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Edward Long and Other Animals: The Orangutan and Race-Making in the Late Eighteenth Century

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Introduction: “the orang outang system”

Edward Long (1734–1813), the pro-slavery planter and author, whose three-volume *History of Jamaica* was published anonymously to great acclaim in London in 1774, aimed to demonstrate that racial difference was natural and that humans were providentially destined for inequality.¹ Long’s *History* was designed to persuade his readers, and himself, that slavery was essential for the wealth and power of Britain. Lord Mansfield’s judgment in 1772, on the case of James Somerset, had demonstrated that slave owners could not rely on the law to defend their rights to human property. Some other legitimization was required. Long found the answer in the distinctions between black and white bodies and minds. Black people, he claimed, were born to serve.²

¹[Edward Long], *The History of Jamaica or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of the Island: With Reflections on Its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government*, 3 vols. (London, 1774) (hereafter HJ).

²Early work on Long and race includes Anthony J. Barker, *The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1550–1807* (London, 1978), Ch. 3; Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984), 136–7, 160–64; Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London, 1999), 55–8. For more recent discussions see Suman Seth, *Difference and Disease: Medicine, Race, and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge, 2018); Miles Ogborn, *The Freedom of Speech: Talk and Slavery in the Anglo-Caribbean World* (Chicago, 2019); Trevor Burnard, *Jamaica in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia, 2020); Folarin Shyllon, *Edward Long’s Libel of Africa: The Foundation of British Racism* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2021); Catherine Hall, *Lucky Valley: Edward Long and the History of Racial Capitalism* (Cambridge, 2024).

After eleven years in Jamaica, working as a planter and active in the Assembly, it had been a shock to return to England in 1769 and find that slavery was now in question. Long's *History* was concerned with the population, economy, politics, and culture of Jamaica, as well as its natural history. He described the origins and establishment of a slave society in all its aspects: the early years, the workings of the plantations, the system of Atlantic mercantile capitalism, the relation to the metropolitan state, the island's topography, and its inhabitants. He aimed to explain and justify racial slavery as an eyewitness. What was it about Africans that was different? What made white men born to master them? Long engaged in a process of race-making: setting out what race was, and what its explanatory force and effective power might be.³ His efforts to justify inequality as *natural* led him to engage with and challenge the theories of Enlightenment natural historians who had inserted humans into the animal kingdom. The argument he developed was that Africans were closer to orangutans than to white men. This racist argument was situated within a well-established debate on the animal and the human that remained unresolved in the eighteenth century: who and what counted as animal and as human? What sort of boundary lay between these categories?

In the 1770s and 1780s the question of the orangutan was part of virtually all anatomical, naturalistic, philosophical, and historical controversies both in Europe and in the nascent United States. A term of Malay origin meaning "man of the woods," and spelled in a variety of ways, orangutan was employed, until the end of the eighteenth century, as a generic noun for all great apes. As such, it denoted a set of associations rather than a defined species. It was at the heart of the emerging "science of man" and of the disputes on the origins and distinctiveness of humanity. The nature of the orangutan was addressed in university courses in moral philosophy, anatomy, anthropology, geography, and natural or universal history from Königsberg to Philadelphia, as well as in scholarly treatises, travel accounts, and engravings. Great apes were exhibited, alive and (more often) dead, embalmed or as skeletons, in the fairs, menageries, museums, and anatomical collections of Europe's capitals. In London, most specimens arrived through the networks of the slave trade and were scrutinized both in coffeehouses and by members of the Royal Society. The orangutan was also discussed within the political arena as part of the debate over slavery.⁴

The extent of this debate was such that, in 1789, William Dickson, the former private secretary to the governor of Barbados who had become an abolitionist, aimed in his *Letters on Slavery* to "completely overthrow the orang outang system, and effectively quash that silly scepticism, respecting the moral and intellectual faculties of the Africans."⁵ Dickson specifically mocked Long's arguments about the orangutan, citing

³Hall, *Lucky Valley*.

⁴Silvia Sebastiani, "A 'Monster with Human Visage': The Orangutan, Savagery and the Borders of Humanity in the Global Enlightenment," *History of the Human Sciences* 32/4 (2019), 80–99; Sebastiani, "Enlightenment Humanization and Dehumanization, and the Orangutan," in Maria Kronfeldner, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Dehumanization* (London, 2021), 64–82.

⁵William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery ... To which are added, Addresses to the Whites, and to the Free Negroes of Barbadoes; and Accounts of some Negroes eminent for their Virtues and Ability* (London, 1789), viii.

the authority of natural historians, and asserted—against Long’s own treatment of the black Jamaican poet, lawyer, and mathematician Francis Williams (whom Dickson quoted on his title page)—that “Those distinguished Africans Phillis Wheatley, Francis Williams, [and] Ignatius Sancho ... would have looked down with just contempt on some late impotent and pitiful attempts to bereave Africans of their human nature as they have already been bereft of their liberty.”⁶ The “orang outang system” was, for abolitionists, the use of ideas about these creatures to question black humanity. In the years after the publication of the *History*, Long had to contend with antislavery activists’ increasingly influential insistence on African humanity and with black people in London who were publicly claiming rights and redress, and refusing to accept pro-slavery narratives.

In what follows, our close examination of the notes that Long compiled up to the late 1780s demonstrates that animals, particularly the orangutan, continued to be central to his reflections on humanity and its boundaries, as well as on slavery and rights. By thinking about, and with, animals Long produced ideas of difference that were rooted in the notion of race. Moreover, we argue that the unprecedented extent of the public debate on race as the slave trade came into question in 1788–9 encouraged Long to experiment with new ways of working, including the visualization of his ideas. At the heart of this experimentation is a remarkable folio on which Long attempted to combine, into a single diagram, his understanding of humans, apes, and monkeys, and of global racial difference, hierarchy, and mixture (Figure 1a, transcribed and annotated as Figure 1b). The authority of a Jamaican planter, as an eyewitness, was no longer enough to secure slavery’s future. What Long can be seen to be developing in his manuscripts was a universal and philosophical natural history of race. This was part of a new public engagement with race in Britain that increasingly worked through languages of scientific precision, global geographies of the relations between people and environment, and visual images of human and animal difference. Notably, while Long did not complete this “orang outang system” and left his materials unpublished, his manuscript diagrams signal forms of race-making that had become dominant in public debate by the mid-nineteenth century.

Thinking with animals

In a draft on slavery, written sometime between 1769 and 1774, Long wrote, “A negro must be divested of his Humanity, and rendered incapable of the King’s protection before he can become *private property*, or a mere *chose in action*.”⁷ Here Long paraphrased, but also upended, a conclusion drawn by the antislavery advocate Granville Sharp in *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery* (1769). Sharp had observed that for enslavers to insist that a person could be held as private property, like a horse or a dog, that person would need “to be divested of his

⁶Ibid., 83–4, 175–6.

⁷Edward Long, “Draft of a Discourse on Slavery,” c.1769–1774, Edward Long Papers, British Library Additional Manuscripts (hereafter BL Add. MS), 18271, fol. 22r. See also *HJ*, 2: 270. All emphasis is original unless otherwise noted.

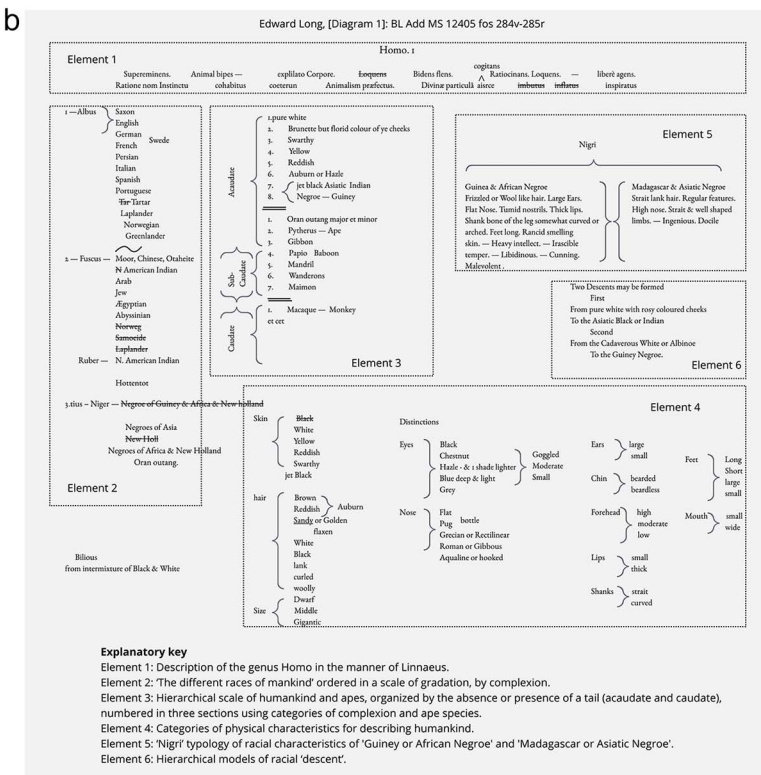
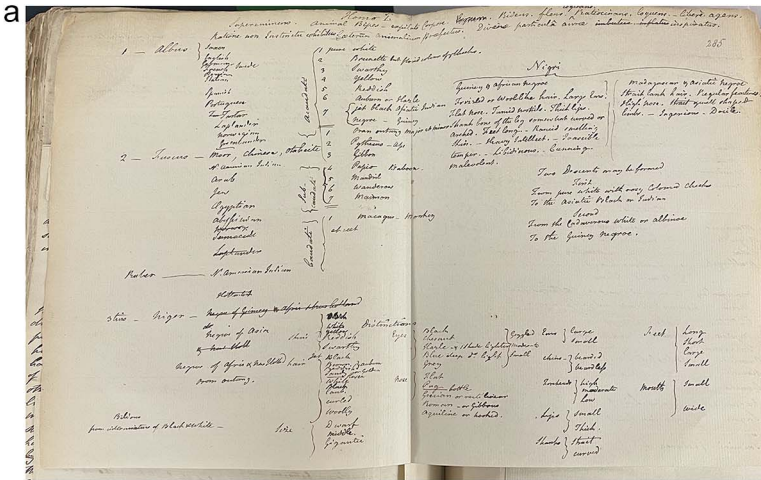


Figure 1. (a) Edward Long, [Diagram 1] "Long's Revisions to the Second Volume of HJ." From the British Library Collection, Add. MS 12405, fos. 284v-285r. (b) Annotated transcript: Edward Long Diagram 1.

human nature” and “his just right to the King’s protection.”⁸ Taking up this challenge, Long proposed to explore the notion that Africans were different enough from white people to make their enslavement as natural as that of beasts. Thinking with animals was not just philosophical speculation but a political matter central to the enslavers’ interests.

Long had grown up with animals on his father’s farm in Cornwall, and human-animal networks were central to Caribbean slave plantations.⁹ In Jamaica, Long recognized that cattle, horses, and people were all vital to sugar production. Oxen were needed for draught, mules for transport, horses to drive parts of the works and for white men to ride, dogs for hunting, pigs and poultry and cattle for food, all for dung. Animals and their reproductive capacities mattered, and attention was also paid to noxious animals, such as “musketos,” breeding in their swampy lagoons, collecting in swarms at night “to make war on every daring intruder.”¹⁰ The horse had pride of place in Long’s *History*. First and foremost a symbol of white mastery and power, the mounted planter could survey his land and people from on high, whip in hand if need be, a perfect expression of dominance. Horses were vital to the military, a source of pleasurable exercise, needed on plantations, their skin, hair, and meat all utilized. Long both stressed their similarities to “man” in the structures of their skeletons and with “Negroes” when it came to the effects of cold mountain air. Dogs also interested Long. Their extraordinary variety was, for him, a clear indication of how, like humans, they were born different. He compared them to Africans, whose “flat noses” resembled “those of a Dutch dog,” and who enjoyed “a dog’s sleep” by the fire at night.¹¹ Dogs were also essential for maintaining slavery, being used to capture run-aways and rebels.¹² Enslaved Africans and livestock were inextricably linked: bought and sold, they were conflated as commodities; they lived and worked in close proximity; they were listed together in inventories and legally equated as chattel; breeding was a crucial issue for both.¹³ As Long himself put it, “Such men [Africans] must be managed at first as if they were beasts; they must be tamed, before they can be treated like men.”¹⁴

Long’s use of animals to think through and represent concerns about humanity, race, slavery, and the law are evident in three of his anonymously published works from the early 1770s: *The Trial of Farmer Carter’s Dog* (1771), *Candid Reflections ... on what is Commonly called the Negroe-cause* (1772) and the *History of Jamaica* (1774). In *The Trial of Farmer Carter’s Dog*, the first work Long published on his return to England

⁸Granville Sharp, *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery; Or of admitting the least claim of private property in the persons of men, in England* (London, 1769), 12–13.

⁹Christopher M. Blakley, *Empire of Brutality: Enslaved People and Animals in the British Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge, 2023).

¹⁰*HJ*, 2: 506.

¹¹*HJ*, 2: 364, 412.

¹²Tyler D. Parry and Charlton W. Yingling, “Slave Hounds and Abolition in the Americas,” *Past and Present* 246 (2020), 69–108.

¹³Philip D. Morgan, “Slaves and Livestock in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: Vineyard Pen, 1750–1751,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 52/1 (1995), 47–76.

¹⁴*HJ*, 2: 401.

from Jamaica in 1769, the dog, Porter, chases a hare into a pond, where it drowns. Porter is prosecuted. The lawyers are convinced that with torture Porter could be forced to speak. Witnesses are called and Farmer Carter defends his dog, claiming that he had been protecting family property by stopping the hare from eating his master's turnips. The magistrates, however, decree that the dog must be hanged. Long was satirizing the legal system (the magistrate, for example, is a "just-ass"), but he was also playing with the boundary between animal and human.¹⁵ Could a beast think and speak? Could it be held accountable for its actions?

Candid Reflections, a political pamphlet that also traded in satire, was Long's response to the Somerset case.¹⁶ As with Farmer Carter's dog, Long criticized the law for not recognizing the facts of nature. Lord Mansfield judged that James Somerset, an enslaved black man, could not be sent to Jamaica against his will. But it was impossible, Long argued, to "wash the Blackamoor white." By legally integrating Africans into a common humanity, rather than treating them as property, blood pollution, debauchery, and unnatural crossbreeding were promoted. Long also condemned the failure to prevent sexual relationships in England between black men and white working-class women who, he argued, "would connect themselves with horses and asses, if the laws permitted them."¹⁷ Disgust towards low-class English women paralleled the assimilation of African men into cattle.

The language of natural difference, animality, and brutality was also central to Long's discussion of black people in his *History*. As Suman Seth shows, in the wake of the Somerset judgment, Long took new impetus from the writings of Samuel Estwick, a fellow West Indian planter.¹⁸ Drawing on the second edition of Estwick's *Considerations on the Negroe Cause* (1773), Long sought a "physical motive" for the enslavement of Africans, rather than either a "political consideration" rooted in parliamentary support and legislation enforced through the courts, or a Lockean justification based on enslaving captives taken in a just war.¹⁹ To do so meant emphasizing the differences in a "human nature" that had previously been seen as universal—shared by all of humanity—to argue for the enslavement of some by others. This differentiated the human according to sets of physical characteristics, particularly skin color, but also equated those with ideas of the "moral sense or moral powers"—the civilizational and intellectual characteristics—of different sets of people.²⁰ For Long, as an Enlightenment thinker, race was a matter of both bodies and minds. Race-making was a process of defining the characteristics of the human.

¹⁵Edward Long, *The Trial of Farmer Carter's Dog Porter, for Murder. Taken Down Verbatim et Literatim in Short-Hand, and Now Published by Authority, from the Corrected Manuscript of Counsellor Clear-Point, Barrister at Law* (London, 1771).

¹⁶*Somerset v. Stewart* (1772) 98 ER 499.

¹⁷Edward Long, *Candid Reflections upon the Judgement Lately Awarded by the Court of King's Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on What Is Commonly Called the Negroe-Cause, by a Planter* (London, 1772), 48.

¹⁸Seth, *Difference and Disease*, 219–20.

¹⁹Samuel Estwick, *Considerations on the Negroe Cause Commonly So Called, Addressed to the Right Honourable Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench*, 2nd edn (London, 1773), 71, 83.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 72, 79.

Long sought to argue, following Estwick's polygenism, that there were "distinct and separate species of men" contained within the genus *Homo*.²¹ He claimed that human blackness was a natural and immutable product of certain sorts of bodies, and was not affected by climate, diet, and other habits. This was not just about difference but about gradation: an idea of hierarchical difference that focused on "faculties of the understanding," not just the features of bodies.²² Such ideas had implications for the boundaries of the human, with Long arguing that "Negroes" "are represented by all authors as the vilest of the human kind, to which they have little more pretension of resemblance than what arises from their exterior form."²³ This in turn led Long to a closer consideration of the "monkey-kind" in terms of their bodies, minds, and behavior.

In the *History* Long engaged closely with the debate conducted by travelers and natural philosophers on the category of large apes known as the "oran-outang," the "pongo" and the "jocko." Among these was the French natural historian Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, from whose enormous *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (36 vols., 1749–88) Long plundered material and constructed arguments, but against which he also expressed disagreements. There were many more, from the English anatomist Edward Tyson, who dissected an "orang-outang" in London in 1699, through a wide range of travelers in Africa, South East Asia, and South America, to Linnaeus's "system of nature." Long also referred to the first volume of Lord Monboddo's *Origin and Progress of Language*, which had appeared in 1773, arguing for the humanity of the orangutan and the existence of tailed men. He endorsed Monboddo's argument that language was not natural or exclusive to humans, but the "work of art."²⁴ This material stressed the porous boundaries between apes and humans: demonstrating great apes' bipedalism, facial expressions, range of emotions, building of shelters, tool use, communication, desire for women, and more.

Yet Buffon, following in Tyson's footsteps, had concluded that the orangutan was not human, despite its "perfect" resemblance to the human species both externally and internally (including the brain). He held that the orangutan could neither think nor speak.²⁵ Long was not so sure, arguing that Buffon was "too precipitate in some of his conclusions." By contrast, he stated that there was no clear boundary—established by anatomy, speech, or rationality—between the animal and the human. There was instead a "natural diversity of the human intellect" that effectively fitted each creature into its ordained place in the great chain of being.²⁶ Long's purpose in his *History* was to use natural history to construct a legitimation of racial slavery by arguing that the category

²¹Ibid., 74.

²²Ibid., 79; Seth, *Difference and Disease*, 228–32.

²³HJ, 2: 353.

²⁴HJ, 2: 370 n. and 382 n. See Ogborn, *The Freedom of Speech*, 6–15; Silvia Sebastiani, "Challenging Boundaries: Apes and Savages in Enlightenment," in Wulf D. Hund, Charles W. Mills, and Silvia Sebastiani, eds., *Simianization: Apes, Gender, Class, and Race* (Berlin, 2015), 105–38.

²⁵Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 36 vols. (Paris, 1749–88), 14: 32; Edward Tyson, *Orang-outang, sive Homo Sylvestris: Or, the Anatomy of a Pygmy Compared with that of a Monkey, an Ape, and a Man* (London, 1699), 55.

²⁶HJ, 2: 363, 371.

of humankind was more capacious than was usually understood.²⁷ As such it could be divided into different species and hierarchically ordered so that those at the bottom were another kind of human who might be enslaved as naturally as beasts. In 1774 Long aimed to convince his readers that the major divide was not between human and animal, but between white and black. This would become even more important for him by the late 1780s.

1788–1789: “African Humanity-mania” and the politics of slavery

Although Long denied African arts and letters, his *History* had devoted a chapter to the Jamaican scholar Francis Williams, who had been famously dismissed by David Hume, saying “tis likely he is admir’d for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.”²⁸ Long transcribed, translated, and critiqued a Latin ode Williams had written for Governor Haldane, but could not simply reject Williams’s claims to humanity.²⁹ By the 1780s, this was even more difficult since Long was faced with a set of prominent black people demonstrating literary and artistic achievement across a range of genres. Though narratives of black suffering had previously appeared, there were now black writers publishing their work as the product of their own intellectual labor.³⁰ As Long knew from his early years as a man of letters in London, publication signaled the arrival of a writer into the literary scene. In 1773, Phillis Wheatley came to London to publish her collection of poems with a title page that clarified that she was “negro servant to Mr. John Wheatley, of Boston, in New England.”³¹ In the late 1760s and the 1770s, Ignatius Sancho, a man of African descent employed in the household of George Brudenell, Duke of Montagu (2nd creation), published a series of musical compositions. His correspondence with Laurence Sterne, published in 1775 and reprinted across a variety of newspapers and monthly periodicals, explicitly addressed slavery and its sufferings.³² In 1782 *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* were published, and both Long and his wife subscribed. Sancho used a sophisticated and ironic Shandean mode of epistolary writing affirming that all human creatures, of whatever race, creed, or gender, had the same ability to feel. The editor’s preface argued that the *Letters* demonstrated that an “untutored African may possess abilities equal to

²⁷ Seth, *Difference and Disease*, 220, argues that this meant “Long was left with contradictions that his own text was never quite able to resolve.”

²⁸ David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene E. Miller (Indianapolis, 1987), 629–30. See Aaron Garret and Silvia Sebastiani, “David Hume on Race,” in Naomi Zack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Race* (Oxford, 2017), 31–43.

²⁹ “To that most upright and valiant Man, George Haldane, Esq; Governor of the Island of Jamaica ... An Ode” (1759), *HJ*, 2: 483–5. See Vincent Carretta, “Who Was Francis Williams?” *Early American Literature* 38/2 (2003), 213–37; John Gilmore, “The British Empire and the Neo-Latin Tradition: The Case of Francis Williams,” in Barbara Goff, ed., *Classics and Colonialism* (London, 2005), 92–106.

³⁰ Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself* (Bath, 1772).

³¹ Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (London, 1773), advertised in *Morning Post* 156 (1 May 1773). See Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens, GA, 2011), 106–8.

³² *Letters of the Late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne, To his most intimate Friends*, ed. Lydia de Medalle, 3 vols. (London, 1775), 3: 22–37.

an European.”³³ As Long would have recognized, such publications made strong claims for the moral and intellectual equality of African people.³⁴

Abolitionist campaigners were further buoyed by the publication of Ottobah Cugoano’s *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1787) and Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789), finding evidence that further refuted claims of African intellectual incapacity. Thomas Clarkson, for example, accepted this as “proof of their abilities,” and Dickson concurred that the work of Wheatley, Williams, and Sancho provided compelling evidence that Africans were “held and reputed to be rational, moral agents.”³⁵ Despite this testimony, objections continued from pro-slavery writers, such as Thomas Jefferson, whom Equiano and Cugoano described in 1789 as “Orang Otan philosophers.”³⁶

These publications contributed to an intense and unprecedented public debate in the late 1780s over the legitimacy of racialized enslavement and the future of the slave trade. In February 1788, Prime Minister William Pitt commissioned a report on the trade from the Privy Council committee for trade and plantations and, in May, Parliament debated his motion “to take into consideration the circumstances of the slave trade....”³⁷ The formation of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in May 1787 had marked a significant step, forcing the pro-slavers to also engage with a wider public.³⁸ Orchestrated by Stephen Fuller, the agent for Jamaica, the Society of West India Planters and Merchants mobilized slavery’s supporters. Fuller lived in Upper Harley Street in Marylebone, near the house Long had occupied in Wimpole Street since 1781. United by familial as well as business interests, the society met at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand and in each other’s houses, enjoying pepper pot and rum while doing their political work.³⁹

³³Ignatius Sancho, *Letters of Ignatius Sancho, an African*, ed. Vincent Carretta (Peterborough, ON, 2015), 47; Markman Ellis, “Ignatius Sancho’s *Letters*: Sentimental Libertinism and the Politics of Form,” in Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, eds., *“Genius in Bondage”: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington, KY, 2001), 44–68.

³⁴See, for example, the discussion of Francis Williams in James Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (London, 1784), 238–9.

³⁵Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African* (London, 1786), 175; Peter Peckard, *Am I Not a Man? And a Brother? With All Humility Addressed to The British Legislature* (Cambridge, 1788), 19–20; Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, 76–7.

³⁶Jefferson thought of Sancho as a kind of freak, an eccentric meteor that, “wild and extravagant,” “escapes incessantly from every restraint of reason and taste.” See Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London, 1787), 234–5. Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoano *et al.*, “To Mr William Dickson,” *The Diary or Woodfall’s Register*, 24 (25 April 1789).

³⁷*The Parliamentary Register; Or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons 23/598* (9 May 1788); James Walvin, “The Slave Trade, Quakers, and the Early Days of British Abolition,” in Brychan Carey and Geoffrey Gilbert Plank, eds., *Quakers and Abolition* (Urbana, 2014), 165–79.

³⁸Christopher L. Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, 2006).

³⁹Society of West India Planters and Merchants Minutes, 1785–1792, the West India Committee records, SC 89, Alma Jordan Library, Trinidad and Tobago, Box 2, Folder 4, 71–2. We thank an anonymous referee for this reference. Some prominent pro-slavery campaigners disagreed with Long’s views on race. See Devin Leigh, “A Disagreeable Text: The Uncovered First Draft of Bryan Edwards’s Preface to *The History of the British West Indies*, c.1792,” *New West Indian Guide* 94 (2020), 39–74.

Long served on a special subcommittee of the society that prepared materials for the Privy Council committee and generated propaganda and petitions, and he was in regular communication with Jamaica. A committed member of the society, he attended at least thirty-one meetings from 1788 to 1795.⁴⁰ Once the danger posed by the abolitionists was recognized, Long was on call for meetings with government ministers, including Pitt. As “the historian” of Jamaica, he commanded authority, and Fuller remained closely in touch.⁴¹

Outside Parliament, but seeking to shape its decisions, the presses produced a welter of print on either side. This put questions of race, animality, and nature at the heart of the public sphere for the first time. On 31 March 1788, while the slave trade was under consideration by the Privy Council, a correspondent in the *Public Advertiser* declared that an “African Humanity-mania” had taken hold of public debate.⁴² As the *London Chronicle* later noted, it was on “Negroes['] ... distinctions from the rest of mankind [that] so much appears to depend for the decision of this great question.”⁴³ The Privy Council report was laid before the House of Commons in April 1789, and William Wilberforce delivered his famous speech demanding the abolition of the slave trade in May. Here Wilberforce drew on ideas of the animal and the human to argue that it was not nature but the slave trade that had “sunk” Africans “so low in the scale of animal beings, that some think the very apes are of a higher class, and fancy the *Ourang Outang* has given them the go-by.”⁴⁴

Slavery hung in the balance, and it was within this intensely politicized and public context that Long worked with his notes and diagrams. His purpose, it appears, was to publish a second edition of the *History* for what promised to be a larger and broader readership, an idea that his friends believed he was still entertaining in 1791.⁴⁵ He certainly gathered materials to reinforce the arguments he had made in 1774. However, he also developed new methods and new forms of presentation. He moved towards an increasingly systematic approach to the animal and the human, the gradations of nature, and the global geographies of difference, and he visualized his ideas in new ways within a series of tables, lists, and diagrams (Figure 1a). Overall, Long’s work in

⁴⁰David Beck Ryden, *West Indian Slavery and British Abolition, 1783–1807* (Cambridge, 2009); Ryden, “Spokesmen for Oppression: Stephen Fuller, the Jamaica Assembly, and the London West India Interest during Popular Abolitionism, 1788–1795,” *Jamaican Historical Review* 26 (2013), 5–28.

⁴¹M. W. McCahill, ed., “The Correspondence of Stephen Fuller, 1788–1795: Jamaica, the West India Interest at Westminster and the Campaign to Preserve the Slave Trade,” *Parliamentary History* 33/1 (2014), 1–256.

⁴²*Public Advertiser* 16754 (31 March 1788).

⁴³“A White Friend to Blacks” [review of Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Philadelphia, 1787; London, 1789)], in *London Chronicle* 66/519 (28 Nov. 1789), 513.

⁴⁴*The Speech of William Wilberforce, Esq., Representative for the County of York, on Wednesday the 13th of May, 1789, on the Question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (London, 1789), 47–8.

⁴⁵“Mr. Edwards informs me that you are printing a second edition of your History of Jamaica, in which I wish you success,” Thomas Dancer to Edward Long, 13 April 1791, BL Add. MS 22678, fol. 58v–59r. There is an undated note (crossed out) in Edward Long, “Revised HJ, II”, BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 440r, that suggests he was working with his bookseller, Mr Lowndes, on printing the text: “I know not whether these are proofs, or already worked off” the press. However, it is not clear from this note whether Long was referring to a second edition.

this period aimed to present an elaborated universal and philosophical natural history of race that was commensurate with the scale of the political task the enslavers now faced and the demands of the broader public they aimed to convince.

Long's archive of race

The materials in the British Library's Edward Long Papers show that Long extensively annotated a printed copy of the *History* and supplemented it with further autograph memoranda, notes, essays, and correspondence, together with printed material from newspapers, periodicals, and reports, subsequently bound into three "grangerized" volumes.⁴⁶ At the end of his life he understood the importance of his archival record and its contribution to maintaining the authority of his account of the past. He left his papers, including the revised volumes, to two of his sons. However, it was his grandson, Charles Edward Long, who presented them to the British Museum in the 1840s and 1850s.⁴⁷

This marked an inheritance. Charles Edward was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, and, with ample provision from the family's slave plantations, developed antiquarian and historical interests.⁴⁸ His pamphlet on the game laws, published in 1824, echoed his grandfather's beliefs by "declaring Game property."⁴⁹ Conscious of his responsibilities as a West Indian proprietor, Charles Edward also published a defence of slavery in 1830, just when the abolitionists were mobilizing for a new attack. He propounded a series of arguments that would have been familiar to his grandfather: harsh treatment was the exception, not the rule; "Idleness is the essential characteristic of the Negro race"; and slavery could be a civilizing force. "Their very bondage," he claimed, "has raised them in the scale of creation." Above all, he wrote that the idea of emancipation was "an outrageous violation of private property" by Parliament that would require financial compensation.⁵⁰

While it is not possible to accurately date all the manuscript annotations Edward Long made to the *History*, it is evident from the addition of statistical material for years beyond 1774, from internal evidence in the annotations, and from the newspaper material that Long began his revisions as soon as the work was published and continued until at least the early 1790s. He was keen to update information about Jamaica's volume of trade, the economies of the parishes, and levels of population. Large sections of the book that were already compilations of information could always absorb more. However, there were areas of concentrated attention, particularly to questions of race, indicated by additional pages of notes or text ready for inclusion. These additional materials consist of notes, in both draft and fair copy, on "Afric," "On the Oran Outang,"

⁴⁶The three revised volumes are in the Long Papers as BL Add. MSS 12404, 12405, 12406.

⁴⁷The revised volumes were presented in 1842 ("Presented by C.E. Long, 8 March 1842, 3 vols" in "Revised HJ, I," BL Add. MS 12404, end flyleaf). Other items suggest the late 1850s: BL Add. MS 22678 is endorsed "Presented by E Long Esq 11 Feb 1859."

⁴⁸Gordon Goodwin, rev. Michael Erben, "Long, Charles Edward (1796–1861)," ODNB online. Legacies of British Slavery Database, Charles Edward Long, at www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/42166; Hall, *Lucky Valley*, 258–9.

⁴⁹Charles Edward Long, *Considerations on the Game Laws* (London, 1824), advertisement.

⁵⁰Charles Edward Long, *Negro Emancipation No Philanthropy: A Letter to the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1830), 7, 29.

on the “different faculties & degrees of Knowledge in different kinds of Animals,” on the “Spectacle de la nature,” and “On the different races of mankind.”⁵¹

The additional material includes the diagram in [Figure 1a](#). This is the most extensive and complete of three diagrams bound into the volume ([Figures 2a](#) and [3a](#)). Each element of its composite structure is internally coherent and discrete on the page, but also in dialogue with the other elements. It presents lists of people, apes, and monkeys; a graded differentiation of physical features; and a hierarchical model of racial descent. However, some of the tensions between these elements are evident from the confusion of Long’s seemingly abandoned attempts to combine or extend them within the other diagrams. [Figure 2a](#) is a complicated list of complexions mixed with or overlaid onto a series of human groupings. [Figure 3a](#) elaborates a hierarchical list of twenty-nine ape and monkey species. We describe these folios as diagrams—defined by Ephraim Chambers’s *Cyclopaedia* as “scheme[s], for the explanation, or demonstration of any figure, or the properties thereto belonging”—rather than just as lists.⁵² According to John Bender and Michael Marrinan’s recent explanation, “a diagram is a proliferation of manifestly selective packets of dissimilar data correlated in an explicitly process-oriented array that has some of the attributes of a representation but is situated in the world like an object.”⁵³ Long often used tables and lists in the *History*, and in his manuscript revisions, sometimes with complex arrangements of quality and value.⁵⁴ Yet in the diagrams we discuss here, Long further develops these data visualizations by correlating novel relations between them and presenting single complex figures.

Long’s manuscript materials recorded and synthesized his reading. Taking together the marginal annotations and the manuscript notes bound into Volume 2 there is, particularly in Long’s discussion of the orangutan, a range of material from various travelers’ accounts and from classical authors, that draws on compilations by others. As with the *History*, much comes directly from Tyson’s *Orang-outang* (1699). Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle* was extensively used again, now accessed through Oliver Goldsmith’s eight-volume abridgment, *A History of the Earth, and Animated Nature* (1774). Alongside Charles Burney’s *A General History of Music* (1776), Long used several French Enlightenment texts, including the well-known note 10 of Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality* (1755) on the orangutan.⁵⁵ These were combined with other

⁵¹Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fos. 274–5, 280–83, 285–93; Edward Long, “On the Different Races of Mankind,” BL Add. MS 12438, fols. 1–13.

⁵²Ephraim Chambers, “Diagram,” in Chambers, *Cyclopaedia*, 4th edn (London, 1741), n.p. (alphabetical); James Delbourgo and Staffan Müller-Wille, “Introduction: Listmania,” *Isis* 103 (2012), 710–15.

⁵³John Bender and Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram* (Stanford, 2010), 7. See also Matthew Daniel Eddy, *Media and the Mind: Art, Science, and Notebooks as Paper Machines, 1700–1830* (Chicago, 2023).

⁵⁴Table: “General Exports for the Port of Kingston, 26th March 1774 to 20th May 1775,” and list of plants: “Breadnut Island,” BL Add. MS 12405, fols. 92, 171–4.

⁵⁵Long used the first English translation: John James Rousseau, *Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind* (London, 1761). He also took notes from other English translations: Noël-Antoine Pluche, *Spectacle de la Nature; or, Nature Displayed* (London, 1733) and Voltaire’s *Treatise upon Religious Toleration*, 1st French edn (1763), in *The Works of M. de Voltaire. Translated from the French. With Notes, Historical and Critical*, trans. and ed. Tobias Smollett, T. Francklin *et al.*, vol. 24 (London, 1764).

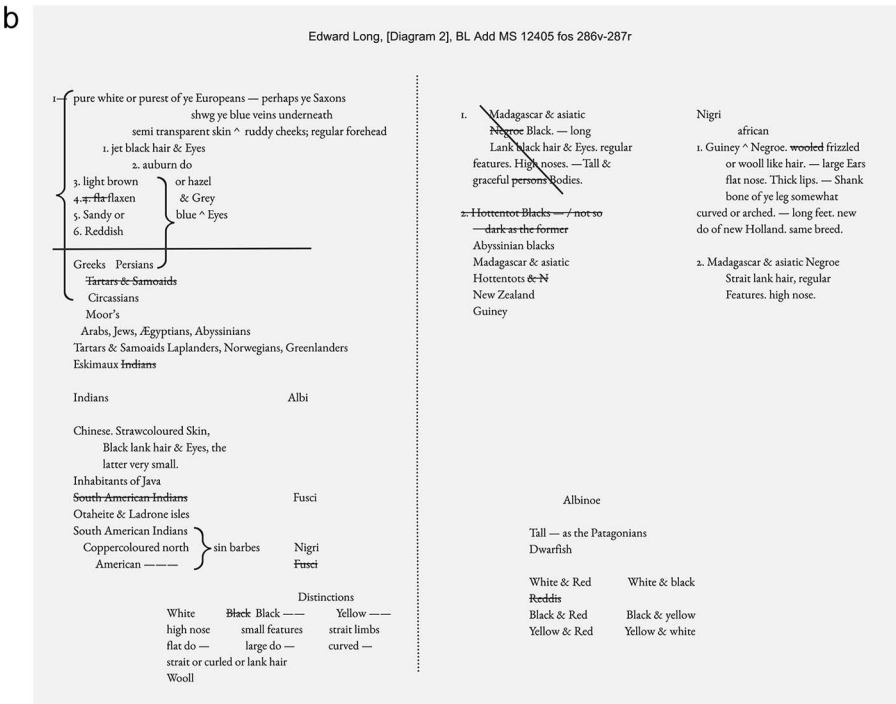
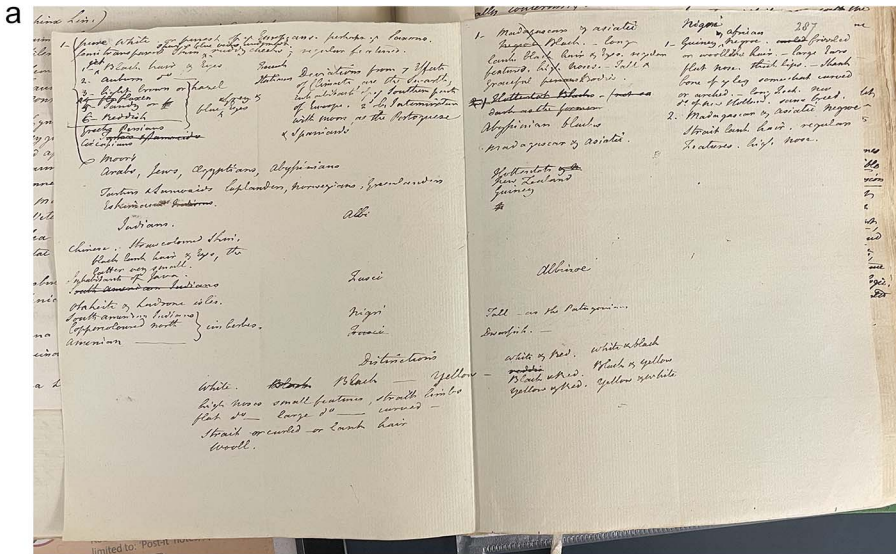


Figure 2. (a) Edward Long [Diagram 2], “Long’s Revisions to the Second Volume of HJ.” From the British Library Collection, Add. MS 12405 fos. 286v–287r. (b) Transcript: Edward Long Diagram 2.

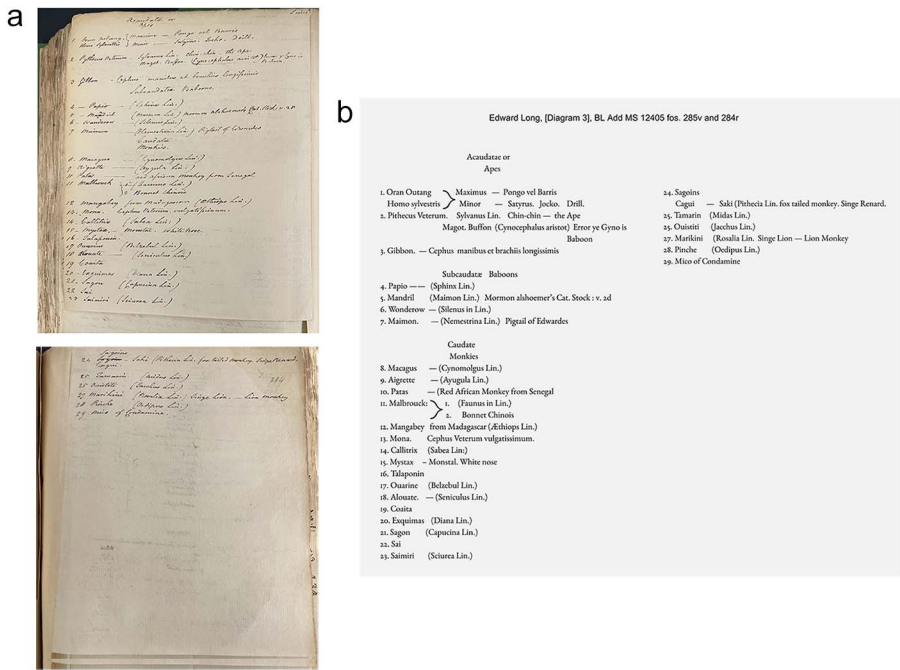


Figure 3. (a) Edward Long [Diagram 3], “Long’s Revisions to the Second Volume of *HJ*.” from the British Library Collection, Add. MS 12405 fos. 285v, 284r. (b) Transcript: Edward Long Diagram 3.

works by travelers and physicians published in the early 1770s. Nothing is cited in these amendments and additions that was published later than 1778.⁵⁶

In his notes “On the different races of mankind” Long returned to Buffon, Goldsmith, and Linnaeus alongside accounts in English of South America, Guinea, and the East and West Indies by Frézier, Snelgrave, and Raynal, and he drew temperature measurements from the *Philosophical Transactions* and a variety of published journals.⁵⁷ There are also extracts from 1780s works, such as the *Treatise on the Synochus Atrabiliosa* (1782) by the physician Johann Peter Schotte, and the London edition of Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787).⁵⁸ This suggests that Long constructed his archive of material on race, nature, and the limits of the human from 1774 until at least 1788, after which he compiled his notes “On the different races of mankind.” He needed new evidence to demonstrate the brutal nature of Africans. As an Enlightenment man of letters he sought to construct his universal and philosophical natural history of race in his library.

⁵⁶ John Roberts in *Extracts from an Account of the State of the British Forts, on the Gold Coast of Africa* (London, 1778), referenced in Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 275r.

⁵⁷ Long, “Different Races,” BL Add. MS 12438, fols. 7v–10r.

⁵⁸ Other extracts are taken from Richard Watson, *Chemical Essays*, 5 vols. (London, 1782–7). The latest extract is from John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra-Leone, on the Coast of Africa* (London, 1788).

Visualizing a universal natural history of race

The borders of humanity

Long's notes and diagrams devoted much attention to the borders of humanity. He located his boundary object, the orangutan, twice on [Figure 1a](#): at the bottom of element 2 and at the mid-point of element 3. He also sought out the orangutan, and its association with Africans, in a range of texts, along with passages documenting the sensibility and feelings of nonhuman animals. In doing so he employed the same method and strategy he had used in his *History*. He transcribed reasonably accurately and at length from the theoretical and empirical arsenal of the Enlightenment, but he did so selectively, omitting material that did not suit his argument, and inserting his own opinions where he thought necessary. His material on the orangutan was often decontextualized from the texts in which he found it.

Long began his notes "On the Oran Outang" by transcribing note 10 of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* in support of the "perfectibility," and thus the humanity, of the orangutan. Rousseau argued that "the monkey" "does not belong to the human Species" because "he wants the faculty of Speech" as well as the "*faculty of improving*," but "the same Hasty conclusion" did not apply to "the Pongos and the oranoutangs." More careful experiments were needed.⁵⁹ Rousseau's conclusion prompted Long to review the extensive travel literature on the orangutan. However, he ignored Rousseau's criticism of European travelogues for their inaccurate portrayal of non-European peoples. As a result, his transcription emphasized the uniqueness of Africa and its inhabitants (including great apes), while neglecting the critical view of Europe that was central to Rousseau's reasoning.⁶⁰ Similarly, dealing with Burney's *General History of Music*, Long noted none of its general subject matter, only transcribing Burney's digression on the great apes.⁶¹ When reading Voltaire's *Treatise on Tolerance*, he ignored the argument against religious intolerance and only recorded Voltaire's footnote criticizing Descartes's animal-machine.⁶² Likewise, from Raynal's *History of the Two Indies*, a complex and contradictory work, Long recorded a section on black skin that was withdrawn from the third edition and omitted Raynal's denunciation of European colonialism and slavery. Finally, he copied a passage on animal language from John Gregory, regardless of the fact that the Scottish physician was a fervent abolitionist and one of the founding members of the Aberdeen Wise Club, which had opposed slavery and polygenism since the late 1750s.⁶³

⁵⁹Long, "Revised HJ, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 280v, quoting from Rousseau's *Discourse*, 228–9. "Hasty" is Long's insertion.

⁶⁰Rousseau, *Discourse*, 231 n. 10 observes, "Though the Inhabitants of Europe for three or four Hundred Years past have overrun the other Parts of the World, and are constantly publishing new Collections of Voyages, I am persuaded that those of *Europe* are the only Men we are as yet acquainted with."

⁶¹Long, "Revised HJ, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 282r, taken from Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period. To which is Prefixed, a Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients*, vol. 1 (London, 1776), 304–6.

⁶²Long, "Revised HJ, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 293r. Long quotes from Voltaire, *A Treatise upon Religious Toleration*, Ch. 12, 131 n.

⁶³Long, "Revised HJ, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 292r. See Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York, 2013), Ch. 4.

Long's notes were largely copied verbatim, with only a few cuts and abridgments. Sometimes there were precise references, including page numbers, but he rarely indicated, except with questions, the insertion of his own comments. These observations were few and short, but they were significant. In the long passage from Tyson's treatise on comparative anatomy, for instance, Long inserted analogies between the orangutan as described by the anatomist and Africans. When remarking on the long breasts of the female Baris (one of the various synonyms for the orangutan/chimpanzee), Long noted, with a characteristic racialization, that they were "as long as some of the *Affric* negro women."⁶⁴ He also questioned whether there was a direct relationship between the "Glandulae Cutaneae axillares" of the orangutan, described by Tyson, and the "Glands of negroes," that could be "in part the Seat of that Tincture which is spread afterwards over the reticular membrane," as suggested by Raynal and Jefferson. This potential source of blackness "should," Long argued, "be carefully examined."⁶⁵ He often compared and interrogated his sources. The orangutan's moderate use of alcohol was contrasted "with ye account of ye Savage People met with by our circumnavigators," where they were often described as prone to drunkenness.⁶⁶ He also noted that some ancient authors had "mix[ed] the negroes & these Wild men in the same class of Brutality" in order to challenge Tyson's attribution of a "brutal Soul" to the ape.⁶⁷ In each case, these brief interventions reveal the processes of race-making behind Long's continued interest in the orangutan.

In turn, Long's diagrams show how this interrogation of apes contributed to defining degrees of humanity. [Figure 3a](#) enumerated all the apes and monkeys then known, numbering them in descending order from those closest to humans to those furthest away: from the Asian and African "Oran Outangs" to the "mico" of the New World. Although Long employed Linnaeus's taxonomic and classificatory method, he named and ordered the different species of apes following Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*.⁶⁸ For Long, the orangutan marked "the Nexus of the Animal and Rational," connecting together "the lowest Rank of Men, and the highest kind of Animals," as Tyson had stated.⁶⁹ In the late 1780s, Long's diagrams aimed to establish this continuity against contrary positions that were available to him and other readers. For example, bound into the revised Volume 2 of his *History* was a letter printed in the *European Magazine* for February 1788. The letter's anonymous author presented "a positive proof of the Owrans-Outang being very far removed from the human species" and argued for the humanity of Africans and the abolition of the slave trade on that basis.⁷⁰

⁶⁴Long, "Revised *HJ*, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 288v.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, fol. 289r. See Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, 2011).

⁶⁶Long, "Revised *HJ*, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 290r.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, fol. 291r.

⁶⁸The list of the twenty-nine species of apes and monkeys in [Figure 3a](#) closely follows the order established by Buffon's vols. 14 (on the great apes, apes, and monkeys of the Old World) and 15 (on the monkeys of the New World), with two minor exceptions. Long Latinized Buffon's names, while often also recording Linnaeus's nomenclature.

⁶⁹Tyson, *Orang-utang*, 5, 94.

⁷⁰*European Magazine*, Feb. 1788, 76, in Long, "Revised *HJ*, II," BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 296.

Beyond orangutans, other animals were also crucial for Long in determining the nature of humanity. In his manuscript notes, he reported the case of a hound that was allegedly taught “to speak certain words as articulately as a man,” recalling Farmer Carter’s dog.⁷¹ More importantly, he resumed the analogy between canine races and the human race, an analogy invoked by proponents both of monogenesis and of polygenesis in support of conflicting theories. Buffon had argued that canine races derived from a single “stock” (*souche*), identified as the shepherd dog, that had “degenerated” because of climate, food, and domestication. Despite his anti-classificatory stance, Buffon had sketched “a sort of family tree,” oriented like a geographical map or network to show the order of dogs at a glance (Figure 4).⁷² The capacity of dogs to procreate together proved the unity of the species, which Buffon understood as a succession of similar individuals able to reproduce.⁷³ In the *History*, Long had challenged Buffon, and his ideas of climatic degeneration, arguing, “There is more difference between the mastiff and lap-dog, than between the horse and the ass; and what two animals can be more unlike, than the little black Guiney-dog, of a smooth skin, without a single hair upon it, and the rough shock dog?”⁷⁴ Long’s later annotations developed the argument, noting, “Dogs of different species differ no more in their form and appearance, than in their dispositions, qualities, constitutions. Yet their several distinctions remain in spite of climate.”⁷⁵ A related passage, copied from John Pinkerton’s *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians* (1787), further extended the analogy: “A Tartar, a Negro, an American, &c. &c. differ as much from a German, as a bull-dog, or lap-dog, or shepherd’s cur, from a pointer. The differences are radical; and such as no climate or chance could produce.”⁷⁶ For Long, as for Kames and Voltaire, it was ludicrous to imagine that the shepherd’s dog could produce such distinct and stable canine breeds, just as, for humanity, it was absurd to claim that the African or the Amerindian derived from the white European or *vice versa*.⁷⁷ The differences were innate, and depended on nature, not on environment or chance.

This discussion of dogs therefore underpinned Long’s rejection of Buffon’s ideas of the unity of the human species, as affirmed by their reproductive capacity and the fecundity of their offspring.⁷⁸ The French naturalist was clear on this point:

⁷¹ Long, “Revised HJ, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 293r.

⁷² Buffon, “Table de l’ordre des chiens,” in Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, 5: 228–9.

⁷³ Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, 2: 10–2; 4: 385–6.

⁷⁴ HJ, 2: 358.

⁷⁵ Long, “Revised HJ, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 277v.

⁷⁶ Long, “Different Races,” BL Add. MS 12438, fol. 1r, col. 1; John Pinkerton, *A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths. Being an Introduction to the Ancient and Modern History of Europe* (London, 1787), 33–4.

⁷⁷ Voltaire, *Traité de Métaphysique*, in Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 22, ed. Louis Moland (Paris, 1879), 210; Henry Home Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1774), 1: 13. See also, for the same argument, William Petty, “The Scale of Creatures,” in *The Petty Papers: Some Unpublished Writings of Sir William Petty, Edited from the Bowood Papers by the Marquise of Lansdowne*, vol. 2 (London, 1927), 30–31; Benoit de Maillet, *Telliamed* (London, 1750), 211–12.

⁷⁸ HJ, 2: 260–1. Long’s description of the Spanish American *casta* system’s nomenclature for diverse mixed-race offspring suggests he was aware that all humans were one fertile species.

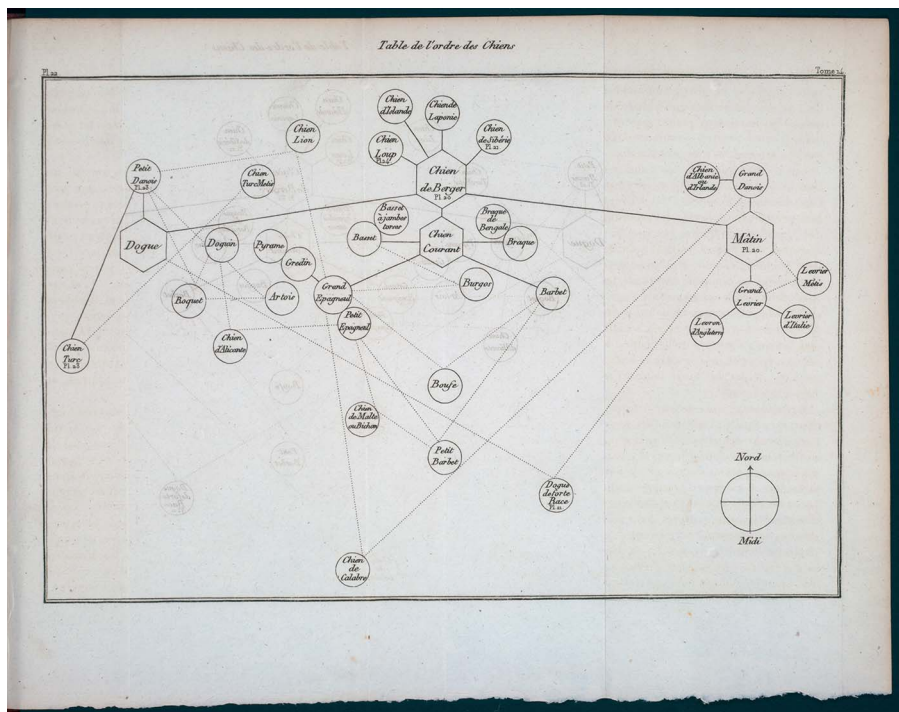


Figure 4. Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, “Table de l’ordre des chiens,” *Histoire naturelle*, vol. 5 (Paris, 1755), fold-out plate, 228–9, New York Public Library, catalog ID b13614591.

If the Negro and the White could not reproduce together, if even their offspring remained infertile, if the mulatto were truly a mule, there would be then two distinct species; the Negro would be to man what the donkey is to a horse: or rather, if the White was a man, the Negro would no longer be a man; he would be a distinct animal, like the ape, and we would be entitled to think that the White and the Negro would not have a common origin.

As Buffon concluded, “since all men can communicate and reproduce together, all men come from the same stock and are of the same family.”⁷⁹ Long, by contrast, claimed that the “mulattos” were infertile, like real “mules.”⁸⁰ Discourses of contagion, contamination, and animalization were mobilized in the *History* to discuss mixed unions. Long inveighed against the sexual relations of “white men of every rank cohabiting with Negresses and Mulattas, free or slaves,” that produced “a vast addition of spurious offsprings of different complexions” and a “yellow offspring not their own.” He urged the “white men” in the colonies to refrain from the “goatish embraces” of

⁷⁹ Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, 4: 388–9, our translation.

⁸⁰ *HJ*, 2: 335–6.

“black women”—here reduced to reproductive cattle.⁸¹ At the same time, Long claimed consanguinity between the orangutan and the African, even arguing that “an Oran-Outang husband” would not be “any disgrace to an Hottentot female.”⁸² His numerous manuscript extracts obsessively reiterated the theme of the libidinous sexuality of Africans, men and women, and their sexual relations with orangutans.

Long made very few annotations to the sections of the *History* addressing Buffon. What he did add indicated that he had not changed his mind. To Buffon’s conclusion that the orangutan “*does not think*,” Long added the question, “But how can we be sure of this fact?”⁸³ For Long, there was a gradation of the human and of human capacities. As a result, the orangutan could exhibit a sort of bare life of human thought and reason. Long argued in his notes that “they think and reason too within such a limited degree as is necessary to supply their wants, acquire and procure the materials of subsistence, provide for their safety, against Enemies, and every other matter suitable to their destination and the ends of their Existence.”⁸⁴

Similar arguments applied to differentiations between humans and other animals on the basis of speech or language. Although never mentioned in Long’s notes, in 1779 Peter Camper had published the results of his dissections of several orangutans, arguing (*contra* Tyson) that their vocal organs were different to those of humans and that these creatures would never be able to speak.⁸⁵ For many, including the author of the letter to the *European Magazine* that Long inserted into his annotated *History*, this was a definitive line drawn between the ape and the human. It swayed the debate among natural historians and comparative anatomists.⁸⁶ However, for Long, who in the *History* had argued that whether orangutans mastered human language or not they would have some sort of oral communication not dissimilar to “the gabbling of turkies” characteristic of the “Hottentots,” such anatomical evidence could not be conclusive.⁸⁷ This was certainly an idea that was also expressed in London’s newspapers in the late 1780s as part of the debate over slavery.⁸⁸ Any vocalization was enough to blur the human–animal boundary, and to reinforce Long’s claim, supported by his notes on Richard Watson’s *Chemical Essays* (1787), that nature’s classes “descend[ed] indefinitely by imperceptible gradations.”⁸⁹ For Long, those at nature’s boundary between human

⁸¹ *HJ*, 2: 327–8, 332.

⁸² *HJ*, 2: 370, 364. Dickson, *Letters on Slavery*, 83–4, commented that this assertion, far from being “ludicrous,” as Long pretended, was “indecent or shocking,” revealing Long’s “*misanthropic, antimosaic, or antichristian*” views. The offensive Dutch term “Hottentots” was used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to refer to the Khoikhoi people. See Nicholas Hudson, “‘Hottentots’ and the Evolution of European Racism,” *Journal of European Studies* 34/4 (1996), 308–32; François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, *L’invention du Hottentot: Histoire du regard occidental sur les Khoisan (XVIe–XIXe siècle)* (Paris, 2002).

⁸³ Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 294r.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 298v.

⁸⁵ Peter Camper, “Account of the Organs of Speech of the Orang Outang,” *Philosophical Transactions* 69 (1779), 139–59.

⁸⁶ Claude Blanckaert, “Produire l’être singe: Langage du corps et harmonies spirituelles,” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 377 (2014), 9–35.

⁸⁷ *HJ*, 2: 369.

⁸⁸ Civis Junior replying to Oroonoko, *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* 6060 (10 Oct. 1788).

⁸⁹ Long, “Different Races,” BL Add. MS 12438, fol. 6r.

and animal—the orangutan and the “Negro”—might be treated differently. They could, he argued, be enslaved: “They seem to be [^]of all mankind[^] the digni qui Serviant of Aristotle.—Some men there are says he who are born to be Slaves, that is seem adapted & intended by nature for Servitude.”⁹⁰

On gradation and the hierarchy of species

Long had deployed this language of gradation and distinction in his *History* when he offered an extended description of the “Negroes” of Guiney and asked, provocatively, “When we reflect on the nature of these men, and their dissimilarity to the rest of mankind, must we not conclude, that they are a different species of the same genus?”⁹¹ Establishing a hierarchy within and between humans and animals was a well-established strategy. Lord Kames, also a supporter of polygenesis, similarly noted “different species of men ... of the same genus” at the outset of his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774).⁹² In describing this diversity, Long noted, “Of other animals, it is well known, there are many kinds, each kind having its proper species subordinate thereto; and why shall we insist, that man alone, of all other animals, is undiversified in the same manner, when we find so many irresistible proofs which denote his conformity to the general system of the world?”⁹³ In the *History*, Long discussed species variation through a discourse of gradation: he wrote of a “regular order and gradation” that connected genera to species by “another gradation.” His notion of gradation is precise and finely calibrated: difference is an “almost imperceptible deviation,” and near connections have a “very palpable similitude,” so that, he says, “where the one ends, the other seems to begin.” The harmony of “subordination and close affinity,” for Long, point to “differences infinitely graduated” within “a primitive and general design.”⁹⁴ Over the subsequent pages of his discussion of the “Negroe,” the “Hottentot,” and the orangutan, the language of gradation is deployed to blur or obfuscate species boundaries. The ontological quality of this language of gradation, the coming together and keeping separate, is reactivated, crystallized, and made visible in Long’s manuscript diagrams.

The diagrams’ visual language articulated the idea of gradation and the scale of species with renewed clarity. Gradation is depicted through Long’s hierarchical list-like structures, where white space separates the nominal terms of his debate, and their placement one above another in hierarchical lists links them together in a chain or scale. In his diagrams, Long uses words and phrases as units of information within the diagrammatic frame, organized on the page by their relation to other nominal terms, in lists that read from left to right and top to bottom, like text. The nominal terms

⁹⁰ Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 273v.

⁹¹ *HJ*, 2: 356.

⁹² Kames, *Sketches*, 1: 7.

⁹³ *HJ*, 2: 356.

⁹⁴ *HJ*, 2: 356.

are separated, but connected, by links both imperceptible and immediate. He supplements this text with brackets and other typography-like punctuational structures. His diagrams are notably not pictorial, though he was capable of that in his revisions.⁹⁵

In Figure 1a above, Long identified peoples and animals in hierarchical chains. The eye is invited to read down the list, noticing how each people, nation, or race (these ideas are not distinguished, but are all in play) are related to those above and below. There is in each part of the diagram an organizing principle, such as the Linnaean categories *Albus*, *Fuscus*, *Ruber*, and *Niger* (white, tawny, red, black) in element 2, or the complex caudate–complexion nexus established in element 3. The chain-like quality of these diagrams enforces one hierarchical ordering, squeezing out the complexity of mixture or multiple origins. Long creates a hierarchical scale of humankind and apes organized by three different and incompatible indices: first, the possession of a tail (“acaudate” and “caudate”); second, human complexion ordered in a numbered list from “White” through “Swarthy” to “Negroe-Guiney”; and third, after an enigmatic double dash, a numbered list of apes, “Oran outang major et minor” to “Maimon” (mandrill), restarting the numbering below that with “1. Macaque—Monkey.” Complexity is introduced by the acaudate bracket extending its reach from human complexion to the higher apes. That these lists end with “et cet” suggests the chain might be continued on through further species.

Long’s diagrams represent a methodological innovation for him. They are a heuristic, a method for making discoveries, setting out the information he has acquired from his library research in order to make deductions. His turn in the diagrams to a visual arrangement of his argument reiterates his hierarchical and gradational model of racial and species categories. In Long’s scale of humankind and apes (element 3), much rests on the visual rhetoric of categorization and hierarchical ordering: numbers, brackets, and lines. The diagrams are simplifying and clarifying structures, part of Long’s thinking tools, but they also have their own visual logic that allows, but also insists on, certain conclusions. As a practice in early modern science, diagrams have been used to represent technical knowledge, to demonstrate knowledge production, to trace processes and procedures, to master uncertainty, and to arrange evidence.⁹⁶ Long uses his diagrams as a new method, setting out his evidence visually, where he had elsewhere set it out in narrative prose; they are a problem-solving visualization that asks where lies the difference between human and animal. The diagrams are not simply representations of his thinking. They are a “tool of reasoning” and, as such, they are an object of knowledge in their own right.⁹⁷

⁹⁵Long, drawing depicting the cotton tree (kapok or *Ceiba pentandra*), “Revised HJ, III,” BL Add. MS 12406, fol. 237; drawing of *Convolvulus colabrinus*, a plant in the pharmacopeia of the enslaved, “Revised HJ, III,” BL Add. MS 12406, fol. 192r.

⁹⁶Chiara Ambrosio, “Toward an Integrated History and Philosophy of Diagrammatic Practices,” *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 14/2 (2020), 347–76.

⁹⁷See Greg Priest, Silvia De Toffoli, and Paula Findlen, “Tools of Reason: The Practice of Scientific Diagramming from Antiquity to the Present,” *Endeavour* 42/2–3 (2018), 49–59, at 52; Lorraine Daston, “Beyond Representation,” in Catelijne Coopmans, Janet Vertesi, Michael Lynch, and Steve Woolgar, eds., *Representations in Scientific Practice Revisited* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 319–22.

As already noted, the orangutan appears twice in [Figure 1a](#). For Long, the orangutan offered a “degradation” of the human characteristics of “shape, figure, and ... appearances,” so appears at the bottom of a list of human peoples organized by Linnaean categories (element 2).⁹⁸ In the list of humans and apes (element 3), the “Oran outang major et minor” appears below the humans, organized by complexion, and at the top of the apes and monkeys, separated by a double wavy line, and joined by the acaudate bracket. Across [Figure 1a](#) the orangutan functions as a free-floating signifier of Long’s desire for an animal or brute companion for his category of the “Negroe.”

Long’s crystallization of the idea of gradation and hierarchy that the orangutan exemplifies can be followed in related manuscript insertions, where he introduces the idea of the link and the chain. He transcribed an article by the natural historian John Hill on “Brutes,” published in the *Supplement to Chambers’s Cyclopaedia* (1753), to which he added interjections.⁹⁹ Hill concluded that studying the “faculties of Beasts” and their capacity for comprehension does not put “Brutes on a level with Man,” as “the difference is immense, and those who in other respects admit of insensible Gradations from one Order of beings to another, must own there is a vast chasm between Man, & the most perfect of Brutes.”¹⁰⁰ While fundamentally disagreeing with Hill’s conclusion, what attracted Long’s curiosity here was the idea of insensible gradation: an almost indiscernible similarity that nonetheless reveals a “vast chasm” of difference. Surveying Hill’s claim, ascribed to Buffon, that animals have “sense, imagination, memory and passion” but are “void of understanding & reason,” Long inserted a bracketed aside about the gradation of souls: “(N.B.—Why may not there be a Gradation of Souls as well as of Bodies?—the Chain admits of many intermediate links between imperfection & perfection).”¹⁰¹ Long’s insertion returned to the idea of the soul as the motor of reason and reasserted the metaphor of links in a chain to explore the idea that there might then be a “Gradation of Souls,” and therefore of the human, on a scale of perfectibility.

Long located further evidence in his reading of missing or intermediate links in the chain of being between man and brute. Observations made by the naturalist Philibert Commerson in a letter to Jérôme De Lalande that was published in 1772 in his account of a “Nation of Dwarfs” in Madagascar, the Kimosse or Quimosse, allowed Long to conclude that these “*demi-hommes*” were the link between man and animal.¹⁰² Writing that this “race” “seems to be the intermediate, and almost imperceptible link that connects the human Species with Quadrupeds, in the great chain or Scale of beings,” Long borrowed from Commerson, but augmented and hardened the Frenchman’s arguments by adding the idea of the great chain or scale.¹⁰³ Long’s metaphor of the immediate

⁹⁸ *HJ*, 2: 356.

⁹⁹ Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fols. 288r–v.

¹⁰⁰ John Hill, “Brute,” in George Lewis Scott, ed., *A Supplement to Mr. [Ephraim] Chambers’s Cyclopaedia: or, Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London, 1753), vol. 1, n.p. (alphabetical).

¹⁰¹ Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 288v.

¹⁰² Philibert Commerson, “Lettre de M. de Commerson,” in *Supplément au Voyage de M. de Bougainville; ou, Journal d’un Voyage autour du Monde, Fait par MM. Banks & Solander, Anglois, en 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771* (Paris, 1772). See Glyndwr Williams, “‘My Plants, My Beloved Plants, Have Consoled Me for Everything’: The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Philibert Commerson,” in Williams, *Naturalists at Sea: Scientific Travellers from Dampier to Darwin* (New Haven, CT, 2013), 54–72.

¹⁰³ Long, “Revised *HJ*, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 292r.

and imperceptible link operated within the ontology of gradation: the more refined the judgment about difference and similarity, the more telling the distinction made. The concept of the chain of being was an enduring commonplace of Enlightenment thought, but naturalists, including Linnaeus and Buffon in different ways, were explicitly moving away from its notion of a single hierarchical chain to more complex branching and networked systems of typology.¹⁰⁴ Long's diagrams and memoranda gave him the space to explore these ideas, sharpening and visualizing his argument for the imperceptible gradation between humans and animals, and locating the orangutan as the intermediary, even if he could not resolve the contradictions implicit to that median position.

Mapping race

Long's diagrams also attempted to substantiate his argument that race was located in the body. To do so he extended his vision and method well beyond the circumscribed comparisons of people from Africa and the Americas presented in the *History*. He copied out Pinkerton's view, from 1787, that "as Science advances, able writers will give us a System of the many different races of Man," and noted the competing classifications of the "distinct races" offered by Linnaeus, Buffon, Jefferson, and Frézier.¹⁰⁵ Long's own "System" was presented as another hierarchical list (Figure 1b, element 2).

Here Long set out the different sorts of people who inhabit the world, with some claim to completeness. He ordered his list with Linnaeus's four categories (*Europaeus albus*, *Americanus rubescens*, *Asiaticus fuscus*, *Africanus niger*), but changed the order of the middle terms and included a notation (~) that separated "Albus" off from the rest.¹⁰⁶ At the head of Long's list were the "Saxons," with the "English" in second place, and a bracket seeming to group them together. At the foot, as noted above, just below the "Negroes of Africa & New Holland" (now Australia) was the "Oran Outang." Between these extremes there is a gradation of "peoples" but also uncertainty as to how to order them. Long shifted some northern peoples between the categories "Fuscus" and "Albus," changing "Samoeid" to "Greenlander" as he did so. "Swede" seems a later addition between "German" and "French," and he added a distinction between "American Indians" (judged "Fuscus") and "N. American Indians" (judged "Ruber"). The category "Niger" is also adjusted to ensure a gradation of increasing blackness between the "Negroes of Asia" and "Negroes of Africa & New Holland" (see also element 6). As previously noted, the categorical and hierarchical nature of the diagram allows little concern for mixture or movement.

¹⁰⁴ Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA, 1936); Bill Jenkins, "Race before Darwin: Variation, Adaptation and the Natural History of Man in Post-Enlightenment Edinburgh, 1790–1835," *British Journal for the History of Science* 53/3 (2020), 333–50.

¹⁰⁵ Long, "Different Races," BL Add. MS 12438, fols. 1r col. 1, 2v col. 1, 3v. Long quotes from Pinkerton, *Dissertation*, 34.

¹⁰⁶ Carl Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae: Sive, Regna Tria Naturae Systematice Proposita Per Classes, Genera, & Species* (Leiden, 1735), n.p. ("Regnum Animale" diagram). Linnaeus substantially revised his nomenclature in the tenth edition of the *Systema Naturae* in 1758, with the invention of the *Homo sapiens*. However, Long used Linnaeus's previous editions.

The degree of invention here, and the repeated attempts to make these classifications cohere, are indicated by comparison with Figure 2a. Here Long only uses three of Linnaeus's four categories, separates them from the list of peoples, and offers a different ordering. For example, "Moor," "Chinese" and "Otaheite" (Tahitian) are all separated hierarchically rather than grouped together, and the Arctic peoples are positioned below the "Arabs, Jews, Ægyptians, [and] Abyssinians" not above. There are also groups here—"Eskimoux," "Greeks," "Circassians," "Ladrone isles" (now the Marianas)—that don't feature in Figure 1a. This may be due to the difficulties classifying those—from Greece and the Caucasus—that were seen as the ancient ancestors of Northern Europeans, but whose populations were geographically located in southern Europe or Asia (like the Persians). This multiplication of peoples somewhere between "Albus" and "Niger" is accompanied by a lack of detail on those two categories. The latter does not feature at all. The former begins with "pure white or purest of ye Europeans—perhaps ye Saxons," indicating at least some indecision, and, below a demarcation line, those problematic, less-than-pure white ancestor populations of Greeks, Persians, and Circassians. Within the category "Albus" there are a range of "complexions" listed (and something similar, albeit undifferentiated, is also offered for the "Chinese"). Their replacement with a fuller list of "White" peoples in Figure 1a signals the impossibility of squaring these fine bodily distinctions with Long's definition of peoples as "races," and indicates the instabilities that lie beneath this ordering.

There were a range of other problematic categorization issues that arose from particular aspects of the ongoing debate over the nature of the human. Long's locating of the "Hottentot," probably as the first entry in the category "Niger," and well above the orangutan, suggests a disagreement with Buffon, but also with what he had himself asserted in the *History*.¹⁰⁷ Yet it served to locate those Africans who predominantly fell prey to the slave trade, along with those from "New Holland" who shared their blackness in Long's eyes, closest to the orangutan. His (re)locating of "Otaheite" suggests that he knew Forster's opinion that "The Taheiteans" were "the fairest of all the islanders in the South Sea," and might be compared with the "fair complexion" of "our [European] ladies."¹⁰⁸ Finally, the placing of "Persian" and "Tartar" suggests an awareness of ideas of European origins rooted in ancient movements of peoples, most notably the Scythians, out of these parts of Asia (especially the Caucasus) to replace the Celts everywhere but the Atlantic fringe. These ideas were most fully developed by Pinkerton, one of the strongest proponents of polygenesis in eighteenth-century Britain.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷The offensive Dutch term "Hottentots" was used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to refer to the Khoikhoi people. See Nicholas Hudson, "'Hottentots' and the Evolution of European Racism," *Journal of European Studies* 34/4 (1996), 308–32; François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, *L'invention du Hottentot: Histoire du regard occidental sur les Khoisan (XVIe–XIXe siècle)* (Paris, 2002).

¹⁰⁸Johann Reinhold Forster, *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World, on Physical Geography, Natural History, and Ethic Philosophy* (London, 1778), 176.

¹⁰⁹Colin Kidd, "Teutonist Ethnology and Scottish Nationalist Inhibition, 1780–1880," *Scottish Historical Review* 74 (1995), 45–68; Silvia Sebastiani, "Race and National Characters in Eighteenth-Century Scotland: The Polygenetic Discourses of Kames and Pinkerton," *Studi Settecenteschi* 21 (2001), 265–81.

Long used a mixture of ways of categorizing people characteristic of eighteenth-century discussions of “race.”¹¹⁰ Figure 1a includes both national and regional designations, linked to a part of the world—“Italian,” “Spanish,” “Tartar,” “Ægyptian,” “Abyssinian,” “Laplander” or “N. American Indian”—and diasporic peoples such as “Arab” or “Jew.” Most significantly, Long dropped the “continental” designations that accompanied the color-coded “complexions” in Linnaeus’s classification of the human. This produced a listing much more directly based on bodily characteristics, particularly skin color, both in the overall classification and in terms of the hierarchical gradation within each of the broader groupings. Doing so allowed Long to draw equivalences—based on complexion, not geography—between very different sets of people: “Moor, Chinese, Otaheite” and “Negroes of Africa & New Holland.” Race was more significant than place in Long’s higher-order categorization of humankind. This explains the absence of people who were treated as having distinctive characteristics in Long’s *History*: all the inhabitants of the Caribbean except those that were judged “American Indian.” On the diagram, Creoles of all kinds remained English, French, Spanish, or African wherever they were in the world.

This served Long’s aim of fixing whiteness and blackness in bodies. In his notes, he copied material, including from Frézier on South America, that people moving between climates do not change skin color, even after many generations, and that only “intermingling” would produce such a change.¹¹¹ He also reproduced Raynal’s conclusion on black skin (see above) that the “Seat of it is in the Reticulum mucosum under the Epidermis or Cuticle,” and Jefferson’s argument:

Whether ... the black colour of the negro resides in his reticular membrane, or in the scarf skin itself. Whether it proceeds from the colour of their blood or the colour of their bile or from that of some other Secretion, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its root cause were better known to us.¹¹²

Long also drew on more than his reading when he added the marginal annotation,

I am informed by a very eminent physician who has resided many years in Jam[aica] and anatomised several Bodies of negroes, that the Substance of their Brain is covered with a dusky coloured membrane, impregnated no doubt from the same source as their more external cuticular membrane, which Fact incontestably proves that their complection is not caused by the action of the Solar rays, but by a peculiar liquor which their internal organs are formed to secrete which agrees with the assertions of other anatomists.¹¹³

¹¹⁰Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, 2000), Ch. 4.

¹¹¹Long, “Different Races,” BL Add. MS 12438, fol. 2r col. 1.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, fol. 5v and 1r col. 1.

¹¹³Long, “Revised HJ, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 271v. This argument had been advanced by the German physician Johann Friedrich Meckel in 1759 in the *Mémoires de l’académie royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Berlin*: “Nouvelles observations sur l’épiderme & le cerveau des Nègres.”

On this basis, Long sought to test, and contest, Buffon's claims about racial variation and to determine "Whether Climate [is] the cause of Black Complexion."¹¹⁴ Once again, he mapped this globally, now using evidence on temperature in an attempt to disprove a simple equation between hot environments and black people. Long drew evidence from accounts of race and migration in the Pacific to conclude, "The Inhabitants scattered over the innumerable isles in the Pacific Ocean ... still preserve their primordial discriminations of Colour & Features under every Variation of Temperature to which these Islands ... are subjected."¹¹⁵ He also drew up a description of the West African coast from Cape Blanco (now Râs Nouâdhibou, Mauritania/Western Sahara) to the Cape of Good Hope to show that while the coastal areas were hot, these environments also included colder mountainous interiors, cool nights, and a rainy season. He concluded, "The people inhabiting these mountains are as Black as their lowland neighbours."¹¹⁶ However, while this argument supported Long's opposition to Buffon's climatic theory of race, it could not assign the different races of the world to their places on "the great map of mankind."¹¹⁷

To do so Long gathered recorded temperature measurements from European settlements and trading posts in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.¹¹⁸ While he drew no conclusions directly from these data (that showed comparably hot temperatures in these different places), he did note that while climate was not simply the cause of blackness there was a reciprocal relationship between bodies and environments, concluding that "this Black colour was originally constituted in the first race of these People to enable them to inhabit the hotter regions of the Globe."¹¹⁹ He also noted Schotte's conclusion that "the White or European Races" who lacked the necessary organs to enable the fetid secretions that offered protection when laboring in these hot climates were prone to "those putrid diseases which originate from its retention within the Body."¹²⁰ As both Kames and Voltaire had also argued, racial variation between global regions was fixed in the body by some natural, or God-given, relationship between environment and corporeality that would then remain unchanged as people subsequently moved, or were moved, about the globe.¹²¹ This fixed global geography of the world's peoples was represented in [Figure 1a](#) as a graduated hierarchy.

These ideas of racial difference inevitably posed questions of human origins. Long disagreed with Buffon's and Goldsmith's argument that "the White Man is the original

¹¹⁴ Long, "Different Races," BL Add. MS 12438, fol. 7r col. 1.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 10v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 10r.

¹¹⁷ This expression was coined by Edmund Burke in 1777. See Peter J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982).

¹¹⁸ Long gathered temperatures for Senegal, Sierra Leone, Senegambia, and the Cape of Good Hope, but also, for comparison, for Canton, Mexico City, Tivoli and Cap François in Saint Domingue, Manilla, Fort St George (Madras/Chennai), Pondicherry, Surinam, Panama, St Eustatia, and Curaçao.

¹¹⁹ Long, "Different Races," BL Add. MS 12438, fol. 10v.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 11r, quoting Johann Peter Schotte, *A Treatise on the Synochus Atrabiliosa, a Contagious Fever, which raged at Senegal in the year 1778* (London, 1782), 105. See Seth, *Difference and Disease*, 268–9.

¹²¹ Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, chs. 2 and 3.

Source from which the other Varieties have Sprung,” insisting instead on polygenesis.¹²² Any queries that this might raise about the veracity of biblical accounts of human origins could be put down to “the innumerable absurdities into which the Hebraic Genealogy from Adam, has led many learned & Speculative men.”¹²³ Here, in conclusion if not in method, Long took up the same arguments made in John Lindsay’s 1788 manuscript “A Few Conjectural Considerations upon the Creation of the Humane Race,” which Long could have consulted at the time.¹²⁴ For Lindsay, the fiercely pro-slavery Anglican rector of St Catherine’s Parish in Jamaica, it could be concluded that “God in his Creation, had most probably made Races of Men for every Climate as we find he hath done with the Animal Creation: and that the Flood was not so General, as to have destroyed the whole of God’s handiwork at one sweep.”¹²⁵ For both Lindsay and Long, this God-given global geography of human difference—of people made *for* climates, not *by* climates—was racialized and hierarchical.¹²⁶ As Long concluded from his global mapping of race, “It has pleased the allwise Father of y^e human Races to measure out their Intellect by a various scale.”¹²⁷ Overall, his diagrams aimed to explain the complexities of the global geography of human variation by visualizing it in terms of natural and essential bodily difference and claiming that this stood for hierarchical differences in “intellect” that blurred the boundaries between the human and the animal and justified slavery.

Conclusion

Between 1774 and the late 1780s Edward Long worked in his library to develop and systematize the ideas about race, the human, and the animal that he had presented in his *History of Jamaica*. His collected materials, notes, and annotations demonstrate that he sought new methods to blur the boundary between “man” and “beast,” to internally differentiate the category of the human, and to locate race as an essential, natural, and fixed attribute of visibly different bodies. To this end he drew diagrams to visualize a set of relationships of gradation and hierarchy that encompassed humans and apes, and that mapped out a global geography of race. He used his wide reading to collate temperature data from sites across the globe to test the relationships between racialized bodies and climate, and he abstracted the orangutan from the Enlightenment discourse on human and animal nature in ways that placed it just where he wanted it: on the borders of humanity. Across these different methods he sought to construct a newly systematic and philosophical natural history of race. It would be an “orang outang system” that used the precision and certainty of his diagramming and note-making to establish the graded hierarchies, world-spanning reach, and natural foundations of white power and

¹²² Long, “Different Races,” BL Add. MS 12438, fol. 4v col. 1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, fol. 5r.

¹²⁴ John Lindsay, “A Few Conjectural Considerations upon the Creation of the Humane Race. Occasioned by the Present British Quixotical Rage of setting the Slaves from Africa at Liberty,” BL Add. MS 12439, in the Long Papers.

¹²⁵ Lindsay, “A Few Conjectural Considerations,” BL Add. MS 12439, fol. 33r.

¹²⁶ David N. Livingstone, *Adam’s Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore, 2018), 57–63.

¹²⁷ Long, “Revised HJ, II,” BL Add. MS 12405, fol. 274v.

domination. This process of race-making—a reconstruction of what race meant, and an assertion of its effectiveness in both explaining and shaping the world—was fitted to the circumstances of the late 1780s. Long and the British pro-slavery lobby faced the strongest challenge thus far to the power of the slaveholders and the legitimacy of racial slavery. It came in the form of an unprecedented discussion of race and slavery within the public spheres of print and politics. In the face of this “African Humanity-mania” Long sought to martial the resources of scholarship and the power of the visualization of information in the service of the plantation system.

However, Long never published a second edition of the *History of Jamaica*. It may have been that the French and Haitian revolutions took the wind out of the abolitionists’ sails and redirected political attention.¹²⁸ Long’s final known publication was *The Antigallican* (1793), a virulent attack on Britain’s great rival. Here Long emphatically reiterated his belief in human inequality and subordination as part of a counterrevolutionary politics. He was horrified by the discourse of the Rights of Man, celebrated as it was by a “tygerish multitude” exhibiting “wanton cruelty” at the heart of Europe. Long adamantly rejected the “Levelling System of France” that “would indeed make us so far equal that we should all degenerate into brutes.” “We should become,” he prophesied, “Lord Monboddos nation; *Our tails would grow*.”¹²⁹ Although he never published on Haiti, and withdrew from public life during the 1790s, he expressed his fears in a private letter in 1804—the year of Haiti’s Declaration of Independence—that insurrectionary “African Blacks” would make Jamaica a second “black Republic” in the Caribbean.¹³⁰ Long wanted to believe, and vociferously argued, that Africans were “brutish” and “bestial,” but his very insistence was an indication of his lack of certainty. He knew perfectly well that black people were human, and that slavery depended on their human characteristics. Yet, once the juridical logics had been removed, enslaving them depended on what Winthrop Jordan called the supposed “similarity between the man-like beasts and the beast-like men of Africa.”¹³¹ The categories of humanity and inhumanity were not antithetical in the eighteenth century, but rather coexisted.¹³² Enslavers like Long lived out a contradiction, both disavowing their knowledge that the enslaved were human and depending on it, including a belief that creolization could partially “civilize” Africans.¹³³

¹²⁸Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge, 2008), 280–91.

¹²⁹[Edward Long], *The Antigallican; Or, Strictures on the Present Form of Government Established in France* (London, 1793), 23–4, 71–2. Long had already used this title for a novel published at the beginning of the Seven Years War, in which he sharply criticized French style: *The Anti-Gallican; or, the History and Adventures of Harry Cobham, Esquire. Inscribed to Louis the XVth, by the Author* (London, 1757).

¹³⁰Edward Long to Mrs Mary Ricketts, 6 June 1804, William Salt Library, Stafford, 49/90/44/1. See Hall, *Lucky Valley*, “Epilogue.”

¹³¹Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968), 28, 54.

¹³²David Brion Davis, “At the Heart of Slavery,” in Davis, *In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values, and Our Heritage of Slavery* (New Haven, 2001), 123–36; Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford, 2006).

¹³³Seth, *Difference and Disease*, 235–6; Catherine Hall and Daniel Pick, “Thinking about Denial,” *History Workshop Journal* 84 (2017), 1–23.

Long's diagrams could not resolve these contradictions and, as we have shown, remained incomplete and provisional, demonstrating the impossibility of his race-making project and the "orang outang system." Like his *History*, the diagrams were riven with a profound tension between a timeless and fixist conception of nature, including human nature, and the dynamism of the colonial project, based on political economy and cultural transformation. Long could not include the "Negros of Africa & New Holland" on the same diagram as the enslaved Creoles of Jamaica. To do so would deny the logic of the great chain of being, the invariability of race with environment, and the fixed place of the African at the border of humanity. The diagrams remained a fantasy of how the "orang outang system" operated in the realms of natural philosophy, or arguments in parliament or a pamphlet, rather than in the workings of a sugar plantation or a colony based on slavery. His fiction of a fixed and a stable human hierarchy was just that, a fantasy, since racial differences are neither essential or natural; rather they are made and constantly remade by people.

Although neither Long's diagrams nor his revised *History* appeared as interventions in the new public debate over race they do point to significant changes in how that debate was conducted in the longer term. The most influential work on race of the late eighteenth century was that of Peter Camper and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, both of whom opposed slavery. Their work involved, like Long's revisions, global comparison of the world's peoples based on observation and assessment of their bodies, albeit focused on careful measurement of anatomical features rather than broad Linnaean classifications of skin color, and were conducted using collections of skulls rather than in an Enlightenment library. While they opposed Long's views, Camper and Blumenbach also presented their arguments about race through diagrammatic visual images.¹³⁴ Camper's diagram of the "facial angle"—showing it reducing, in sequence, from a classical sculpture to an orangutan—and Blumenbach's "classic depiction" of a row of five representative skulls ("Ethiopian," "Malay," "Caucasian," "American," and "Mongolian") were intended as arguments against polygenesis, racial hierarchy, and essentialized difference. They also asserted, like Buffon, the distance between the human and the animal.¹³⁵ However, in circulation within the broader public debate on race that had opened in the late 1780s these diagrams soon became deployed by others to the opposite effect. They were used to make influential racist and polygenist arguments based on ideas of the blurred boundary between the animal and the human and

¹³⁴Miriam Claude Meijer, *Race and Aesthetics in the Anthropology of Petrus Camper (1722–1789)* (Amsterdam, 1999); Nicholaas Rupke and Gerhard Lauer, eds., *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach: Race and Natural History, 1750–1850* (London, 2018). In his *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* (1775), Blumenbach cited the *History of Jamaica* in relation to "mulattos," and criticized its author as one of those "famous men," who were "ill-instructed in natural history and anatomy," and "not ashamed to say that this ape [the "orang-outan"] is very nearly allied, and indeed of the same species with themselves." See Thomas Bendyshe, ed., *The Anthropological Treatises of Blumenbach and the Inaugural Dissertation of John Hunter on the Varieties of Man* (London, 1865), 95, 112 ff., 214 ff. In 1794 Blumenbach asked Joseph Banks whether the *History* was written by Long or Estwick: Blumenbach to Banks, Göttingen, 28 Dec. 1794, British Museum Add. MS 8098, fol. 221.

¹³⁵Meijer, *Race and Aesthetics*, 3–6, 97; Nicholaas Rupke, "The Origins of Scientific Racism and Huxley's Rule," in Rupke and Lauer, *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, 233; Snait B. Gissis, "Visualising 'Race' in the Eighteenth Century," *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 41/1 (2011), 41–103.

an ordering of the world's peoples that emphasized both graduated hierarchy and the correlation of race and place. These were arguments that Edward Long would have recognized and supported, and they were dominant by the mid-nineteenth century.¹³⁶ So although Robert Boucher Nicholls, the abolitionist Dean of Middleham, could state in 1788 that the poetry of Wheatley and Williams contradicted Long's pro-slavery claims about the "stupidity" of black people as a justification for their enslavement, because he had "never heard of poems by a monkey, or of Latin odes by an oran-outang," the debate over race-making and the "orang outang system" was far from over.¹³⁷ Ironically, Long had been correct in alleging the capacity of the orangutan to communicate and feel—characteristics which were imagined by others as quintessentially human. What caused the damage was his insistence on essential and natural differences in humanity: his use of the orangutan for race-making.

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¹³⁶For example, Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man, and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (London, 1799), and Bendyshe's translation of Blumenbach. See Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800–1960* (Basingstoke, 1982), Ch. 1.

¹³⁷Robert Boucher Nickolls, *Letter to the Treasurer of the Society Instituted for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (London, 1788), 45.

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