



The changes I made to the draft.

Extended Inquiry Project(final version) with marked up changes.

N/B: The words in **bold** were altered. I will indicate in **bold font if an image/quote was altered.**



Every single skull is identical, We are the same.

(The image was altered from an image of all the flags of the world in atlas shape.)

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“We are equal in the fact that we are different, we are all the same in the fact that we will never be the same”.

C. JoyBell. C

My initial inquiry was where do stereotypes get their power from anyway?

I have found my answer to this question in one word, belief. **If a stereotype is believed** to be true, you will find any means to defend that opinion. Initially it may be a healthy opinion that you have formed from experience or simply what you believe **to be true**. From there it may evolve to the more ugly extremism we find today. **Assumptions of any kind are** only so powerful because **it is actually believed and people** use those assumptions to judge other people, situations and use them to make decisions everyday. Case in point, an assumption that a man is much more intellectually inclined/academically oriented than a woman. If you simply thought it ridiculous and did not believe it, then you have no faith in that assumption, that stereotype and its implications are not included in the formation of your opinions, your decision making and your observations of men or women and their intellect. With all that in mind, I found

that question *"where do stereotypes get their power from anyway?"* didn't truly address the problem. **The answer to that is fairly obvious:** people believe it, that's why. So in an attempt to **truly answer the problem**, I added this question to my inquiry, *What are the origin of stereotypes?*

Every stereotype is dangerous and forces people to live up to or spend their lives fighting against many assumptions made and expectations from other people. However, a particular type of stereotyping in particular has built many walls and wreaked much havoc, stereotyping based on race or what most people call racial prejudice.

In my inquiry, I will be examining the origin of racism and its ripple effects on modern racial assumptions. The earliest racial profiling I identified from my research is from the pre-slavery era, this profiling occurred as a result of transatlantic first impressions. The definition of black before the sixteenth century in the Oxford English Dictionary included:

"Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul. ... Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked. . . . Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc." Black was an emotionally partisan color, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign..of repulsion".

For these Europeans(the Portuguese to be specific) who first discovered Africans, they were puzzled, **they could not comprehend the life and culture of these foreigners.** **And as human beings, what we fail to understand, we hate.**

These 'Negroes' represented the complete opposite of Elizabethan men. This contrast represented by white skin and black skin was considered a deeper metaphor of good and evil, pure and tainted they were complete opposite sides of the moral, intelligence and beauty spectrum. All these were the very first impressions of explorers regarding Africans and for generations to come, these impressions will play a big role in the inhumane treatment Africans face.

Unfortunately, these stereotypes, (as a function of the time they lived in) were readily believed. The father of Literature, William Shakespeare wrote unapologetically to his **mistress regarding her features:**

"My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red, than her lips red:

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks".

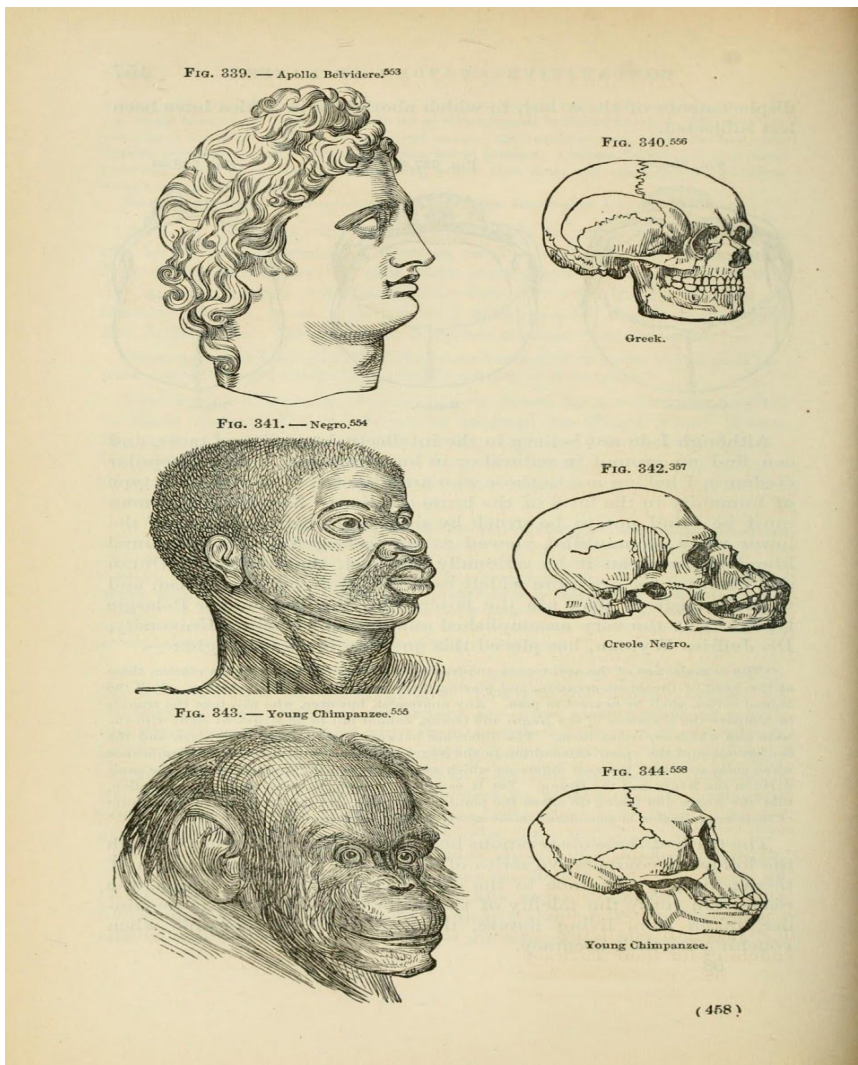
A portion of Shakespeare's famous dark lady sonnets. Sonnet 130

There is some scholarly debate that the mistress Shakespeare refers to as 'The Dark Lady' is a woman of African origin because of the way he refers to her features. The adjective dun refers to a brownish grey color, her lips are observed to be dark and she is not prone to blushing(which means she is not pale). Other scholars however claim that like many of Shakespeare's mistresses she is conjured up by his imagination and her features do not allude to any real person. Some others believe he means she is monstrous or grotesque hence his less than flattering description of her features. There is no proof to conclude who William Shakespeare is talking about.

However, if the poem is referring to a woman of African origin that would certainly be in tune with the expectations of beauty in Shakespeare's time. For about three quarters of the poem he seems to agree with the assessment that 'her' features are unattractive and makes several comparisons to the features of a European woman(brightly colored eyes, roses he cannot find in her cheeks). The rest of the poem calls his 'Dark Lady' a goddess and professes his love to her so some may argue that these lines are taken out of context. Whoever Shakespeare is referring to, I will use this poem as a representation of the times that Shakespeare's lived in and the world's assessment of

African beauty at the time. Opinions such as Africans are dirty and unattractive may stem from sources such as these or even more modern sources, like the news(their portrayal is unfortunately not much different).

A more concrete example of the origins of racial prejudice is demonstrated through a concept called 'scientific racism'. Specifically through taxonomy(the science of naming) and physiology(the science studying how an organism's shape/ characteristics relates to function). There were some findings that in the late sixteenth century 'proved' that there was some connotation between the race of an individual and their intellect, behavior and by extension, place in the hierarchy of the world. Many **scientists** at the time were probably of similar opinion but perhaps the most notable claim in scientific racism was **proposed** by Carl Linnaeus: a Swedish Biologist in the late sixteenth century who is considered the father of Taxonomy. Linnaeus is responsible for **developing** the Binomial System of Classification: a **biological** system used to name organisms by their characteristics. Just like plants and invertebrates, Linnaeus also believed he could classify human beings, **and to him, the perfect criteria was to classify them according to their race.**



1854, Clark, Robbins: Types of Mankind.

Comparisons between the skulls of a Greek, a "Negro" and a chimpanzee.

(Image was enlarged and made interactive)

Amerinds (yellow bile, angry)	Europeans (blood, optimistic)	East Asians (black bile, melancholy, sad)	Africans (phlegm, sluggish)	Monstrosus
copper-colored, eager, combative, governed by customs.	pale, muscular, swift, clever, inventive, governed by laws	yellow, inflexible, severe, avaricious, dark-eyed, governed by opinions.	black, slow, relaxed, negligent, governed by impulse.	(dwarfs of the Alps, the Patagonian giant, the monorchid Hottentot): agile, fainthearted.

Characteristics that Linnaeus attributed to each race.

(Image was made enlarged and interactive)

He(Linnaeus) made observations of the different races and the former image above is the abridged version of his conclusions. It is obvious that he is very generous to his own race, while towards the other races he seems especially harsh. **His most famous proposals inspired even more race based explanations of evolution and classification of intelligence. Another race based classification of intelligence was propounded by**

the 17th century authors Josiah Clark and George Robbins in Types of Mankind (1854) was that the African 'species' is the intermediate step between the primitive primates such as the Chimpanzee and the polished finished product that was Europeans. .

Obviously, **all of** these observations and "**findings**" are a hoax. Africans are not an intermediate or lower species, **every single human being is a part of the same species. If these claims were true, then people from different races would be unable to reproduce. There are multiracial people all over the world who are also the same species as other races ergo, this claim cannot be true. People with different skin colors have** simply evolved differently, changes in phenotype and morphological variation because of the environment in which they lived. But it is still interesting to see the lengths that Linnaeus went to prove that his speculations were accurate. As great a scientist as he was, he was still a product of his time, **clearly** manipulating his findings to align with the **political agenda, societal** assessments and beliefs of his time. Sources as old and seemingly authentic like these are the sources that now taint **modern** society with unhealthy opinions. Even though on paper (the constitution) all seems well, centuries of opinions and beliefs aren't just going to disappear, transatlantic slave trade began in the fifteenth century and the Civil Rights Act was just passed in 1964: 56 years ago. Fifty six years is simply not enough time for everything **to be perfect**. The Apartheid in South Africa ended officially in 1994 and the nation is still feeling its ripple effects, with some mainly black regions still struggling with poverty and Xenophobia. Mass incarcerations, racial profiling, discrimination based on sex, sexual

orientation, **faith**/religion, lack of **faith**/religion, country of origin, race, appearance are all social problems the modern society still grapples with.

I am confident however, that things are better than they were a decade ago, or the time before that. **Slowly but surely, if we are making conscious efforts and educating ourselves** on the stereotypes based on race and country of origin that exist, we may succeed in **bringing down the walls history has built**. In 1694, there were people who believed in the equality of races such as Captain Thomas Phillip **of the British Navy** who said:

"I could not imagine why they should be despised for their color, being what they cannot help, and the effect of the climate it has pleased God to appoint them".

If there were progressive thinkers in 1694, we can all be progressive thinkers in 2020 and beyond.

Let us examine stereotypes more people can hopefully relate to. Stereotypes based on sex/gender . I am not so optimistic about these stereotypes as they have fading/becoming less prominent anytime soon. Gender based stereotypes have been around for even longer than racial or country of origin based stereotypes. And unlike racial stereotypes, gender based assumptions are subtle and difficult to pinpoint/observe. So hidden that many say they do not exist at all and that sentiments biased against any gender should be left in the past where they existed.

Mary Wollstonecraft is an English author in the late sixteenth century who is considered the first feminist, her groundbreaking book 'A vindication of the Rights of a Woman' was authored in 1792. Ironically, it is dedicated to a man: Maurice de Talleyrand a French politician and diplomat whose words inspired the authoring of 'A vindication of the Rights of a Woman'. **Talleyrand** says:

"That to see one half of the human race excluded by the other from all participation in government is a political phenomenon...impossible to explain".(Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, France, 1791)

Her entire work is spent criticizing the social system that existed at the time (and traces of which remain today) and asserting the importance of considering women as equals who are competent and should be independent. She says in its early chapters:

"my own sex, I hope will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures instead of flattering their fascinating graces and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone".(Wollstonecraft, A vindication of the rights of a woman, 1792)

I **think it's important** to say that Wollstonecraft's words are still very much relevant in today's society. There are cultures even I am familiar with where there is still some resistance to send female children to school, where there are child brides, girls **are forced to get married at a delicate age to** much older men and have children at 16. People and places who believe that girls are accessories, not as good enough as boys and in a household where there are only female children, the **woman** is believed to be

barren, she has failed as a wife. The assessment that women and girls are weaker may have made some sense many centuries ago when the key to survival was physical strength and **hunting abilities**. On average, men are more physically stronger than women so in that time and culture, that assessment may have been correct.

Fortunately, the human race is no longer in a time where brute strength is the key to survival, what is needed to survive now is intelligence, creativity, innovation and determination. None of which are more bestowed on men more than women. Why then are women still viewed as inferior? A **woman** must be overly conscious of what she wears, how she carries herself and what she says or she may not be taken seriously by her colleagues, her ideas, intellect and values and tied to what she looks like. Worse, she may even be sexualized. **Everyone but women themselves** get a say in how women must dress themselves or appear in public in order to be viewed as 'acceptable' or 'decent'. The truth is the society we live in is a patriarchal one. One where men will always be viewed as superior unless a widespread change in thinking and perspective. In 1792, Wollstonecraft wrote:

"Dismissing then those pretty feminine phrases which the men condescendingly use to soften our slavish dependence and despising that weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel, I wish to shew that elegance is far inferior to virtue".

Misogyny **still** exists, as much as some would like to deny, and it affects women everywhere everyday. Its roots, as we have seen, are equally as ancient as concepts like scientific racism.

To conclude, stereotypes and assumptions are powerful sociocultural tools that have been wielded for a long time, we as people living and working in this day and age need to understand their origins and their belittling effect on its victims. It is very easy to stereotype people, even what we believe are 'positive' stereotypes are still assumptions and identities we force on other people and expect them to live up to. For instance, there is a popular social categorization that Asians are naturally very academically inclined. This may appear to be a positive stereotype' but it still forces people in that category to live up to those expectations, expectations they did ask to be placed on them. The problem with most stereotypes is not that they are false (some stereotypes are entirely untrue of course), but that they have a singularity about them which forces people under one umbrella. Stereotyping encourages social categorization and enforces an impression of a place or a people. This impression may be one that they do not identify and is detrimental to how society views people in that category or in that location and even how they view themselves. It is essential to understand that human beings are the most unpredictable beings that exist and we should all refuse to be biased against/for other people and places. Sociocultural categorizations are powerful and damaging and they should not exist even if their roots/ or origins span centuries

Notes, comments on changes made:

The changes I made pertained mostly to making the message I was trying to pass across clearer. I got some feedback saying that in the first few sentences when I attempt to explain my findings on why stereotypes are extremely powerful my tone came across as 'condescending' which was not my intention at all. I also wrote the entire document on different days and in different moods and levels of understanding of my sources so my entire work had no "transitioning". I went back over and edited whatever I felt came across as self righteous(I did find some) and tried to somewhat "introduce" each paragraph and how it tied into my message. But overall, the format and message stayed the same. I was also told to place the argument against gender based stereotypes but I refused because I wanted the readers to be able to appreciate the difference in origin but how similar the effects are. Also, I found that I put in the quotes from my sources in the right format, indented, with punctuation and in text citations. I noticed some of my sentences were long and seemed cumbersome, so I separated my sentences to allow the reader to understand better, enlarged images to increase visibility. I got some feedback that my paragraphs were too long and contained several ideas/claims so I made an attempt to separate the paragraphs for easier reading.