

Darwin's and Galton's scientific racism essay

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



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To some degree, racism takes its origins in the ideas that emerged in the nineteenth century. They could be supported even by the intellectual leaders of that period. For instance, one can speak about Charles Darwin and Francis Galton, who significantly advanced various areas of science. In particular, one should speak about the applications of evolutionary theory to such concepts as race or ethnicity.

In particular, one should speak about the belief that some races were more advanced. Overall, it is possible to say that the ideas of these people were largely based on the misuse of scientific methods and lack of anthropological knowledge. Moreover, this interpretation of race was quite consistent with the policies of colonialism and imperialism. Much attention should also be paid to the values of the desire to belong to the group, which is allegedly superior to others. These are the main arguments that can be put forward.

It should be noted that Darwin focused on the intellectual abilities of an individual while evaluating the worth of races. In his view, Europeans were generally superior to non-European people. Admittedly, he recognized the idea that the differences in intellectual abilities existed within races and not only between races. The main problem that he overlooked is that in the nineteenth century, there were no valid tools for measuring the intellectual capacity of a person.

Moreover, those people, who acted as evaluators, were usually biased against non-European people, especially those who came from Africa. These are some of the main aspects that can be distinguished. Nevertheless, it is

critical to remember that Darwin recognized the cruelty of European settlers. Moreover, this thinker fully recognized the repugnance of slavery.

Moreover, according to this thinker, " races did not necessarily form one single, monogenist ascending series"; more likely, they were intertwined (Heller 87). More importantly, in this opinion, " men of all nations and races" merited compassion (Darwin 103). Therefore, one should not suppose that Charles Darwin was willing to justify the atrocities committed by colonizers or slave-holders by using the principles of evolutionary theory. This is one of the details that can be identified.

Francis Galton also focused on intelligence as one of the possible measures. Yet, he also paid attention to such characteristics as self-sufficiency and self-control. Moreover, Galton laid stress on the material culture as one of the criteria according to which the worth of a race should be evaluated. Like many other people, he emphasized the inferiority of black people.

Nevertheless, he did not mention any tools which could be used to measure these attributes of a person or a group of people. This is one of the flaws that can be identified. Additionally, he believed that Africa had to be settled by Chinese people. His arguments are partly based on the premise that black people were not able to create governmental institutions. In his opinion, they could not " sustain the burden of any respectable form of civilization" (Galton 4).

This is another aspect that he focused on. In order to justify these arguments, Galton referred to such a country as Liberia because this

example allegedly showed that black people had not been self-sufficient. Moreover, in his opinion, they were not capable of acting independently. These opinions can be explained by the lack of knowledge about culture, history, and economic difficulties that could be encountered by former slaves who were removed from the United States back to Africa.

Thus, one can say that even people like Galton, who significantly contributed to science, could easily accept racist stereotypes. One should bear in mind that in the nineteenth century, many anthropologists attempted to show that non-European races were at the earlier stage of evolution. These activities were largely based on the misapplication of scientific methods.

It is possible to argue that the principles of scientific racism were quite consistent with the policy of imperialism, which was adopted by many European countries in the nineteenth century. This ideology helped policy-makers justify the colonization of various countries.

People living in these territories could be reduced to subhuman status. In turn, scientific racism was necessary for showing that European countries had a right to act in this way. Moreover, this ideology was necessary for demonstrating that European powers brought the benefits of civilization to the colonized territories. This issue is also important for explaining the popularity of this approach to the study of races. To a great extent, the principles of scientific racism continued to be popular even in the first half of the twentieth century, when colonialism was still a prominent part of the geopolitics. This is one of the details that can be distinguished.

There are several values that are closely related to scientific racism. In particular, one should speak about a person's desire to belong to the group, which is allegedly superior to others. This group can be marked by several characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or nationality. As a rule, such people cannot boast of their individual accomplishments. Such individuals want to find ways of showing their alleged superiority to other people. This is one of the reasons why many people accepted this ideology. In many cases, scientific racism could simply comply with their values. This is one of the details that should be taken into consideration.

In contrast, a person should have several values in order to reject scientific racism. In particular, he/she should first value individuality, which can incorporate both positive and negative sides. This viewpoint implies that one cannot explain the actions of a person only by his/her race, ethnicity, or cultural background.

By adopting this viewpoint, a researcher can better understand the flaws of racism, even if it is supported by people like Galton or Darwin. Additionally, one should speak about openness to cultural, racial, and religious differences. Such attitudes can prevent a person from becoming prejudiced to people who represent a different group. It should be mentioned that the ideas expressed by Charles Darwin and Francis Galton have certainly been rejected by modern scientists. Nevertheless, there are attempts to explain various aspects of a person's behavior by his/her race. For instance, it is possible to speak about the efforts to find a relationship between race and intelligence. This is one of the concerns that should not be overlooked.

On the whole, this discussion indicates that science could be used to suit the dominant political ideology. The attempts to classify race by using the principles of evolutionary theory illustrate are closely related to the policy of imperialism implemented by European countries.

Moreover, in some cases, even prominent intellectuals such as Darwin and Galton could be vulnerable to the stereotypes existing in the nineteenth century. To a great extent, this fallacy can be explained by the misapplication of scientific methods and lack of knowledge about anthropology and culture. In turn, the main principles of scientific races can be rejected if a person values individual achievements. Moreover, he/she should be willing to recognize and respect the diversity of modern society. These are the main details that can be singled out.

Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man*. New York, NY: Digireads. com Publishing, 2004. Print.

Galton, Francis. *Africa for the Chinese*. New York, NY: Digireads. com Publishing, 2002. Print.