

ANTH 3640 Race and Human Evolution
Assignment #7 Summary Notes

Radicals, Reactionaries, and Racial Differences

I. Angela Davis's Relevance: A Few Takeaways

A. Busts Myths: Challenges the “reified images”, “distorted categories”, “destructive myths”, and biased representations of black women of the sort that Waters sees in museum exhibitions, and that race realists like Rushton and Lynn utilize in their evolutionary stories (e.g., black female hypersexuality and black laziness as “behavioral traits” that make blacks culturally inferior to whites).

B. Gives History: Where Boas documented the technological and political innovation of African cultures, you might say that Davis documents the refined “arts of resistance” to political and economic domination practiced by enslaved populations. As she points out, written history probably underestimates the frequency of slave insurgencies and rebellions (they weren't publicized at the time).

C. Promotes Anti-Racism: Davis occupies an important place in the long line of black intellectuals stretching from Douglass to Du Bois to Davis to Kendi.

II. Richard Lynn

A. Evolutionary Narrative

1. Africa as the birthplace of *H. sapiens*.
2. Migration of *H. sapiens* into different environments presenting different cognitive demands and challenges (hunting, keeping warm, organizing activities, etc.)
3. Brain size expands and culture evolves in the North—Eurasia. Smaller brains and lesser cultural development elsewhere (e.g., the tropics). Similar kind of story to that of Coon!

B. Problems with the Narrative

1. Takes the validity of IQ testing and the famous “15 point gap” between blacks and whites for granted. Doesn't bother with the many studies from anthropology, psychology, and other fields that question the validity of IQ testing by showing the role of numerous cultural and environmental factors in influencing how individuals perform on the tests.
2. Channels 19th century thinkers—Morton, Nott and Gliddon—and their discredited ideas about the significance of brain size in distinguishing racial groups, and the positive relationship between brain size and intelligence.
3. Ignores the complexity of tropical environments and what it takes in the way of knowledge and skill to survive in them.
4. Completely ignores Neandertals—who had the biggest brains of all hominins and lived in extremely challenging (glaciated) northern environments—because they don't fit the story. Despite their big brains and innovative culture, Neandertals ended up either dying off (Replacement) or being genetically swamped (Interbreeding) by people moving into Europe from Africa.