I. Social Construction of Science

A. Claim/Wisdom

1. Science is autonomous discipline governed by the logic of exploration and discovery.

2. Science is objective and unbiased because of its autonomy and rigorous adherence

to the scientific method: empiricism

3. Science discovers the knowledge about reality.

4. Scientific knowledge gives an objective explanation about how the world works

4. Scientific knowledge is universal.

5. Scientific discoveries lead to technological development which gives us power to manipulate the natural world.

6. Knowledge derived from the application of scientific method defines what knowledge is (everything else is belief, opinion etc)

B. Social Construction of Science

1. Science is a social practice that arrives at a particular type of “knowledge”

2. Science is based on a particular world view.

3. Science is embedded in social processes (especially capitalism and war)

a. which determine it as knowledge

b. determine its direction

4. Science is an ideology justification for social processes in which it is embedded and social order

5. As a practice it is unreflective on the non-empirical philosophical assumptions

upon which it is based.

C. Free market and the social construction of science

1. free market and redefining the natural world

a. resource to be transformed into commodities (commodification of nature)

b. that which as private property (owned by humans) had an exchange value

c. nature has no inherent value, only exchange or use values

2. free market and science

a. increase productive capacity through the rationalization of the market system

b. efficiency, predictability, calculability and control

c. scientific knowledge and technological advancement allow for

increased productivity

i. more efficient and productive means for extracting natural resources

ii. more efficient means for transforming natural resources into commodities

iii. means for subduing recalcitrant populations during this process

iv. means for subduing labor

v. means for introduction of new products into market place

vi. means for fighting wars

D. World view: “disenchantment of the world” and the the social construction of science

1. Feudal world view

a. nature was without inherent value (“this world”)

b. but it was enchanted, spirits, ghosts, witches, and as such

c. relationship: dependent upon it for subsistence and as such it was fearful

2. Modern world view

a. nature is matter in motion (motion generated by knowable causes and predictable effects and can be reduced to formulas

b. without soul or consciousness and without inherent value

1. relationship: domination

i. nature is standing reserve

ii. which needed to be subdued by “lords of the earth”

3. philosophical construction of modern/scientific world view

a. Descartes: Cartesian dualism

i. res cogitans: distantiated self

ii. res extensa: natural world/animals

b. Hobbes and Locke

i. in nature

ii. nature is site of individual competition

c. Bacon

i. man must use science to “hound her”

ii. until it dominates “her”

d. Marx

e. Condorcet

d. scientific method

i. mind independent reality (nature)

ii. observer: distantiated subject

iii. independent reality is governed by laws of cause and effect (pre-scientific believe in ordered universe)

iv. independent reality is matter in motion

v.. observation and experimentation can discover laws of motion and can be reduced to formula (mathematized)

4. Power and science

a. social sciences and social control

b. Le Bon

C. Consequences

7. biological determinism: social construction of race

a. “race scientists”

i. scientific method

ii. craniometry

iii. phrenology

b. discovery: humans can be classified according to common physical characteristics: racial groups

c. characteristics of groups are heritable, passed from one generation to next

d. non-physical characteristics associate with same groups

i. immortality

ii. laziness

iii. criminality

iv. intelligence

e. superior races move humanity forward

d. inferior group undermines social evolution

9. Calvinism

a. work ethic

b. “Forgotten Man”

B. Where does this lead?

1. justification of class structure

2. ignores social factors

3. justifies imperialism

4. justifies genocide

5. eugenics

C. Eugenics

1. Comes from Greek meaning “Good origin”
2. Def: “Science” of heredity and good breeding

3. Assumption: a characteristic of evolution was the passing of traits from generation to generation.

a. some traits are good, others are bad.

b. fit and unfit people

c. fit = upper class and Anglo-Saxons, unfit=lower class and minorities

4. Goal of Eugenics:

* 1. breed “better” traits in: Anglo-Saxonism

b. breed “bad” traits out

1. poverty

ii. immorality

iii. feeble minded

iv. inferior races (Southern Europeans, Asians, blacks)

v. “un”intelligence

c. preserving the “American type”: Anglo-Saxon

d. preserving good racial stock

5. Organizations and support

* 1. American Genetic Association (previously American Breeders Association)

b. National Conference on Race Betterment

c. scientists, doctors, philanthropists

6. Means

1. Separation

i. institutionalization

ii. miscegenation laws

1. exclusion

i. Immigration Act of 1924

ii. Coolidge: Nordics deteriorate when mixed

iii. immigrants based on observation of intelligence

c. forced sterilization

1. 1930 30 states

ii. 60,000 people

d. movies “The Black Stork”, county fairs, universities

e. Supreme Court Buck v Bell 1927

7. American eugenics and Hitler

Note: Anglo-Saxonism

1. preceded Social Darwinism

a. originally product of nationalism

b. Mexican War and inferiority of Mexican race

c. chief element of American imperialism: Hawaii, Cuba, Philippines, Puerto Rico

2. Social Darwinism supported Anglo-Saxonism

a. Anglo-Saxon race is superior

b. superior ideas, beliefs, values, institutions, language

proof: colonialism

spread of Teutonic theory of democracy

America: proof of the mighty history of racial growth

(T. Roosevelt)

c. Africa and Asia, homes to inferior races, need to be subjugated

and shown a civilized way to organize their societies.

3. Anglo-Saxonism and American Imperialism

a. Philippines: manifest destiny of Anglo-Saxons, survival of the fittest

b. rule of the survival of the fittest applies to nations as it does individuals

c. Yellow Peril

4. Anglo-Saxon Alliance and the brotherhood of humanity