The Blood Group "Fad" in Post-War Racial Anthropology

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I have since looked over the last few years of the American Journal of Physical Anthropology and I am simply amazed to discover the amount of emphasis they put on blood typing. Doesn't this business eventually reach a point of diminishing returns? As I recall, in my cursory study of the more recent volumes there was only one anthropometric study in the lot.

—Letter from Robert A. McKennan, Professor of Anthropology at Dartmouth, to Carleton Coon, Professor of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, August 3, 1959.

Blood typing is a fad and like all fads it will someday join the Davy Crockett hats and the Hula Hoops.

—Coon's response to McKennan, August 5, 1959.

"This controversial report concerns that touchy, explosive, confused subject—RACE," claimed an advertisement for Carleton Coon's 1965 text, The Living Races of Man.¹ The techniques used to construct racial taxonomies—the systematic classification of human races—have also been "touchy," "explosive," and "confused." Until World War II, many anthropologists maintained that races could be classified, and that the most valid method to define them were phenotypic characteristics. However, a number of post-war anthropologists, along with geneticists and serologists, sought more "valid" and "objective" racial taxonomies using blood group technology. This paper follows the intertwining paths of blood-groups and the race concept during the post-war era, focusing on the work of William Boyd, a serologist, and Carleton Coon, a physical anthropologist. Despite differences in disciplinary training, both scientists defended traditional racial taxonomies and ultimately used serology to support their racial classifications.

At the same time, a number of post-war anthropologists moved away from racial classification toward other fields of study, many maintaining that discrete biological races were an invalid construct. These scientists also cited blood group data—but to destabilize instead of to support traditional racial definitions. Ultimately defenders and detractors of the race concept both employed blood groups as evidence. Despite initial enthusiasm, new genetic techniques alone could not settle scientific
debates surrounding race, as numerous scientists with conflicting conceptions of race appropriated genetic data.

**A Time of Transition**

"Physical Anthropology seems to be in a fairly sound state, outside of not knowing where the hell it's going," remarked anthropologist Lawrence Angel to Ashley Montagu in 1950. Angel's assessment reflected a widespread sentiment among physical anthropologists. After World War II, American physical anthropologists faced numerous choices as they consciously reopened issues involving race. For decades physical anthropology had operated under the assumptions that racial divisions existed and that racial taxonomies could be constructed by scientific techniques. To formulate their taxonomies, anthropologists relied on methods such as craniometry and anthropometry (head and body measuring) and the assumption that there were fixed, natural divisions between races (see Gould 1981:73-143). During the 1940s, however, American physical anthropologists, reexamined for both empirical and political reasons the problematic methods and racist motivations behind racial taxonomies. This reevaluation led to numerous disciplinary responses, one of which was to incorporate the techniques of population genetics and serology into physical anthropology in order to solidify a new racial classification.

During this period of reevaluation, anthropologists, geneticists, and serologists frequently communicated about what constituted a "new" racial definition. For example, in a 1948 letter from geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky to anthropologist Carleton Coon, Dobzhansky attempted to edit Coon's conception of race:

In your definition of race, I like the emphasize place [sic] on the fact that a race is a population, i.e. an interbreeding community, associated with a place or region. But the statement that members of a race "are more like one another than they are like other individuals of the same general kind" seems to me in need of clarification. To speak of "similarity" as some over-all abstract similarity does not get us very far. . . . Personally, I would not include that in a definition of "race".

Dobzhansky advocated a different definition of race, based on the frequencies of genes among populations, stating that "populations which differ in frequencies of certain genes or certain traits are more concrete and definite entities." Although the two did not conclude their communication with a settled view of the value of racial types and morphological criteria, Dobzhansky stressed the "necessity of cooperation between actively working anthropologists and geneticists" in fashioning new approaches to studying and classifying races.
Trained to consider phenotypical traits as racial criteria, a number of anthropologists were initially hesitant about adopting genetic techniques for racial science. Nonetheless, the majority still expressed hope that with further collaboration with geneticists, they would soon be able to understand what constituted a biological race. As Berenice Kaplan (1950:30) wrote: “We hope that in five years it will be possible to set up genetic classifications of human groups which will not be likely to break down.” Another physical anthropologist, Joseph Birdsell, commenting about the need to “revitalize racial anthropology,” also argued that a modern racial science would only be possible if anthropologists adopted new techniques from geneticists: “Racial anthropology is not bankrupt, but it will require assistance. . . . The problems of human evolution and racial differentiation will be advanced by borrowing techniques from the vigorous field of population genetics” (Birdsell 1951:259, emphasis added). Anthropologist Gabriel Lasker wrote that the “major trend in physical anthropology today seems to be the effort to make our analysis of the varieties of man more valid. . . . Studies in blood groups lead the way” (Lasker 1945:7, emphasis added). Many anthropologists trusted that new techniques could be established which could define races more accurately, through cooperative, interdisciplinary studies. The tool that held the most promise in the post-war era was the human blood groups.

The “Enthusiastic Salesman”

Throughout his career, William Boyd served as the “enthusiastic salesman” for racial serology, as he attempted to convince physical anthropologists that blood groups were an exceptionally useful tool for anthropology (Birdsell 1952:355). A professor of immunochemistry at the Boston University School of Medicine, Boyd considered himself to be a member of the anthropological community, even though he was not trained as an anthropologist, nor did he teach in an anthropology department. Nevertheless, he became a member of the American Anthropological Association as well as an editor of the American Journal of Physical Anthropology. In his articles written from the 1930s to the 1960s, and especially in his 1950 book Genetics and the Races of Man, Boyd attempted to study racial difference—which he considered the goal of anthropology—using techniques from serology.

Boyd insisted that blood groups were a practical way to meet the goal of racial taxonomy, contending that blood groups were more “scientific,” “objective,” and even less racist than the anthropology of the past. The most appropriate genetic criteria for racial studies, according to Boyd, were simple, discrete characteristics, such as the blood groups. As he explained, “blood groups are characteristics genetically determined, by a known mechanism, absolutely objective in character, absolutely unaffected by environment, not subject to mutation at any rapid rate, and so far as we are able to discover by extensive investigation, non-adaptive” (Boyd and Schiff 1942:198). In contrast, he noted that most phenotypic traits were inherited by
unknown mechanisms, were not easily nor consistently classified, and were subject to environmental modification. As Boyd (1947:49) avowed, "the only scientific meaning which can be attached to the word 'race' defines it in terms of gene difference or differences in gene frequencies." Boyd often caricatured the pre-genetic practices of physical anthropology, using adjectival phrases such as "grotesque misconceptions" and "regrettable and pathetic ignorance" (1950:66) to portray previous methods for constructing taxonomies. Because of the "technique-bound, interpretation-deficient, anthropometric" nature of traditional physical anthropology, Boyd (1947:49) claimed that "if progress in this field continues, it would seem hardly too much to say that serology (or rather, genetics) is destined to oust craniometry and anthropometry as the main tool of racial anthropology."

Despite Boyd's criticism of previous anthropological practices, his "serological taxonomies" bore a resounding resemblance to traditional racial groupings. Calculating the percentages of gene frequencies of the ABO, MN, and Rh blood types, he identified a European (Caucasoid), African (Negroid), Asian (Mongoloid), Australoid, and American Indian race (Boyd 1950:268; Marks 1995:131). There was considerable overlap between the frequencies of each trait from race to race. The Early European race had a 0.25 frequency of blood group A, the European had 0.2-0.3, the African had 0.1-0.2, the Asiatic had 0.15-0.4, the American had 0-0.6, and the Australian had 0.1-0.6. Based on the frequencies of blood group A, the lines between the six races were extremely arbitrary, and similar overlap occurred with the other blood types.

In essence, Boyd's races were based on large continental divisions on which he imposed gene-frequency differences. He first marked out racial delineations, and then made the blood group frequencies fit within these divisions (Marks 1995:131-2). Boyd chose the populations that he sampled based on morphological criteria, and then extracted the blood-group frequencies based on these populations. Anthropologist T.D. Stewart (1951:471) complained that "it is debatable whether the genetic classification of races rests upon a higher degree of objectivity than do the morphological classifications. Essentially all of the available [blood group] data have been derived from peoples selected directly or indirectly because of their phenotypic characters." As a result, Boyd's categories—African, Asian, Australian, European, American—were remarkably similar to previous classifications based on morphology. Ironically, one of his reasons for rejecting head measurements and skin color as inappropriate traits to delineate races was that "all of these methods are attempts by anthropologists to make races 'come out right' by selecting criteria which should produce racial divisions relating to geographical divisions" (Boyd 1952:108). Yet, even using new genetic criteria, Boyd also made his serological races "come out right," corresponding to the same divisions as previous taxonomies.
Despite their resemblance to traditional racial taxonomies, several anthropologists, including Carleton Coon, did not initially accept Boyd’s serological racial taxonomies. To Coon, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, “racial” features were visible phenotypic characteristics, such as skin color or facial features, instead of percentages of blood groups “A” or “B.” In addition, Coon did not want “outsiders” to the discipline faulting its techniques and assumptions. He alleged that “some of the blood-groups enthusiasts prematurely and rather arrogantly declared that their new discipline had pulled the rug out from under our feet.”

Similarly, in a 1952 letter to Joseph Birdsell, Coon stated:

Boyd feels that we should base our classification of races on characters the genetics of which are known. In other words, blood groups. I do not agree with him. Race depends on the few but critical, if genetically unknown, differences between human populations which relate to man’s adaptation to his environment, physical and social. Just because we do not know about the exact manner of transmission of skin color, nose form, and still to be discovered differences in the nervous system does not mean that these are not the important factors on which racial differences depend. I further feel that the geneticists are a little less than gods, and they too, like the atomic physicists, have much to learn.

Coon did not want a dilettante dictating how anthropologists should conduct the study of race. When faced with such an intrusion, Coon defended morphology more vigorously than ever. Yet, a decade later, Coon would reappropriate blood groups for racial taxonomy, as his colleagues began to attack not only traditional racial techniques such as morphology, but the race concept itself.

**Discarding the Framework**

“What happened to race?” asked the historian of anthropology George Stocking, after he observed an absence of racial studies during the 1950s and 1960s. He realized that the “preoccupation of scientists with race was largely an obsession of the past . . . race simply no longer occupied the center of the scientific stage as it once had done” (Stocking 1968:vii). Alice Brues (1968:117) concurred in her review of Carleton Coon’s *Living Races of Man* (1965), a 350-page taxonomy of human races:

It requires a degree of courage to write a book on the Races of Man in this era of the New Prudery, when r-ce has replaced s-x as the great dirty word. . . . And paradoxically, criticism will be more severe because there is nothing else like it in print, and people will have to refer to it whether they agree with it or not.
Brues recognized that many scientists during the 1960s were hesitant to study issues of race. As the United States became especially cognizant of racial issues after the horrors of Nazism and during the burgeoning Civil Rights movement, many anthropologists feared being labeled racist by other scientists and the public if they chose to investigate racial differences. Although scientific definitions of race did not play as large a role in the Civil Rights movements as sociological racial categories, both liberals and conservatives referred to racial science during the Civil Rights debates. Physical anthropologists frequently commented on scientific and social racism, but many chose not to specifically study race, in part for fear of what might happen to their data if appropriated, and in part because there were other non-racial topics worthy of investigation, such as the processes underlying human genetic evolution—selection, adaptation, and genetic drift.11

Consequently, after World War II, most physical anthropologists chose to place race aside and not study it directly, employing blood groups to investigate non-racial, evolutionary questions instead. However, beginning in the early 1960s, anthropologists published a series of articles in the new periodical Current Anthropology which not only addressed the race concept but explicitly rejected it. Physical anthropologists such as Frank Livingstone (1962) and C. L. Brace (1964) argued that human populations differ among each other, but they do not form discrete racial clusters. Instead, individual traits vary gradually with geography in what are termed “clines,” with no clear-cut lines separating races. As Livingstone (1962:279) explained:

It should be pointed out that this position does not imply that there is no biological variability between the populations of organisms which comprise a species, but just that this variability does not conform to the discrete packages labeled races. There are no races there are only clines.

Sociologist Leonard Lieberman has employed the term “lumpers” to describe those anthropologists who rejected the race concept, and “splitters” to designate those who accept the idea of biological races.12 A number of anthropologists began to shift from a splitter to a lumpmer position during the early 1960s, and by the late 1970s it had become an increasingly popular position, with almost half of all anthropologists rejecting the race concept after 1975 (Lieberman et al. 1989:57).

Many lumpers have argued that blood group data ultimately led them to favor a clinal position (Littlefield et al. 1982:644). In spite of the fact that Boyd had pitched blood as a way to strengthen taxonomies by providing a more “scientific” way to classify humankind, new blood group data was actually crucial in dismantling the race concept. For example, C. L. Brace (1982:648) realized that serological characteristics
were distributed in geographic gradations called clines, not in discrete racial populations:

What really forced the issue was the accumulation of data on genetically controlled traits. I well remember, as a graduate student at one of the “elite institutions” in the early 1950s reading Birdsell’s (1950) presentation of gene frequency data for a number of different traits in aboriginal Australians and being disturbed because they could not be made to fit into a framework of circumscribed breeding populations, as it was then fashionable to do.

Brace asserted that blood group data resisted being squeezed into a racial framework, as the blood groups varied spatially instead of in discrete breeding populations. As anthropologist Morton Fried (1965:35) observed, the work of anthropologists who “prefer the rapidly mounting blood factors,” has “one consistent by-product: The resultant classifications tend to cross-cut and obliterate conventional racial lines so that such constructs as the white race disappear as useful taxonomic units.” Instead of using blood groups to perfect racial classification, clinalists routinely cited blood group studies as undermining the race concept.

Politics inside and outside of anthropology also played a role in destabilizing the race concept. Brace and Livingstone published their landmark clinal essays in 1962 and 1964, respectively, in the midst of the contentious Civil Rights movement, when scientists were particularly sensitive to issues surrounding race. They also published their essays circa the publication of Carleton Coon’s controversial 1962 book, The Origin of Races. Coon, the president of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, argued not only that there were five distinct races, but that each race evolved separately and at different times, whites first and blacks last. Coon (1962:ix-x) asserted that the “Negroid” race’s “later” evolution to Homo sapiens explained its “lower” level of civilization:

[It] is a fair inference that...the subspecies which crossed the evolutionary threshold into the category of Homo sapiens the earliest have evolved the most, and that the obvious correlation between the length of time a subspecies has been in the sapiens state and the levels of civilization attained by some of its populations may be related phenomena.

Not surprisingly, conservative segregationists publicly appropriated his argument. Coon’s distant cousin, Carleton Putnam, published full-page ads in newspapers across the country as well as a widely-circulated book, Race and Reason (1961), which prominently mentioned Coon as the “voice of science supporting the segregationist cause.”13
A number of physical anthropologists were disturbed that an esteemed member of their discipline was linked publicly with the segregationist cause. To counter this negative publicity, they produced a flurry of articles that were not racial studies, but commentaries and analysis about race, as many scientists talked about race but few actually studied it. These articles addressed not only scientific racism, but the problems accompanying the concept of biological races. Since the Second World War, periods of social and scientific racism have often rendered the race concept even more unstable than during less fractious times. When scientific racism peaked with Nazism, scientists such as Julian Huxley, A. C. Haddon, and Ashley Montagu not only fought against scientific racism, but began to question the race concept itself (Huxley and Haddon 1935; Montagu 1941). Similarly during the 1960s, when scientific racism re-emerged, the concept of race itself returned to the arena of public discourse. Only when scientists examined the issue more critically instead of diverting their energy to other topics could they recognize inherent problems with the concept of biological races.

Transfusing Blood into Race

Bruno Latour, a sociologist of science, has contended that scientists “speak in the name of new allies that they have shaped and enrolled... they add these unexpected resources to tip the balance of force in their favor” (1987:257). Late in his career, Carleton Coon forged an alliance with the “unexpected resource” of serology in defense of racial classification. A zealous advocate of the race concept, Coon was initially wary of serology, arguing that blood groups did not serve as valuable markers of race. He asserted that morphological characteristics such as skin color were more valuable taxonomic criteria. In 1926 Coon was the first academic anthropologist from the United States to take blood samples as part of his fieldwork, but he quickly abandoned the practice because “blood group work cannot be substituted, as some have presumed, for the study of the human organism as a whole” (Coon 1981:69).

To Coon, the only reason why scientists avoided the study of morphological criteria was because there was a history of racism associated with these traits. In a speech given at Brown University in 1965, he complained that physical anthropologists, “looking for something innocuous turned away from the study of skulls and bones to a study of the blood groups”—a study which he said had proven inconclusive. He continued, stating:

Until well into the 1930s, most physical anthropologists were content to measure scores of human populations ... Then they discovered genetics, largely through the medium of blood groups and it became fashionable to downgrade such troublesome polygenic products as metrical and morphological constants and put all their eggs in the monogenic basket of hematology. This shift was particularly
opportune because of the rising tide of prejudice against racial prejudice. Blood groups were politically and socially safe and respectable.\textsuperscript{16}

Coon was particularly critical of the trend toward non-racial, genetic investigations, for he maintained that the focus of physical anthropology should be on racial studies. He argued that “the study of race is physical anthropology. There just aren’t many true physical anthropologists and most of them are working in non-racial or only remotely racial subjects, like fossil man and blood-groups. This is because in the USA work on race is not encouraged with any enthusiasm.”\textsuperscript{17} He contended that scientists shied away from the study of race simply because race was deemed to be an uncomfortable topic during the era following World War II through the turbulent 1960s. He recognized, much to his chagrin, that the emphasis on adaptive blood group investigations had replaced the study of race.

However, during the 1960s, as an increasing number of anthropologists defended a clinalist position—often citing genetic studies as evidence—Coon recognized that he needed to enlist allies in support of the race concept. If the clinalists were using serology to back up their opinions, he would enroll serology to support the race concept, too. He mentioned this tactic in a 1963 letter describing the forthcoming publication of his Living Races of Man. Because critics were so quick to vilify works on race, Coon relayed that he had to be knowledgeable with the newest technologies to support his viewpoint: “I cannot afford a single error. The young men know more than the old ones about blood biochemistry, physiology, etc.”\textsuperscript{18} He also recalled that Boyd, using blood groups, had classified virtually the same racial groups as anthropologists had recognized using morphology. Therefore, in his controversial book on The Origin of Races (1962) Coon wrote that “to me, at least, it is encouraging to know that biochemistry divide us into the same subspecies that we recognize on the basis of other criteria” (663). In The Living Races of Man (1965), Coon more explicitly allied blood groups with racial taxonomy. After explaining how Boyd’s classification “confirms rather than vitiates morphological classifications of non-serological physical anthropologists,” Coon (1965:19) concluded that:

Boyd’s efforts have helped greatly to bring together the contributions of workers in different disciplines in the interest of racial classification. We are, we hope, approaching the path to a general agreement, after which we may be able to attach valid racial third names to Homo sapiens.\textsuperscript{19}

In order to salvage the race concept, Coon now turned to the genetic techniques offered by other disciplines. Ironically, he had once denounced these methods because they threatened to subsume what he considered to be the interest of physical anthropology—the study of race. But when he realized that race was quickly
moving out of fashion, he resorted to the techniques that were à la mode to help defend race. According to Latour, when scientists face a contentious issue, to strengthen their particular side, they must “fasten their position to less controvertible arguments... to less disputable fields” (1987:109). By the 1960s the majority of scientists perceived genetics to be far less controversial than skin color or anthropometry. Since the race concept was already in so much dispute, Coon now had to turn to the least contentious methods at hand, genetics, to lend more validity to racial classifications.

**Unsettled Debates**

Sherwood Washburn, a leading post-war anthropologist, declared in 1951 that the next decade of physical anthropology should be a “period of experimentation” in which new issues were studied and new techniques employed by scientists grappling with the recently opened issue of race (Washburn 1962:9). Because of their manifold applications and multiple interpretations by others, the blood groups were an integral part of this experimental period, offering many more unresolved issues than concrete solutions. Although they sparked new questions and investigations, blood groups did not provide clear answers to taxonomy, let alone evolutionary history or adaptation. Subject to multiple appropriations and definitions, blood groups only reinforced the deep divisions and debate surrounding race, as both blood groups and the race concept remain unsettled.

There are several reasons why genetics, like all scientific techniques, has not stabilized racial definitions. First, race is a particularly intractable issue because it is tied to social and political dimensions and will be emotionally charged regardless of the techniques used. In light of racism, scientists tend to reexamine the techniques used to construct conceptions of race, at times deeming certain techniques, such as the blood groups, to be “safer” politically than other methods, such as craniometry. Yet any demarcation of a “political neutral technique” is transient. Craniometry, for instance, was once unproblematic at the turn-of-the-century, while the blood groups became racist tools under the Nazis.20

Second, blood groups proved to be a flexible tool, applicable to purposes besides defining race. Individuals who defended the race concept and those who rejected it were each able to appeal to blood groups to support their sides. The clinalists for example, attempted to deconstruct racial categories using serology, while the categorizers, such as Coon, employed the same tools in their efforts to preserve racial taxonomies. Blood groups, appropriated by both camps, could not settle the divisions between the two viewpoints, but only deepened the trenches between them.

A final reason why blood groups could not settle racial definitions is that scientists could not agree upon fundamental methodological issues that were
necessary to define the races. Anthropologists appropriated a "population approach" from geneticists, but scientists from both disciplines could not concur on how to define or sample a "population." Serology could not clarify racial definitions if scientists could not figure out how to delineate a race to sample in the first place. Blood groups were simply inapplicable to the resolution of these underlying questions necessary to define race.

New technologies—from population genetics, serology, or molecular biology—have not stabilized the scientific study of race. The investigation of human diversity will always be socially and emotionally charged, regardless of the techniques used. In addition, fundamental sampling questions are still unsettled, and new technologies cannot in and of themselves answer these underlying questions. Furthermore, most of these technologies were not designed specifically for racial study. Instead, they can adapt to multiple roles, such that different scientists can appropriate them either to support or to undermine the concept of race. While new technologies can expand our knowledge of human diversity on an increasingly specific level, it is naive to expect that a given technique, by mere virtue of being "genetic," "scientific," or "new," can resolve the question of what constitutes a human race. There are limits to what techniques can and cannot resolve; race is, above all, a conceptual issue, which technologies alone cannot settle. Perhaps the only concept illuminated by recent genetic techniques is the inherent instability of race itself.

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Notes

2Lawrence Angel to Ashley Montagu, July 24, 1950, Box 4, Lawrence Angel Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.

3Theodosius Dobzhansky to Carleton Coon, March 1, 1948, Box 18, Carleton Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.

4Dobzhansky to Angel, April 13, 1950; Angel to Dobzhansky, April 18, 1950, Box 3, J. Lawrence Angel Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC. Members of the two disciplines crystallized an alliance at the Fifteenth Cold Spring Harbor Symposium on Quantitative Biology in 1950. The focus of this conference was the “Origin and Evolution of Man” and drew renowned participants from many disciplines involved in the study of human biology, especially from physical anthropology and genetics. The opening speaker, M. Demerec, explicitly stated the goal of the conference as an “arranged marriage” of sorts: “The chief aim of the 15th Symposium on Quantitative Biology is to help establish a collaboration between anthropologists and geneticists, who until recently had enjoyed relatively little contact and collaboration” (Demerec 1951). In addition, anthropologists, after the conference, adopted the term “biological anthropology” as a way of emphasizing the new and stronger links between physical anthropology and population biology.

5Untrained anthropologists, such as Boyd and Dobzhansky, were increasingly common. As Stanley Garn (1964) observed, “I think that we can say that there is far more physical anthropology now, but much of it is being done by physiologists, serologists, biochemists and others not formally trained in physical anthropological disciplines.”

6By the late 1950s, Boyd changed his mind 180 degrees about the non-adaptive nature of blood groups (see Boyd 1963).

7A letter from Stanley Garn to Carleton Coon exemplifies the practice of classifying races a priori: “We must state very early that races are not discovered by use of genes, anthropometers, or any other sophisticated techniques. Rather races are noted, first intuitively and then validated by using whatever techniques there are.” Garn to Coon, 11 Oct. 1954, Box 6, Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.

8Coon was undoubtedly influenced by his mentor, Harvard Professor Earnest Hooton, who did not support genetic traits for racial classification. As Hooton wrote in his 1931 textbook, Up From the Ape: “We can make little or nothing of blood group analysis from the point of view of racial studies... At present it seems that blood-groupings are inherited quite independently of any of the physical features whereby we determine race” (1931:491, cited in Marks 1995:126).
Carleton Coon, Draft of Introduction to *Origin of Races*, 1961, Box 70, Carleton Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC. For a similar critique, see Weidenreich (1946:78-79).

Carleton Coon to Joseph Birdsell, August 7, 1952, Box 13, Carleton Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.

The Carleton Coon and J. Lawrence Angel Papers at the National Anthropology archives have extraordinary evidence regarding the political mobilization of anthropologists during the late 1950s and 1960s, their reluctance to study race during this period, and the appropriation of scientific data by both sides of the Civil Rights debates. For more information on this under-researched topic, see Tucker (1994:163-168) and Shipman (1994).

Both splitters and the public have often grossly misconstrued the lumper position by alleging that the lumpers ignore human diversity. Several anthropologists, such as C. L. Brace, prefer to use the terms “categorizer” and “clinalist” (see Littlefield et al. 1982:641).

Other segregationists besides Putnam also appropriated Coon’s theory. James J. Kilpatrick, a southern journalist, debated with James Baldwin, on an October 14, 1962 TV debate on NBC, “Is there a Case for Segregation.” Kilpatrick repeatedly stated on national television how Coon, “one of the most distinguished anthropologists in the country,” agreed that “science supported the segregationist cause.” Box 71, Carleton Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.

The Coon papers at the National Anthropology Archives (Boxes 71-72) contain scores of letters and petitions written to Coon by other anthropologists who were disturbed by all the negative publicity.

The cumulative index of *Current Anthropology* from 1960-1967 which appeared in *Current Anthropology* 8 (December 1967): 533, displays the proliferation of essays about race.


Carleton Coon to Carleton Putnam, 19 July 1960, Box 10, Carleton Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.

Carleton Coon to Carleton Putnam, 31 March 1963, Box 12, Carleton Coon Papers, National Anthropology Archives, Washington, DC.
Advertisements for the book demonstrate Coon's commitment to ally with blood groups: "Applying his theory to all the peoples of the world, he tests it with the most recent scientific facts. For example, the preponderance of certain blood types in some races." Advertisement, *New York Times Book Review* (21 November, 1965).

Otto Reche, a prominent German professor of racial science, asserted that A was the blood type of pure Northern Europeans (Aryans), and B was the Jewish blood type. According to Reche, A and B were "enemy" blood groups that should not be mingled, a metaphor that perhaps arose from the dangers of transfusing an A-type individual with B-type blood. Although post-war surveys revealed that non-Jews had higher frequencies of B than Jews, German racial science was more concerned with furthering political ideals than determining accurate blood-group frequencies (Shipman 1994:134).

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*Archival Material.* Most of the letters and documentary materials used in this paper came from the the Carleton Coon and J. Lawrence Angel Papers at the National Anthropology Archives in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC, which proved to be a goldmine of resources on the history of mid-century United States physical anthropology. In addition to containing rich commentary on genetics, both the Coon and Angel archives have extraordinary evidence regarding the political mobilization of anthropologists during the late 1950s and 1960s, their reluctance to study race during this period, and the appropriation of scientific data by both sides of the Civil Rights debates.

I tried in vain to locate William Boyd's papers. They are not archived at Boston University, where he taught, nor in the archives of the Blood Grouping Laboratory at Children's Hospital, where he also worked. Fortunately, Boyd corresponded frequently with Angel and Coon and he also published regularly in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* and in other journals, leaving plenty of evidence with which to work.

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Marks, Jonathan

Montagu, Ashley

Putnam, Carleton

Shipman, Pat
Stewart, T.D.

Stocking, George

Tucker, William H.

Washburn, Sherwood

Weidenreich, Franz