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Signature Assignment

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Muhammad Ali said, “Hating people because of their color is wrong. And it doesn’t matter which color does the hating. It’s just plain wrong.” (Muhammed Ali Quotes) Ali may have the right attitude, but history is wrought with examples of racial and ethnic persecution. Cultural looks at race differently than science or religion does. Science offers insights into why members of the human race have biological differences while Christian religions submit yet a different perspective on the same topic; considering either explanation, it is difficult to acknowledge that culture has consistently allowed for one race to be superior over another despite their common beginnings.

Gary D. James suggests in *Climate-Related Morphological Variation and Physiological Adaptations in Homo sapiens* that since *Homo sapiens,* or humans,evolved and populations dispersed geographically that adaptations have developed in the differing populations (James, 2010). Adaptations have included human morphology and ecogeographic rules, thermoregulation and temperature acclimatization in adult humans, cold climate, high altitude hypoxia, ultraviolet radiation, and health (James, 2010). In looking specifically at the adaptation to ultraviolet radiation, a difference in skin color emerges.

“Adaptations to ultraviolet radiation (UVR: wavelengths between about 280 and 400 nanometers) is focused on the effect of UVR on skin color. This is primarily determined by the amounts, type, and distribution of melanin, which is a pigment in the epidermis” (James, 2010). Naturally, UVR varies depending upon the time of year, climate, latitude, environmental conditions, and other factors with the intensity being greatest at the equator (James, 2010). Those populations sustained a darkening of the pigment of their skin while populations at higher latitudes sustained less darkening. This shows a correlation between UVR exposure and skin color.

There are other factors to take into consideration when looking at the correlations between UVR and exposure and skin color such as the effects of vitamins, specifically vitamin D, allowing humans with diets rich in Vitamin D to settle in regions further from the equator and thus to have lighter skin tones. Prior to a diet high in Vitamin D, these people at higher latitudes were at risk for deficiency not receiving it from UVR and thus would not thrive and be susceptible to natural selection.

James gives us the science into the different colors of skin based on the correlation of proximity to UVR. Those closest to the equator sustained the highest amount of UVR and the darker skin pigmentation. Those migrating north were able to sustain lighter skin pigmentation only after relying on a diet high in Vitamin D to prevent deficiencies. Both outcomes do not change the fact that they evolved from the same point of origin.

Science has used the surrounding factors to explain the variations of skin color in humans, using logic and reason to come up with a theory. Contrary to science culture and religion has a much more unique way of explaining skin color and race. In the Christian religion, and the view of creationists it is often a belief that God created man. In Genesis, the first book of the bible we read that “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” God then created for man a woman, and from these two humans was all the earth filled with mankind. This is how many people believe that mankind came to be. This offers up a question though as how, if all the earth came from two parents be they white or black do have such a diverse set of variations in the people we see today. A lesser known story from the bible is often cited by creationists to explain man’s skin color, this is the story of Cain. Also in Genesis we read of the son of our first parents, Adam and Eve, the story of their son Cain. To make a long story short Cain was jealous of his bother Able and chose to murder him. Murder is known to be contrary to the law of God and thus Cain was punished by God for his crime against his Able. Because of this disobedience God chose to punish Cain by cursing him. This story can be read in the fourth chapter of Genesis. The story reads

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? And he said, what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.”

From this we learn the because Cain disobeyed God he was cursed and subsequently marked in some form that altered his appearance so that anyone who might happen upon him would know who he was simply by looking at him. Many modern Christian churches have taught that this mark with which Cain was cursed was black skin, and that this pigmentation of skin was passed on genetically to his posterity. In modern scripture known as the Pearl of Great Price, which is a secondary account that confirms and adds to the book of Genesis in the Bible. The book was found and then translated by the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith states that “for the seed of Cain were black.” Further on in the Pearl of Great price we read that this same curse of black skin was also placed upon the Canaanites who settled in what is known today as Egypt and northern Africa.

Religion doesn’t cease there though. Still unexplained is the dark skin of Native Americans and pacific Islanders. Modern scripture in the Book of Mormon reveals that 700 years BC a group of people left the land of Jerusalem and across the sea to the Americas and steeled here they divided in to two social groups known as the Nephites and the Lamanites. In the Book of Mormon we read that because of the disobedience of the Lamanites, they were cursed with the same black skin curse we have seen before. The scriptures read “For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome … the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.” Later these people sent many groups of people out on boats up and down the pacific coast and out in to the pacific sea where many of them could have made it to the pacific Islands.

Thus the Christian religion explains race and skin color as a work of the hand of God and the effects of time on the human race. This is how many people in the world explain race and skin color and how they believe the world came to be the way it is. The Christian faith is not the only religion that might explain skin color in such a way, many different faiths and beliefs may differ in the facts and overall explanation for race, but their conviction to their beliefs may be just as firm as the belief any scientist may have in his findings.

The truth is though scientists and have about the same amount of proof to prove both their theories and neither one can exclusively say that theirs is true. The fact of the matter is that the way we perceive things such as race, creation, evolution is all based on our interpretation of the truths that we find. Some of us leap blindly into the first theory that we hear blindly accepting the facts and statistics never putting to test the findings of others. Realistically though every fact or theory be it scientific or religious must be tested and validated before we personally believe it and accept it as fact. This is common practice in the scientific community to use the scientific method to validate the theories of other scientists. It can and should also be instituted in religious fields as well. If someone says God exists you cannot argue the contrary until you can exhaust every avenue to prove he doesn’t. This means that you must try to prove that he does by praying and asking God if he exists. The only way to prove scriptures false is to read them and act according to their precepts. If you record that you gain blessings and an elevated form of living from them as they promise, then you have proved them to be true, else you have proved them false.