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Blanchard, Pascal, et al, *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Empire* (Liverpool UP, 2008)

'Human zoos', forgotten symbols of the colonial era, have been totally repressed in our collective memory. In these exhibitions, 'exotic' individuals were placed alongside wild beasts and presented behind bars or in enclosures. Human zoos were a key factor, however, in the progressive shift in the West from scientific to popular racism. Beginning with the early nineteenth-century European exhibition of the Hottentot Venus, this thoroughly documented volume underlines the ways in which they affected the lives of tens of millions of visitors, from London to New York, from Warsaw to Milan, from Moscow to Tokyo. Measured by scientists, exploited in shows, used in official exhibitions, these men, women and children became extras in an imaginary and in a history that were not their own.

Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)

A major influence on civil rights, anti-colonial, and black consciousness movements around the world, *Black Skin, White Masks*, authored by a Martinican psychiatrist, is the unsurpassed study of the black psyche in a white world. Hailed for its scientific analysis and poetic grace when it was first published in 1952, the book remains a vital force today from one of the most important theorists of revolutionary struggle, colonialism, and racial difference in history.

Felt, Ulrike Felt, et al, *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies* (MIT, 2016)

Science and Technology Studies (STS) is a flourishing interdisciplinary field that examines the transformative power of science and technology to arrange and rearrange contemporary societies. *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies* provides a comprehensive and authoritative overview of the field, reviewing current research and major theoretical and methodological approaches in a way that is accessible to both new and established scholars from a range of disciplines. This new edition, sponsored by the Society for Social Studies of Science, is the fourth in a series of volumes that have defined the field of STS. It features 36 chapters, each written for the fourth edition, that capture the state of the art in a rich and rapidly growing field. One especially notable development is the increasing integration of feminist, gender, and postcolonial studies into the body of STS knowledge. The book covers methods and participatory practices in STS research; mechanisms by which knowledge, people, and societies are coproduced; the design, construction, and use of material devices and infrastructures; the organization and governance of science; and STS and societal challenges including aging, agriculture, security, disasters, environmental justice, and climate change.

Heaton, Matthew, *Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry* (Ohio University Press, 2013)

Black Skin, White Coats is a history of psychiatry in Nigeria from the 1950s to the 1980s. Working in the contexts of decolonization and anticolonial nationalism, Nigerian psychiatrists sought to replace racist colonial psychiatric theories about the psychological inferiority of Africans with a universal and egalitarian model focusing on broad psychological similarities across cultural and racial boundaries. *Black Skin, White Coats* is the first work to focus primarily on black Africans as producers of psychiatric knowledge and as definers of mental illness in their own right. By examining the ways that Nigerian psychiatrists worked to integrate their psychiatric training with their indigenous backgrounds and cultural and civic nationalisms, *Black Skin, White Coats* provides a foil to Frantz Fanon's widely publicized reactionary articulations of the relationship between colonialism and psychiatry. *Black Skin, White Coats* is also on the cutting edge of histories of psychiatry that are increasingly drawing connections between local and national developments in late-colonial and postcolonial settings and international scientific networks. Heaton argues that Nigerian psychiatrists were intimately aware of the need to engage in international discourses as part and parcel of the transformation of psychiatry at home.

Harries, Patrick, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa* (Ohio University Press, 2007)

This book shows how Swiss missionaries in early colonial southern Africa adapted local knowledge to shape European scientific classifications during the nineteenth century, especially in the field of lepidoptery.

¹ The summaries draw from the publishers' formal abstracts.

Holbrook, Jarita C., et al, *African Cultural Astronomy: Current Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy Research in Africa* (Springer, Dordrecht, 2008)

Astronomy is the science of studying the sky using telescopes and light collectors such as photographic plates or CCD detectors. However, people have always studied the sky and continue to study the sky without the aid of instruments this is the realm of cultural astronomy. This is the first scholarly collection of articles focused on the cultural astronomy of Africans. It weaves together astronomy, anthropology, and Africa. The volume includes African myths and legends about the sky, alignments to celestial bodies found at archaeological sites and at places of worship, rock art with celestial imagery, and scientific thinking revealed in local astronomy traditions including ethnomathematics and the creation of calendars.

Holocaust Encyclopaedia, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, 'Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race'
This collection of entries examines the intersection of medical research and the politics of genocide in 1930s Germany.

[Science as Salvation: Weimar Eugenics, 1919–1933](#)

[The Biological State: Nazi Racial Hygiene, 1933–1939](#)

[Final Solutions: Murderous Racial Hygiene, 1939–1945](#)

Jacobs, Nancy, *Birders of Africa: History of a Network* (Yale UP, 2016)

In this unique and unprecedented study of birding in Africa, historian Nancy Jacobs reconstructs the collaborations between well-known ornithologists and the largely forgotten guides, hunters, and taxidermists who worked with them. Drawing on ethnography, scientific publications, private archives, and interviews, Jacobs asks: How did white ornithologists both depend on and operate distinctively from African birders? What investment did African birders have in collaborating with ornithologists? By distilling the interactions between European science and African vernacular knowledge, this stunningly illustrated work offers a fascinating examination of the colonial and postcolonial politics of expertise about nature.

Joseph, George G. *The Crest of the Peacock: The Non-European Roots of Mathematics*, 3rd edn (Princeton UP, 2010)

From the Ishango Bone of central Africa and the Inca *quipu* of South America to the dawn of modern mathematics, *The Crest of the Peacock* makes it clear that human beings everywhere have been capable of advanced and innovative mathematical thinking. George Gheverghese Joseph takes us on a breathtaking multicultural tour of the roots and shoots of non-European mathematics. He shows us the deep influence that the Egyptians and Babylonians had on the Greeks, the Arabs' major creative contributions, and the astounding range of successes of the great civilizations of India and China. The third edition emphasizes the dialogue between civilizations, and further explores how mathematical ideas were transmitted from East to West. The book's scope is now even wider, incorporating recent findings on the history of mathematics in China, India, and early Islamic civilizations as well as Egypt and Mesopotamia. With more detailed coverage of proto-mathematics and the origins of trigonometry and infinity in the East, *The Crest of the Peacock* further illuminates the global history of mathematics.

Keller, Richard, 'Madness and Colonization: Psychiatry in the British and French Empires, 1800–1962', *Journal of Social History* 35:2, 295–236

Cultural, social, and intellectual historians have begun to examine the intersecting histories of European colonialism and psychiatry. At their best, these studies engage with at least four distinct historiographies. First, they revise the history of European medicine by illustrating the importance of the colonies to metropolitan scientific developments. Second, they explore the relationship between knowledge and power in the colonial context that the pre-occupied scholars since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978. Third, they explicitly address the psychology of colonialism, a phenomenon at the heart of many intriguing yet speculative works in postcolonial studies. Finally, they open a new methodological window into the history of race by exploring institutional psychiatry's contributions to definitions of race and citizenship under colonialism. This essay reveals the potential implications of such research by highlighting recent studies of British and French colonial psychiatry in Africa and Asia, while also addressing possible future directions for the study of colonial psychiatry.

Kodesh, Neil, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (UVA Press, 2010)

Winner of the 2011 African Studies Association Herskovits Award. *Beyond the Royal Gaze* shifts the perspective from which we view early African politics by asking what Buganda, a kingdom located on the northwest shores of Lake Victoria in present-day Uganda, looked like to people who were not of the center but nevertheless became central to its functioning. Drawing on insights from a variety of disciplines—history, historical linguistics, archaeology, and anthropology—Neil Kodesh argues that the domains of politics and public healing were intimately entwined in Buganda from the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Drawing on extensive fieldwork conducted throughout Buganda, Kodesh demonstrates how efforts to ensure collective prosperity and perpetuity—usually expressed in the language of health and healing—lay at the heart of

community-building processes in Buganda. Kodesh's work offers a novel approach to the use of oral sources and opens up new possibilities for researching and writing histories of more distant periods in Africa's past.

Kuhn, Thomas, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago, 1962)

With *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn challenged long-standing linear notions of scientific progress, arguing that transformative ideas don't arise from the day-to-day, gradual process of experimentation and data accumulation but that the revolutions in science, those breakthrough moments that disrupt accepted thinking and offer unanticipated ideas, occur outside of "normal science," as he called it. Though Kuhn was writing when physics ruled the sciences, his ideas on how scientific revolutions bring order to the anomalies that amass over time in research experiments are still instructive in our biotech age.

Mbembe, A., 'Decolonizing the University: New Directions', *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 15:1, 29–45

This article explores two questions: What are the limits placed on the 'decolonization' project by the forces of neoliberalism? How does this impact the future of the university?

Osseo-Asare, Abena Dove, *Bitter Roots: The Search for Healing Plants in Africa* (University of Chicago 2014)

Winner of the 2015 African Studies Association Herskovits Award. For over a century, plant specialists worldwide have sought to transform healing plants in African countries into pharmaceuticals. And for equally as long, conflicts over these medicinal plants have endured, from stolen recipes and toxic tonics to unfulfilled promises of laboratory equipment and usurped personal patents. In *Bitter Roots*, Abena Dove Osseo-Asare draws on publicly available records and extensive interviews with scientists and healers in Ghana, Madagascar, and South Africa to interpret how African scientists and healers, rural communities, and drug companies—including Pfizer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Unilever—have sought since the 1880s to develop drugs from Africa's medicinal plants. A fascinating examination of the history of medicine in colonial and postcolonial Africa, *Bitter Roots* will be indispensable for scholars of Africa; historians interested in medicine, biochemistry, and society; and policy makers concerned with drug access and patent rights.

Painter, Nell Irvin, *The History of White People* (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2011)

Telling perhaps the most important forgotten story in American history, eminent historian Nell Irvin Painter guides us through more than two thousand years of Western civilization, illuminating not only the invention of race but also the frequent praise of "whiteness" for economic, scientific, and political ends. A story filled with towering historical figures, *The History of White People* closes a huge gap in literature that has long focused on the non-white and forcefully reminds us that the concept of "race" is an all-too-human invention whose meaning, importance, and reality have changed as it has been driven by a long and rich history of events.

Polanyi, Michael, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (University of Chicago, 1958)

Authored by a Hungarian-British polymath, this is one of the most influential works in the history of the philosophy of science. Polanyi argues that the scientist's personal participation in her knowledge, in both its discovery and its validation, is an indispensable part of science itself. Even in the exact sciences, "knowing" is an art, of which the skill of the knower, guided by her personal commitment and her passionate sense of increasing contact with reality, is a logically necessary part. In the biological and social sciences this becomes even more evident. The tendency to make knowledge impersonal in our culture has split fact from value, science from humanity. Polanyi wishes to substitute for the objective, impersonal ideal of scientific detachment an alternative ideal which gives attention to the personal involvement of the knower in all acts of understanding. His book should help to restore science to its rightful place in an integrated culture, as part of the whole person's continuing endeavor to make sense of the totality of her experience.

Prescod-Weinstein, Chanda (University of Washington/MIT): Blog Entries

[Making Meaning of Decolonising](#)

[W]hen we talk about decolonising/decolonizing science (as is often my habit), we need to be talking about it with the context of upending settler colonialism as part of that project. I cannot separate telling the truth about the history of Native Hawaiian astronomy from also not wanting Native Hawaiian astronomy to be used as an excuse to further colonize Hawaiian lands. I cannot separate wanting to tell the truth about Islamic contributions to physics from also having complex conversations about Native sovereignty and what that means for me as a descendent of one of the kidnapped ones.

[Intersectionality as a Blueprint for Postcolonial Scientific Community Building](#)

We make the scientific community and the scientific community determines what constitutes science and science's priorities at any given time. This means that, for example, when Europeans arrived on foreign shores with very set ideas about the gender binary and couched them in contemporary "science." What they were really doing was forcing Judeo-Christian gender

narratives on anyone who crossed their path, but because at the time the entire European scientific community shared this world view, it was considered scientific. In essence, European scientists were prone to tautologies that are self-consistent with cultural traditions and have nothing to do with objectivity.

[The Self-Construction of Black Women Physicists](#)

The core question I'm most interested in is: What is the epistemological impact of colonial, exclusionary ontologies? The answer I am curious about is with respect to self-definition of scientists and what we know about the world, the science we uncover.

Shotwell, Alexis, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* (Minnesota UP, 2016)

In *Against Purity*, Alexis Shotwell proposes a powerful new conception of social movements as custodians for the past and incubators for liberated futures. *Against Purity* undertakes an analysis that draws on theories of race, disability, gender, and animal ethics as a foundation for an innovative approach to the politics and ethics of responding to systemic problems.