Chapter 5: “To Lay These Specters To Rest"

In earlier chapters I have discussed the functional identity of racial and historical
development for significant currents of late nineteenth and early twentieth century
American political theory. Now I will turn to a dramatic disruption of that link. In this
chapter and the one that follows I argue that two developments in the science of race and
ascriptive hierarchy are key sources of an interwar-era transformation in the way political
science understood its own enterprise, and to the images of liberalism and democracy that
it began to produce. These are the critique of evolutionary anthropology by Franz Boas
and his students and the publicity attendant to the Army intelligence-testing program
during World War I.

According to Dorothy Ross, it was in this period that Chicago political scientist
and Social Science Research Council founder (and former Burgess student) Charles
Merriam’s “scientific program began to transform the traditional concerns of the
discipline.” This transformation set his students—notably Harold Lasswell—on what
Ross calls a course of “extension and elevation of scientism in the profession.” For most
historians of the discipline, this new course represents a significant modernization (for
lack of a better word) of the discipline, at least in the sense that it is when American
political science begins to look recognizable to practitioners of the discipline today. More
specifically, Ross locates interwar political science, particularly as practiced at the
Chicago department led by Merriam, directly on the genealogical line of 1950s
behavioralism (of which, for her, Merriam is “rightly the grandfather”) (Ross 1991: 452,
457). Robert Dahl, a self-identified veteran of the behavioral revolution, concurs, naming
Merriam’s contribution to political science as one of the “specific…very powerful stimuli” to the subsequent “rapid flowering of the behavioral approach in the United States.”

For Ross, Merriam’s key contribution is a commitment to “scientism;” for Dahl, it is his fostering of a “new mood of scientific empiricism” (Dahl 1961: 763). However, as John Gunnell points out, these terms, like many used to characterize this disciplinary moment, are exceedingly vague. Moreover, commitments to “science” and empirical evidence were hardly new in the discipline, and in fact constituted central claims to authority for the Teutonic theory of the founding generation. This leads Gunnell to characterize the interwar period as one more of continuity and “methodological refinement” than of real change in the discipline, though he concedes that “hold[ing] Merriam's post-1920 work up against the arguments of some of the most influential members of the Columbia school from which he emerged, always seems to evoke a sense of contrast” (1992: 134). This chapter, and the following one, claim that attention to the discipline’s engagement with race and racial thought during this period can help to specify the content of that contrast.¹ That is, the methodological innovations of this period are connected to fundamental shifts in political scientists’ understanding of the relationship between nature and politics, and of the relationship of both of these to historical and evolutionary time—shifts that are effected through engagement with the new sciences of race emerging from anthropology and psychology.

To make this argument, these chapters examine a subset of political theory literature in the 1920s, produced in large part by graduates of Burgess’s Columbia

¹ This topic receives fuller treatment in the conclusion to Chapter 6.
Department of History and Political Science, that grapples specifically with the questions raised by the work of Boas and his students and by the new psychology of mental testing. Here I will focus on the first, arguing that engagement with the Boasian critique of Victorian anthropology led to a rejection by this cohort of the overtly racialized (and often nakedly racist) framework that had been the common sense of Burgess’s generation. More significantly, it led them to sever the link between modern political and social organization and evolutionary time.

*Integration and Differentiation of the Social Sciences in the Interwar Period*

The years immediately following World War I were ones of significant ferment and self-examination within the rapidly expanding and professionalizing social sciences. In Ross’s characterization, this period saw significant growth in the “strength of the professional structure of the disciplines and their consequent power to socialize recruits into professional norms” (Ross 1991: 392). This was certainly true of political science. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the field in its early decades was closely allied not only to other social sciences as such but to education reform, journalism, civil and military service, law, and missionary work as well. It was not unusual, in fact, for many of these fields to intersect in a single biography. Just to give one example, David P. Barrows, a contributing editor of the *JRD* who would go on to become President of the University of California and Chair of its political science department, received his Ph. D. in anthropology in 1897, and did an extended stint as a Taft appointee running the school system first in Manila and then in the Philippines as a whole before returning to the
academy in 1910. His academic career, moreover, ran concurrently with an illustrious military one, which included intelligence and other service in the Philippines and elsewhere and culminated in his 1926 commission by President Coolidge as major general of the United States army [University of California Academic Senate 1958].)

According to Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus’s portrait of the early years of institutional political science, Barrows’ career may have been unusually distinguished, but it was not atypical in the way it mixed disciplines and scholarly and non-scholarly activity. In their periodization, it is not until the discipline’s “middle period”–roughly 1921-1945–that the field begins to emerge as a clearly defined, specialized, university-based academic discipline. It is also a period in which, as newer departments consolidate, and the students of Burgess and Adams fan out across the county, Columbia and Johns Hopkins cede their place of leadership in the discipline, significantly to a rising University of Chicago under Merriam (1982: Ch 1, 55-57, 110).

Institutional development was accompanied by efforts at new intellectual coherence and reach in the social sciences as a whole. The establishment of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), discussed in detail in Chapter Seven, was one of the most tangible of the efforts to bring the social sciences to bear in a coordinated way on social and intellectual problems. But it was far from the only one. Both during the 1920s and since much was made of the “blossoming” of a newly self-conscious “science-oriented social science” (Ross op. cit: 311) in the aftermath of the the first World War. One touchstone for this development in political science is Merriam’s 1925 book, New Aspects of Politics. But in fact he was but one of a number of ambitious institution builders eager to redefine their disciplines and the social sciences in general at this
Juncture. One result was the publication of a number of thick, edited, programmatic volumes with titles like *The History and Prospects of the Social Sciences* (Barnes, Bigelow, Brunhes, et. al., 1925) and *Recent Developments in The Social Sciences* (Ellwood, Wissler, Gault, et. al., 1927), as well as more specialized collections like T. V. Smith and Leonard D. White’s *Chicago: An Experiment in Social Science Research* (1929). In 1930 this synthetic ambition culminated in the publication of the first volume of the pathbreaking *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.

By their very inclusiveness, all of these works instantiate an interest in integrating the various spheres of human knowledge, and their editors’ comments generally present this task as an urgent response to a perceived increase in the complexity and interrelation of modern, industrial civilization (to say nothing of the complex interrelations demonstrated by the far-reaching devastation of the war). It is interesting to note, however, that in so doing the books also effect a significant amount of “boundary work,” defining the increasingly professionalized disciplines. This desire for both integration and professional differentiation is clearly visible in the introduction to *The History and Prospects of the Social Sciences*. In it, Harry Elmer Barnes comments that

> If better and saner types of conduct are to be achieved, this must be brought about by giving the individual a better set of … guiding criteria for conduct. What these … shall be can only be determined by the most earnest and prolonged collaboration of natural and social scientists, each a specialist, and all dominated by the aim of social betterment (op. cit.: xv, emphasis added)².

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² Of course, this quote, and much of the rhetoric surrounding all of these efforts at defining the social sciences and their relationship to one another, also instantiates at least a possible tension between notions of “scientific detachment” and “political relevance,” though as has often been commented about the social scientists of this period, they mainly seemed to believe that the results of “dispassionate” science would more or less automatically be social progress. In any event, that question has been analyzed elsewhere (e.g. Seidelman and Harpham 1985) and is not central to the argument of this chapter.
This somewhat paradoxical set of purposes is striking in the very structure of *The Social Sciences and Their Interrelations* (1927). In this volume, editors Alexander Goldenweiser (a prominent anthropologist then based at the New School for Social Research) and William Fielding Ogburn (of the University of Chicago’s sociology department) call for “constant cooperation” between social scientists, with “an all but complete disregard of academic and classificatory distinctions” (7) while at the same time making an almost comically extensive use of such distinctions: The table of contents lists 34 short chapters; the first set consider the relationship of anthropology to, respectively, economics, ethics, history, law, political science, psychology, religion, sociology, and statistics. Then follow chapters on the relationship of economics to, again respectively, ethics, law, political science, psychology, and statistics. The pattern then repeats for history, political science, and sociology, with a final four chapters on “The Social Sciences and Biology,” “The Social Sciences and Education,” “The Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences,” and “The Social Sciences and Philosophy.”

The ambiguous, if not to say self-contradictory, effect of this structure was noted by contemporaries. E. B. Reuter in the *American Journal of Sociology* describes the volume as primarily an attempt to “define the various social sciences” (1928: 998) and political scientist C. E. G. Catlin, reviewing the book for the *Philosophical Review* saw it as “a significant indication [of] the importance for method…of delimiting the fields of the respective social disciplines in other than a merely popular fashion” (1929: 497).

This simultaneous impulses toward interdisciplinarity and the carving out of distinct institutional and intellectual spaces for the various fields is similarly in evidence a relatively early “state of the field” effort for political science, co-edited by Merriam...
and, once again, Harry Barnes, a particularly prolific sociologist, historian, and political theorist then teaching at Clark University. In the early 1920s the two began planning a Festschrift for their shared mentor at Columbia, William Archibald Dunning. The volume, eventually published as *A History of Political Theories, Recent Times: Essays on Contemporary Developments in Political Theory* (1924; hereafter *HPTRT*) was meant both as a tribute to Dunning and as a sort of sequel to and update of his three-volume *History of Political Theories* (1902, 1905, 1913), which had surveyed the history of Western political thought from ancient Greece through the theories of Herbert Spencer. Commissioned essays by Dunning’s former students were meant to “present and interpret” the “many interesting and significant developments in political thought” since the late nineteenth century, when Dunning’s final volume left off (Merriam in *HPTRT*: vii). Primarily intended as a textbook for political science courses, the book contained contributions not only from teachers in that discipline but from people holding positions in departments of sociology, anthropology, law, and philosophy, among others. This of course reflected the diverse careers of Dunning’s many students, but also the purpose of the editors. Describing their vision of the field, co-editor Barnes wrote that the subject of “political rights” needed to be “rejuvenate[d]” and “divest[ed]” of “metaphysical origins

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3 Correspondence between the editors on the planning, execution, and eventual fate of the volume can be found in CEM papers Series 2, Subseries 3, Box 25, folder 15. In particular, in letters on January 20 and May 16 of 1924, Barnes reports to Merriam that the book is getting wide use in introductory courses, as hoped, and is set to “pulverize” a competing text then planned by Francis Coker. (Coker, who contributed a chapter on sovereignty to the Merriam/Barnes volume, may have agreed: His *Recent Political Thought*, Barnes’s apparent referent in the letter, did not in fact appear for another decade.)

4 It also represents the incompleteness of professional specialization by this time. Most of “non political scientists” in *HPTRT* published articles in *APSR* and *PSQ*; the political scientists, for their part, wrote for a wide range of journals, including those identified with sociology, history, philosophy, economics, law, and statistics.
and implications” (387).\textsuperscript{5} Merriam amplified this point in his contribution, characteristically titled “Recent Tendencies in Political Thought,” in which Merriam applauded the beginnings of a revival and "restudy" of the "Aristotelean doctrine" of man's political nature "more and more upon the ground of fundamental impulses, ethnic, economic, or psychological" (23). In this vision, echoed throughout the volume, political science, in order to claim its own place and achieve relevance in the modern world, needed new premises; paradoxically, these premises were to be sought in “fundamental” knowledge about human behavior drawn at least initially from other disciplines.

Another tension was more specific to the nature of the Festschrift form. As the editors’ correspondence on the matter sometimes gently alluded, the book was intended at once to celebrate Dunning and also to stake out the differences in their own generation’s political science, if not from Dunning’s own, then from that of Dunning’s generation.\textsuperscript{6} For the most part, this task is handled quite delicately.\textsuperscript{7} One of the most striking areas of difference, containing by far the most strongly worded criticism of the scholarship of the group’s teachers, and in particular Burgess, had to do with the treatment of race and racial difference.

\textsuperscript{5} An earlier version of this essay had been given as an invited address to the APSA, and was reprinted in the \textit{APSR} in 1921. The earlier version opened by commenting that the "fact that a sociologist has been asked to appear on the program of the American Political Science Association … is an admission that some political scientists have at last come to consider sociology of sufficient significance to students of political science" (Barnes 1921: 487).
\textsuperscript{6} Dunning died while the book was in its editorial phase, turning the volume into a sort of memorial work.
\textsuperscript{7} [GIVE EXAMPLE].
Rejecting Teutonism in Political Science

The volume as published contained thirteen chapters covering general currents in political thought, theories of democracy, pluralism and state sovereignty, international law, jurisprudence, socialism in theory and practice, pragmatism, the “contribution of sociology to modern political theory,” social psychology, anthropological theories of the state, anthropogeography, and “race as a factor in political theory,” among other topics. The book was reviewed in all the main political and social science journals (e.g. Curtis 1925, Elliot 1925, Fenwick 1925, Gettell 1925, Grierson 1925, Smith 1925, AAPSS: 1925). The vast majority of the reviews were highly respectful; almost all noted the prominence and distinction already achieved by the majority of the contributors. The reviews also overwhelmingly (and generally positively) noted that the contributors, all products of the Columbia Department of Political Science and History, were both reflecting and contributing to a political theory significantly different from that of their teachers. To the reviewer for The American Journal of International Law, HPTRT represented a “treasure-house” of all that was “current” in political theory (Fenwick 1925: 242). In The International Journal of Ethics, T. V. Smith of the University of Chicago noted that, “political theory has become socialized,” commenting that the book was characterized by a "more concrete orientation than Professor Dunning himself was able to achieve"; a change, according to Smith, “for the better” (op. cit. 312). Likewise, for Raymond Gettell in The American Historical Review, "The volume under review is strongest where Dunning was weakest,” that is, in recognizing the "change in point of
view resulting from the contributions of anthropology, sociology, and social psychology" (op. cit. 575).

Two exceptions to the positive value given to this shift were the reviews in the *American Political Science Review* and the *Philosophical Review*. W. Y. Elliot of the University of California qualified an otherwise laudatory review by characterizing the book’s “tone” as “too largely sociological” (op. cit.: 178). The book’s lone mainly negative notice appeared in *The Philosophical Review*, where Matoon M. Curtis of Western Reserve University commented that, “Insofar as politics has leaned on sociology, it has become weak and incoherent, forgetting logic, ethics, and aesthetics alike” (op. cit.: 499).

Even Curtis, however, was favorable toward the book’s treatment of race, praising a highly critical discussion by Franklin Hamilton Hankins of Teutonism and its variations as well as contributions by Alexander Goldenweiser and Franklin Thomas, both critical of teleological “stage” theories of political evolution and anthropogeography (ibid: 498-499). Other notices echoed the sentiments, as when John Grierson of the University of Chicago, writing in the *American Journal of Sociology*, commented that, “The greatest single pleasure of the book--if style and wit still count for anything in political science--is Professor Hankins' chapter on 'Race as a Factor in Political Theory.' Professor Hankins' refutal of the Aryan and Teutonic myths has a gusto which ought to lay these specters to rest for good" (104, cf. also Smith 1925: 313).

As should be clear from the foregoing, many of the contributions were sharply critical of the Teutonism of Burgess—who as the founding chair of Dunning’s
department had also taught many if not most contributors—and Adams.⁸ (These figures are invoked both by name and by allusion). The break with Teutonism is generally presented as a move to incorporate the more “modern” scientific findings available to a new generation of scholars.⁹ Moreover, other varieties of race theory came in for frequently devastating dismissal. Hankins’s contribution addressed this topic most directly. Hankins was a statistician and sociologist who had headed the Department of Political and Social Science at Clark University until he left to teach economics and sociology at Smith College, where he remained at the time of writing. Author of a study of Adolphe Quételet’s statistical work (his doctoral dissertation at Columbia [Hankins 1908]); former contributing editor of the *JRD*; frequent contributor to sociological and statistical journals, *Political Science Quarterly*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Hankins was a prominent Progressive, reformer, and outspoken pacifist then at work on what would become *The Racial Basis of Civilization: A Critique of the Nordic Doctrine* (1926).

Hankins’ essay for *HPTRT*, eventually entitled “Race as a Factor in Political Theory” (earlier working titles had included “The Contributions of Social Biology to Political Theory” and “The Contributions of Social Biology and Statistics to Political Theory”¹⁰), minced no words. It unhesitatingly reduced Teutonism to a symptom of “prejudice” and “pride,” writing that,

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⁸ Merriam for example had taken at least two courses from Burgess, including his class on Comparative Constitutional Law of the Commonwealths of the United States and Comparative Constitutional Law. His notes from these classes can be found in CEM Papers, Series 1, Subseries 3, Box 6, Folders 3-6. Moreover, Burgess mentored Merriam, for example helping him as he began his career (see correspondence in Series 1, Subseries 3, Box 1, folder 17).

⁹ Though Hankins in fact claims that even the science available to Burgess in the late nineteenth century should have been enough to undermine his faith in the “Teutonic germ” (533; see below).

¹⁰ See correspondence between Merriam and Barnes, op. cit.; also correspondence between Merriam and Hankins, CEM Papers, Series 2, Subseries 3, Box 31, Folder 9.
[C]ertain definite doctrines of racial purity, racial superiority, and racial capacity for political organization and cultural achievement … have figured largely in the writings, speeches, and calculations of statesmen, publicists and scholars during the last half-century. By all odds the most important of all such doctrines in recent times is that known as Aryanism… the ancestor of a variety of descendant doctrines which still exert a powerful influence over popular emotions and on the thought of scholars and litterateurs. For it is an historical fact that Aryanism differentiated into Teutonism, Celtism, Anglo-Saxonism, and Nordicism—depending on the particular form of race prejudice and pride which the particular circumstances of Germany, France, England and America seemed to require (511).

Not only serving local chauvinism, Teutonism was scientifically suspect, based on “the naïve and popular” conceptions of race “of an age preceding the discoveries of modern anthropology and ethnology” (514). “[D]octrines of the mythical potency of the Teuton for political and cultural ascendancy (524) were “idealized” (530), “gross exaggeration” (535), and, worst of all, “metaphysical or idealistic” (538). Burgess specifically was not only wrong but unduly impressed by European conceits: “While acting in harmony with that type of pseudo-science which was considered good political policy in certain German university circles,” by embracing Teutonism he “committed a serious error from which an intimate knowledge of existing anthropological knowledge would have saved him” (533).

Hankins begins his essay with a wide-ranging critique of the “doctrine[s] of the inherent supremacy of an imaginary Aryan race” (514) elaborated by figures from Arthur de Gobineau to Houston Stewart Chamberlain and given credence by “social selectionists” such as Paul Broca, Francis Galton, Georges Vacher de Lapouge, and

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11 James W. Ceasar is one of many who have noted the “intellectual campaign” of American Progressives against concepts they labeled as “metaphysical” but that had, by previous generations, been understood as “science”; this is clearly a salvo in that campaign, if a late one. Ceasar also points out that the rejection of Teutonism in the interwar era is related to a more general disenchantment with “the German forests” so romanticized by Teutonic mythologizing, which had, as a result of the war and the sentiments kindled by it in the United States, “lost much of their luster, as well as their foliage” (2007: 23, 19).
others. On Gobineau and Chamberlain Hankins is scathing, at one point despairing that “elaborate criticism of all [Gobineau’s] generalizations is not possible here” (514) and that Chamberlain’s work among other things constitutes “a complete rejection of all the approved methods of modern physical anthropology and their replacement by a method of intuitive discernment of spiritual affinity” (522). To the “social selectionists” he is gentler, conceding that they had made a substantial contribution to the understanding of heredity but insisting nevertheless that they had “neglected” the diversity within racial groups, constructing “ideal” types that were not useful to a truly “scientific” understanding of race (530).

Burgess himself is taken to task for combining “the race mysticism of Gobineau” with Fichte and Hegel’s “even more mystical philosophy of state” (535). Hankins criticizes Burgess’s work for similar scientific faults to those discussed above, including confusion about the category of race itself and a misunderstanding of its relationship to culture, as when he conflates nationality and race or alternates between using language as a proxy for race and distinguishing between racial groups who speak the same language (531-536). Hankins goes on to link Teutonism to “the most systematic exposition” of the “present form of Anglo-Saxonism…contained in Madison Grant’s The Passing of the Great Race, or the Racial Basis of European History,” which he describes as a “veritable fountainhead from which has poured an avalanche of Nordic mythologizing, race mysticism, and sociological dogmatizing” in which “contradictions and inconsistencies are overlooked, while preference is given to those doctrines which strike a deeply responsive chord in popular tradition and race egotism” (540-1).

That is, Burgess’s work was not only wrong, but also politically objectionable.
Hankins goes on to amplify this point, accusing Burgess’s work of “aid[ing] in perpetuating a point of view” characterized by an “ego-centric and ethnocentric theological interpretation of historical processes.” This “point of view” implied “[t]he Teutonic nations also must have a colonial policy […] in which […] there are no supposed rights of barbaric peoples which need to be respected,” and ultimately held that “might makes right in the political sphere” (537-538). As such, for Hankins, it was “one of the psychological features leading to the Great War… (534). 12

Hankins is by far the most forthrightly hostile critic of Teutonism and race theory generally, and the most forthrightly political, in the Merriam and Barnes volume, but his position does not appear to have been idiosyncratic. In his own contribution, Barnes wrote of “the essential illiteracy and scientific bankruptcy which is self-confessed on the part of any writer who would attempt a racial explanation of the political development of any European state, ancient or modern” and of “how extremely tenuous is all evidence for the doctrine of racial superiority[,] the Aryan myth and all allied vestiges of racial arrogance which have perverted history and politics from the days of Artistotle and St. Peter” to the present (371). Similar sentiments appear in a number of other essays. Charles Elmer Gehlke, in his discussion of “Social Psychology and Political Theory” characterizes the notion of “an ‘instinctive leaning’ toward parliamentarism in the Anglo-Saxon, or toward despotism in the Slav” as “the extreme of absurdity” (420). Even the generally diplomatic Merriam, in his introductory chapter, noted that political and social theory of the previous generation was “often overlaid with race prejudice, or with

12 As noted above, Hankins had spoken out against American involvement in World War I. Indeed, a number of the contributors to this volume were outspoken opponents of America’s entry into the war, including co-editor Barnes, Alexander Goldenweiser, and E.M. Borchard, who contributed a chapter on International Law.
national influence or propaganda of an absurdly transparent type," with much theorizing on the topic of race taking “casual and superficial traits and characters…for the temperament and attitude of the group, often with the most astounding disregard for the primary elements of scientific method" (19-20). In total, seven of the thirteen chapters specifically address questions of race and racial difference, and in not one of these is a racial theory of history advanced or even partially endorsed. In this sense the volume as a whole represents a resounding rejection of the category of race as a basis for political theory, and as such a significant break with the work of the founding generation. The sense of generational change is amplified when you consider that, by definition, all contributors to *HPRTR* had studied in Burgess’s Department of Political Science and, as noted above, many had studied with Burgess directly.

While perhaps rejecting Burgess and Adams-style racialism more explicitly than most, in this the contributors to *HPRTR* seem to have been taking what had become a more or less mainstream position within the discipline. The early decades of the twentieth century were of course a high point for “Nordicism” in America, with Lothrop Stoddard’s *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (1920) and *The Revolt Against Civilization* (1922) just two of the many white supremacist screeds following up on the success of Madison Grant’s 1916 *The Passing of the Great Race*, a bestseller that was reissued and reprinted multiple times into the 1920s (Tucker 1996: 93). And of course the immediate postwar era was generally one of nativist and racial hysteria. However, responses to Nordicism and its many proponents in the review pages of two major political science journals, *The American Political Science Review* (*APSР*) and *Political Science Quarterly* (*PSQ*) in the first half of the 1920s in general ranged
from qualified endorsement to, more commonly, mild condescension or outright dismissal. A new edition of *The Passing of the Great Race* was reviewed in an unsigned, brief “book note” in *PSQ* in 1920 as little more than “an attempt…to glorify the ‘Nordic’ race” (*PSQ* 1920: 697). In 1921, *The Group Mind* (1920) by William McDougall, a leading “race psychologist” and “spokesman for the inequality of races” (Stocking 1969 [1982]: 216-217), was described in *PSQ* as “mystical,” “metaphysical,” linguistically sloppy, and lacking “a critical attitude toward alleged facts” (McBain 1921: 123). Four years later, McDougall’s *Ethics and Some Modern World Problems* received nearly as critical a review in the same journal from Frank Knight. Knight eventually conceded that McDougall’s work had some scholarly value, but he began his review by characterizing the book as primarily “propaganda” and “special pleading” in contrast to “science” (Knight 1925: 140, 138).

The *APSR* review of Roland B. Dixon’s white supremacist tract, *The Racial History of Mankind* (1923), referred to the book as a “polygenetic outburst” and commented that, “The days of slavery called forth a whole series of polygenistic treatises, and now, after the great war, we may expect a blossoming of [similar] theories of diverse human stocks” (Starr 1923: 676-77). A few numbers later in the same journal, international relations scholar Raymond Leslie Buell reviewed three books interrogating the relationship between race and civilization. Buell’s review, itself rather complacently paternalistic in its attitude toward “backward” peoples, took a jab at “Nordic idolators,” who were, Buell believed, likely to be “disappointed” by the fact that none of the books “harp[ed] upon” white supremacy (Buell 1923: 496). Quincy Wright took much the same

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13 It is worth noting that the author of this review, Frederick Starr, was a biologically-minded anthropologist from the University of Chicago generally favorably disposed to racial determinism (cf. Stocking 1968 [1982]: 184, 281).
tone with a book by Vice-Admiral G.A. Ballard considering the comparative maritime talents of Nordics, Latins, and Anglo-Saxons; for Wright, Ballard’s discussion of Anglo superiority in this regard, while marking him as “a good Englishman” also indicated his “lack of meticulous scholarship and careful objectivity” (Wright 1924: 413-414). Similarly, Hankins was asked to review John Grant’s *The Problem of War and Its Solution* (1922) for *PSQ*; the review faulted the book for using old-fashioned classifications of the European races (1924: 522). Another review in the same issue made disparaging reference to the “Nordic propaganda” associated (by name) with William McDougall, Lothrop Stoddard, and Madison Grant (Hayes 1924: 503). The following year, Stuart Rice urged “pro-Nordics” to a “dispassionate” reading of Herbert Adolphus Miller’s book, *Races, Nations, and Classes* (1924), a book diagnosing the urge for racial domination as a psychological disorder (Rice 1925: 294).

This is not to say that white supremacy itself was categorically denied or even seriously challenged in these pages with any regularity; Buell’s review, cited above, noted with an approval typical of the *APSR*’s general tone on the subject that one of the authors “does say that the white man is better than the black, because ‘he has behind him a tradition of collective growth in power and knowledge for now nearly three thousand years, in which each individual has a share’” and this meant “the West should use this accumulated power, as a trustee, ‘to bring up the whole body of their fellow men to the level reached by the most advanced’” (op. cit.). As will be explored more fully below, the rejection was not of racism per se, but primarily of race as a proxy and catchall explanation for “civilizational” development, of the associated “historical” method, and for making distinctions between European groups (on the latter, cf. also GilFillan 1924).
The mounting rejection of the Burgess/Adams brand of historicism can be seen in the review in the *APSR* of Burgess’s late work, *Recent Changes in American Constitutional History* (1923) (a denunciation of what Burgess saw as the menacing expansion of the regulatory powers of the state and the looming threat of a world state). Here, the senior scholar receives only barely respectful treatment. While the reviewer, Harvard’s H. A. Yeomans, begins by saying that the book merits “careful and widespread attention,” he goes on to make clear that it belongs to a previous generation, noting that it is marred by “pervading exaggeration” and “gloominess” to the extent that “few except students and pessimists will care to read” it and going on to contrast it with another work, which though also “historical” in method is nonetheless “keen, sane, and up-to-date” (1924: 398-399).

Of course, both Burgess-style historicism and more explicit “Nordicism.” “Aryanism,” and etc., retained credence among some political scientists. William McDougall was still called upon in 1923 by the Williamstown Institute of Politics (an organization founded three years earlier to study and disseminate information about international affairs) as an authority on “Race as a Factor in World Politics,” for example (see Williams 1924: 648). And Charles C. Josey’s *Race and National Solidarity*, a white supremacist tract so extreme that the *Journal of Philosophy* speculated that it might be a “hoax” (the reviewer called it “the most unblushing and brutal appeal for the cultivation and extension of the white race we have seen,” and noted that it “outdoes Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard” [Wolfe 1924: 444]) received favorable mention in the *APSR* the same year. (The unsigned review opined that Josey “writes in good temper, is actuated by no unreasoning prejudices, and makes what many readers will regard as a strong case”
And passing reference to, for example, the advantages of a high ratio of “Teutonic racial elements” (Sims 1920:69), the “handicap” of “racial diversity” (Cox 1921: 244), the “well recognized sociological principle” of racial segregation (Ross 1925: 639), or the “unequal capacities” of the races (Commons 1922: 147), as well an understanding of colonialism as at least potentially a project of “uplift” (e.g. Buell op. cit.) remained relatively unexceptional in the pages of both journals. Nonetheless, if the review pages of the major journals are any indication of theoretical trends, which it seems reasonable to expect they are, sweeping syntheses of race, history, and political development were increasingly viewed as passé, if only methodologically.

This shift in attitude is captured well by the “Report on the Second National Conference on the Science of Politics,” published in the APSR in February 1925. That document contained a section on “Pre-Scientific Studies” that largely dismissed the theoretical bases of the work of a previous generation of political scientists. It did not, however, dismiss the possibility of a relationship between race and politics. Rather, it called for a new understanding of this relationship as a question to be tested, rather than a premise from which to depart:

Before quantitative work can be begun in the social sciences it is perhaps characteristic to find a period of speculation and historical inquiry into the subject. Out of much study come they hypotheses that can, at a later time, be subjected to quantitative scrutiny. It is frequently possible to discuss these hypotheses gleaned from historical or other informal evidence without seeing the immediate possibility of experimentally verifying them. Such theories, doctrines, and hypotheses break up gradually into groups of more specific questions that may be studied with the quantitative controls of scientific method. This will probably be the case with such questions as the influence of Nordic or Mediterranean nationalities on American civilization (Hall et. al., 1925: 113).
That is, Teutonism, Nordicism, etc., belonged to an earlier “period of speculation,” a perhaps necessary phase in the development of a science presumably coming into its own, or beginning to do so, in the 1920s. These theories then were to be rejected less for their emphasis on racial inequality than for their speculative, “historical,” and “non-quantitative” character.

While in the context of political science the main targets of this faint praise would clearly be Burgess and Adams, this “pre-scientific” understanding of political evolution was also associated with what Barnes called “the imposing but treacherous edifice of Morganian genetic sociology” (*HPRTR*: 367). That is, as discussed at greater length in Chapter Three, while Burgess and Adams were interested in the particular determinants and genealogy of Anglo-Saxon civilization, they were working very much in a tradition with Lewis Henry Morgan and other Victorian social evolutionists associated with the “comparative method,” who painted a broader, if clearly similar, picture. Morgan’s foundational work, *Ancient Society* (1877 [1964]), for example elaborated a sequence of seven “stages” of social evolution that was “historically true of the entire human family, up to the status attained by each branch respectively” (3-4). It was against this notion of a predetermined, teleological racial development, and what they characterized as the synthetic, deductive methodological style associated with it, that the contributors to *HPRTR* aimed their attack.
The Impact of Franz Boas

Just as the Gilded Age political scientists had borrowed heavily from early anthropology to construct their schema of political evolution, in making this shift their students (by the interwar era prominent scholars in their own right) were responding to important shifts taking place in anthropology. Each of the seven *HPTRT* contributions to directly address race makes reference to, and many substantially discuss, what Barnes refers to as “the work of a group of American anthropologists led by Professor Franz Boas [and using] a truly inductive method” (367). Gehlke’s discussion of social psychology acknowledges the competing framework of “another group of social scientists”: "the cultural anthropologists, Boas, Lowie, Goldenweiser, Wissler, Kroeber, and others," including the sociologist William Fielding Ogburn (417). Throughout the texts there are references to the “critical anthropologists” (e.g. Hankins 544; Thomas, 459) and “the American group of anthropologists, under Franz Boas” (Willey 58), as well as to concepts worked out within the emerging Boasian framework,\(^\text{14}\) such as Ogburn’s “cultural lag” (e.g. Merriam 11).\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^\text{14}\) There has been some debate over the idea of a Boasian “school” or “paradigm” (cf. Castañeda 2003 for a discussion of this issue, also see Stocking 1968 [1982] and Stocking 1992, esp pp. 123-126). For present purposes, however, the question of whether cultural anthropology by this point or any other had achieved the status of “normal science,” or more generally of the appropriateness of such Kuhnian terminology for the social sciences (or at all), is not at issue. Suffice to say that the contributors to *A History of Political Theories, Recent Times*, clearly understood Boas and certain of his students to represent a particular, relatively coherent, and new, theoretical approach.

\(^\text{15}\) Ogburn defined “cultural lag” as follows: “The thesis is . . . that the source of most modern social changes today is the material culture. The material-culture changes force changes in other parts of culture such as social organization and customs, but these latter parts of culture do not change as quickly. They lag behind the material-culture changes, hence we are living in a period of maladjustment.” (Ogburn 1922: 196). As such, for Ogburn it was mainly intended to characterize problems within a given culture. As the concept moved into general usage it could also characterize a disconnect between a particular people’s cultural level and that of the surrounding society and economy. In this usage it could characterize peasants moving into an industrial economy or urban setting (American blacks in the north were often analyzed in this frame), or immigrants confronting modern American conditions, for example.. (The novelty of this
The foundations of the Boasian critique of social evolutionism around the turn of the twentieth century were laid in Boas’s work in the Pacific Northwest in the 1890s, during which he began to understand cultural change in that context in historical terms—as the product of cultural “diffusion”—rather than developmental/evolutionary ones. This formed the basis for the elements of Boasian anthropology that are best remembered outside the profession: the elaboration of a new concept of culture, and a limited rejection of racial determinism. Eighteenth-century humanistic and evolutionary concepts of culture generally understood it as the “progressive accumulation of the characteristic manifestations of human creativity art, science, knowledge, refinement—those things that freed man from control by nature, by environment, by instinct, by habit, or by custom”—that is, as the distinguishing characteristic of the “superior races.” Around the turn of the century however, Boas and those associated with him began to elaborate a concept of culture “as weighted, … limiting, … homeostatic,” “a determinant of behavior” (Stocking 1968: 201-202). No longer the progressive elaboration of universal rationality, culture became a burden of tradition shared by distinct groups. As such, it was simultaneously universal—something that applied to both “modern” and “primitive man”—and plural; one could now speak of distinct cultures. This move opened up two radical possibilities, none of them immediately taken up in their entirety even by Boas himself: that race could be disentangled from culture, and that cultures could be equal. More immediately embraced were two slightly less radical (at least politically if not intellectually) possibilities: that social and political organization should be studied as historical phenomena, and that the constraints of both culture and nature might weigh as heavily on members of the

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formulation should be emphasized. According to Stocking, it was only around 1910 that the plural “cultures” begins to appear in the writing of Boas’s students.
“superior” races as on the inferior.

The prominent member of Boas’s circle associated with *HPTRT* focused on the former. Alexander Goldenweiser, along with Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, and Edward Sapir, had been among of the first of Boas’s students to achieve independent stature in the discipline. A “brilliant Boasian maverick,” the time of writing Goldenweiser was among the refugees from Columbia’s wartime nationalism teaching at the New School for Social Research and doing what Margaret Mead was later to characterize as the first work on cultures as “wholes” (an idea that was to become an important tenet of the 1930s culture and personality tradition in particular) (Stocking 1992: 295). His essay for the Merriam and Barnes volume, “Anthropological Theories of Political Origins” stated flatly that, “the idea of the uniformity and universality of such succession [as Lewis H. Morgan and other social evolutionists described] can no longer be entertained” (445). This was in the course of an attack on the “undue recourse to hypothetical argument” in extant “theories of social and political evolution” (433). The thrust of his critique was to show that the burgeoning ethnographic record showed few examples of the successions (matriarchal to patriarchal marriage forms, etc.) predicted by the theory, and many counterexamples. On the subject of “primitive political organization,” Goldenweiser argues that while politics, or rather the “integrating” tendency of political “consciousness,” is “universal and as old as society itself”, the “modern state” is something else altogether, characterized by a coordination in one institution or set of institutions of the “legal, religious, economic and other cultural functions” that are generally dispersed in “primitive society” among various non-state “constituent units of

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16 As against Victorian social evolutionism, which saw politics as emerging “upon the ruins of kinship organization” (455).
the social aggregate” (such as religious societies or clans) (454, 446, 455). As a result, the emergence of the modern state is not a radical change in the order of society along the lines of an evolutionary leap, but a new organization of “constituent units” of society, prompted in turn by historical circumstance, such as war, territorial expansion, and economic change. The essay concludes,

It is for this reason that the study of the problems presented by the historic state tends to develop into a special discipline. This is as it should be. If only it is remembered that political organization is of the essence of human society, that one or another form of political life is omnipresent, then the separation of the study of the modern historic state as a distinct branch of socio-historic inquiry becomes not only justifiable but imperative (454-455).

That is, the grand evolutionary system-builders of previous generations, anthropologists, sociologists, and political theorists alike, had missed the point. The state, or politics more generally, was a modern, historical phenomenon that needed to be studied on its own terms. This was certain to be welcome news for political scientists interested in carving out distinct institutional and intellectual territory. The historical specificity of the modern state is emphasized again in the next two essays in the volume, in which, respectively, Franklin Thomas gives extended consideration to Robert Lowie’s critique of geographical determinism and Hankins attacks Nordicism (together these three essays conclude the book), again emphasizing the dangers of assuming uniform causes for similar historical phenomena.

The combined effect of these emphases and other critiques of Nordicism sketched above is to suggest a new orientation for modern political research, in which political institutions are no longer intimately intertwined with a developing human nature, and, it therefore follows, no longer necessarily studied in terms of grand, macrohistorical schemes. The centrality of this shift to the field, and of race to this shift, is underscored
by the fact that of all the essays in the volume, those cited above as addressing “race” specifically are with one exception the only essays in the volume to claim to offer methodological or foundational claims for the field as a whole.\textsuperscript{17}

For Barnes, for example, “the time ha[d] arrived when the old lion, political science, [might] lie down in peace with the young lamb, sociology” (358). This meant, primarily, a move toward a process-oriented, psychologically informed study of the extra-political and extra-institutional factors shaping modern politics. Echoing Goldenweiser, Barnes wrote, “the state, of modern political terminology, is a very late and recent product of social evolution, and is, thus, by its very origin and genesis, as well as by analysis of its present state and functions, demonstrated to be a product, creation, and creature of society.” Political science can only escape metaphysics by “accepting as indispensable prolegomena the sociological generalizations with respect to the underlying social foundations of law and political institutions” (365, 361).

For Barnes, moreover, this represented a return to a “true” political science that had been “interrupted and obstructed for a half century by the influence of the lawyers [such as Burgess] upon political theory and practice”:

\textsuperscript{17} The exception is “Political Implications of Recent Philosophical Movements,” essentially a primer on pragmatism by Dewey student Herbert W. Schneider. The remaining essays are defense of the notion of state sovereignty against “pluralist” critiques by Francis Coker, a call by Borchard for greater realism in the study of international law, a similar critique by “Dunning School” historian Caleb Perry Patterson of the study of jurisprudence, an overview of socialist theory by labor economist Paul Douglas, and an essay on the demise of internationalism among German Social Democrats up to the war. Moreover, I should qualify my classification. In reality, some of these essays do touch on racial questions. Borchard, for example, notes that existing “idealists” theories of international law do not account for de facto asymmetries of power, as in colonial relationships. They simply do not make the category of race, or racial theories of politics, central to their argument. Significantly, Coker’s essay, while mainly negative (outlining the shortcomings of pluralism, which he likens to anarchism) qualifies his attack by granting that, “Pluralists have, however, made clearer than has been made before the superiority of society to law” that thus that “to consider political society solely in its legal aspect is now indeed an inadequate approach to political theory. A complete philosophy of the state must give elaborate attention to the social origins of the state and the social and psychological materials out of which the state fashions its laws. It seems probable, however, that the more effective corrective of the older, formal approach has come rather from the sociologists” such as Malcolm Willey and Barnes, whom he references, and who do make race a central problematic.
What modern sociology has done for political science is not to originate the synthetic approach to politics, but rather to put the lawyers of the metaphysical and 'mechanical' schools to rout, and to restore the viewpoint of Ferguson, Hall, Madison and Calhoun. Indeed, it has done more than to restore this general viewpoint; it has strengthened it and modernized it through an infusion of Darwinian and Neo-Darwinian biology and functional and behavioristic psychology (401).

Merriam makes much the same observation in his introduction, citing as the major methodological advance in political science in recent decades "restudy" of the "Aristotelian doctrine" of man's political nature "more and more upon the ground of fundamental impulses, ethnic, economic, or psychological" (op. cit.), and insisting that these must be studied in “relation to time or place-given conditions” (33). Contributions by Gehlke, Schneider, and Hankins similarly link what Barnes characterized as the Boasian “destruction of… Morganian...sociology” (367) to a new, foreshortened time horizon for political study.¹⁸

This should not be at all surprising; in fact, it puts political science clearly in line with currents in the social sciences more broadly. The momentous impact of Franz Boas, his students, and his sympathetic colleagues on the social sciences has been widely explored; according to Stocking, the influence of the Boasians and others working on parallel lines was such that by the 1930s, the culture concept was “paradigmatic” for the social sciences (1968 [1982] and 1992; similar claims are made by Barkan 1992, Cravens 1988, Purcell 1973, and Tucker 1996). More specifically, Dorothy Ross characterizes the 1910’s and 1920s as a period in which the “study of natural process,” encouraged by the Boasian turn, yielded “new models of American liberal change” within a “modernist

¹⁸ Thomas hope for a new approach to the environmental influences on human behavior exemplifies a similar shift, in what now seems a slightly comical way: such a new approach, unlike the traditional anthropogeography discussed in most of the essay, would not use climate to account for culture and political organization, but rather look at the temporary effects of weather on “the metabolism of life” (503).
conception of historical time.” In her summary of changes affecting the social sciences as a whole,

Historicism had been intertwined with evolutionism during the nineteenth century; now the work of Franz Boas and others challenged the fixed, unilinear model of evolutionary development. Aided as well by the disproof of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, one of the supports of the older theory, the fixed structure of evolution was dismantled. Attention turned to the particular interacting factors that produced human variety and progress, increasingly to the study of culture. The evolutionary depiction of long-term change over time began to be replaced by short-term study of the process of change (op. cit.: 318-319).

The conformity of political science to this broader trend is noteworthy, however, in light of what I call the “exceptionalist” account of political science with regard to race (see Chapter One and Chapter Two). That is, Merriam, the contributors to *HPTRT*, and likeminded scholars staked their claim to a more “modern,” “scientific,” political science on a new orientations toward nature and history that were worked out, much as occurred in other disciplines, *through* rethinking the status of race and its relationship to history.

Specifically, by disentangling nature and history, such that nature now appeared much more as a source of relatively static laws and properties underlying and limiting historical and political development than as the realm and principle of development itself, political science set itself two new and related tasks. The first was to study historical and political dynamics in the medium term. That is, since, in Goldenweiser’s terms, “origins” could no longer be understood as determining the character of “the modern state” such determinants, to the extent they were to be found in history at all, were to be found in recent political, social, and institutional history—not evolutionary time. The second was to determine how nature—as we shall see, particularly the natural characteristics and tendencies of individuals—limited or provided possibilities for politics. Nature, once in a sense the medium or essence of historical development, now appeared as its substratum, a
source of laws and truths that would show what was—and was not—politically possible or likely.

This indicates, of course, that the rejection of teleological, racial theories of history within the discipline by no means represented a wholesale turn to “culture” at the expense of “nature,” or the ascriptive characteristics of populations. In the next two chapters, we will see that in fact nature and more specifically ascriptive difference were not set aside but rather retained their importance even as they shifted in meaning.