

“To Bring out the Best that is in Their Blood”
Race, Reform, and Civilization in the *Journal of Race Development* (1910-1919)

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The *Journal of Race Development* was published out of Clark University between 1910 and 1919. A first incarnation of what was later to become *Foreign Affairs*,¹ the JRD brought together leading Progressive Era social scientists from many fields, both in its pages and in conferences on international questions staged at Clark by historian and JRD founding editor George Blakeslee. (Conference proceedings were a regular feature in the journal.) Blakeslee's co-editor was the pioneering psychologist G. Stanley Hall; contributing editors included sociologists (such as WEB Du Bois and Robert Park), political scientists (such as David Barrows, later the president of the University of California), economists (such as Thorstein Veblen), anthropologists (such as Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber), geographers (such as future Eugenics Society president Ellsworth Huntington), as well as many civil servants and missionaries; contributors ranged from Japanese colonial administrators to John Dewey.

For a short while, this high-powered company debated an expansive vision of America's role in the new century and the possibilities for worldwide progress and peaceful coexistence. In general, they wanted America to lead the world in the uplift of the "backward" or "dependent races." This was to include colonial subjects (as in the Philippines), those of sovereign states (as China and Liberia), and "dependent" peoples within America's own borders ("the Indian" and "the Negro"). For some, this implied a sort of tutelary, temporary, paternalistic administrative/colonial endeavor; for others it meant something closer to what we would now understand as development aid

It was almost always presented as a kind of reform. The idea was that even if they could not be erased, the meanings of racial differences could be in some ways changed for the better through education and political reform. This was the core project of the JRD and it was based on a notion of "civilization" in which race, culture, and political institutions form a complex that can be mapped on to evolutionary processes. In turn evolution itself was both a natural and a cultural process, the embodied accretion of influences over time. As such it could be harnessed by scientific knowledge and rational state action. Evolution could be directed; it could be made into "development."

¹ In 1919, the journal changed its name to *The Journal of International Relations*. Three years later, it moved to New York and merged with another publication to become the house organ of the Council on Foreign Relations, *Foreign*

My main concern in this paper will be to get a better understanding of how this was supposed to work, and to see what these mostly left-progressive writers thought it implied for America's role in the world.² Robert Vitalis has identified the JRD as part of a “lost world of development studies”—one in which groups of private foundations, academics, and other associations in America within and outside of government around the turn of the twentieth century organized around “the development of backward states and races...and what kinds of interventions if any are effective” (Vitalis & Markovits 2002, Vitalis n.d.) So in many ways this paper will simply confirm and flesh out a piece of this observation that the “story of development” must be extended back before 1945 to a moment when its preoccupations were explicitly racial. However, I will also emphasize that the JRD saw itself, and seems to have been perceived by others, as somewhere on the left.³ What is interesting about the ideology and worldview that emerged from the JRD is the particular way in which it combined a relatively “liberal” (in every sense) ideological position with a deeply racialized and biologized view of human variation. Critiques of contemporary development discourse have often made the point that the field, the left-liberal portion of it as much as any other, is still in many ways haunted by the ghosts of racial evolutionary thinking (e.g. Tucker 1999, Cooper & Packard 1997, Leys 1996, Ferguson 1990, Packenham 1973). The JRD, with its peculiar mixture of good intentions, liberal-democratic political prescriptions, paternalistic disdain, and (limited) faith in the capacity of technocratic expertise to fix what is “wrong” with “undeveloped peoples,” gives us a clearer picture of the ancestors themselves.

II. The JRD and early-twentieth-century racial thought

For the writers in the JRD, it was an article of consensus that “backward races” were the product of variations in developmental or evolutionary processes. Who really qualified as “backward,” and how much so, were points of difference, but the journal's title itself shows that it was uncontroversial to view races as primary social units with shared physical and socio-political

Affairs.

² I concentrate particularly on the first few years that the Journal was published, partly for the sake of manageability, but also partly because the tone and focus of the journal changes somewhat with the outbreak and American entrance into the Great War.

traits. This drew on conventional scientific and popular wisdom, as well as established doctrine in American political science. Francis Lieber and John Burgess, often cited as founders of American political science, for example both traced free political institutions to the spread of the “Teutonic” races. All the same, Lieber and Burgess, the JRD’s editors were self-consciously racially progressive. In the editorial that opens the first issue of the JRD, editor Blakeslee explains that the journal,

aims to present, by the pen of men who can write with authority, the important facts which bear upon race progress, and the different theories as to the methods by which developed peoples may most effectively aid the progress of the undeveloped; ...not how weaker races may best be exploited, but how they may best be helped to be stronger (1/1: 1).

The purpose of this endeavor, he continues, was “to secure for the peoples of weaker civilizations a treatment marked by continually greater justice and wisdom and sympathy” (1/1:4). Moreover, it was to be carried out on United States soil as well as abroad—to join in the “struggle” that he called the “key to the past seventy-five years of American history”: finding “some solution for the negro problem.” Here Blakeslee offers a mild criticism of the American people. A few pages later, G. Stanley Hall is firmer, citing the “innumerable modes of extortion and misrepresentation that private greed is still allowed to practice upon...the Negro” in America (1/1: 6-7).

For the most part, the JRD skirted the most vicious forms of racism that were widely acceptable at the time. For many progressives, the science of Herbert Spencer and Charles Sumner had “proved” what racial practices in America had long largely presumed: that races were, in the words of one prominent historian at the time, “the fundamental division of mankind” with differences that, because they lay “in the very blood and physical constitution,” could be altered only by the “slow progress of the centuries” (in Smith 1995: 416-7). Such views were commonplace; the Jim Crow system, which was being widely instituted at this time, was often justified on this basis as the logical outcome of a “science” which had disproved sentimental or

³ I’m using “left” for the sake of convenience. But it is not really satisfying. Notably absent from the journal’s pages, especially given the identities of some of the contributing editors, is any mention of socialism or socialistic

religious notions of human kinship (cf. *ibid*: 417). So too, these ideas were prominent in the discourse of the very active anti-immigration societies and politicians at the time, and in modified form in advocacy of U.S. military intervention to curb Japanese power in the Pacific. The JRD, in contrast, mostly (if not consistently) took the position that the mental and physical capacities of the races were not so fundamentally different, and occasionally argued that they were in fact the same. (They were particular fans of the Japanese, whose role as a colonizer in Korea and Japan they saw as parallel to American efforts in the Philippines, for example.) More generally, where others saw in evolutionary theory the scientific explanation of fundamental racial difference, they found a field of possibility for intervention and positive change.

This general orientation is announced in G. Stanley Hall's pointedly titled, "The Point of View Toward Primitive Races," which appears in the first issue in July 1910. Hall is best known for his theory of "race children," which grouped races according to the developmental life-cycle of individuals. A race could be, for example, "Child" or "Adolescent," etc. (Ross 1972). Hall's evolutionary perspective certainly made Anglo-Saxons out to be superior. What sets him apart from many of his contemporaries, however, is that he saw that superiority as contingent and temporary; "possibilities of historic development along new lines" in each of what he called the "so-called lower races of mankind" and meant that a decadent European civilization might soon give way before some other, "ascendant" race (1/1: 5). In this view, and in his enthusiasm for the pending eclipse of white civilization, Hall seems to have been more or less alone, at least in the pages of the *Journal*. (Though Blakeslee does comment that "the record of social evolution clearly shows the immense importance of sound stock in the survival of races and nations. Superior vitality may make the backward races of to-day the world leaders of tomorrow" [1/1: 4].) It certainly didn't entail much respect for non-white people. He explains his call to educate African children in their native languages, for example, by saying that it is necessary "to first make them good Kaffirs, and not cheap pinch-back imitation white men" (1/1: 8). Nonetheless, he and others involved with the JRD editors saw themselves as advocates of "dependent peoples" against those who would exploit them or see them as a threat or enemy. (For example, a 1914 review in *The American Journal of International Law* remarks about a collection of Japan essays from the JRD that, "As was to be expected, these lectures show decided pacific leanings [with

alternatives for "development."

pronounced emphasis on the factors tending to draw the United States and Japan together, and the effect of the whole is to leave the feeling that the various contributors are too sanguine.”⁴)

The JRD published its share of standard-issue colonialist rhetoric. To give just one of many possible examples, in January of 1911, a former U.S. Civil Service Commissioner in the Philippines named Wm. S. Washburn contributed an obituary for an American military officer serving in the Philippines. The title was, “A Worthy Example of the Influence of a Strong Man upon the Development of Racial Character,” and it described the deceased “a man who, by temperament, force of character, and training, was fitted to rule as a benevolent despot in a land where ignorance, treachery and tribal enmities bound the inhabitants to barbarism” (1/3: 373). At the same time, they also with some regularity published articles critical of American attitudes and policies. A 1912 article by one Wm. Elliot Griffis (it was included in the book the AJIL discussed) is a striking example. Entitled, “A Literary Legend: ‘The Oriental,’” (3/1), the article is worth quoting at length. Griffis begins,

A literary legend has been developed, which sets in sharpest opposition the so-called Orient and the fondly named Occident. Writers have created the ‘Oriental’ of imagination, fancy, prejudice and bigotry, which has no counterpart in reality or has ever existed [sic]. It has become a ‘vested interest,’ a staple and stock in trade, a permanent and ever-promising speculation to picture ‘the Oriental’ as a being in human form whose nature is fundamentally different from the ‘Occidental.’ Such a delineation and contrast has mercantile value. It pays in what the American loves so dearly—money (3/1: 65).

It does so by increasing

...the sale of tickets at the box office. It enlarges the circulation of the newspapers. It delights the mob.... “The ‘Orientalism’ which sells..., which gets up periodical war scares and from nervous congressmen compels votes for big battleships, or which is set forth by politicians bidding for votes is not intrinsically

⁴ Krehbiel, Edward, review of Blakeslee, ed., *Japan and Japanese-American Relations: Clark University Addresses*. *American Journal of International Law*, 8/1 (January 1914).

different from that which was and is dearly loved in Europe. ... Yet probably in no country more than in the United States of America, is our legacy of prejudice against 'the Oriental' so worked in the interest of dollars and cents (3/1: 67).

Articles like this one, while unusual even for the JRD, did clearly set the journal apart from the segregationists, the warmongers, and the nativists. Some writers went so far as to contest the idea that races can be ranked hierarchically (an October 1914 article by Wilson D. Wallis of the University of Pennsylvania targets Hall's "race children" theories on this score) or to advocate intermarriage and race-mixing. In the same issue as the Wallis article another piece on "Ancient Race-Blending Region in the Pacific" concludes with the "hope the day may come again when the Pacific Ocean will become the intermediary for bringing together the innumerable racial globules that seem past amalgamation" [5/2: 159]. Intermarriage was also occasionally proposed as a solution to the "Indian Problem." (There seem to have been limits, however. I never found any such positive references to intermarriage between blacks and whites.) So the JRD expressed attitudes that were in many respects on the radical side. But in most ways the JRD was very much in step with its times. The program of Progressivism, and of left progressivism in particular, was one in which paternalistic "uplift" was central.

III. Context: The Progressive Era

A period of significant industrial development, massive immigration, and large-scale urbanization, the Progressive Era in American history (more or less the first twenty years of the twentieth century) is famous for its optimism and reformist zeal. Herbert Croly's *The Promise of American Life* is often cited as the representative book of the Progressive Era. Croly argued that American prosperity, free political institutions, and the "worthier set of men" these would create offered "the highest hope for an excellent worldly life that mankind has yet ventured" (in Ross 1991: 152). It was a moment of dramatic increases in productivity, industrial concentration and expansion, urbanization, unprecedented immigration, and the large-scale expansion of legally sanctioned racial segregation. It was also the moment in which America became conscious of itself as a major player on the world stage, with new territories and newly consolidated spheres

of influence in Asia, the Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere; this consciousness was to come to fruition in Wilsonian internationalism.

According to Rogers Smith both major parties in the 1912 elections portrayed the United States as a “modern democratically and scientifically guided nation that was also culturally ordered, unified, and civilized due to the predominance of northern European elements in its populace and customs. Thus structured and guided, [they] promised, Americans could do more than cope with a rapidly changing world: they would lead it” (Smith 1995: 411). This optimistic nationalism and faith in progress reflected in many ways the “scientific pragmatism” that had dominated the intellectual scene for some time. Again to quote Smith, the turn of the century through the ‘teens saw an “elite convergence” around “beliefs in empirical scientific expertise, experimentation, efficiency via rational organization, evolution, pragmatically defined values, and the fundamental reality of human interdependence” (ibid: 412).

It was an era of great enthusiasm for organizations. Where earlier republican theory had held that America’s promise and values could only be realized in a nation of independent small producers, now for many it was modernity itself—big, efficient, corporatist institutions, including large corporations and large labor unions, expanded trade and, for some, overseas territory—that would save American democracy from the twin scourges of economic depression and socialism/labor unrest (all of which had been much in evidence in recent years) (Ross 1991, Smith 1995, LaFeber 1963). Fueled by considerable support from an expanding business class interested in promoting scientific and technical progress, an explosion of new professional societies, new universities, and new academic and professional journals created opportunities and generated prestige for a newly self-conscious intellectual class (Ross 1991: 158-161).

IV. America in the world

American foreign policy makers during the decades around the turn of the twentieth century tended to see American possessions overseas as stepping stones to regional markets. A chief argument of the antiannexationists in the late 1890s was that trade could be maintained without political control. For the JRD crowd, these debates had missed the point. For them, these

possessions were not only means to the end of trade (though they were that, too); they saw them as flagships in a developmental project to which trade would be both a contributing factor and an outcome.

This developmental project was unmistakably a kind of progressivism writ large. In a speech at a 1910 Clark University conference on the Far East, reprinted in the JRD, the Commissioner of the U.S. Civil Service in the Philippines makes this connection explicitly: “The reform movement is dominant now in America, insisting not only on clean governmental operations, but also the enactment of laws for the betterment of the people, for their moral, mental, and physical elevation” It is “desirable and essential that these reform influences and the power of public opinion in the United States extend to the Philippines....” This will “give the Filipino people every opportunity for development and constitute an added achievement of the United States, worthy of the nation’s greatness” (1/1: 40-41).

The JRD contained a lot of criticism of European colonialism. In his first and only editorial, cited above, Blakeslee explains that the JRD was to be devoted to the “general subject of the control of dependencies, a field in which there has already taken place a profound change of feeling and belief.” Notions of colonies as resources to be exploited have been

very generally superseded by the idea of ‘the white man’s burden,’ a burden, which England seems to believe she is carrying in India, of ruling a land permanently in its own best interests, though against its wishes. This policy, in turn, is now giving place to that recently introduced by the United States in the Philippine Islands—the policy of controlling a backward people only so long as it may be necessary to train them to carry on successfully an efficient government (1/1: 3).

Hall, too, urges the United States to take a path different from Europe’s. For him, the great “possibilities for historic development along new lines” represented by the “ascendant” races are being stifled by modern colonial policy. In “The Point of View Toward Primitive Races,” cited above, he wonders what would have happened if the Romans had exploited their European territories the way England taxes India or Belgium exploits the Congo, or if Japan had been

partitioned in 1840. He proclaims that, “Our own country, that has so lately become a competitor in the struggle...to parcel out among the leading nations all the remnants of the unappropriated territory of the world, ought to lead in this more humane and larger policy” (1/1: 6-7). He urges the establishment of an African Bureau in Washington, D.C., to exhibit the accomplishments, past and future, of “the African.”

We should strive to make representative colored men self-respecting, give them a just measure of pride in their race, and give their leaders motivation in studying its history not only in this country but in their fatherland, teach them, to understand the magnificent emotional endowments nature has given them... in a word, to bring out the best that is in their blood, and to mitigate surely, if ever so slowly, the handicap of race prejudice, for these things alone can give the black man true freedom (1/1: 7).

A similar policy should be pursued for “the Indian,” or “red man,” by putting the government Bureau of Ethnology to greater use

That is, while Europe has been exploitive, the United States should pursue a policy of “uplift” that is both beneficent and informed by science. This perspective comes through in other articles more subtly. In an article entitled “Geographic Factors in South Africa,” one W.M. Davis takes an ominous tone about British administration in that country. What is lacking there, he implies, is “A trained understanding of anthropological problems, supported by a sympathetic interest in the well-being of native races.” As it stood, the British risked “tempting the majority to violent revolution” (2/2: 146).

For these writers, America was better suited to the task of uplift by virtue of its national history and character. The whole of the July, 1914, issue is devoted to Latin America, particularly to the development of national political and economic institutions, and to prospects for trade with the opening of the Panama Canal. Much attention is paid to questions of trade balances, Latin American perceptions of American intentions, natural resources, and the like. But the developmental status of Latin American civilization is central. The issue opens with something like a plea for racial indulgence from a Peruvian Envoy named Federico A. Pezet. In “Contrasts

in the Development of Nationality in Anglo- and Latin-America,” Pezet argues that Latin America was at a disadvantage relative to its northern neighbors in terms of developing republican institutions and prosperous economies. For Pezet (whose sentiments are echoed by the then-president of Argentina, quoted in the same issue), Anglo-America was colonized by a homogenous group of Pilgrim families who confronted only relatively weak and easily vanquished savages, leaving them plenty of virgin land. Latin America, by contrast, was settled by adventurous, fortune-seeking men from Iberia, who mixed with the more numerous and prosperous native population, living off their wealth and labor rather than establishing homogenous, self-supporting colonies. Closer to Europe both geographically and climatically, North America got the “better” western European immigrants who were able more easily to assimilate to the republican institutions inherited from the English.

Pezet sums up the Latin American disadvantage as follows: “Latin America, at the time of its inception into the family of nations, was a group of disassociated military nations, utterly unschooled in self-government, and inhabited in greater part by unfused races” who “from despotism and servitude...jumped into the most advanced form of government” (5/1: 12-13); He ends with a plea for greater understanding and aid in the “common quest for human uplift” (5/1: 18). I want to note here how the coexistence of different races is in itself a problem, and also the preoccupation with the difficulties produced by “skipping” stages. Both were common themes in the JRD. (And should sound familiar to anyone familiar with the development literature, if you substitute “ethnic group” for race.)

But in particular I want to point out that, here, the United States appears as a potential partner with Latin-American elites in the cause of uplift. This is a twist on a more general theme in the JRD, in which the task of uplift seems largely to consist in the *creation* of an elite, or rather of the right kind of elite. Evolution is never clearly defined in the journal—it seems to be less a definable concept than an interpretive grid through which to view the world, though I will explore this question more fully below. What is consistently clear is that it has something to do with progressive differentiation (from simple to complex organism; from simple to complex society). In “race development” this seems to translate into the move toward a capitalist division of labor and the appearance of class differentiation (to be distinguished from differentiation

based on rank or “organic hierarchy,” thought to be a characteristic of more “primitive” society). It was common in the JRD to take for granted that the developmental task is that of establishing and maintaining such differences.

Articles on the Philippines in particular discuss techniques for the creation of “native” leadership. Training Filipinos to (gradually) assume higher positions in the civil service is the focus of an article by William Washburn in the very first number (also cited above). In it, Washburn writes that if Filipinos are “left to their own resources” they will fall into corrupt oligarchy (1/1:46). Hence, “As stated by President Roosevelt in one of his messages to Congress, ‘It is important that this—the merit—system be observed at home, but it is more important that it be rigidly enforced in our insular possessions.’” (1/1: 53). That is, by rewarding honesty, education, and hard work, the U.S. administered civil service can be the incubator for a class that will lead the Philippines and help to make them “in time—probably not in your day nor in mine—partially at least if not fully prepared for self-government” (1/1: 55). These sentiments appear again and again. Contributing editor David Barrows’s *A Decade of American Government in the Philippines, 1903-1913* by is reviewed in 1915 by Payson Treat, who seconds Barrows’s emphasis on the need for the education of a political class.

Articles devoted solely to American “Negroes” are relatively rare , but one such, Howard Odum’s “Standards of Measurement for Race Development” (5/4), is a call to be attentive to class differences. He cites approvingly a the idea that race progress can be measured by “the degree to which [a race] tended to increase the proportion of its population above the lower classes...to the increase of the great middle class and especially the upper half” (5/4:378-9)., And while articles are scarce, books on the subject are frequently reviewed, and generally commended to the extent that they identify race prejudice as the chief factor condemning the large majority of black people to the lower classes and limiting the aspirations of the “better class” (see especially “Notes and Reviews” in 5/3).

Sometimes the leadership to be established is by one non-white “civilization” over another. An article by W. Morgan Shuster on “Our Philippine Policies and their Results” deals with solidifying the dominance of Christianized Filipinos over “Moros” particularly but also over

“uncivilized” pagans. This includes establishing a Jim Crow-type system of separate jurisdictions and administrations. Shuster thinks the “pagans” can be reached, but that a “strong, quasi-military government is the only one suited to deal with the Moro problem, which must be clearly distinguished from the general Filipino problem. The Filipinos are Christians and by nature peaceable; the Moros are Mohammedans and by nature turbulent, lawless, and bloodthirsty” (1/1: 61). (This view is contradicted in the lead article of the April, 1915 article by a John P. Finely, a Lieutenant Colonel and former Governor of a Moro province in the Philippines. In “The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines” Finley defends the “Moros” against such charges, arguing to the contrary that they are highly civilized and should be afforded a much greater level of autonomy, away from the uncivilized and undeveloped heathens [5/4].)

Liberia presented another twist on this general problem. Two articles on that country, one by George W. Ellis (“Dynamic Factors in the Liberian Situation”) and the other by Emmet J. Scott, both of whom have filled official U.S. government posts there, appear in 1911. Scott’s title poses the question, “Is Liberia Worth Saving?” Both articles answer in the affirmative, presenting the “Americanized” Liberians as a vanguard for the civilization of their race-fellows on the continent, and suggest that this experiment is under threat from both the European powers that are struggling over borders in the region and from the recalcitrant natives. The “Americanized Liberians” “have helped to uplift the natives—to no considerable degree, it is true, but nevertheless to an appreciable degree” (Scott 1/3: 301); to fail to support the Liberian government against both threats would be to sacrifice those gains and also to betray the trust of the Liberian people.

Uplift did not have to be an exclusively altruistic task. Apart from short pieces by the vice-president of Miami University and the Director of the International Bureau of Students (arguing for the professionalization of Latin American universities, and increased exchange programs, respectively) the Latin-America issue discussed above is uncharacteristically short on the rhetoric of benevolence. For example, “The Development of Our Latin-American Trade” by American businessman John Hays Hammond emphasizes American need for Latin American markets (5/1: 44-48); and Hiram Bingham, of the Yale history department, in “The Probable Effect of the Opening of the Panama Canal on Our Economic Relations with the People of the

West Coast of South America” is essentially a call for caution against over-exuberant investing, noting that, among other reasons for restraint, “The Indians are not ready for a boom” (5/1: 64). W.D. Boyce’s article on the “Advantages of Making the Canal Zone a Free City and a Free Port” is more boosterish: In his view, the “star of Empire” should lead the United States southward, toward “ the best unoccupied land in the world” (5/1: 72).

However, his view of the disadvantages facing Latin America is not substantially different, bringing together the notions of developmental disadvantage (paying particular attention to its evolutionary and climatic origins) with recommendations for American businessmen and policymakers. Boyce was the publisher of *The Saturday Blade* and *The Chicago Ledger*. He begins his article with an overview of the history of human settlement of the Americas, in the view understanding South America’s commercial development requires that “we must first analyze the original stock from which these people sprang” (5/1: 68). In his view, the first humans came from Asia across the Bering Strait, and hunted and fished their way southward. Thus employed, “ The Indian improved until he reached the warm country near the Rio Grande, and there in the hot climate, where life was easy he began to deteriorate” (68-69). (He concedes that some of this deterioration was offset in the temperate zones of the Andes, allowing for the development of Inca civilization.) His prescription is an energetic policy of free trade, with the establishment of tariff-free zones, a network of American banks and commercial agents in capitals throughout the region, and a merchant marine, complemented by thorough research into the wants of South American consumers and a policy of doing business “everlastingly on the square.” As to the latter, he remarks that, “they are not used to it, but they will like it once they find it genuine” and come to prefer trade with the United States over Europe (5/1: 83).

V. Evolution, change, and heredity

Thus far I have noted the predominance of evolutionary concepts in the JRD. Here I want to reflect a bit more closely on precisely what they understood evolution to mean. Nineteenth-century British and American social thought, well before Darwin, was steeped in evolutionary concepts. For those Victorians to whom the concept of change since the creation no longer smacked of blasphemy, evolution was a basically unilinear process, from lower to higher, from

less differentiated to more differentiated, from savage to civilized, in which the social, cultural, and biological traits of a group developed in tandem. It was, as the last few terms in the preceding sentence imply, a framework in the popular scientific imagination as much or more for understanding human than animal differences, and its main application and evidence was the explanation of differences in appearance, customs, religion, and manual arts among groups of people in the world.

Among the most prominent early explanations for such biological change came from Auguste Lamarck, a French zoologist and botanist writing at the turn of the nineteenth century. Known as the doctrine of heritability of acquired characteristics, Lamarckianism held that adaptation to new conditions could lead to structural modification in adult individuals; new actions, “becoming habitual” could “occasion[...] the development of the organs which execute them” (in Stocking 238-9). These new traits, or “organs” could then be passed down to offspring. With the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, the subsequent rediscovery of Mendel’s experiments on heredity, and a campaign by August Weismann against Lamarckian ideas, the processes and mechanism of evolution became the subject of heated and sometimes vicious debate. However, Lamarckianism was not wholesale discarded, and elements of Lamarckian thought were mixed with theories of natural selection and even, as we shall see, of mutation, both by “neo-Lamarckians,” and by others who incorporated them less self-consciously.

In an influential essay entitled “Lamarckianism in American Social Science, 1890—1915,” George Stocking argues that, “The idea that acquired characteristics might be inherited was stated or implied in the work of so many [turn of the century] writers that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that they were primarily reflecting a widespread popular scientific attitude whose roots lay deep in the western European cultural tradition” (242). This may go some way toward explaining why the logic if not the substance of Lamarckianism is so prevalent in the pages of the *Journal of Race Development*, despite the fact that in Stocking’s view, the fight in the biological sciences had been by 1910 pretty much settled, with the heritability of acquired characteristics on the losing side.

The great majority of articles in the JRD focus on differences of education, customs, and living standards rather than biology. However, physical evolution was clearly understood as a related concern: many articles focused primarily on various aspects of biological evolution and, as we have seen, even topics that would seem quite far from questions of biology (like Boyce’s article on eliminating tariffs in the Panama Canal Zone) were often prefaced by a brief overview of a few millennia of human migration and settlement in the region under discussion. Articles on racial diversification in the Pacific region, the probable racial origins of the indigenous people of Latin America, the effects of geography on the evolution of peculiar racial characteristics of the “native races” of South Africa, on how well whites could adapt to tropical and subtropical climates, etc., were published without comment or fanfare; no justification was required for their inclusion, and there is no major discontinuity in perspective between these biologically oriented writers and their more socially minded colleagues.

And this should not be surprising. For them, there simply was no clear-cut distinction between nature and society. George Stocking has made this point very forcefully; for him, American social science in this period is fundamentally hobbled by its lack of an autonomous subject matter: “The problem facing the social sciences in the early twentieth century was not their domination by notions of biological or racial *determinism*, but rather their obfuscation by a vague sociobiological *indeterminism*, a ‘blind and bland shuttling’ between race and civilization” (265)⁵. This “shuttling” may have been blind, but I don’t find it so bland—rather it seems to me central to the uplift project, as a way of simultaneously maintaining the boundaries between groups, establishing science and scientists as the authoritative source of practical knowledge about those boundaries, and at the same time giving science a clear entry point for directing change.

Both these elements—the indeterminate boundaries between what is natural and what is social and the confusion of and over Lamarckian, Darwinian, and Mendelian understandings of evolution—are abundantly in evidence in a 1913 article by contributing editor Thorstein Veblen,

⁵ Stocking celebrates the liberation of the social that for him occurred around 1917; I would argue that while this shearing off of culture may have been good for the social sciences on an institutional level, and is certainly a crucial component of progressive thought now, it was by no means unambiguously a good thing from the point of view of racial justice for much of this century.

entitled “The Mutation Theory and the Blond Race.” In this article, Veblen explores what he describes as “two distinct but closely related captions: The Origin of the Blond Type, and the Derivation of the Blond Culture” (4/3: 492), in light of evolutionary theory in which change originates in mutation rather than through “usages.” The thrust of the article is that there is one true “dolicho-blond” in Europe, “in the lands immediately about the narrow Scandinavian waters,” and that the other “blond groups” are in fact “hybrid types” (4/3: 502). However, while Veblen’s interest in this topic, and desire to isolate the natural germ of what he in other works characterized as the most progressive world culture is in itself fascinating, the primary interest of the article for present purposes lies elsewhere.

A central problem for the Darwinian theory of natural selection was that of the “origin of the fittest”; that is, where did variation come from in the first place? Veblen seems to have perceived correctly that Mendel’s experiments might hold the key to that problem, though as it happens he was wrong as to how they would do so. What Veblen does, rather, is turn mutation theory into a theory of adaptation that mimics Lamarckianism—which he never mentions by name—in many important respects. That is, in his view, the “Mendelian postulate that the type is stable except for such a mutation as shall establish a new type” raised “at least the presumption that such a mutation will take place only under exceptional circumstances, that is to say, under circumstances so substantially different from what the type is best adapted to as to subject it to some degree of physiological strain” (4/3: 495). In this case, the “parent stock” entered Europe from Africa sometime in the late quaternary period, where it was “exposed to notably novel conditions of life, such as would be presumed...to tend to throw the stock into a specifically unstable (mutating) state” (4/3: 495). That is, external conditions would call forth appropriate adaptive mutations, in enough individuals that while they would inevitably have to mix with the parent stock, a new, “pure type” could in time arise. Moreover, culture itself could be among the environmental factors calling forth such change: “characteristic forms” arise “in adaptation to the peculiar circumstances of environment and culture under which each particular local population is required to live” (4/3: 504).

In this scheme, then, geography and culture—the two main stimuli for change in neo-Lamarckian theory—retain their causal centrality. There is no room for the random, purposeless

quality that later understandings of mutation would attribute to the process. What is important about this here is that evolution thus remained something that could be directed—if culture could prompt mutation, changes in education, administration, and industrial organization could still write new characteristics into the bodies of populations, which of course was central to a project of uplift in which racial distinctions were entirely “real,” and at the same time remediable.

These ideas were central to the uplift ideology of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Though current popular culture portrays them as polar opposites, and indeed in their lifetimes they often clashed bitterly, their differences were mostly political and strategic. What they shared was a vision of American blacks as a distinct racial/cultural (or in Du Bois’s term, “spiritual”) community that could and needed to be “developed”—in Washington’s view through vocational education; in Du Bois’s, by the leadership of an enlightened “talented tenth” of the black population—but which would nonetheless retain its separate identity indefinitely (cf. Gaines 1996, Reed 1996, Smith 1995, ch. 12). Du Bois doesn’t actually write for the JRD until 1917, but when he does it is to excoriate decadent and rotten “spirit of white culture” as the cause of the war in Europe and of European depredations in Africa (7/1).

That is, while culture is of primary concern, racial/civilizational criteria are the proper ones for dividing the world, both between and within national borders. Europeans and Americans are culturally different, but they share a “white spirit”; similarly, the American “Negro problem” is somehow of a piece with problems of colonial management in Africa. Again, however, this “stability of type” was for most writers in the JRD only provisional.

We have already seen that just as races can “develop,” they can also decline, as in Boyce’s treatment of the native populations in South and Central America, who upon crossing the Bering Strait and leaving North America behind lost the vigor that had propelled them on that journey and became torpid and conservative. This notion has two important implications that underlie much of the concern about development in general. The first is that the opposite of “development” would not necessarily be stasis: it would more probably be exploitation by more developed peoples, decline, and degeneration, to the point where peaceful coexistence would be threatened by “race war.” This anxiety is alluded to more often than directly stipulated, but it is

nevertheless palpable, particularly in discussions of the situation in the Pacific as well as of, tellingly, both American and South African “race relations,” as in Davis’s 1911 article on South Africa, cited above.

A second implication is that whites, too, face the possibility of collective decline. G. Stanley Hall, of course, seemed almost to welcome that prospect, but it was in fact a widespread concern of the early industrial era in America. For many, Frederick Jackson Turner perhaps best known among them, America’s distinguishing virtues were traceable to the “Teutonic” heritage of free political institutions combined with the existence of the frontier. This huge reservoir of land was supposed to guarantee that an independent, agrarian republican society would be able to avoid the decay that had beset all previous republican experiments in Europe.

Dorothy Ross has argued that when the “closing” of the frontier more or less coincided with establishment of large scale manufacturing in rapidly growing urban centers, populated by a growing industrial working class, this idyllic vision was threatened. This crisis produced an enormous range of responses, from the call for imperial expansion to replace the lost frontier, a number of populist and/or antimodernist rejections of cities and industrial production, to the embrace of modernity that characterized most progressive intellectuals: For them, “the realization of American liberal and republican ideals depended on the same forces that were creating liberal modernity in Europe, on the development of capitalism, democratic politics, and science. America’s unique condition did not block the full effects of modernity on this continent, but rather supported it” (Ross 1991: xv). However, this did not mean that America’s ideals would be realized automatically. Rather, it was the job of science to determine how the course of modernity could best be directed. It was this spirit, in large part, that animated the academic reformers of the era; it was certainly this spirit that animated the group who produced the JRD.

While the JRD did not advocate expansion by force of arms, nor saw settler colonialism as an answer to America’s problems, it consistently presented America’s future as deeply bound up with the rest of the world, and advocated outward-looking policies on many fronts. At the same time, though, the new, internationalist world they envisioned for the future carried some inherent dangers. What would happen to whites as they ventured into areas—and particularly climates—

populated by “the dark races?” As we have seen, Latin America was sometimes presented as a cautionary tale on that score (even by Latin Americans). The writer who paid the most thorough attention to this question was contributing editor Ellsworth Huntington.

As noted above, Ellsworth Huntington was a leading geographer who later became the head of the American Eugenics society. However, at this point the Eugenics movement as such had not been launched, and Huntington was working out his ideas in a number of books as well as the pages of nine major Geography journals and more than 40 other publications, ranging from the *American Historical Review* to *The Nation*.⁶ In his first major book *The Pulse of Asia* (1907) he elaborated the “Huntington Theory,” which suggested that significant and irregular climate changes had occurred over time, probably caused by changes in the sun, and profoundly influenced human culture. In his view, weather had stimulating (storms) and stultifying (unchanging heat) effects on the human constitution, and as a result, the worldwide distribution of civilization could be explained by the distribution of temperate climates. His theories were enormously influential, and whether they read him or not, most writers on evolutionary topics subscribed to some version of his basic premises.

Huntington published four articles in the JRD: “Physical Environment as a Factor in Turkey” (1/4), “Geographical Environment and Japanese Character” (2/4), “A Neglected Factor in Race Development” (7/2) and “The Adaptability of The White Man to Tropical America” (5/4). In the latter he argues that the riches of tropical America and Africa will be developed only with the “help” of “people of European origin.” The stultifying heat and evenness of the weather in the tropics, as well as the ease of life, are conditions which for ages have acted as handicaps to every race whose lot has been cast in” the tropics (5/4: 187). (He proceeds to focus on Latin America.) Such conditions make one “loathe to work” in general; prolonged exposure to them however, turns such lethargy into racial traits. He suggests that a few generations of habitation by whites in such regions could cause a like degeneration among them. (This would be compounded by the “fact” that “Experience in all parts of the world shows that the presence of an inferior race in large numbers tends constantly to lower the standards of the dominant race” [5/4: 193].) The

⁶ Publication history drawn from S.S. Visher. “Memoir to Ellsworth Huntington, 1876-1947.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 38/1 (March 1948).

fixes, once again, were scientific and institutional: Huntington looked to advances in medical science to offset the debilitating effects of tropical disease and to (unspecified) advances in hygiene and institutional arrangements to offset the generational decline.

VI. Concluding thoughts

The very evolutionary theory that for some proved the immutable inferiority of non-Anglo-Saxons to many of the writers in the JRD signaled a field of almost unbounded possibility, and a good use for their skills. For the most part they allied themselves with the disadvantaged, “developing” peoples of the world. And they devoted themselves to identifying the problematic patterns of social organization that were seen to underlie those disadvantages—a research tradition that has, I would argue, a largely uninterrupted history, continuing today.

This research tradition—one of, to put it simply, diagnosis and prescription for “sick” societies—of course does not now and has probably never completely defined the entire field that we know today as “Development Studies.” A long tradition of Marxist analysis locates the predicament of the “Third” or “developing” world in core-periphery capitalist relations; another examines the legacies of colonialism; still others focus on practical conditions for and constraints on economic growth in an increasingly globalized economy, the possibilities for state v. market-led development, etc. However, all of these traditions have to varying degrees participated in another, larger tradition of ranking societies on a scale of less to more developed, and seeking the causes (if not final causes, at least proximate ones) of those differences in something called society or culture. (Even climate—while the worries expressed by Huntington about racial decline seem to have faded with the Eugenics movement, theories relating climate to entrepreneurship and economic development were not outside the pale in development theory until the 1970s.) Examples of this abound, and are perhaps today most represented in the increasing concern with such topics as social capital and the development of democratic political culture, which has consistently focused on the socio-cultural determinants of development.

I do not mean here to condemn that tradition as racist by association with the earlier, much more frankly racialized and biological understanding of “development” exemplified by the JRD. While

you can certainly find racism in much of this scholarship, some of it is also not only consistently and fiercely anti-racist but also deeply committed to undermining the very idea of race (see Mahmoud Mamdani's work, for example). In any event, to make such a blanket claim would be exaggerated, ahistorical, and unhelpful. I do believe, however, that uncovering what Vitalis (drawing on Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, and others) has called the "unspoken" history of racial thought in the disciplines—in this case primarily development studies, but take your pick—is useful in a number of ways. First and most straightforwardly, it helps to fill out and correct the historical record, which is valuable in and of itself.

But it may also be an important step in a process of self-examination. (Coming to Political Science from Anthropology and Development Studies, I at least see myself as very deeply formed by these traditions.) I don't claim to know what the results would be of such a process, beyond some increased self-consciousness and clearer understanding of the precedents for certain conceptual frameworks, etc. But I do think it would help us to understand, and possibly correct, a few things. To give as concrete an example as possible, tradition holds that political science in America has largely been silent about race. I don't believe this to be true—the fact that the *Journal of Race Development* counted political scientists among its editors and contributors is a small piece of evidence to the contrary, for example. Beyond that I cannot argue the point here. But this perception, fuelled in my opinion by an insensitivity to the ways that race has structured any number of political science debates, sometimes by omission, has in some ways been self-fulfilling. As Professor David Plotke pointed out to me in one of our many (and very helpful) discussions of this paper, people interested in questions of racial hierarchy, such as many members of the first generations of people of color to get social science PhDs in America in any real numbers, have been steered away from political science, leaving it one of the most (if not *the* most) segregated of the social sciences.

Another example can be found in Anthropology. Anthropologists have responded to a blizzard of criticism in the last quarter of the twentieth century, mostly focused on anthropology's role as the "handmaiden of colonialism" and largely from within the discipline, by developing a program of "anthropologizing up": studying how powerful institutions, such as governments, academia, and even the natural sciences, deploy and maintain that power. I don't cite this example to suggest

that other disciplines follow it, but only to point out that new and fruitful research programs can arise from this kind of serious self-examination.

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