plagiarising large passages). Climate and stage of society were the prevailing explanations for racial difference, and again normative Eurocentric assumptions underpin the logic of the RMS dissertations.[96]

Intelligence was a noticeable topic of interest in the RMS dissertations. Writing in the academic year 1790-91, James Buchan favoured the climatic and moral explanations of human difference but nevertheless seemed to agree with David Hume about the inferiority of non-white peoples:

> …who would not, at first, suppose the Negroe & European to be of different species?...An author of great acuteness has brought several arguments to prove that the blacks are naturally of an inferior capacity to white people. These are well founded on the supposition that there never appeared any individuals of great learning, or nations in a highly civilized state. As to the last of these assertions, I believe there can be very few, if any, exceptions, adduced; and although, in some cases, individuals have been found capable of learning, yet this only shows, that education, in some cases can counteract a natural bias. At any rate, it is argued, that, in general, both they and the Esquimaux & other inhabitants of very cold regions, are inferior to those that live in more temperate climes.[97]

Richard H. Dyett (1789-1839) addressed the issue of supposed natural differences in intellectual ability directly, arguing that any differences arose through the influence of 'manners and customs, of differences of education'. Hume again seems to be the reference point: 'It is contended by some Authors, that the native of Africa affords a fair instance, not only of inferiority of species, but of inferiority of Intellect.' Among those writers who 'have tended widely to disseminate the pernicious doctrine of European intellectual superiority, we must give the highest place to Mr. Jefferson and Principal Robertson.'[98] But he also mentioned travel writers who 'almost unanimously declared it as their opinion, that the Africans are a race of beings, who appear greatly inferior in intellectual qualifications to the Europeans.' Dyett rejected this opinion strenuously and attributed it to European prejudice; however, his explanation was still grounded in European civilizational superiority:

Race, and Radicalism in the Later Scottish Enlightenment', in Margaret Pelling and Scott Mandelbrote (eds.), *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science, 1500-2000* (Aldershot, 2005); Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 100-105.

[95] Jenkins, 'Race before Darwin', 359.

[96] Jenkins, 'Race before Darwin', 342.

[97] James Buchan, 'Whether are Moral and Physical causes sufficient to account for the varieties which occur in the Human Species?', Royal Medical Society Dissertations, Vol. 26 (1790-91), 310-311, 317.

[98] Richard H. Dyett, 'Is there any original difference of Intellectual Ability amongst Mankind?', RMS Dissertations, Vol. 58 (1807-07), 231.

> We well know that it is morally impossible, that Africa should be at present a civilized nation. Never having been professed of any opportunities of improvement, of which its customs and manners, but especially its remoteness from a civilized country, will not allow…the mind of the African is not originally differently organized from that of the European, but could be expanded and elevated were it possessed of the advantages of culture and civilization.[99]

According to Dyett, Africa nevertheless remained barbarous and needed to be civilized. One wonders how Dyett's seemingly genuine impassioned argument for the inherent equality and perfectibility of all peoples squares with the fact that he came from a prominent plantation family in the Leeward Islands and was awarded compensation by the government when the enslaved people on it were emancipated in 1834.[100]

At the same time as RMS members were delivering papers investigating racial theories, their peers in the Royal Physical Society were doing the same. The same patterns prevail in these essays as in the RMS dissertations, with a clear preference for monogenism. The American Samuel Cramer (1779-1840), for example, wrote that the 'White man [is] the source from whence all the varieties sprang', and that other races had degenerated from this ideal type: 'these changes which the African, the Asiatic, or the American undergo are but accidental deformities, which a kinder climate, better nourishment, or more civilized manners would in due course of time very probably remove.'[101] He argued that as a result of civilization and knowledge, white women were more beautiful than women of other races.[102]

Another location for student racial debate at the time was the Natural History Society of Edinburgh, founded in 1782.[103] Its 'Objects of Investigation shall be Natural History and Chemistry', and within this remit several students presented papers on 'racial' subjects. Robert Carey Mitchell gave a paper 'On the Varieties of Colour of the Human Species';[104] Alex Macpherson gave a paper of the same title;[105] the future famous chemist Thomas Beddoes read a paper 'On the Chain of Beings' (Beddoes would later become known for performing experiments trying to whiten Black skin and hair with acids); Richard Millar presented 'On the variety of the Human Species';[106] George Archer 'On the varieties of the Human Race';[107] John Gagahan 'On the Natural History of Man';[108] Malachi Blake 'On the Varieties of the Human Species';[109] and John Bradley 'On the Varieties of the Human Species' again.[110] The Natural History Society ceased to operate around the turn of the century; however, when a similar 'Plinian Society' of Natural History was begun in 1823, these subjects continued to occupy it.[111]

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[99] Dyett, 'Original Difference', 228, 236.
[100] *Dyett of Montserrat* (London, 1915), 6; 'Richard Henry Dyett', in *Legacies of British Slavery* database, online at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/24894.
[101] Samuel Cramer, 'What influence has Climate on the Human Constitution?', Royal Physical Society Dissertations, EUL DA.67 Phys, Vol 19 (1798-1800), 488.
[102] Cramer, 'What influence has Climate on the Human Constitution?', 484.
[103] Douglas McKie, 'Some Notes on a Students' Scientific Society in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh', *Science Progress* 49 (1961), 228-41.
[104] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, III, p. 49.
[105] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, IV, p. 60
[106] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, IV, 161.
[107] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, V, 17.
[108] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, VIII, 95.
[109] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, X, 234.
[110] Natural History Society Papers, EUL, XI, 11.
[111] Plinian Natural History Society Minutes, 2 vols., EUL Dc.2.53.

Race was also debated by groups beyond the medical and scientific groups, such as the Speculative Society, one of the more prestigious student societies founded by William Robertson and other luminaries. Edinburgh MD John Aitken (?-1790) delivered a paper there on the subject 'Has all the Human race sprung from one Man?', before John Vivian of Claverton (1756-1828) discussed the 'Varieties of the Human Race', while in 1808-9 two members asked 'Are the effects of climate sufficient to account for the varieties of the human race?'[112]

Many of the papers presented to these societies – especially the Royal Medical Society – formed the basis for MD dissertations and later published works. One of the earliest and most influential dissertations on the subject was written by John Hunter (1754-1809) and published in 1775 as *De Hominum Varietatibus et harum causis*. Hunter's dissertation was referenced throughout James Cowles Prichard's Royal Medical Society dissertation, which became his MD Dissertation of 1808, and in turn expanded into his *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (1813). Nicholas Pitta argued – similarly to Smith and Prichard – that dark skin colour was 'corrected by a state of civilization', and in the book he later published on the subject he argued that 'The small progress of negroes in the study of the sciences and in civilization…the form of their head, which is in a medium between the European and Orang-outang' were among the 'proofs of physical and mental inferiority' but did not justify their enslavement.[113]

The young Charles Darwin studied medicine at the UoE between 1825 and 1827, and it has been emphasised by his biographers the impact that debates such as these had upon his work.[114] While Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection completely exploded the polygenesis theory, in many ways it strengthened the argument for racial differences as determined by civilization, categories he himself deployed in his *The Descent of Man* (1871). Although he did not think that there were inherent differences between human races, in that book Darwin spoke frequently about racial differences that had arisen over time; his arguments resemble in many ways his predecessors of the late Enlightenment period. Some passages of such as the natural 'competition of tribe with tribe, and race with race' helped to shape the process of 'Social Darwinism' described by contemporary social theorists.

India: the UoE and the East India Company

It is well-known that, after its own seventeenth-century commercial ventures floundered, Scotland benefitted greatly from the British Empire and that Scots disproportionately populated the East India Company (EIC).[115] This occurred for various structural reasons, such as that an EIC career seemed to offer the promise of fortune to talented sons of proud but cash-poor Scottish noble families. There were also political reasons, such as that the UoE alumnus and student of Ferguson, Henry Dundas (1742-1811), was President of the Board of Control (of the East India Company) for most of the 1790s, and favoured the appointment of his countrymen to careers with the Company. Yet one hitherto unrealised factor relevant to this report is that

[112] *History of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1845), 113, 129, 402.
[113] Nicholas Pitta, 'What is the influence of climate on the human species? And what are the varieties of men which result from it?', RMS Dissertations, Vol. 66 (1811-12), 283-307; Nicholas Pitta, *Treatise on the Influence of Climate on the Human Species* (London, 1812), 32.
[114] Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (London, 2009), 27.
[115] G.J. Bryant, 'Scots in India in the Eighteenth Century', *SHR* 64 (1985), 22-41; George K. McGilvary, *East India Patronage and the British State: The Scottish Elite and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2008); George K. McGilvary, 'The Scottish Connection with India, 1725-1833', *Études ecossaises* 14 (2011), 13-31.

the UoE professoriate actively promoted their students for careers in the EIC. Both the institution and several individual professors profited from this relationship in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

One of the most significant figures in this nexus was John Macpherson (1765-1821) who studied in the Divinity School in the mid 1760s and eventually rose to become the second (interim) Governor-General of Bengal. He became a close friend of Adam Ferguson and the circle of 'Moderate' literati who dominated intellectual life in the town and at the UoE, including the Professor Hugh Blair (1718-1800) and the Principal William Robertson.[116] Macpherson later wrote that this circle had encouraged him to pursue a career in the East 'for the sake of Information', because 'the History of [Robert] Orme [1728-1801] had pointed out the subject of India as interesting to their Reflections as the Battle of Fingal.'[117] In other words, because they envisioned useful knowledge being produced, which we now understand were shaped by the patterns of 'Orientalism'.[118]

Financial benefit was also evidently a factor. Ferguson and Macpherson discussed the issue of wealth transfer in their letters, which show that Ferguson essentially endorsed private wealth transfer 'from India to Europe':

> I shd be sorry if any thing be done [to] hinder The Companys Servants from acquiring fortunes in an Innocent way Abroad for after all that has been said this I believe to be the likeliest way of bringing wealth from India to Europe. The State I hope will leave the Company in all matters to Govern itself, & it will be wise in any Minister to leave them accountable for what happens there but it will be allowable likewise to squeeze them to the last farthing they can pay in consistence with that Interest they ought to have as trade to manage their aff[airs].[119]

Macpherson, who at several points affirmed himself Ferguson's disciple, wrote that the 'system' he adopted as Governor-General of the East India Company

> pours in upon Britain more streams of friendship and of aid, which every officer, civil and military, in these colonies wishes to send partially to his relations, and which, in the general remittance and receipt, give the British heart on this and your side of the ocean its most delightful exercises, and which gladden every village and place, from the cottages of the Isles of Skye to the palaces of London.[120]

In other words, Ferguson wrote that private individuals should acquire fortunes – thereby avoiding the state's entanglement with the company – and enrich Britain, and Macpherson confirmed that his tenure effectively ensured this, and was proud of the material benefit to Britain. Adam Ferguson was one of those to receive such a gift, from Macpherson himself:

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[116] See Ian Stewart, 'Adam Ferguson, Sir John Macpherson and the French Revolution: New Evidence and Perspectives', *Scottish Historical Review* CII (2023), 367-393.
[117] Draft of a letter from Macpherson to Ferguson, BL MSS EUR F291/172, f.16r; BL MSS EUR F291/102, f. 7v. Robert Orme was the author of *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, From the Year MDCCXLV* (London, 1763).
[118] The classic formulation is Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978).
[119] Vincenzo Merolle (ed.), *The Correspondence of Adam Ferguson* (2 vols., London, 1995), I, 99.
[120] Merolle, *Correspondence*, II, 315.

> I received your Letters & Duplicate of the months of Ja^{nry} & Feb^{ry} 1786 inclosing a first and second Draft on the India Company for £1000 as also in the form of postscript a first & second order on Ja^{s} M^{c}Pherson Esqr for £100.[121]

This is the equivalent of well over £200,000 in today's currency, which Ferguson used to pay off the feu-duties on the farm he had recently purchased. Macpherson also served as a go-between for other UoE Professors who sought careers for their family and friends in the Company. In addition to Ferguson, these included William Cullen (1710-1790), Joseph Black (1728-1799), and William Robertson (1721-1793). EUL records show that Black was also an investor in the EIC.

There was a noticeable increase in interest in India among the next generation of Edinburgh professors and students, particularly those taught by Dugald Stewart.[122] It is clear that UoE alumni who arrived in India applied the stadial model to the peoples and cultures they encountered there. This was particularly noticeable in theories of language, in which it was thought that a language's development would mirror the progress of human society up the civilisational scale, becoming more refined as society became more polished. In India, James Mackintosh (1765-1832), who studied moral philosophy with Stewart in the 1780s and was a classmate of Benjamin Smith Barton, provided the focal point with his *Plan of a Comparative Vocabulary of Indian Languages* on 26 May 1806.[123] His main aim was to use linguistic comparison to determine the ethnological relationships between the different peoples under British governance. Surveying the languages of South Asia would 'furnish certain means of determining their affinity and filiation'.[124] As rulers of most of India, Mackintosh conceived of it as Britain's duty to perform the task:

> from similarity of idiom and from local convenience, the languages of *India* become the proper province of the *British* nation. By *Indian* languages are meant, those spoken by that race of men, of which the great majority professes the Braminical religion, and which inhabits the country extending from the *Indus* to the *Burrampooter*, and from the northern mountains to *Cape Comorin*… All the *Indian* languages hitherto explored have a large mixture of *Sanscrit*; but in what relation they stand to that ancient and celebrated tongue, is a matter which has not yet been determined, and which indeed cannot be determined, without a more exact comparison than has yet been laid before the public.[125]

In other words, the point was to figure out whether all Indian languages came from the same source – Sanskrit – with the implication that all Indians would all belong to the same ethnicity, or whether, as the case turned out, there were languages genetically unrelated to Sanskrit that had 'borrowed' much of its vocabulary. In this instance it was particularly desired for those who undertook the project to 'note with more than ordinary care the speech of any tribes of men uncivilized, or in other respects different from the Hindoo race, whose language is most likely to deviate from the general standard.'[126] Tracing these linguistic relationships was therefore a racial classification project.

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[121] British Library, MSS EUR F291/97, ff. 14r-17v.
[122] Jane Rendall, 'Scottish Orientalism: From Robertson to James Mill', *Historical Journal* 25 (1982), 43-69.
[123] James Mackintosh, *Plan of a Comparative Vocabulary of Indian Languages: Read at the Literary Society of Bombay, On the 26th May, 1806* (Bombay, 1806). This was reprinted at the Hindoostanee Press in Calcutta in 1808. On Mackintosh's intellectual interests in India see Jane Rendall, 'The Political Activities of Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832): a study of Whiggism between 1789 and 1832', unpublished PhD Thesis (UCL, 1972).
[124] Mackintosh, *Plan*, 3.
[125] Mackintosh, *Plan*, 6.
[126] Mackintosh, *Plan*, 10.

As it turned out, most of those who undertook Mackintosh's project of collecting the languages of India were not only Scots but alumni of the UoE, and many of them had passed through the classroom of Dugald Stewart and John Walker.[127] One of the main figures in furthering Mackintosh's project was John Leyden (1775-1811), who studied Divinity at Edinburgh in the 1790s and took Stewart's lectures. Leyden had published a synthetic history of European travels in Africa, which was organised according to stadial principles. Securing a position as a doctor in the EIC, Leyden travelled to India in 1803 and set about learning languages on his arrival. He had the same ethnological purposes in mind as Mackintosh, *viz*. determining the affiliations of languages and the populations that spoke them. Leyden also thought of languages as capable of illustrating the mind of supposedly less developed peoples lower down on the civilizational scale: 'I have been thus particular in specifying the languages or dialects of those rude tribes with whom I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted, because of all the monuments of rude and savage men the language is the most interesting and instructive as characterizing best their natural state and habits and affording as it were a natural scale of their feelings and ideas.'[128] Language study was therefore not only useful for ethnological purposes, but for the philosophy of mind in illustrating the mental development of 'savage men'. He produced various works before his death in 1811, all according to stadial principles.[129]

Another respondent to James Mackintosh's call for Indian vocabularies was a lieutenant in the 11th Bengal Native Infantry named Francis Irvine (1785-1855). Irvine studied at the UoE between 1802 and 1804, where in the winter of 1802-3 he took Stewart's course on political economy.[130] Educated by Stewart, and very well read in Enlightenment social theory, Irvine was particularly interested in the social dynamics of savagery, barbarism, and civilisation, and would devote great attention to them in India. Stewart played an important role in getting him there. On 4 January 1804 he wrote to his father that he had had

> a conversation of considerable length with Dugald Stewart. He approved highly of my intentions to prosecute literary enquiries in India. I having explained to him my projects, & the path which I purposed to tread, he told me that he thought I had made a far preferable choice to many other oriental scholars who had wasted extraordinary powers in vain & upon unprofitable researches, & that I would find few rivals in this pursuit. He had no time to write letters, but bid me mention my name to his son Lieutenant Stewart should I go to Woolwich, & in case I was appointed on the Bombay establishment, he desires me to introduce myself in the same manner to his friend Sir James Macintosh who is at present recorder there.[131]

This passage is a window into the network centred around the UoE, where young men were educated for imperial careers and promoted by their professors. Irvine procured many vocabulary samples for Mackintosh, characterising the difficulties faced as 'the stupidity of the informant defeats the most pertinacious enquiry, & some times his pedantry…'[132] However,

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[127] Rendall, 'Scottish Orientalism'. For an overview of these Scots and their efforts see Ian Stewart, 'The First Linguistic Survey of India, c.1806-c.1811' (forthcoming).
[128] BL Add MS 26564, f. 19v.
[129] See I. M. Brown, "John Leyden (1775–1811): His Life and Works" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1967)' for many examples of the Eurocentrism that underpinned Leyden's thought and output.
[130] Francis Irvine to Alexander Irvine, 23 December 1802, BL, IOR, MSS PHOTO EUR 355. These are photocopies of letters sold through Bonham's and apart from the first five sheets are not paginated.
[131] Francis Irvine to Alexander Irvine, 3 January 1804, BL, IOR, MSS PHOTO EUR 355.
[132] Francis Irvine to James Mackintosh, 10 August 1807, BL Add Ms 26605, ff. 33v-34r.

after a few years Irvine abandoned the linguistic project (never realised by Mackintosh) and moved onto a much larger work still more reflective of the themes of his UoE education.

Having taken Stewart's political economy course – the first of its kind in Britain – Irvine sought to apply its lessons and produce the first political economy of India. He wrote to the governor-general of India, Lord Minto (1741-1814), yet another UoE alumnus who took Stewart's lectures and then later appointed his son as his aide-de-camp,[133] 'The object of my work, as far as theoretical, is to show that legislation can work greater changes upon the structure of civil society than the moderns have acknowledged; and as far as practical, to point out what I conceive enterprizing and judicious legislation can do for India.'[134] His aim, therefore, was to 'civilize' India by applying the principles of political economy that he learned at UoE and through his reading of other Enlightenment figures to India through British governance: 'I have not the smallest doubt…that any country whatsoever (even Negroland), may be civilized without colonization.'[135] Essentially, Irvine aimed to set up a system of secure private property and make the land more productive, and although his intended magnum opus was patronised by the Company, funding was withdrawn after he failed to produce much after a couple years.

Another prominent 'Scottish Orientalist', John Crawfurd (1783-1868), studied medicine at Edinburgh from 1799 to 1803, before joining the EIC. In South Asia he helped in the conquest of large parts of what is now known as the East Indian Archipelago, which formed the subject of his major work that is shot through with comments on race and civilization, with comparisons drawn to Europe and the rest of the world:

> The *brown* and *negro* races of the Archipelago may be considered to present, in their physical and moral character a complete parallel with the white and negro races of the western world. The first have always displayed as eminent a relative superiority over the second as the race of white men have done over the negroes of the west. All the indigenous civilization of the Archipelago has sprung from them, and the negro race is constantly found in the most savage state.[136]

James Mill (1773-1836), a student of Dugald Stewart and classmate of John Leyden in the 1790s, made his name as a critic of the East India Company. In an early essay he argued explicitly for European colonisation of India because he feared the alternative was the rise of a mixed-race class who could not be trusted:

> In estimating the chances of good or of evil which may arise from this or that mixture in the population of Hindustan, there is one race which has hitherto been most unaccountably overlooked; we mean, the children of the Europeans by native women. This is a population which is rapidly increasing, and which, though hitherto little heeded, must one day, unless precautions are taken, make itself be dreadfully felt. Its character and future influence, it would require too many words here to explain…And is not this colonization far more imminent, and of far more doubtful promise, than that by natives from Europe?[137]

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[133] Bow, *Dugald Stewart's Empire of the Mind*, 119.
[134] Francis Irvine Papers, NLS, MS 11727, 17v.
[135] Francis Irvine Papers, NLS, MS 11727, 18r.
[136] John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago* (3 vols., London, 1820), I, 18.
[137] James Mill, 'On the Affairs of India', *Edinburgh Review* (1810), 127-157.

But Mill also produced the major history of British India that would shape British views for much of the century. Although it was already present in the thought of, for example Francis Irvine, Mill's work more than anything else signals the shift to utilitarianism and the civilizing mission that took place in British thought about its empire.[138] He spelled out extremely clearly the stadial principles underpinning the work: 'it is from an accurate comparison, grounded on these general views, that a scale of civilization can be formed, on which the relative position of nations may be accurately marked.'[139] 'Exactly in proportion as *Utility* is the object of every pursuit, may we refer to a nation as civilized', but as it stood utility was not the object of many pursuits in India. India had always been easily conquered, wrote Mill, because its inhabitants were not civilized enough to organise a defence. 'Of all the results of civilization, that of forming a combination of different states, and directing their powers to one common object, seems to be one of the least consistent with the mental habits and attainments of the Hindus. It is the want of this power of combination which has rendered India so easy a conquest to all invaders; and enables us to retain, so easily, that dominion over it which we have acquired.' In the notes to this passage Mill wrote that the 'Hindu character' was therefore nowhere 'far removed from that of the savage state.'[140] Complicating the problem, according to Mill, was the 'listless apathy and corporeal weakness which so remarkably distinguish the natives of Hindustan', which continued long after it should have because of their 'wretched government'. The explicit argument throughout the work, and throughout Mill's tenure as an employee of the EIC, was that enlightened British government would eventually cure such problems.[141] His book became the textbook history for students at the EIC college at Haileybury, where they received a crash course in Indian history, society, and political economy before heading east.

Drawing on Mill's work, Dugald Stewart ventured into early Indian history in an essay written in the last decade of his life.[142] Essentially he argued that Sanskrit was *not* related to Greek and the European languages (it is and had already been shown to be so when Stewart was writing), and that Brahmins who encountered Alexander the Great's Greek-speaking army had adapted the elegance of Greek grammar onto their vernaculars. Stewart had always in his lectures included a section on the use of linguistic comparison to prove ethnic affiliation, and noted that opponents of 'a diversity of races' (i.e. polygenism) have sought to prove consanguinity 'from the similarity in the structure of the languages of nations as far as we know totally unconnected with one another.'[143] So Stewart would have known that by severing the Indo-European link between Sanskrit and Greek he was not only robbing Sanskrit of its high reputation as a sophisticated, refined classical language, but also that the racial implication was that Britons were not related to Indians – as held in the Indo-European idea – and instead governed a separate race.

America

The notoriety of the Medical School in particular attracted students from across the British Atlantic World, including many young Americans.[144] Historians have recently shown that significant early American thinkers, many of whom are recognised as 'founding fathers', were

[138] Stokes, *Utilitarians and India*; Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's* The History of British India *and Orientalism* (Oxford, 1992).
[139] James Mill, *The History of British India* (3 vols., London, 1817), I, 431.
[140] Mill, *The History of British India*, I, 460.
[141] Mill, *The History of British India*, I, 314.
[142] Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, IV, 78–105, esp. 95–97.
[143] [Stewart], 'Notes from M[r]. Stewart's Lectures', EUL.Dc.5.88.
[144] Lisa Rosner, 'Thistle on the Delaware: Edinburgh Medical Education and Philadelphia Practice, 1800-1825', *Social History of Medicine* 5 (1992), 19-42.

influenced by Scottish philosophy, including by ideas being generated by thinkers at the UoE.[145] As noted briefly above, UoE professors and students were also influenced by American observers and enslavers. This section outlines the Trans-Atlantic epistemological network built up around ideas of race and civilisation.

William Robertson, Historian and Principal of UoE, published a voluminous history *History of America* in 1777.[146] The work contains one of the clearest examples of the way stadial theory was applied to indigenous peoples, effectively justifying the European imperial project in the western hemisphere.[147] For example, although there were some differences in the manners and cultures of different North American peopless, by and large they were 'so extremely rude that the denomination of *savage* may be applied to them all';[148] any cultural diversity was swept aside and relegated as being of little importance in comparison with their place on the stadial scale. We have also seen that the medical student Richard Dyett singled out Robertson for promulgating the idea that Europeans were intellectually superior to Africans.

A number of prominent American doctors attended the UoE in this period, and many of them had their own distinct racial interests. One famous example is the 'founding father' Benjamin Rush (1746-1813), who received an Edinburgh MD in 1768. In 1792, Rush published a paper of 'Observations intended to favour a supposition that the Black Color (as it is called) of the Negroes is Derived from the Leprosy', in which he argued that Black skin was a 'disease' that needed to be 'cured'. While Rush denied natural white superiority, the paper was obviously shaped by an assumption of aesthetic White preference. Rush argued that whitening Black people would 'add greatly to *their* happiness, for however well they appear to be satisfied with their color, there are many proofs of their preferring that of the white people.'[149]

American students were also noticeably interested in the history of Native Americans. Benjamin Smith Barton (1766-1815) is one of the most notable.[150] Having been recommended to Edinburgh professors by Benjamin Rush, Barton studied medicine at UoE between 1786 and 1788, where he was a Royal Medical Society president before having to flee without graduating because he embezzled from it. Notably, it was Barton who edited Stanhope Smith's *Essay* and published it in Edinburgh, where it shaped the thinking of so many medical students (as revealed above by their dissertations); Dugald Stewart owned a copy and cited it repeatedly.[151] In 1787, while still a student, Barton published a book which included a discussion of Native American antiquities. While Barton did not refer to skin colour or differences related to physical appearances, he characterised Native Americans as 'savage' peoples living in a state of 'rude simplicity'.[152] Barton's purpose was in part to hit back against Robertson that they had

[145] Sebastiani, 'Anthropology Beyond Empires'; Charles Bradford Bow, 'Becoming White in the American Enlightenment', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 22 (2024), 149-72; Charles Bradford Bow, 'Samuel Stanhope Smith and Common Sense Philosophy at Princeton', *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 8 (2010), 189-209.
[146] William Robertson, *The History of America* (2 vols., London, 1777). A third volume on the history of British colonisation in North America was published posthumously in 1796.
[147] Bruce P. Lenman, '"From savage to Scot"' via the French and the Spaniards: Principal Robertson's Spanish Sources', in Stewart J. Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), 196-209.
[148] Robertson, *History of America*, I, 283.
[149] Benjamin Rush, 'Observations intended to favour a supposition that the Black Color (as it is called) of the Negroes is derived from the Leprosy', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 4 (1799), 289-97.
[150] Jeanette E. Graustein, 'The Eminent Benjamin Smith Barton', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 85 (1961), 423-38.
[151] EUL D.S.h.12.7/1.
[152] Benjamin Smith Barton, *Observations on Some Parts of Natural History* (London, 1797).

always been so, and argued that at least certain Native American cultures had once been very advanced and had degenerated to their state as he perceived them.[153]

Another medical student interested in the subject was John Taylor (1784-1853), son of John Taylor of Caroline (1753-1824), a 'founding father' and plantation owner in Virginia. Taylor gave a paper to the Royal Medical Society and the Royal Physical Society, and then reworked it for his MD Dissertation.[154] It seems likely that he took Dugald Stewart's lecture course because he gifted a copy of his MD Dissertation to Stewart.[155] Taylor is notable because he was one of the few students to defend polygenesis. Because of 'the great difference of some nations from others, in colour, stature, form and dispositions', Taylor concluded that 'all mankind are not descended from the same family.'[156] It seems reasonable to draw the conclusion that what his father wrote in his essays on the inferiority of Africans, Taylor 'proved' scientifically at Edinburgh. He inherited the plantation and owned around 140 enslaved people at his death.

Perhaps the most notable American student of UoE was Samuel George Morton (1799-1851), who studied there from 1820 to 1823, when he received his MD.[157] Morton studied with Robert Jameson while in Edinburgh and was allowed access to the collections of the Natural History Museum. A friend at UoE recorded that at this point Morton was already interested in the 'Indians' of North America[158] From 1830, Morton assembled the largest skull collection in North America, what eventually totalled up to around a thousand skulls from across the world.[159] This formed the basis for his major work *Crania Americana: or a Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America* (1839), which was dedicated to James Cowles Prichard. Morton was a polygenist who believed that there five particular races (following Blumenbach), each created for a particular continent. He measured the cranial capacity of his skulls and found that Caucasians had the largest, and was therefore 'distinguished for the facility with which it attains the highest intellectual endowments', while the 'Ethiopian' (Black African) race 'present a singular diversity of intellectual character, of which the far extreme is the lowest grade of humanity.'[160] Within the scientific network interested in racial classification views like these were common, but it is possible that Morton's thought here bears the influence of Jameson's teaching. As discussed below, Morton also opened up space for phrenology.

Africa

There is a striking, if not entirely surprising, contrast between Dugald Stewart's statement above about how much was supposedly known about Africans, and how little was actually known about the continent of Africa and the cultures there. Considering the grim commercial

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[153] Frank Spencer, 'Two Unpublished Essays on the Anthropology of North America by Benjamin Smith Barton', *Isis* 68 (1977), 567-73.
[154] John Taylor, 'Are all Men originally descended from the same Stock?', Royal Physical Society Dissertations, EUL DA.67 Phys, Vol. 24 (1804-6), 464-71.
[155] John Taylor, *Diss. … inaug. de hominum varietatibus*. Edinburgh, 1806. D.S.i.1.13.
[156] Taylor, 'Are all Men'.
[157] For a history of Morton and his craniology see Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago, 2010), esp. 21-3, for Morton's Edinburgh training.
[158] Thomas Hodgkin to John Hodgin Junior, 23 November 1820, Wellcome Collection, PP/HO/J/D5, 11.
[159] The largest assemblage of skulls in North America prior to Morton's collection was probably that of Samuel Latham Mitchill, who received his MD from Edinburgh in 1786.
[160] Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana: or a Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America* (1839), 5-7.

links that had long been formed between Europeans and parts of Africa, the lack of published works about African civilizations as they actually existed stands out. At the beginning of his *Historical and Philosophical Sketch of the European Discoveries & Settlements of the Europeans in northern & western Africa* (1799), John Leyden noted that it was only in the eighteenth century that European interest in Africa began to be directed, in part, by 'the desire of knowledge, instead of avarice and ambition.'[161] The book is a sort of ethnographical synthesis of the various travel accounts that Leyden had access to; although he denied that differences of race were immutable, the book was firmly organised on stadial principles with most African cultures being assigned to various levels of savagery. One of the main accounts on which Leyden drew was that of James Bruce (1730-1794), a UoE alumnus who spent the 1760s in northeastern Africa searching for the origins of the Nile; Bruce's account shows that Egypt and Abyssinia – because of their records in classical sources – were generally held at a higher level of prestige than sub-Saharan Africa, even if their civilization was thought to have 'degenerated.'[162]

The foundation of the African Association in 1788 has been identified as an inflection point, in which the British started to be interested in the continent and its peoples for their own sake. Its first major project was to ascertain the source and directional flow of the Niger river, and ultimately the man it selected to achieve this was Mungo Park (1711-1806), a UoE alumnus who had studied with Stewart and Walker. On a previous voyage to Southeast Asia, Park wrote to a friend that, 'I have purchased Stewart's philosophy to amuse me.'[163] Park's work is, like that of his contemporaries, saturated by stadial theory ranging many of the cultures he encountered (and especially the behaviour of the 'Moors') in stages of savagery.[164] Dugald Stewart used his book in lectures for accounts of African society, though often to support the view that considerable portions of Africa were civilized. Park was killed on his second voyage in the interior of Africa. As this cursory section suggests, much more work is needed on the Scottish Enlightenment and Africa.

Australia and the Pacific

Australia and the islands of the Southern Pacific and their Scottish Enlightenment links are also areas to be further developed.[165] Alumni of the Medical School sailed with several of the major explorers to this part of the world during this 'second age of Exploration'.[166] William Anderson (1750-1778), an Edinburgh MD influenced by Mondro Secundus and William Cullen, travelled with Cook on his first and second voyages and kept a journal that racialised the peoples he encountered, recording their physical characteristics and manners, and aligning them with the stadial model of civilizational development.[167] After his death several of his items seem to have ended up in the UoE's Natural History Museum. Another Edinburgh trained surgeon, Archibald Menzies (1754-1832), accompanied George Vancouver's voyage to the north western coast of North American and kept a journal similarly organised on stadial principles.[168] Robert Brown (1773-1858) studied medicine at UoE between 1790 and 1793, where he also

[161] John Leyden, *Historical and Philosophical Sketch of the European Discoveries & Settlements of the Europeans in northern & western Africa, at the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1799), vi.
[162] James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols., London, 1790).
[163] Joseph Thomson, *Mungo Park and the Niger* (London, 1890), 42.
[164] Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (London, 1799).
[165] On racial theory in these areas generally see Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds.), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race, 1750-1940* (Canberra, 2008).
[166] See esp., Buchan, 'Medical Ethnography'; Buchan and Andersson Burnett, 'Knowing Savagery'.
[167] Buchan, 'Medical Ethnography', 934-35.
[168] Buchan, 'Medical Ethnography', 938-41.

attended John Walker's natural history classes.[169] He was taken as a naturalist aboard Matthew Flinders' (1774-1814) voyage to Australia, where he was particularly interested in the racial classification of the indigenous population according to their hair colour and texture.[170] In early January 1803 a violent confrontation between British sailors and an indigenous group on the coast of northern Australia led to the death of an indigenous warrior, whose head and heart were taken by the sailors and preserved for anatomical observation.[171]

Race Science: Phrenology

The UoE has an ambivalent relationship with phrenology, a nineteenth-century 'science' that claimed to be able to 'read' the bumps and grooves of the skull for evidence of the moral qualities of the individual. The larger the external protrusion, the more the particular quality thought to be located in that area of the brain was said to predominate. Although some scientists kept it at a distance, phrenology was extremely popular in the nineteenth century, seeping into popular culture and influencing anthropological and criminological theorising.[172] Because phrenology was revealed to be bogus, it provides a transparent window onto the racist suppositions of many thinkers of this era, because they essentially read what they wanted into the skulls of different individuals and populations. As a recent exhibition at the UoE's Anatomical Museum emphasises, most skulls in the Edinburgh collections were taken from British colonies, often through violent encounters and without consent.[173]

For religious and philosophical reasons, phrenology was vigorously combatted by many at the UoE (this forms the subject of a famous inquiry in the history of science about the subjectivity of scientific 'truths').[174] There are nevertheless many links and associations between it and the UoE. George Combe (1788-1858), the leader of the movement in Britain and eventually the world – his *Constitution of Man* outsold Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* by 6:1 – was educated at the UoE in the early 1800s. He then convinced his younger brother Andrew (1797-1847), who became another leader of the movement, to study medicine there with the view of strengthening the underlying anatomical foundations of phrenology. The Combes founded the Edinburgh Phrenological Society, whose catalogue is now held by the UoE because the skull collection assembled by the Society was eventually absorbed by the UoE in 1886 through the brokerage of the Professor of Anatomy Sir William Turner (1832-1916).[175] At least in the early 1820s, the phrenologists were also allowed to share the anatomical collections in the University's Museum (though Jameson resisted this).[176] Although the moral philosophers – the field in which phrenologists claimed new insights – opposed it, there were professors from other faculties involved with the Phrenological Society, including William Gregory (1803-

[169] Matthew Eddy, 'Natural History Class Lists'.
[170] Buchan, 'Medical Ethnography', 941-47.
[171] Buchan and Andersson Burnett, 'Knowing Savagery', 127-8.
[172] Among a large literature see, e.g., James Poskett, *Materials of the Mind: Phrenology, Race, and the Global History of Science* (Chicago, 2019).
[173] 'A Skull Collection Revisited: From Colonial Resistance to Repatriation', online at https://exhibitions.ed.ac.uk/exhibitions/mind-shift/colonial-resistance-to-repatriation.
[174] Steven Shapin, 'Phrenological Knowledge and the Social Structure of Early Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh', *Annals of Science* 32 (1975), 219-43.
[175] 'National Skulls', EUL/Gen. 608/2.
[176] G.S. Mackenzie to George Combe, 11 November 1820, NLS, MS 7205, f.108r-v.

1858), Professor of Chemistry, who served as the society's secretary from 1832 to 1836 and tried to fuse his two fields of interest.[177]

Robert Verity, an Edinburgh MD who dabbled in phrenology but fell out with the Edinburgh society, published a book in which he investigated the relationship between physiology and the advancement of civilization. Building on the ideas of Johann Spurzheim (one of the founders of the movement) he wanted to know the proportion of a positive substance 'throughout the different regions of the brain, in the savage, in the negro, and other inferior varieties of the race'.[178] Samuel George Morton opened his *Crania Americana* with a declaration that though he was not entirely sure about the system, he 'admitted the fundamental principles of Phrenology' and that his findings about 'the mental character of the Indian, and his cranial developments as explained by Phrenology' were congruent.[179] Morton solicited a letter from George Combe on the principles of phrenology that he included as an appendix to his large work, which sought to explain the superiority of Europeans to other races through phrenological principles.

The UoE also benefitted financially from its relationship to phrenology. For example, the Combe Trust – set up with estate of George Combe, and therefore the money he made from his books and lecture tours promoting phrenology – endowed the first Professorship in Psychology in 1906, which was known as the Combe Professorship. The Combe Trust continues to fund a Combe Trust fellowship in the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, for which the fellow must deliver a lecture 'emerging from the interests of George Combe', though obviously referring to his many other interests than phrenology.[180]

Race Science: Ethnology and James Cowles Prichard

The idea of racial difference – whether original (polygenetic) or not (monogentic) – became axiomatic in nineteenth-century thought. It provided the foundations for the fields that have come to be called 'race sciences', which were therefore those disciplines built upon the doctrine of present racial variation.[181] Roughly speaking, the race sciences sought to investigate and account for the three phenomena held to comprise race: physical appearance, intellectual aptitude, and moral character.[182] The main science of race that arose in early nineteenth-century Britain came to be called ethnology, and was driven by James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848), who studied medicine at the UoE between 1805 and 1808.[183] While recognisable forms of what came to be called 'ethnology' existed across Europe from at least the Renaissance, and Han

[177] See, e.g., William Gregory, 'The Cerebral Development of Dr Justus Liebig', *Phrenological Journal* 18 (1845), 54-60; Ellen Packham, 'The Limits of Chemistry: How William Gregory Contested the Boundaries of "Established Science", 1820-1850', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 75 (2021), 73-89.
[178] Robert Verity, *Changes produced in the Nervous System by Civilization* (2nd ed., London, 1839), 128.
[179] Morton, *Crania Americana*, np 'Letter to John Phillips'.
[180] https://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/combe-trust-fellowship.
[181] Richard McMahon, *The Races of Europe: Construction of National Identities in the Social Sciences, 1839-1939* (London, 2016), is the best account of the European racial classification project.
[182] [William Benjamin Carpenter], 'Ethnology or the Science of Races', *Edinburgh Review* 88 (1848), 429-87. For the development of the race sciences see, e.g., Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Britain, 1800-1960* (London, 1982); Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology*; Carole Reynaud-Paligot, *De l'identité nationale: science, race et politique en Europe et aux États-Unis, XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris, 2011); Chris Manias, *Race, Science, and the Nation: Reconstructing the Ancient Past in Britain, France and Germany* (New York, 2013).
[183] The standard biographies are H.F. Augstein, *James Cowles Prichard's Anthropology: Remaking the Science of Man in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Amsterdam, 1999); George W. Stocking Jr., 'From Chronology to Ethnology: James Cowles Prichard and British Anthropology, 1800-1850', in idem (ed.), James Cowles Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind* (1813: Chicago, 1973), xxxiv-xl.

Vermeulen has shown that these inquiries crystallised into named disciplines – *Ethnographie, Ethnologie, Völkerkunde* – for the first time in Germany during the 1770s and 1780s, a distinct variant arose in Britain in the early nineteenth century.[184] The words are attested in English and French from 1787, but the variety of intellectual enquiry centred around issues of race and civilization at UoE formed the kernel for what became crystallised as 'ethnology' in Britain and America in the 1830s. Prichard was the main agent.

Prichard's time at the UoE was foundational for the development of his racial theory. As we have seen, the puzzle of human variation was a popular topic among UoE faculty and students, and Prichard became obsessed with it. He wrote in 1813 that he had found the 'arguments of those who assert that these races constitute distinct species [i.e. polygenism]…at first irresistible'; however, he decided to examine the question further after attending the moral philosophy lectures of Dugald Stewart.[185] Prichard presented his findings to the Royal Medical Society in a dissertation in which he referenced Stewart's lectures, John Gregory's, and the Edinburgh student dissertation of Dr John Hunter, among other influential scientists such as Buffon, Blumenbach, Stanhope Smith.[186] However, Prichard found 'vague and unsatisfactory' the opinion held by Stewart among others, 'which attempts to explain their appearance by the gradual influence of climate, of situation and peculiar customs.'[187] Instead he suggested that physical features were to a large extent hereditary, while not attempting to give an explanation of the mechanism that had given rise to this in the first place. He did note, however, that the 'prevailing appearance of man' was the white complexion…the primary character of our species.'[188] These conclusions were rehearsed and accompanied by more data in his MD Dissertation *De generis humani varietate*.[189] This Edinburgh foundation remained at the heart of Prichard's ethnological project over his entire scholarly career. In 1813 he published a greatly expanded version of his Edinburgh writings as *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, which was revised and expanded with the tweaked title *Researches into the Physical History of* Mankind (2 vols., 1826; 5 vols., 1836-47), as well as several other work*s* – including a popular one-volume *Natural History of Mankind* (1843), which focused solely on the problem of physical variation.

The mechanism by which variation occurred, or the 'principle of natural deviation', changed in each edition of the *Researches* and, as Augstein shows, Prichard's thinking was often contradictory and vague.[190] The stadialist insights of his Edinburgh education peppered the 1813 edition of the *Researches* in which he suggested that physical features correlated with the stage of civilisation, in a Eurocentric aesthetic assumption that whiteness equalled beauty and refinement, and Blackness its opposite.[191] According to Prichard, all humans were originally dark skinned but as they ascended the civilisational ladder their outward appearance changed

[184] Han F. Vermeulen, 'Origins and institutionalization of ethnography and ethnology in Europe and the USA, 1771-1845', in Han F. Vermeulen and Arturo Alvarez Roldán (eds.), *Fieldwork and footnotes: Studies in the history of European anthropology*, (London, 1995), 39-59.
[185] James Cowles Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (London, 1813), ii-iii.
[186] James Cowles Prichard, 'On the Varieties of the Human Race', Royal Medical Society Dissertations, vol. 58 (1807-8), 88 n, 94, 104, 106. However, he agreed with Stanhope Smith that climate had more influence on those 'savage manners', while ridiculing Smith's the obviousness of Smith's observation that the appearance of enslaved domestic servants would differ from enslaved field workers kept 'under the relentless lash of those sons of liberty [see Prichard, 'On the Varieties of the Human Race', 114].
[187] Prichard, 'On the Varieties of the Human Race', 100-1.
[188] Prichard, 'On the Varieties of the Human Race', 93.
[189] James Cowles Prichard, *De generis humani varietate* (Edinburgh, 1808), 119.
[190] Prichard, *Researches* (1813), 61, 71.
[191] For a history of similar assumptions, see esp. David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century* (London, 2002).

accordingly: 'the process of Nature in the human species is the transmutation of the characters of the Negro into that of the European, or the evolution of white varieties in black races of men.'[192] A crude form of sexual selection was in operation, as Prichard speculated that white varieties were more aesthetically pleasing and therefore more likely to reproduce. As for other types of features, Prichard thought that cultural preference might play a role in perpetuating certain characteristics. For reasons that are unclear, Prichard backed away from this explanation in later additions, reverting to the hereditarian position that he had advanced as a student. All three editions of Prichard's *Researches* retained the same organisational format: the first portion discussed the mono vs. polygenesis question, introduced Prichard's hypotheses, and laid out the methods for investigation, before the second half surveyed evidence from Asia, Africa, the Indo-European countries, Oceania and the South Pacific and the Americas, usually more or less in that order. The accrual of more and more evidence led to the book's burgeoning size over each decade and new edition.

Prichard's work was widely influential across the West, and he was recognised as the foremost ethnologist by Europeans and Americans. In 1843 he co-founded the Ethnological Society of London and became its President, and in 1846 he succeeded in establishing an Ethnology sub-section to the British Association for the Advancement of Science.[193] Making the case for its singular character in 1847 Prichard succinctly stated his view: 'Ethnology is the history of human races, or of the various tribes of men who constitute the people of the world. It comprehends all that can be learned as to their origin and relations to each other.'[194] Prichardian ethnology was premised upon the study and comparison of physical features *and* cultural characteristics to determine the origins and histories of peoples (variously expressed as 'nations' or 'races'); classification was a function of tracing their histories. Prichard's overarching puzzle was that of human physical 'form and complexion', but his main normative argument was the monogenetic one that races were varieties of one species, which he upheld rigidly as a result of his Christian commitments. Clearly this did not preclude assumptions about stark racial differences and of civilizational superiority.

Race Science: Anthropology and Robert Knox

Following the death of Prichard in 1848, a new movement arose within the Ethnological Society and began challenging its monogenist convictions. Eventually this broke away as the London Anthropological Society in 1863 under the leadership of James Hunt (1833-1869), a UoE alumnus. Broadly speaking, the Anthropologicals emphasised physical anthropology above all other methods and were almost uniformly committed to the polygenist position. Whereas the Ethnologicals had adhered to a view that human nature was universal and that all human races were improvable – though it must still be emphasised that this was a Eurocentric racist position – the Anthropologicals were overtly racist and argued that some (non-European) races were simply incapable of improvement. The normative commitment following from this conclusion was that the white race should avoid race-mixing at all costs and strive for racial purity. The Anthropological leaders were almost uniformly educated at UoE, and some preserved links to the University.

The most famous of these – and the most notorious British race scientist of the nineteenth century – was Robert Knox (1791-1862). Knox studied medicine at UoE between 1810 and

[192] Prichard, *Researches* (1813), 232-3.
[193] Augstein, *James Cowles Prichard's Anthropology*, 145.
[194] [original emphasis] J.C. Prichard, 'On the Relations of Ethnology to Other Branches of Knowledge', *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* I (1848), 302.

1814, before joining the army as a surgeon. In this capacity he worked in the Cape Colony between 1817 and 1820 during which time, a biographer later wrote, he dissected 'Caffre and Bosjeman' people to examine 'those differences of organization supposed to exist between these savage tribes and the European settler.'[195] Knox's – at this time – fivefold racial division may reflect his attendance of Robert Jameson's natural history lectures.

In 1846 Knox gave a lecture series on the *Races of Man*, which was published in 1850 and is recognised as his magnum opus. Even by the standards of the time Knox's racism is striking. His doctrine is what is known as racial determinism, *viz*. that race is the motor of history, determining everything else. As he put it: 'race is everything: literature, science, art, in a word civilization, depend on it.'[196] Formulations like this appear repeatedly through the book. Essentially, Knox was a polygenist who argued that race-mixing was dangerous because it would enervate the white race and lead to its downfall, and he worried about a global race war:

> Look at the Negro, so well known to you, and say, need I describe him? Is he shaped like any white person? Is the anatomy of his frame, of his muscles, or organs like ours? Does he walk like us, think like us, act like us? Not in the least…Can the black races become civilized? I should say not; their future history, then must resemble the past. The Saxon race will never tolerate them-never amalgamate-never be at peace. The hottest actual war ever carried on…is not equal to that now waging between our descendants in America and the dark races; it is a war of extermination – inscribed on each banner is a death's head and no surrender; one or other must fall.[197]

Legacies

It is beyond the scope of this appendix to give a detailed examination of racial thought at the UoE after 1850. However, some selected examples reveal that racial dogma remained alive and well. This is unsurprising, given the fact that the second half of the nineteenth century is generally recognised as the era of high racialism.

One of the most strident assertions of white superiority was made by the essayist Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), who had been elected Rector of UoE in 1865. Carlyle studied at Edinburgh (1809-1814) and went on to become a leading public intellectual in Victorian Britain. In 1849 he published the 'Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question', which is an overtly racist defence of natural slavery. In 1853 it was reprinted in America as 'Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question', and Carlyle argued that the southern states should secede from the Union and form a slave empire with the West Indies. It was acclaimed in the American South by defenders of slavery. Carlyle lamented the abolition of slavery his entire life and after the Morant Bay Uprising in Jamaica in 1865 he led the faction defending the actions of the governor who instituted martial law. In 1867, reflecting on these issues and opposing the Second Reform Act, he lamented the outcome of the American Civil War:

> By far the notablest case of Swarmery, in these times, is that of the late American War, with Settlement of the Nigger Question for result. Essentially the Nigger Question was one of the smallest; and in itself did not much concern mankind in the present time of struggles and hurries. One always rather likes the Nigger; evidently a poor blockhead with good dispositions, with affections, attachments-with a turn for Nigger Melodies, and

[195] Henry Lonsdale, *A Sketch of the Life and Writings of Robert Knox, the Anatomist* (London, 1870), 12.
[196] Robert Knox, *The Races of Man: A Fragment* (Philadelphia, 1850), 7.
[197] Knox, *The Races of Man*, 161-2.

> the like: he is the only Savage of all the coloured races that doesn't die out on sight of the White Man; but can actually live beside him, and work and increase and be merry. The Almighty Maker has appointed him to be a Servant.[198]

Thus, during his tenure as rector of the University, Carlyle published a text lamenting the outcome of the American Civil War and defending the argument that Black people were naturally inferior and only fit to be slaves.

The views of another later rector, Arthur Balfour (1848-1930), also reflected a belief in the supremacy of the white race. As he put it in a debate over suffrage in South Africa:

> We have to face facts; men are not born equal, the white and black races are not born with equal capacities, they are born with different capacities which education cannot and will not change; and as far as I know there are no forces now in operation which can or will change them within a period of time.

Native South Africans were, 'a race which is by birth less intellectually and morally capable of dealing with these problems than a white race. I state it quite plainly and nakedly as I believe it to be'.[199] The racism underpinning Balfour's geopolitics is discussed elsewhere in the main review and his its own appendix.

Conclusion

As this overview of some of the key professors, alumni, and senior leadership reveals, the UoE formed a central point in a network of knowledge about 'civilization' and 'race' from the period of the Enlightenment onward. These assumed a normative framework in which the white, educated and often wealthy, male was positioned as the ideal type. Other races were either depicted as inherently inferior and so different that they constituted a separate species (as held by the polygenists), as 'degenerated' versions of humans whose complexions and other physical features had changed as they fell down the civilizational ladder, or as 'savages' or 'barbarians' who had yet to ascend it. Civilizational and racial theories were adopted, developed, and deployed at an early stage by the Moral Philosophy Professors Adam Ferguson and Dugald Stewart. The Principal and historian William Robertson also examined the histories of the Americas and India through the stadial model, characterising Native Americans writ large as 'savages'. These theories were also taught by the Professors of Natural History John Walker and Robert Jameson, who drew on their collections of human remains, including the skulls frequently stolen from indigenous populations and sent to them – often from former students – from around the world, in their teaching. Student societies debated different racial questions over this period and many medical students chose to write dissertations on the subject. When they fanned out across the world as a result of the positions that many of them secured with the help of their UoE credentials, these alumni applied racial theories and the stadial theories of civilization in their own works on these subjects. When published back in Britain, their findings strengthened these systems of knowledge. As the nineteenth century progressed, UoE alumni were some of the most important figures in the development of sciences that placed racial and civilizational ideas at their centres. While the history of ideas of civilization and race has tended to focus on major intellectual figures and their influence, future historiography will have to take greater account of institutions and the networks of individuals

[198] Thomas Carlyle, *Shooting Niagara: and After?* (London, 1867), 5.
[199] *Hansard*, HC Deb 31 July 1906 vol 162 c799-800: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1906/jul/31/class-ii#column_800.

and ideas connected to them. All of the foregoing evidence suggests that the University of Edinburgh was one of the institutional centres for the development of ideas about civilization and race, and their crystallisation within the ‘race sciences’ that developed in the nineteenth century. In different ways, all of these played into intellectual justifications for slavery and colonialism over the period examined in this Appendix. The same systems of knowledge retained a central place in Western thought through much of the twentieth century, and even though ‘race’ has been debunked as a scientifically legitimate idea, its cultural and social legacies continue to shape the world in which we live.

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