

RACIAL STEREOTYPING OF *HOMO SAPIENS AFRICANUS*: A REVIEW OF ITS MYTH AND IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENTAL CAPACITY

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Before even the British came into relations with our people, we were a developed people, having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government.

*J. E. Casely-Hayford, 1922
Ghanaian (Gold Coast) Nationalist*

ABSTRACT

Generally, negative stereotypes have been shown to have negative impact on the performance of members of the social group that is the target of the stereotype. It is against the background of this evidence that this article argues that the negative stereotypes of perceived lower intelligence held against Africans has a similar impact on the general development of the continent. This article seeks to challenge this stereotype by tracing the source of this negative stereotype to David Hume and Immanuel Kant and by showing the initial errors they committed, which have influenced social science knowledge about race relations. Hume and Kant argue that Africans are naturally inferior to Whites, or are less intelligent and support their thesis with their contrived evidence that there has never been any civilised nations other than those developed by



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White people or any African scholars of eminence. Drawing on Anton Wilhelm Amo's negligence-ignorance thesis, this article proves that the Hume-Kantian argument and its supporting evidence are fallacious.

Keywords: (under)development, Amo, Hume, Kant, racial prejudice, Africa

INTRODUCTION

The state of mind of the citizens of a country plays an important role in their socio-economic transformation. For instance, Oppong (2014) has shown that learned helplessness has the potential to influence negatively the responsiveness of a given group of people to national policies intended to improve their living standard. Learned helplessness in human psychology refers to 'the tendency for individuals to fail to act in circumstances where they have the opportunity to do so' (Oppong 2014, 185). In this article, it is argued that self-doubt, which is either the product or the flip side of lower self-efficacy or lower self-belief, has the potential to negatively influence Africans in terms of what they believe they are capable of achieving. Thus, this article argues that development is a product of the mind as socio-economic transformation emanates from the mind of the people. The psychological and behavioural economics literature suggests that self-efficacy can influence national development, while locus of control relates to poverty level (Bernard, Dercon and Taffesse 2011) and performance of individuals (Luszczynska, Gutierrez-Dona and Schwarzer 2005; Schmader 2010). This is an indication that any factor that affects self-belief is worthy of exploration. One such factor that affects self-belief is stereotype.

Stereotype has been described as 'a relatively fixed and oversimplified generalisation about a group or class of people, usually focusing on negative, unfavourable characteristics' (Colman 2006, 726). Steele and Aronson (1995) have empirically demonstrated that stereotypes can have debilitating effects on the targets of the stereotypes. This negative impact of stereotypes on performance has been referred to as stereotype threat. According to Colman (2006, 727), stereotype threat refers to the 'impairment of performance resulting from perceived likelihood of being judged according to a negative stereotype, or fear of acting in a manner likely to confirm the negative stereotype'. Schmader, Johns and Forbes (2008) have suggested that stereotype that threatens leads to physiological stress response and self-monitoring, which interferes with the efficiency of the working memory needed to solve problems. It is argued that here negative stereotypes against Africans and Africa result in similar impairment in performance of individual Africans, which at the aggregate level; affects the economic performance of various African states. It is particularly worthy to note that a major stereotype against Africans and Africa is that Africans have low intelligence or fare poorly in measures of cognitive ability. In the past, this contributed to justification of racism and colonisation of the African land

and mind. In this article, the term African is used to refer to both Africans of the soil (continental Africans) and Africans by blood (African Americans and continental Africans in the Diaspora). As a result, 'African' is used interchangeably with Black or Black people unless a distinction is made.

This perceived low cognitive ability continues to haunt Africans in contemporary times. Indeed, empirical regularities between national intelligence quotient (IQ) average scores and gross domestic product (GDP) have been reported (Christainsen 2013; Daniele 2013; Jones 2011; Rushton 2003; Templer and Arikawa 2006). These empirical regularities have continued to be reported, notwithstanding criticisms against the definition and use of Western instruments for measuring intelligence (see Berhanu 2011; Kaplan 1985; Matsumoto and Juang 2004; Schlinger 2003; Stanovich and West 2014).

A major debate resulting from these investigations is whether or not racial differences in cognitive ability or intelligence test scores are due to genetic differences (and therefore non-modifiable) or environmental factors (and therefore modifiable). Galton, Burt, Jensen, Rushton, Herrnstein, Murray, Lynn, Meisenberg, and a host of others have argued strongly in favour of the biological or genetic basis. Thus, Galton and his disciples have sought to produce empirical regularities to suggest that cognitive ability is biologically determined with the implication that Africans are naturally inferior to non-Africans. That this empirical regularity is used to fuel the stereotype of low intelligence implies that there is a need to insightfully investigate its historical and philosophical roots.

In addition, other stereotypes have been associated with Blacks or Africans. For instance, Katz and Braly (1933) reported that university students usually associate 'Negroes' or Africans with negative traits (see Table 1). Thus, the White American students perceived Africans to be lazy, ignorant, stupid and naïve. These descriptors correspond to the stereotype of perceived low intelligence frequently assigned to Africans. These negative stereotypes predate Katz and Braly's study in the 1930s, given that the study investigated recall of already existing beliefs and judgments.

Indeed, non-Africans who hold these stereotypes against Africans tend to suffer from confirmation bias in their interaction with Africans, while Africans tend to suffer from labelling and by extension, self-fulfillment prophecy. Given that these negative traits associated with Africans are perceptual filters, they have the potential to influence evaluations and/or judgments that non-Africans make about Africans, whether it be during an employment interview, scholarship award decision, university admission decision, editorial decision for scholarly publication, and simple things such as sitting next to someone on the bus, asking for street directions, and a host of mundane issues. However, when an African does not fit the description, most non-Africans tend to regard such a person as only an exception and extraordinarily different from the others. Unfortunately, such 'exceptional' Africans tend to also regard themselves as being above other Africans (Asante 2003).

Table 1: Twelve traits most frequently assigned to some racial and national groups

Africans	White Americans	Germans	English
Superstitious	Industrious	Scientifically-minded	Sportsmanlike
Lazy	Intelligent	Industrious	Intelligent
Happy-go-lucky	Materialistic	Stolid	Conventional
Ignorant	Ambitious	Intelligent	Tradition-loving
Musical	Progressive	Methodical	Conservative
Ostentatious	Pleasure-loving	Extremely nationalistic	Reserved
Very religious	Alert	Progressive	Sophisticated
Stupid	Efficient	Efficient	Courteous
Physically dirty	Aggressive	Jovial	Honest
Naïve	Straightforward	Musical	Industrious
Slovenly/Careless	Practical	Persistent	Extremely nationalistic
Unreliable	Sportsmanlike	Practical	Humourless

Source: Adapted from Katz and Braly (1933)

The net effect of this negative stereotyping is that negative traits tend to have both a prescriptive and a proscriptive impact on the African. This is to say that Africans may tend to think of themselves as incapable of tasks in stereotype-inconsistent domains such as science and technology-related activities (proscriptive norms), while they may also think of themselves as capable of tasks in stereotype-consistent domain such as music and sports (prescriptive norms). This also suggests that these negative stereotypes may have been internalised. This may therefore prevent Africans from exploiting their potential to the fullest, with a resultant impact of underdevelopment. Unfortunately, the stereotype-consistent domains for Africans such as sports and music are also not the domains known to contribute significantly to economic growth. Thus, Africans are encouraged or compelled to concentrate on developing competence in areas (such as sports and music) that will not deliver economic prosperity, while ignoring domains (such as education) that are known to generate economic prosperity to the entire society.

This article further argues that the stereotype of low intelligence in contemporary times has resulted and continues to result in stereotype threat to Africans. This article does not deny the existence of the differences in average IQ scores between Africans and non-Africans. However, it argues that these are partly the result of stereotype threat that has persistently led to these low IQ scores. Indeed, the initial attempt to estimate the IQ scores of Africans by Francis Galton was not based on any acceptable measure of intelligence (see Galton 1869). This is to say that before an ‘acceptable’ measure of intelligence was found Hume, Kant and Galton sought to portray Africans as intellectually inferior without any reliable evidence. This suggests that there was

already an expectation that Africans would underperform in such tests before the first known intelligence test was developed. This may have affected the performance of the Africans who first took those intelligence tests, which subsequently provided newer evidence that Africans are intellectually inferior.

It stands to reason that there exists a vicious cycle relating stereotype to impairment in stereotype-inconsistent domains and developmental capacity (see Figure 1). It is not the low IQ scores that poses the problem, but the acceptance that the low IQ scores is a true measure of one's intelligence, which results in learned helplessness. This learned helplessness will prevent the individual from engaging his or her intellectual capacity to solve problems. This is to say that the target of the stereotype may internalise the stereotype, while the perpetrator may allow the stereotype to regulate their interactions with the targets, particularly if the stereotypes are inflexible. These negative stereotypes and their resulting prejudice produce and reproduce themselves through the institutions of socialisation such as the family, religious organisations, schools, and the mass media.

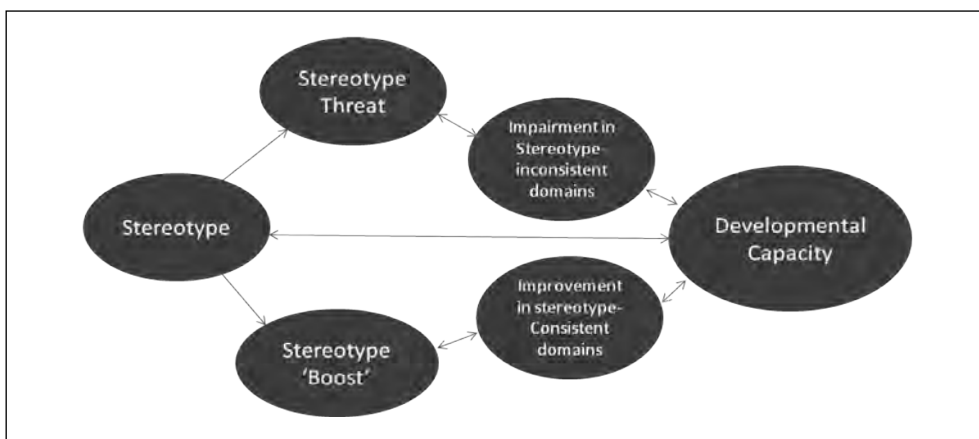


Figure 1: Vicious cycle linking stereotype to developmental capacity

Of interest to this analysis are the conceptual definitions of stereotype boost and developmental capacity. In this article, stereotype boost is used as a rival concept to stereotype threat. If stereotype threat refers to the 'impairment of performance resulting from perceived likelihood of being judged according to a negative stereotype' (Colman 2006, 727), then *stereotype boost* refers to improvement in performance resulting from perceived likelihood of being judged according to a positive stereotype or a stereotype-consistent domain. Developmental capacity has been defined as 'the capacity of governments to design and implement policies for growth and to provide governance to their societies and markets' (Englebert 2000, 4). However, developmental capacity is used here in an extended form. In this

article, it is used to refer to the capacity of an entire society to design and implement interventions or activities that will deliver economic prosperity to the society.

Thus, an attempt to uncover evidence to suggest that the very initial stereotype that produced the stereotype threat was false is a worthy course. Just like learned helplessness can be shown to be the result of past oppressions, we can also trace the contemporary negative stereotypes most frequently associated with Africans to some historical roots (For details on how past oppressions produce learned helplessness, see Oppong 2014). The purpose of this article is, therefore, to examine the philosophical and historical basis of racial differences in intelligence, started in the 18th century. In this sense, this article is an address to: (1) victims of internalised racism and (2) perpetrators of the vestiges of the old prejudice by demonstrating the original fallacious arguments which have been refined over time to sustain old prejudice. Thus, in the paragraphs that follow, Anton Wilhelm Amo is introduced and an exploration of the genealogy of European scholars who sought to argue and prove that Africans have lower levels of intelligence is provided. However, the genealogy provided here is by no means exhaustive. In addition, the views of Hume and Kant about the intelligence of Africans are presented and subjected to analysis on the basis of historical sources.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Anton Wilhelm Amo (1703–1784) was a Ghanaian who was taken to Germany as a child, studied at the Universities of Halle (1727–1729) and Wittenberg (1730–1734) and later taught at the Universities of Wittenberg, Halle and at the University of Jena. He received his Doctor in Philosophy in 1734 Wittenberg (Abraham 2004; Bemile 2002; Blakeley 1997; Jahn 1968; Amo 1734/2012). At the University of Halle, Amo's lectures were compiled into his magnum opus *Treatise on the Art of Philosophizing Soberly and Accurately* which was published in 1738 (Abraham 2004; Bemile 2002; Blakeley 1997; Jahn 1968). Bemile (2002) reports that Amo's *Treatise* was a book about the theory of cognition and/or epistemology. In his *Treatise*, Amo states that negligence and ignorance help account for prejudice, superficiality, subtlety or mental arrogance and sectarianism. He stresses the love of and zeal for the truth and urges that one should take truth for authority rather than authority for truth.

Hume and Kant set the agenda for racial prejudice for Francis Galton (1822–1911), Cyril Burt, Arthur Jensen, John Phillippe Rushton, Richard J. Herrnstein, Charles Murray, Richard Lynn, Gerhard Meisenberg, and many others who continue to pursue further research on the racial difference in intelligence. It is highly likely that Galton and Burt influenced Jensen and his contemporaries. Galton also influenced Burt; Burt recounted that his father who was a medical doctor was employed by the Galton family, and so as a school boy, he met Galton, read his books, and listened to him expound his views (Rushton 2002). Burt's ideas and research on racial

differences in cognitive abilities were about the most prominent evidence presented by Jensen, whose work also served as strong evidence for the research by Rushton, Herrnstein, Murray, Lynn, and Meisenberg. Hume's (1748) *Of National Characters* and Kant's *Observations on the feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764) were strong enlightenment voices on the matter of the source and presence of racial differences in cognitive abilities.

Other scholars such as Charles Edward Spearman 1863–1945 and James Mckeen Cattell (1860–1944) also deserve special mention here. Spearman conceptualised the general intelligence factor, 'g', and proposed the 'Spearman hypothesis' that encouraged researchers to carry out investigations to demonstrate that the 'g' is inherited or biologically determined. Spearman's hypothesis states that the difference in IQ scores between Whites (W) and Blacks (B) is larger on more g saturated tests (Spearman 1927; Hartmann and Nyborg 2007), a piece of evidence that is also used to suggest that the racial differences are due to genetic rather than environmental factors (Jensen 1998; Kane and Brand 2003). Cattell worked with Galton and together they 'raised interest in the measurement of intelligence' (Gottfredson and Saklofske 2009, 183).

However, he cannot be absolved from the 'scientification' of racial differences in intelligence. This is because Cattell was a member of the Eugenics Research Association and its president in 1921 (Pillsbury 1947). Thus, it is more likely that Cattell's work with Galton to raise interest in intelligence testing was simply to find a 'more scientific' way to measure and demonstrate racial differences in intelligence. This then places both Spearman and Cattell in the circle of scholars whose efforts sought to provide scientific justification for this continued prejudice.

In his magnum opus, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws and Consequences*, Galton (1869, 2) wrote:

The general plan of my argument is to show that high reputation is a pretty accurate test of high ability; next to discuss the relationships of a large body of fairly eminent men ... and to obtain from these a general survey of the laws of heredity in respect to genius. Then I shall examine, in order, the kindred of the most illustrious Commanders, men of Literature and of Science, Poets, Painters, and Musicians, of whom history speaks.

Thus, Galton's influential book on the genetic determination of intelligence was based on reputation. It is worth noting that Galton did not depend only on reputation but also on natural gifts or abilities. However, his conclusion is that reputation is a good indicator of natural abilities, hence his focus on reputation. According to him, reputation means 'the opinion of contemporaries, revised by posterity – the favourable result of a critical analysis of each man's character, by many biographers' while by natural ability, he means 'those qualities of intellect and disposition, which urge and qualify a man to perform acts that lead to reputation' (Galton 1869, 37). It is important to note that in the chapter entitled 'Intellectual Differences' in *Inquiries*

into *Human Faculty and Its Development*, Galton (1883) reiterated his comments on racial differences as previously stated in *Hereditary Genius*.

Galton raised another important question that demands our careful attention: Were there not any commanders, men of literature and of science, poets, painters, and musicians in Africa? By ‘of whom history speaks’, did Galton mean only history known to the West? Whose history told by whom? This is because every society has a history of great commanders, men of literature and of science, poets, painters and musicians. It is obvious that Galton used the history he was familiar with, hence his conclusion about Black people.

What is not clear is how Hume and Kant influenced Galton. It may be argued that long before Galton’s *Hereditary Genius* (1869) and *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (1883) were published, Hume had already prepared the way with his publications of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and *An Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding* (1748). Again, Kant also published his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) some years before Galton published his *magna opera*. Another possible speculation is that Galton’s focus on reputation as a measure of intelligence was congruent with the position held by Hume and Kant who consistently challenged anyone who argued that Africans are intelligent as other human groups should name just one African of eminence (see Hume 1748; Kant 1764). In short, Galton like scholars before him (Hume and Kant) all focused on reputation as a measure of intelligence. What is clear is that over the years the arguments sustaining this prejudice have undergone refinement from collective achievements or civilization (Hume and Kant) to personal achievements (Galton) to tests of familiarity with White culture called intelligence tests (Burt) and contemporary intelligence researchers with the persuasion that there is a ‘g’ that is genetically based.

Having outlined the lineage from Hume to present-day researchers with a strong belief in genetic determinism of cognitive abilities, it is equally plausible to do same with Amo. Historical records indicate that Amo met Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716) as a boy and probably listened to him and read some of his books and went on to become a Wolffian scholar (Abraham 2004; Bemile 2002). It is also known that it was through Christian von Wolff (1679–1754) that Amo had an ‘actual encounter with Leibnizian theories’ (Abraham 2004, 195).

It is even possible that Amo’s ideas later influenced Wolff’s *Psychologica Rationalis* (1734). This is because Amo did not cite him in his 1734 doctoral thesis on *The Apatheia of the Human Mind* (Amo 1734/2012) while Wolff’s *Psychologica Rationalis* was a full elaboration on mental activity. Another possibility is that Amo’s *Treatise* may have been influenced by Wolff’s ideas in his *Psychologica Rationalis*, given that Amo’s lectures were published at the University of Halle, a university at which Wolff was a chancellor. The argument here is that African philosophy of mind did in fact impact Western philosophy. For instance, Amo’s view that the human mind does not sense was reflected in Wolff’s ideas.

Despite the eminence of Hume and Kant in the discipline of philosophy, the two respected 18th century Western philosophers (Hume and Kant) made unfounded comments about the cognitive abilities of persons of African origin. It is worth noting that the scholarly works by many early African scholars indeed attempted to challenge the issue of racial differences. Such Black scholars are the likes of Anton W. Amo, Ignatius Sancho, Olaudah Equiano, Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Kwame Nkrumah, Malcom X, George Padmore, and a host of others whose names cannot be mentioned here for lack of space. It is also true that racial prejudice may have declined on the part of the perpetrator. However, it is the position of this article that historical events continue to have influence on behaviour today. Thus, ancient racial prejudice gives way to internalised racism which continues to sustain the prejudice. Internalised racism is understood as a person's conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy, in which Blacks are consistently ranked below Whites (Johnson-Ahorlu 2008, 2012; Williams 2012).

CRITIQUE OF DAVID HUME

David Hume (1711–1776) wrote:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all others species of men to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There never was any civilized nation of any other completion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the Whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government... (Hume 1748/1996, 228).

Hume, categorising humans on the basis of skin colour, argued that persons with black skin do not possess the genetic endowment to become extraordinary in any area of human endeavour. Hume's position is diametrically opposed to the view of his contemporary, Johannes Gottfried Kraus, the Rector of the University of Wittenberg at the time Amo defended his doctoral thesis. Kraus (1733, cited in Amo 2012/1734, 13–14) wrote that:

In the past, the veneration given to Africa was enormous, whether for its natural genius, its appreciation for learning, or its religious organization. This continent nurtured the growth of a number of men of great value, whose genius and assiduousness have made an inestimable contribution to the knowledge of human affairs and, much more, to the knowledge of divine things. From memory, no one has ever been judged better informed in matters of daily life, nor more a man of refined manners, than Terence of Carthage. Plato himself was reborn in the Socratic interventions of Apuleius of Madaurus. His discourses were so well received in centuries past that learned men were divided into two camps: that of Apuleius contended with that of Cicero for the first prize in eloquence. And in the development of Christian doctrine, how many were its promoters who came from Africa! Only to speak of the greatest

of them, let us cite Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Optatus, Augustine, who disputed with candor across the full range of the knowledge they had acquired.

Despite the evidence contained in the commentary by Kraus at the time of Amo's *viva voce* in 1733, Hume still erroneously argued that Black people have not contributed to human civilisation. Amo's (1734/2012) critique of Descartes is an illustration of the fact that an individual of a complexion other than white was eminent in speculation or philosophy. In his critique of Descartes, Amo (1734/2012, 9) wrote:

Human beings sense material things not with the mind but rather through the living and organic body. These things are said and defended against Descartes, and against his view in the *Epistolae*, Part I, Letter XXIX, where he holds: 'For as there are two things in the human soul on which all cognition that we are able to have of it depends, the one of which is that it thinks, the other that, united to a body, it is able *to act* and to *suffer* with it.' About which claim we warn and dissent; we concede that the mind acts by means of the body through a mutual union. But we deny that it is capable of suffering along with the body.

To Amo (1734/2012, 9), to 'suffer' and 'to sense' are, in living things, synonymous' and in opposition to Descartes, he argues that:

Whatever senses, lives; whatever lives, is nourished; whatever lives and is nourished, grows; whatever is of this sort, is in the end resolved into its first principles; whatever is resolved into its first principles, is a being constituted from principles; every being that is constituted from principles has constitutive parts; whatever is of this sort, is a divisible body; therefore if the human mind senses, it follows that it is a divisible body.

Amo's arguments, without doubt, showed that sensation and the faculty of sensing are absent in the human mind but present in the body. Similarly, Amo (1734/2012, 6) conceptualised the human mind as 'a purely active and immaterial substance, having commerce with the living and organic body, having knowledge and operating from intention according to a determinate end of which it is conscious'.

Given Amo's demonstration of his speculative abilities both in his doctoral thesis and in other works (such as the *Treatise*), it follows that Hume erred in his inability to discover any Black person of eminence at the time he made that assertion in 1748. There were other early prominent Africans in addition to Amo (Hume 1748/1996, 228). Thus, two things are obvious. One is that Hume was not well read or ignored information that ran contrary to his views. This is because Hume had no idea about the great empires such as Kush or Kemet (Nubia; 15th B. C. E.), Axum (Ethiopia; 1st C. E.), Ghana (1st C. E), Mali, and Songhai and Great Zimbabwe as well as a Swahili-city states (Adler and Pouwels 2006; Rodney 1972). Existing alongside these well-known empires were smaller ones (kingdoms) that were involved in trade with them.

In present-day Ghana, Denkyira, Asante, Akyem, Fante, Ga, Akwamu, Dagomba and other Kingdoms also existed (Fynn 1999). It is reported that present-day Ghana was linked to Western Sudan or the Songhai Empire by trade routes via Timbuktu,

Jenne, Wagadugu (in present-day Burkina Faso), Kong, Bonduku (in present-day Côte d'Ivoire), Kintampo and Kumasi in present-day Ghana (Fynn 1999). Many of these kingdoms predate Hume. For instance, the Denkyira Kingdom of present-day Ghana had one of their great kings, Boa Amponsem, reigning from 1660 to 1690 but later defeated in 1701 (Fynn 1999). Other kingdoms include Yoruba, Dahomey, Rwanda, Burundi, and AmaZulu (Rodney 1972).

In addition to the empires and kingdoms, there were many other city-states that were scattered across the length and breadth of Africa. For instance, the Portuguese, who were the first to set foot in Africa, reached the coast of present-day Ghana in 1471 (Fynn 1999; Gadzekpo 2006, Amponsah 2013). According Gadzekpo (2006, 15–16):

Early Portuguese writers like João de Barros and Pacheco Pereira described the 15th and 16th century settlements as 'republican townships' comprising several settlements with population of over 2000 governed by a chief and a council of elders, protected by large standing armies. According to these writers, Elimina in this period also had complex agricultural, industrial and international trade systems.

It is true that some of the empires such as Great Zimbabwe were not known to the world until 1871 (Adler and Pouwels 2006), so obviously Hume (who died in 1776) could not have been aware of such states. But what is interesting is that he ignored records about African states that preceded him, or is it that he was not aware of the existence of these records? Regardless of what answers are given, what is clear is that Hume did not do any systematic, extensive literature review before making such statements, with profound implications for many people.

Another interesting observation to note is Hume's justification for his assertion of perceived low intelligence of Black people. He argued that there were, 'not even any individual eminent in action or speculation' (Hume 1748/1996, 228). Amo defended his first dissertation when Hume was only 17 years old and completed his doctoral dissertation and started teaching at the University of Wittenberg in Germany when Hume was 23. As a result of his negligence and ignorance, Hume (died in 1776) who even died before Amo (died in 1784) never heard of Amo nor read any of his books. What is interesting is the fact that education or enlightenment was introduced to Europe by black Moors. According to Windsor (2003), the black Moors invaded and ruled southern Europe for several years in the 17th century. 'During this time', Windsor (2003, 110) writes, 'the Moors developed the greatest cultural civilization known anywhere in Europe'. Windsor (2003, 111–112) also documents that:

When many Europeans were garbed in skins in coarse garments, the Moors were wearing silks, linens, and cotton cloth... Erudite Moorish men made spectacular contributions to philosophy, medicine, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, and botany... They established academies and universities for the rich; also, there were many free schools... Moorish civilization had a gigantic effect on Portugal and Spain; this is the reason that these two countries were the first European powers to emerge after the Dark Ages [in Europe].

Though it appeared in the second half of the 11th century, this Moorish empire that ruled Europe emerged from the ruins of the Songhay Empire when it became weak on continental Africa; the Moorish empire was established by a powerful dynasty in modern day West Africa (Windsor 2003). Again, it was out of the ashes of the Mali empire (established in 1240 C. E.), also on continental Africa, that the Songhay empire emerged. However, it was during the epoch of the Mali empire that the first university in the world, the University of Sankore, was established. It ‘acquired a universal reputation as a university of theology, law, philosophy, medicine, history, etcetera’ (Windsor 2003, 97). As a centre of learning, University of Sankore at Timbuktu served students from both Africa and the Middle East and had eminent scholars such as Ahmed Baba, who wrote more than 40 books on diverse subjects, and owned a 1,600 volume library in the 16th century (Zulu 2006). It stands to reason that the reputable learning centre of Sankore established by Black Africans educated the Black scholars of the Moorish empire who spread enlightenment to Spain, which then spread to the Portuguese and the rest of Europe, that elevated them from their Dark Ages. By implication, David Hume, born in 1711, was a key beneficiary of the enlightenment of the Black Africans on whom he turns in 1748 to describe them as ‘less intelligent’. There are two basic explanations: (1) Hume was less educated in ancient history and therefore ignorant or (2) Hume neglected ancient historical facts to perpetuate a sense of White supremacy.

In addition, there were other Africans of eminence during the 18th century. Abram Petrovich Gannibal or Hannibal (1696–1781), an Eritrean-Ethiopian and the grandfather of the father of modern Russian literature (Aleksandr Pushkin), became the major-general of the Russian Army, an engineer and the governor of Reval (currently called Tallinn, the capital and largest city of Estonia). It is reported that in 1726, Hannibal wrote a book on engineering, though it was not published. Capitein was a Ghanaian who studied in the Netherlands (where slavery had been abolished in 1628 but not tenable in the Dutch colonies and protectorates) at Leiden University and defended his dissertation, *Political-Theological Dissertation Examining the Question: Is Slavery Compatible with Christian Freedom or Not?* in 1742. Capitein was the first to translate the Lord’s Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, Christian Catechism and the Ten Commandments into Fante; it is also reported that together with Christian Jacob Protten, Capitein prepared a Ga-Twi-Danish catechism and grammar, making them the pioneers in the study of local African languages (Abraham 2004; Amponsah 2013; Bemile 2002; Kwamena-Poh 1977).

At that time there also lived Christian Jacob Protten (1715–1769), ‘a mulatto [who] was a pioneer Christian missionary and schoolmaster on the Gold Coast in the 18th century. The son of a daughter of Chief Ashangmo, ruler of the Gas from 1660–80, and of a Danish soldier father, he was educated in the Danish school for mulattoes in Christiansborg Castle. Protten was taken to Copenhagen, Denmark, at the age of 12 with another mulatto pupil, Friedrich Pedersen (Smith 1997, para.

1–2). In 1732, Protten entered the University of Copenhagen and later published a grammatical introduction to the Fante and Ga languages in Copenhagen in 1764. It is reported that he also ‘translated Martin Luther’s *Smaller Catechism* into Ga and Fante. His plan for a boarding school, submitted in 1764 to Frederick V, King of Denmark (reigned 1746–66), shows his awareness of the place of African languages in the school curriculum’ (Smith 1997, para. 6). It is also reported that, on 6 June, 1746, Protten married Rebekka Freundlich, the mulatto widow of the Moravian missionary Martin Freundlich (Smith 1997; Gallagher 2005).

Similarly, there also lived Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa (1745–1797), another prominent African (an Igbo, Nigerian; it is also speculated that he might have been an African-American born in South Carolina) who was involved in the British movement for the abolition of the slave trade (Walvin 1998). In 1789, Equiano published the first slave autobiography that was widely read in England entitled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, which rapidly went through several editions (Walvin 1998). It is reported that his publication of the slave autobiography which portrayed the horrors of slavery influenced the enactment of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 (Walvin 1998).

Yet another example is Francis Williams (1700–1771), a Jamaican classical scholar, poet and a schoolmaster in Jamaica (Walvin 1998; Gilmore 2005). Historical accounts suggest that Francis was the research participant in a social experiment by Johan Montagu (the Duke of Montagu), who wanted to demonstrate that persons of African descent with the right education ‘could match the intellectual achievements of Whites. The Duke is reported to have sponsored Francis to travel to England to undertake an English education at a grammar school [Bishop’s Stortford Grammar School] and then at Cambridge University’ (Victoria and Albert Museum 2014, para. 3).

There were also Jupiter Hammon (1711–1806) and Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784). Hammon was the first African-American writer to be published in the present-day United States with his publication of *Evening Thought, Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries* (1761), which was composed on Christmas Day, 1760 (Gilbert 2011). Other published works by Hammon include: *An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatly* (1778), *An Essay on the Ten Virgins* (1779), and *A Winter Piece* (1782) and his final published work, *An Address to the Negroes of the State of New York* (1787). His 1787 publication enjoined younger slaves to seek their freedom but Hammon, born into slavery, was never emancipated. He is considered one of the founders of African-American literature (Gilbert 2011).

Wheatley, on the other hand, doubles as the second published African-American poet and first published African-American woman. Historical accounts suggest that she was born in present-day Senegal or Gambia (Gates 2010; Smith and Carroll 2000). It is also reported that her publication *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773) brought her fame both in England and the American

colonies such that George Washington (the first president of the United States), among others, praised her literary work (Gates 2010; Smith and Carroll 2000).

Ignatius Sancho (1729–1780), born on a slave ship crossing the Atlantic from Africa to the West Indies, was a composer, actor, and writer (Carey 2003). It is on record that he was the first Black Briton to vote in a British election. He is known for his *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* which was edited and published two years after his death in 1782. Sancho's *Letters* are considered one of the earliest accounts of African slavery written in English by a former slave (Carey 2003).

Though Hume challenged the existence of civilisation and scholarship in pre-literate culture, it is possible to expand his challenge to include the existence of educational institutions, written language, and contributions to science and technology. Bin Yahya al-Wangari (2008) reports that scholars from as far afield as Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, and Spain were invited to teach at Timbuktu's University of Sankore. Zulu (2012) also demonstrates that the ancient Kemet developed the earliest library system, which Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) had learnt from the ancient Kemet and interestingly, Melvil Dewey (1851–1931), after studying Aristotle's classification system, published the Dewey classification in 1872. The literature shows that the Dewey classification system was, then, based on the Kemet library system.

On the matter of written language and literature, it is reported that one of the earliest written African languages was Ge'ez, also known as Ethiopic, which existed in the 3rd or 4th century before Arabic was introduced in the 7th century (Zulu 2006). Evidence from the 'biographies of Ibn Khallikan suggests the Arabic language was even invented by an African named Abul Aswan' (Zulu 2006, 39). Similarly, the Mande had their own developed script with the oldest inscriptions dated at 3,000 B.C.E. (Winters 1991; Zulu 2006). Other scripts included (Zulu 2006):

- ancient Egypt hieroglyphics
- Meroitic and Coptic scripts of Nubia
- Amharic, and Sabeian scripts of Ethiopia (Amharic is still in use)
- Berber and Carthaginian scripts of North Africa
- Arabic script of North, Northeastern and west Africa
- Swahili Perso-Arabic script of the east coast of Africa
- Nsibidi script of the Efik of Nigeria
- Mende script of Mali and Sierra Leone
- Moum script of the Moum of Cameroon
- Toma (aka Loma) and Vai scripts of Liberia;
- Bete script of the Bete of Ivory Coast
- Adinkra script of the Akans of Ghana, West Africa

- A-ka-u-ku script invented by the Bamum around 1896 in Cameroon

Similarly, in terms of science and technology, Zulu (2006) identified a number of contributions to humanity including (but not limited to):

- the production of carbon steel 1,500 to 2000 years ago on the western shores of Lake Ukerewe (aka Lake Victoria) in Tanzania
- the creation of a stone astronomical observatory in Kenya on the edge of the Lake of Turkana 300 years before the birth of Christ with each stone aligned with a star.
- the development of a medical text 5,000 years ago in ancient Egypt and the development of iron technology by the middle of the first millennium in West Africa.

The above-mentioned inventions by Africans are ancient; however, there are contemporary inventions that are not mentioned here as the temporal context of the analysis is during or before the 18th century.

Given that one can identify not one but 11 18th century Africans of prominence (including Rebekka and Friedrich Pedersen), many great African nations or empires as well as several inventions and contributions in education, science and technology, it stands to reason that Hume's conclusions were wrong. While it is also true that many of them may have become prominent after Hume's death; it is still possible to identify many more such 18th century African figures. In sum, both reasons adduced by Hume to support his conclusions about Blacks as inferior rather showed either his ignorance or negligence or a combination of the two.

Amo's first dissertation on *The Rights of Blacks in Europe*, defended publicly in 1729 makes him one of the early philosophical sources on human rights in the world cannot be found but only a summary of his main arguments can be found in the November 28, 1729 issue of the *Weekly Newspaper*). It is reported that it was published because a disputation of that calibre had never been heard in Halle in the 1700s. However, Nickel (2014, para. 1), writing on human rights in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* reports that:

Early philosophical sources of the idea of human rights include Francisco Suarez (1548–1617), Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), John Locke (1632–1704), and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

Is this another display of negligence and ignorance? The editor of *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta may have to ensure that Nickel (2014) rewrites this sentence to read:

Early philosophical sources of the idea of human rights comprise Francisco Suarez (1548–1617), Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), John Locke (1632–1704), Anton Wilhelm Amo (1703–1784) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

Interesting to note here again is that Fagan (2014) in his paper published in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (A peer-reviewed academic resource) commits the same error of failing to acknowledge Amo's work on human rights. Another interesting thing is that the author's search for 'Anton Wilhelm Amo' on the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy yielded no results. There is no gainsaying that Hume was ignorant and negligent, two characteristics of the social and personal racial prejudice of his time.

Similarly, it is reported that Amo gave lectures on 'The Frontiers of Psychology' at the University of Jena in Germany from 1740 until he left for the Gold Coast (Jahn 1968). Yet it is important to note that he is not mentioned in the textbooks on the history of psychology. These lectures by Amo sought to define the subject matter of psychology (Jahn 1968).

CRITIQUE OF IMMANUEL KANT

In describing a report of something seemingly intelligent that had once been said by an African, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is reported to have dismissed it on the grounds that 'this fellow was quite black from head to toe, a clear proof that what he said was stupid' (Smith 2013, para. 4). In his attempt to catalogue world cultures, Kant also wrote, in his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764):

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world ... So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour ... The blacks are very vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings (1764/1960, 110–111).

This quote from Kant shows that he obviously had less knowledge about Black people than he claimed to know. Others have attributed his ignorance about African peoples to the fact that he never left his home town of Königsberg, and that his views about Africans were heavily influenced by Hume's thoughts about Africans (Eze 2011). Similarly, the views about Africans expressed by Johannes Gottfried Kraus (as stated earlier) are applicable here as well. Written before Kant wrote his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), the commentary by Kraus in 1733 undoubtedly provides some evidence against Kant's unfounded views about Africans. Again, it is highly probable that Kant may have been referring to Amo or one of his contemporaries, Capitein, Hannibal, Equiano or Protten or any

other eminent African of the time when he described the intelligent comment by the Black as stupid.

Kant's insistence on using Hume as authority on the matter of the cognitive ability of persons of African origin was both misplaced and misguided. It is possible to argue that many of the Africans may have become prominent after Hume's death; it is highly contentious to argue same for Kant who died in 1804. Of course, Kant was only expressing his views and the sentiments of his day. To this degree, Kant's conclusions and arguments about the intelligence of persons of African origin, which were derivatives of Hume's flawed reasoning are equally flawed (see Table 2 for summary of the 18th century eminent Africans). Windsor (2003) also documents the achievements of famous ancient black scholars who lived and taught in southern Spain during the Moorish Empire which spanned from Senegal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, and southern Spain in the 14th century; for lack of space, this article will concentrate more on a few of the Black scholars born in the 18th century as noted in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the achievements of key 18th century eminent Africans

S/N	Name	Achievements
1	Anton Wilhelm Amo (1703–1784)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Rights of Blacks in Europe</i> (1729) • <i>The Apatheia of the Human Mind</i> (PhD, 1734) • <i>Treatise on the Art of Philosophizing Soberly and Accurately</i> (1738) • Lectures on 'The Frontiers in Psychology' (from 1740) at the University of Jena • Attended the Universities of Halle (1727–1729) and Wittenberg (1730–1734) • Taught at the Universities of Halle (1735–1739) and Jena (1740–1746)
2	Jacobus Capitein (1717–1747)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Leiden University, Netherlands • <i>Political-Theological Dissertation Examining the Question: Is Slavery Compatible with Christian Freedom or Not?</i> (doctoral thesis, 1742) • Translated the Lord's prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, Christian Catechism and the Ten Commandments into Fante • Prepared a Ga-Twi-Danish catechism and grammar (with Christian Jacob Protten)
3	Abram Petrovich Gannibal or Hannibal (1696–1781)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major-general of the Russian Army • An engineer and the governor of Reval (currently called Tallinn, the capital and largest city of Estonia) • Wrote a book on engineering in 1726 though never published

4	Christian Jacob Protten (1715–1769)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entered into the University of Copenhagen (1732) • Published a grammatical introduction to the Fante and Ga languages in Copenhagen (1764) • Translated Martin Luther's <i>Smaller Catechism</i> into Ga and Fante (with Jacobus Capitein). • In 1764, Submitted a plan for a boarding school to Frederick V, King of Denmark (reigned 1746–66)
5	Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa (1745–1797)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African</i> (1789) and several volumes afterwards • Instrumental in the abolition of slavery
6	Francis Williams (1700–1771)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical scholar, poet and a schoolmaster in Jamaica • Attended Bishop's Stortford Grammar School and Cambridge University
7	Jupiter Hammon (1711–1806)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evening Thought, Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries</i> (1761) • <i>An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatly</i> (1778) • <i>An Essay on the Ten Virgins</i> (1779) • <i>A Winter Piece</i> (1782) • <i>An Address to the Negroes of the State of New York</i> (1787)
8	Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral</i> (1773)
9	Ignatius Sancho (1729–1780)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composer, actor, and writer • First Black Briton to vote in a British election. • <i>The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African</i> (1782)

It is remarkable to note that Amo defended his first dissertation in 1729 on *The Rights of Blacks in Europe* when Kant was barely 5 years and his PhD thesis *On the Apathia of the Human Mind* when Kant was only 10 years old. Again, Kant published his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* 26 years after Amo had published his *Treatise* in 1738.

Similarly, it follows from Kant's conclusion and arguments that if we are able to identify Blacks who had shown talents, then his conclusion is wrong. A number of eminent 18th century African scholars we have already identified above evidently demonstrate that Kant could not have been right in his conclusion about Blacks. Amo had argued that we should take truth for authority rather than authority for truth. Kant, indeed, did the opposite; of course knowing Kant, he would dismiss it as stupid philosophical advice coming from a Black person. Again, Amo's argument that negligence and ignorance account for prejudice and mental arrogance can be said to have been at play here. Should we dismiss all statements made by Kant about

persons of African origin as a result of his negligence and ignorance? Maybe we should dismiss them.

CONCLUSION

Stereotypes are known to have an impact on the target of the stereotype including stereotype threat. However, it is also possible that the stereotype may enhance performance of the target in given situations, something the author refers to as stereotype boost. For instance, the positive stereotype that Black people are musical often results in Black people excelling in music (stereotype boost). On the other hand, the negative stereotype that Black people are less intelligent results in poor performance by Black people in task domains requiring the display of superior cognitive abilities (stereotype threat). Indeed, Black people are often associated with negative stereotypes.

Empirical regularities between national intelligence quotient (IQ) average scores and gross domestic product (GDP) have been reported (Christainsen 2013; Daniele 2013; Jones 2011; Rushton 2003; Templer and Arikawa 2006). Simply put, these findings indicate that the countries with higher intelligence tend to be richer than countries with lower intelligence. These findings present a stereotype threat to *Homo Sapiens Africanus*. As a result, there is no expectation that Africans will develop. However, low intelligence is likely to be imagined stereotype than real. To show that the efforts by researchers to demonstrate that low intelligence (as measured with existing intelligence tests) affects developmental capacity is an attempt at reification. Owing to this, the author investigated the philosophical and historical basis of racial differences in intelligence that began in the 18th century. The original source of the stereotype of perceived low intelligence can be traced to the scholarly works of Hume and Kant (Smith 2013).

It is obvious that the racial agenda set by both Hume and Kant was based on shaky grounds. One thing is also certain: that both Hume and Kant were negligent and ignorant about some of the issues on which they purported to be authorities; they may have expressed their personal prejudice and the prejudicial sentiments of their days which somehow continue to be kept ablaze today. It is possible to argue that published works in the 18th century did not circulate widely at the same rate as they are disseminated in contemporary times; as a result, both Hume and Kant could not have access to the works by these African scholars. On this basis, it follows that they were not supposed to offer opinion without empirical evidence. However, given Kant's attitude towards Black people, it is possible that he would have ignored their published work and any other achievements.

Evidence from the administration of Eurocentric conventional tests, which measure one's familiarity with White culture should never be used as the basis for any meaningful discussion about differences in cognitive abilities. It is true that any

cultural group on the surface of the earth is capable of designing cognitive ability tests in which individuals who are not members of their society will underperform. Examples abound: Adrian Dove's (1967) *The Dove Counterbalance General Intelligence Test* or *Chitling Test*; Robert Williams's (1974) *Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity* or *BITCH-100* and *The Chorizo Test* (Cabrera and Cabrera 2008) which is biased towards Hispanics. Similarly, it is equally possible that non-Ghanaians will underperform on the Akan (Ghanaian) 'Agya-reko' test (or Akan puzzles).

It is clear that these two so-called 'enlightenment luminaries' (Hume and Kant) employed wrong premises to justify the continued enslavement of Africans during their day. Their works on racial differences in intelligence should, therefore, be dismissed as desperate efforts to provide the then needed intellectual support for the Zeitgeist. Should we also critically examine their other works for the same biases? Perhaps, we should. Thus, a reorientation is required on the part of everyone that given equal opportunities, persons from all continents of this world can excel regardless of their skin colour.

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