

A Normative Approach: Can We Eliminate Race?¹

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Abstract

It would not be exaggerating to point out that there is a clear controversy on the notion of race. In some instances philosophers acknowledge that race might have a meaning that can be traced to the world. In his book, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Kwame Anthony Appiah has developed an account of race that is eliminativist in nature. Appiah's intention was to demonstrate that the notion of race is non-existent. Meanwhile, lines have been drawn between proponents who advocate for conservationism and others for eliminativism. The controversy persists among philosophers with regard to the question whether to eliminate or conserve the concept of race. This article seeks to examine the performance of the eliminativism theory, in contrast with the conservation theory of race. I seek to show that the metaphysics of race via finding determinative theory of reference for racial terms or concepts is unfruitful. I seek to argue that racial eliminativist criticism against the notion of race is not convincing. I argue that we should preserve the notion of race, given that the position of eliminativism does not account for the social injustice that people of different races experience.

Keywords: eliminativism, normative, race, racialism, philosophers, Kwame Anthony Appiah

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Introduction

In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophers have again turned their focus on racial discourses. A key worrisome factor in the philosophy of race is the normative question of whether to conserve or eliminate racial discourse and thought, as well as the practices that depends on the racial categories thereof. The desire to leave the notion³ of race behind us seems to be the urge that dominates many people's minds (Glasgow 2009; Zack 1993). This idea looks to be attractive on paper. A number of scholars argue that we have to do away with this notion, but it is highly impractical in reality. However, a number of arguments have been put forward by those proponents who propose eliminativism about race. These arguments seek to confront the most sensitive problems that the modern-day communities across the globe face. Some of those problems are perpetuated by the notion of race, and its ideologies and doctrines. Those problems still persists in our communities across the globe even up today—social problems like racism⁴—that are closely aligned with the notion of race. In their arguments of eliminating the concept of race, the liberal eliminativists, like Appiah, argues that the significance that is attached to racial classification is not important or artificial, and that this significance shall depreciate over time (and perhaps disappear completely) (Appiah 1985 & 1992). In brief, Appiah argues that 'the truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us' (Appiah 1992: 45). This is the view that I believe seeks to resolve the tensions that are brought by the notion of race and its practice. I find this eliminativist argument unconvincing on their position of the normative question of race. To demonstrate this, I wish to take an indirect approach. Firstly, I seek to outline the important arguments of eliminativism camp and also outline the different types of racial eliminativist camps. Secondly, I seek to outline some of the major criticism against racial eliminativist position on the notion of race. Thirdly, I seek to search for a plausible property that can account for the existence of race that still persists

³ Throughout, I use the terms 'notion' and 'concept' interchangeably.

⁴ As evidence to the claim above, the intriguing racism is the Oprah Winfrey case were she claimed that in her visit to Switzerland in 2013. A shop assistant refused to serve her in an upmarket shop in Zurich. To read the actual article, see: <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-23626340> =Detail (Accessed 29 April 2015).

even today by analysing the doctrine of racialism. If my search for this property succeeds, I then seek to argue that it is important to conserve the notion or concept of race within our communities. I argue that in order for race to exist—we do not have to engage in tedious examination of things to find its reality in the world—we can consider what comes to our knowledge when one looks at racial landscape of individuals, as Lee (1994) will concur; through our naked eyes what we cannot miss is the differences that exist amongst people. This difference is what I call race⁵.

This article is arranged into four sections. In the first section outline the important arguments from the racial eliminativism camp and also outline the different types of racial eliminativism. In the second section I briefly give a cursory outline of the criticism against racial eliminativism camp. In third section I make the analysis of the doctrine of racialism and show the role that it plays in racial discourse. In the four sections I attempt a critical interpretation of the arguments that are for eliminativism on race. I then argue that there is a need of conserving the notion of race in our communities, given, that there are still differences that exist in our racial landscape.

So conceived, this article is limited to the arguments between philosophers like Appiah (1992), (1985), Glasgow (2009), Zack (1993), and Mallon (2006) where the central focus is the normative question of whether race is supposed to be conserved or eliminated. I thereby consider this article as a contribution to the debate of race specifically focused on the normative question of whether we need to eliminate or conserve the notion of race.

Philosophical Eliminativism

My use of the term philosophical eliminativism is meant to describe the new racial eliminativism tradition that originated in the early 90s. The eliminativists, whose main proponents are Kwame Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack, argue that the scientific invalidity of race calls for the rejection of the concept. In addition to its scientific invalidity, Zack also argues that the concept renders mixed race people race-less because of their supposed

⁵ For the purpose of this article, I seek not to engage in the taxonomy of race, as this question goes beyond the purpose and the scope of this article. The main purpose of this article is to worry about the normative question whether we can eliminate the notion of race.

exclusion from racial binaries (Zack 1993). This tradition has been formulated, with a clear reflection of society and its history, with regard to the corrupted notion of race. Most racial eliminativists, in regard to their position on the reality of race, come to a conclusion that this assumption that it is possible to divide human beings into racial groups such that members of each group share certain heritable characteristics, is false. I think care must be taken to make a clear distinction between views within this racial camp. From the view of things, there seems to be more than one view that belongs to this camp. However the proponents of those views have one ultimate goal to eliminate the notion of race, racial discourse and thoughts.

The views of racial eliminativist camps that I have in mind can be traced to Joshua Glasgow's analysis of racial eliminativism views in his book *A Theory of Race*. Here, Glasgow pointed out that there is more than one view or type of eliminativism. I suggest that racial eliminativism tradition is mostly encouraged by the history of human kind (of suffering and oppression, of other human beings by the other). It is in this history that the racial eliminativists conceived it to be fundamentally importance to be revolutionary towards the available knowledge of race. What seems to be the backbone or their motivation mechanism is the suffering that human beings faced in the previous centuries.

In his analysis of Placide Temples' *Bantu Philosophy* project of displaying of the Bantu systems of thought, Bernard Matolino reiterates that there are three philosophical racialism⁶ views. I think it is fair, before I discuss the types or views of philosophical eliminativism, to consider the views that are proposed by Matolino's *Temples' Philosophical Racialism* as they ultimately serve a major purpose of narrating the human history that the proponents of racial eliminativism seek to reject. Matolino claims that:

⁶ For Matolino, philosophical racialism, is meant to refer to those doctrines that have been deliberately formulated, with reflection, come to the conclusion that people of another races or other races, other than one's own, are inferior by virtue of their race. He further claims that 'it does not refer to those incidents where people of another race may simply be prejudiced against some other race or races. It does not also refer to situations whereby people of one racial group may act in ways that may show preference to keep company, marry or only see as equals only those people who belong to their racial group' (2011: 332).

the first view of philosophical racialism seeks to claim that black people are, by virtue of their blackness, incapable of developing any culture, particularly one that is not to exhibit any form of logical and precise reasoning. And it may be argued, consistent with this line, black people's behaviour is based on myths, ill-informed fears that give rise to abhorrent ritualism, superstition, and failure to distinguish fact from fiction, that results in a culture of indolence when it comes to the use of their mental faculties (Matolino 2011: 333).

He [Matolino] concludes that this type of philosophical racialism is nakedly vicious in its condemnation of the African as completely hopeless and useless in terms of development. The second philosophical racialism view, is unlike the first type, which is nakedly vicious in its condemnation of Africans, this view is advocated by Tempels and Marcel Griaule's *Conservations with Ogottemmelli*. These works according to Matolino interpretation, seek to present the philosophical viewpoint of Africans from the Africans' own perspective. The third and last philosophical racialism according to Matolino is from the same vein of condemnation and condescending in nature. He claims:

for Hume, the first type was unimpressive and only the third type was impressive. This also meant the superiority of white people since they were the only ones who were capable of engaging in the third type of mental activity. What we can see here is that Hume's kind of racism seeks to present some evidence to sustain its position. It firstly seeks to draw evidence of the African's backwardness by tracing his history of lack of achievement in both arts and science. Secondly, it turns to genetic account of what it implies to bear black skin and how that marks one as different from other bearers of lighter skins. And, finally, it seeks to seal the condemnation of the African by showing how his mind is incapable of abstract and faint impressions (Matolino 2011: 335).

For racial eliminativists, this is a social situation that is not ideal; I suppose they believe there is more to mankind than to be racist towards each other.

The first racial eliminativism view is academic eliminativism, in this

view eliminativists seek to claim that race does not refer to anything—by virtue of that there are no racial essences—this then led eliminativists like Appiah to claim that race cannot have meaning without referring to metaphysical features of the world. Appiah (1992: 37) writes:

To say that biological races existed because it was possible to classify people into a small number of classes according to their gross morphology would be to save racialism in the letter but lose it in the substance. The notion of race that was recovered would be of no biological interest—the interesting biological generalizations are about genotypes, phenotypes, and their distribution in geographical populations. We could just as well classify people according to whether or not they were redheaded, or redheaded and freckled, or redheaded, freckled, and broad-nosed too, but nobody claims that this sort of classification is central to human biology.

Furthermore, Appiah concludes by claiming that:

The truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us. As we have seen, even the biologist's notion has only limited uses, and the notion that Du Bois required, and that underlies the more hateful racisms of the modern era, refers to nothing in the world at all. The evil that is done is done by the concept and by easy—yet impossible—assumptions as to its application (Appiah 1992: 45).

Appiah's position is definitely informed by his desire or urge to undermine race as a natural factor and the existence of racism. He believes that race is relatively unimportant, by virtue that, is not biological real and it cannot account for the racial differences that exist amongst human beings. This position is also endorsed and emphasized by Naomi Zack. In her book *Race and Mixed Race*, Zack goes further to suggest that many 'biologists and anthropologists are sceptical of the concept of race as a useful scientific tool because no racial population, past or present, has ever been completely isolated from other races in terms of breeding' (Zack 1993: 15). Hence, Appiah and Zack contend that there is nothing in the world that can be used as reference to race.

The second racial eliminativism is a political view, Glasgow suggests, in a more contestable form, the political version of eliminativism claims that we should eliminate racial categories from all or most of the formal state policies, proceeding, documents and institutions. Glasgow, however, argues that the state of California and its residences rejected this proposal that we have to remove the racial categories from most or if not all formal documents and states policies (Glasgow 2009: 2). He further claims that political eliminativism is, in other times, motivated not only by the claim that the way we think about race might be incoherent, but also by the rationale that eliminating racial categories will undermine other policies, such as affirmative action, which presuppose race (ibid). These actions will lead to good relations economically.

The racial eliminativism that I consider to be third view is a public eliminativism. This eliminativism is not far removed from the previous eliminativism as they are intertwined. They are both concerned with eliminating the notion of race and its practices from the public avenue. Glasgow writes that:

[A] more sweeping form of eliminativism is the public version. Public eliminativism advises that we get rid of race-thinking not only in the political sphere, but in the entirety of our public lives, so that we neither assert nor recognize one another's races (Glasgow 2009:2).

The final racial eliminativism is global racial eliminativism.

The goal of this view is for us to eventually get rid of race-thinking not only in the political or even public world, but altogether. That is, even in our most private inner moments, race-thinking should go the way of belief in witchcraft and phlogiston: a perhaps understandable but hopelessly flawed, antiquated way of making sense of our world, a way of making sense that has no place in our most sophisticated story about The Way Things Are (Glasgow 2009: 2).

From the foregoing there are four valuable ideas in my evaluation of racial eliminativism position on the notion of race. The first idea claims that racism

must be abandoned. The reason is that it has been proven to be genetically inaccurate and relatively unimportant biologically. Second, racial identification is not natural then it is warranted for individuals to disassociate themselves with race related identification. The third idea, as things stands, claims that it is warranted to abandon race—because we reject the doctrine that is racism, there is surely a need of rejecting the concept that support the doctrine. Lastly, we should abandon racial terms from both public and academic discourses and the practices that rely on those terms.

Topology of Criticism against Racial Eliminativism

In this section I seek to give cursory arguments against racial eliminativist position on race. There are three major criticisms against racial eliminativists on their position that race is meaningless as it is biologically unreal, and it has to be abandoned. The first argument against racial eliminativism is that the idea that race is not scientifically supported does not rule out its existence. David F. McClean (2004: 142) argues that:

I do not agree that race has no ‘reality’ because I see no reason to over-privilege the scientific account of race’s status—no more reason to limit the discussion of race to the scientific’s vocabulary than limit the question of whether we should make more bombs or grow more corn to that vocabulary. Race, while a legitimate subject for scientific study, has taken on a meaning and a life far greater than the mere scientific pronouncement of its death.

He further explains that this scientific pronouncement of the death of race is valuable as a literature for proper interpretation. McClean is of a view that scientific pronouncement of the death of race can be read or conceived differently from what the racial eliminativist camp conceive.

Indeed, it makes no more sense to ignore the scientific pronouncement about race than to ignore the scientific conclusion that disease is caused by germs, genetic anomalies, and poisons in the environment, rather than by evil spirits (McClean 2004: 142).

Regarding disease this is an unchangeable truth but that is not the case with

race. I propose that there is a need to read scientific outcomes differently, as McClean (2004) will concur, than what other philosophers have been tempted to read them. Most racial eliminativism, like Appiah and Zack, read the scientific pronouncement of race as a call for rejection of the concept of race. Lucius Outlaw (2001) acknowledges that race is not completely scientific. In light of the above, it is clear that race has much more strand that is dynamic in nature than what scientists have proposed that philosophers like Appiah and Zack endorse with such eagerness. Geneticists have told us that there is no race and it has no reality (McClean 2004: 142). However, the idea that race has no reality is not sufficient enough to disprove or discredit what people experience in their social world.

Secondly, racial eliminativist attempt at rejecting the notion of race relies on a misleading approach. They base their arguments on semantics theories. One can ask what makes this approach misleading. Mallon gives satisfactory answers to this question, and can be formulated in two ways. Firstly, Mallon argues that there is a problem with semantic strategy of answering the question of race (Mallon 2006). The problem is the disputes of the correct account of reference theory to employ on answering the question of race. Mallon (2006: 548) claims that ‘accounts of reference are justified by reference to semantics intuitions that vary from person to person and from culture to culture’. Before, I outline the second answer I wish to consider Mallon’s outline of the questions that we ask ourselves when we engage in race talk. Mallon outlines three questions that we ask ourselves when we question the reality of race. Here are the three questions:

- 1) The normative question: Should we eliminate or conserve racial discourse and though, as well as practices that rely on racial categories?
- 2) The ontology question: Is race real?
- 3) The conceptual question: What is the ordinary meaning of race, and what is the folk theory of race? (Mallon 2009: 1).

Secondly, Mallon argues that there is a need to overlook the ontological and conceptual questions of race. He proposes that if we insist in these two questions the answers with which we shall arrive at will be distorted. The reason for this I suppose is that it does not reflect reality as most of us know it. But, if there is continuation of over-privileging the scientific (here I mean

geneticists) account of race by defending its position through semantic strategy which most racial eliminativist seem to be engaging in. This approach shall mislead us in our quest of understanding the notion of race. Mallon, further, proposes that understanding metaphysics of race through the account of reference theory is unlikely to be fruitful (Mallon 2006: 549).

This leads me to the third and final argument against racial eliminativist position on race. As argued above, racial eliminativist are a new generation of philosophers who endorse values of universalism. It is clear in racial eliminativists that they tend to align their argument with values that will promote the ideas that we are all the same, as we have less variation. But the fundamental problem at hand is racism. Racism and its mischief have led racial eliminativist to claim that [Although] ‘there is sufficient social significance of the concept for it to be used in the effort to eliminate racism, but that the achievement of the latter would imply the elimination of the former’ (Gordon 2010: 6). But, does eliminating the doctrine of racism and the notion of race change our racial landscape? This does not seem to be plausible the fact that there are different races in terms of racial landscape will still be a fact without any change. My proposed criticism differs from all these criticism in that I seek to show that the rejection of ‘racialism’ by racial eliminativists is false. This issue will occupy our time later. I conceive that racial eliminativist quest of eliminating the notion of race has stemmed from their rejection of the doctrine of racialism. My position is sympathetic towards racial constructivist view that argues that race as social phenomenon is real. Further, without race we cannot account for campaigns against racism and policies that are race related like affirmative action.

The Analysis of Racialism

In this section I wish to turn my attention to the analysis of the doctrine of racialism. There is general agreement amongst race scholars that *racialism* is a doctrine which was at the heart of the ill treatment of many people of different colours – in South Africa for example—this doctrine played a major role in the segregation rules that were used by the government of Apartheid (Mandela 1994). Racialism has informed many of the racist ideas and practices in the previous two centuries. Many people have suffered a great deal at the hands of those who adhere to this doctrine. Racialism, according to Appiah,

[is a doctrine that claims that] ... there are heritable characteristics, possessed by members of our species, which allow us to divide them into a small set of races, in such a way that all the members of these races share certain traits and tendencies with each other that they do not share with members of any other race. These traits and tendencies characteristics of a race constitute, on the racialist view, a sort of racial essence; it is part of the content of racialism that the essential heritable characteristics of the 'Race of Man' account for more than the visible morphological characteristics – skin color, hair type, facial features – on the basis of which we make our informal classifications (Appiah 1992: 13).

Further, Appiah argues that there are three types of racism, namely; racialism, extrinsic racism and intrinsic racism. According to Appiah, extrinsic racists:

Make moral distinctions between members of different races because they believe that the racial essence entails certain morally relevant qualities. The basis for the extrinsic racists' discrimination between people is their belief that members of different races differ in respects that *warrant* the differential treatment—respects, like honesty or courage or intelligence, that are uncontroversially held (at least in most contemporary cultures) to be acceptable as a basis for treating people differently (Appiah 1992: 13-14).

Intrinsic racism is a form of racism that I take to be a mild form of racism. For Appiah, intrinsic racism:

... are people who differentiate morally between members of different races, because they believe that each race has a different moral status, quite independent of the moral characteristics entailed by its racial essence. Just as, for example, many people assume that the bare fact that they are biologically related to another person—a brother, an aunt, a cousin—gives them a moral interest in that person, so an intrinsic racist holds that the bare fact of being of the same race is a reason for preferring one person to another (Appiah 1992: 14).

Racialism that was at the center of the attempts by some Westerners to build

a science of racial difference during the 19th century. Appiah also claims that racialism in itself is not a dangerous doctrine. But it must be seen to be false as well as a cognitive problem. But it does not mean that this doctrine is a harmful doctrine. Appiah argues that racialism is a ‘... presupposition of other doctrines that have been called “racism”, and these other doctrines have been, in the last few centuries, the basis of a great deal of human suffering and the source of a great deal of moral error’ (Appiah 1992: 13). From this claim, it is clear that racialism is not the only doctrine that has brought suffering for human beings, and other doctrines that works hand in hand with racialism like racism, extrinsic racism and intrinsic racism have contributed to a great deal of hurt. Appiah in his illuminating categorization of racism into three schemata. Appiah argues that racialism forms part of his three distinct doctrines that compete for the term racism (Appiah 1992), however, I beg to differ on this understanding that racialism is part of the competing doctrines for racism. I suspect the doctrine of racialism is the umbrella of racism. My reason for this is that if we can look close at Appiah’s definition of the doctrine of racialism it is vivid that most of the characteristics that are presented as the criteria for one to belong to a particular race, plays a role in the practices of preference, discrimination, and segregation based on the skin colour.

It is clear now, that racialism forms part and parcel of the term and practices of racism. Lee concurs, with this, when she argues that ‘racialism is a necessary premise of racism’ (Lee 1994: 766). Thus, we can conclude that racism is a term that is based on racialism, but, racism is not the only notion that hangs on it. Racialism also forms a necessary premise to the notion of race. The description or meaning that is attributed to the notion of racialism plays part to the defining of the notion of race. My aim in this section is to search for property that still persists even today for our racial difference.

As an entry to my search of the property that still exist even today to account for notion of race. Thus, if I secure it, then I will argue that there is a need for us to conserve race as its elimination renders the efforts of racism campaigns meaningless as the notion which this campaigns rely on would have been abandoned. This, therefore, entails that the combat of racism have no place without the notion of race. Lee argues that:

if race does not exist outside from discursive frameworks, then our

task is not to probe for the reality of race, but search for the authentic features of race difference (Lee 1994: 751-2).

Though, I concur with Lee on the idea that our task is to probe for the property that can account for our racial difference. I disagree with Lee over the point that we should not ask the question of the reality of race not unless if Lee take it to be the case that race exist. Thus, if this is the case this disagreement will be trivial. I will take it that Lee is of a view that the question of the reality of race is not important.

Elliot Sober, in his *From Biological Point of View*, he assessed and defended essentialism modes of thought. Sober argues that:

Both typologists and populationists seek to transcend the blooming, buzzing confusion of individual variation. Like all scientists, they do this by trying to identify properties of systems that remain constant in spite of the system's changes. For the typologist, the search for invariances takes the form of a search for natural tendencies (Sober 1994: 219).

I suggest that both Lee and Sober have hinted on something valuable that can be of good use in the philosophy of race. It seems to be important despite dismissing the notion of race facile by asking the metaphysical question if race exist, what we need to be engaging on is to probe for an authentic feature or features that will be useful for our understanding of the notion of race. On the other hand, as Sober has argued we need to be searching for a property that remains constant in a system despite the changes that has occurred. To my mind, I believe these are quite valuable views that can make a positive contribution to philosophy of race. This approach seems to hold promise in the debate of the notion of race. It seems apt that this approach can yield a good outcome if followed through. For the purpose of this article I will accept this approach on the debate of race. In this section I seek to employ this approach and search for a property that remain constant on the debate of race.

It is certainly the truth that biological races are false and if we conceive race from a biological point of view our exercise will be unfruitful, as the conclusion that follows from this assessment will be that there are no races (Appiah 1992); (Zack 1993). Indeed, as cited above, we cannot ignore

the scientific pronouncement of the death of race. But it looks like most race scholars, especially those of eliminativist view, asks the wrong question in their assessment of the notion of race. There seems to be a distortion on the approach which racial eliminativist camps use to question the notion of race. This distortion is not clearly articulated in literature. However, most scholars seem to hint on this point, as seen above, in spite of fully articulating this distortion race scholars, tend to deviant from this point as the questioning of the notion of race is an exercise that is accompanied by emotions, as it is highly sensitive. Thus, McClean argues that ‘... the question has more to do with...*who* we are than *what* we are’ (McClean 2004: 142). I seek to detach myself from those emotions while attempting to search for property or properties that are viable that still exist that can be used to account for this notion of race.

According to Andreason (2005), the doctrine of racialism went unquestioned for a long time. But, when put through questioning by race scholars it has been found that the doctrine of racialism is false. This view is one which most scholars of race across most disciplines like anthropology, philosophy and science agree that racialism is false (Appiah 1992; Zack 1993; Outlaw 2001; Lee 1994). But care has to be taken on this point, it seems that this universal dogma of racialism being false might have some elements of fault on it. Here, I seek to revisit the definition of racialism with a purpose to ask is the entire definition of the doctrine of racialism false. Thus, I suggest that the doctrine of racialism is a doctrine that is made up by more than one aspect. These aspects are denoted by the definition of racialism. When we look closely to the stipulated definition of racialism that is given by Appiah, we can note that there are two intertwined aspects of this doctrine.

I propose to separate and formulate the two aspects that had played a greater role in the separation of people into different racial groups during the 19th century as follows:

- (1) The first aspect deals with bio-behavioral essences⁷ underlying natural properties that are heritable, biological features, and are

⁷ I owe this understanding to Professor Ron Mallon from Washington University in St. Louis. In his paper, *Race: Normative, Not Metaphysical or Semantics*, he defines *bio-behavioral* essences as ‘underlying natural (and perhaps genetic) properties that (1) are heritable, biological features, (2) are

shared by all and only by the members of a race, and as a result of which, are said to behave in the same way.

(2) The second aspect has to do with physical appearance (or morphological characteristics) which was a tool with which people were separated into racial groups based on their appearances.

The doctrine of racialism assumes that people of the same race share the same traits and tendencies, including the idea that there is some form of hierarchical standing in races, with whites being at the top of the hierarchy and other races coming after them. Two classical philosophers (Immanuel Kant and David Hume) held a belief that the appearance of a person or race has a relation to that person's mental ability (Eze 1997: 38). The first aspect has to do with dividing people by traits and tendencies. This aspect of racialism has been mainly responsible for the stigma and hatred that most races experienced in the past century. The second aspect has to do with what I call the simple classification of people by physical appearance. We can classify people using this aspect of racialism without any stigma. I suggest that it is the first aspect of racialism that philosopher like Appiah has rejected as false. Since there are no traits and tendencies that are peculiar to particular races, it is likely that people of different races act in a similar manner. Does the view that people share the same behaviour imply that they are of the same race? I do not think that this is the case.

I believe if Appiah's argument does not comprehend that racialism is formed by two intertwined aspects, then Appiah's rejection of the notion of race is incorrect. If we consider that a simple aspect of racialism exists and is still in use today, then his argument that is keen to eliminate the concept of race fails and it is not persuasive. I argued that the rejection of racialism by philosophers and other intellectuals seems to be a rejection of only a single part of racialism which, according to my assessment, has caused the ill treatment of other human beings. The other aspect of racialism is not harmful in nature. What is left of racialism, according to my observation, is a diluted version of the doctrine whereby people are separated according to their visible appearance, without any stereotypical connotations being attached to this separation: the doctrine merely acknowledges that we are different. If

shared by all and only by the members of a race ... cultural predispositions of individual persons and racial groups' (2006: 528–529).

my suggestion is right that philosophers are mostly worried by the first aspect of racialism, then there is one half that remains that ensure the possibility of the concept of race and account for the problem of racism. With this in my mind I seek to move to the next section where I will attempt to critique views that are perpetuated by racial eliminativism camp holistically.

The Normative Question: Should we Conserve or Eliminate the Notion of Race?

In this section I seek to answer the most perennial question in philosophy of race. The question that I seek to answer in this section forms the main purpose of this article; the normative question: whether to eliminate or conserve the notion of race has occupied minds of many scholars across most disciplines as pointed above. This question has also kept most philosophers busy, and in this debate there are two camps that has emerged. The first camp argues that it is advisable for the notion of race to be eliminated as it is based on false assumption and arbitrary ideas of classifying people according to their superficial features. This camp, further, argues that race has to be abandoned as it is not biological real. The second camp argues that race has to be conserved as elimination race would be like ‘giving up the features of ourselves that are most important, that makes us interesting individuals’ (McClellan 2004: 149).

Race is a constitutive element of our common sense and thus is a key component of our taken for granted through which we get on in the world. And, as we are constantly burdened by the need to resolve difficulties, posing varying degrees of danger to the social whole, in which race is the focal point of contention (Outlaw 2001: 58).

It should not go without saying that Appiah’s criticism on the notion of race is highly uncharitable. Yet, my focus in this section is not on the incoherence and the unclarity of this highly corrupted notion of race as such rather I wish to worry about the normative question of whether to eliminate or conserve race. I perceive from the racial eliminativism camp that is more aligned with anti-realism, than to interpret the real phenomena that we can visibly experience by our naked eyes. I suspect that there is a need for us to conserve

the notion of race in our communities across the globe. The reason for this is because the notion of race has a number of uses in our daily dealings as human beings. Here, I seek to outline what are my reasons of suggesting that there is a need for us to conserve the notion of race in our communities across the globe.

Thus, my first reason why we need to conserve the notion of race in our communities, is that racial eliminativist position on race is incompatible with our intuitive understanding of the notion of race. Our intuitive understanding of the notion of race can be captured by our naked eyes. Through our naked eyes we can make reports that there is a clear difference amongst races that is visible to our naked eyes. I have argued above this is what I call race. This is an obvious reality in our social worlds as Outlaw (2001) will affirm. The concept of race is useful as a tool to categorize human beings. Hence, this point might have been disapproved in literature, but, I argue race is a fundamental currency in a social world which people tend to draw lines amongst themselves as races. I think that the following observations, by McClean, will help to emphasize this point:

The idea of race is pretty much dead, but the damage race has done still remains, although not withstanding that damage, race, as a social construct, could be something we might keep around (McClean 2004: 149).

The second and final reasons why we need to conserve the notion of race, is that without the notion of race we cannot account for the term and practices of racism in our societies. Further, we will also be unable to account the campaigns of racism that are in existence across the globe. David Theo Goldberg argues that ‘race is irrelevant, but all is race’ (Goldberg 1993: 6), in light of this quotation, it is apt Goldberg is of view that it is highly impractical to remove the notion of race in society. Given, that the racial problems are still evident in our societies. In South Africa, for example, a minister in the presidency Trevor Manuel accused Jimmy Manyi as the worst kind of racist that is called black racism⁸. To be truthful removing the notion

⁸ To read the actual article in detail, see, Matolino’s analysis of the effectiveness of black racism in his ‘There is a racist on my stoep and he is black: A Philosophical Analysis of Black Racism in Post-apartheid South Africa’.

of race in society will be an act that will cripple how people conceive themselves and structures that have been established by a history that is befogged by racialized thinking and racism that had been a serious problem – and it is still even today. On this account, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that most societies across the globe have been build a long side the idea of race.

It seems apt that the concept of race cannot easily be abandoned. It does account for the social injustice that occurs within societies in which this concept is the main factor. It will be doing injustice if we can eliminate and abandon this concept, because most aspects of daily dealing with one another would have lost their meaning. I have argued that there is an aspect that still persists that can be used to secure this concept. Outlaw (2001: 82) argues that ‘elimination I think unlikely – and unnecessary’. My view of race aligns itself with racial constructionism – that argues the concept of race cannot easily be abandoned – this concept exists it is social real.

It should be clear by now, that my view is sympathetic towards the social constructionism position. Although my position corresponds with views of the constructivist, it does not take the more radical views of this position. But, it only accepts that race has functioned as a maker and social category, were others were privileged and others oppressed. In addition, it also accepts that there are visible differences among races that is what I call race. Finally, in a footnote, Mallon (2006: 539) argues that ‘racial theorist should want something stronger than the rejection of racial essences...the rejection of racialism on the grounds that there are no racial essences is too weak’.

Conclusion

We have seen that, despite the ever-increasing appeal for eliminating the notion of race. That is a view held by racial eliminativism. Mostly, the reasons that have perpetuate this state of affairs seem to be the history and legacy of the notion of race—that have left many human beings suffered through the ill-informed ideas about this notion of race. As a result, I have argued that it is a legitimate case that race has brought suffering among human beings. But it seems to be apt to abandon the notion of race or dismissing the notion of race in a facile way. It appears that dismissing the notion of race does not bring solution to the problem that people experience

in the social world. There are still reports of individuals who experience discrimination, prejudice and social injustices based on color as Du Bois has predicted in the 18th century. Further, I argued that the rejection of racialism by philosophers and other intellectuals seems to be a rejection of only a single part of racialism which, according to my assessment, has caused the ill treatment of other human beings. The other aspect of racialism is not harmful in nature. What is left of racialism, according to my observation, is a diluted version of the doctrine whereby people are separated according to their visible appearance, without any stereotypical connotations being attached to this separation: the doctrine merely acknowledges that we are different. It appears that there is an aspect that still persists even today. From this, it is clear that there is a need for us to conserve the notion of race.

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Mutshidzi Maraganedzha

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