

Notes on a **Brief history** of the **Origins** of the **Discipline of Anthropology** – the Convergence of certain Intellectual and Experiential prerequisites occurring in only in Europe:

1. **Scientific Revolution:**

A. Locke, Descartes, Comte, etc. of the 16th thru 19th century

– “Cartesian dualism” and **objectified, quantified, secularized reality** and established “**scientific method**”

– the behavior of other humans: a. had **own existence separate from observer** – objectified, b. was **governed by certain “laws” that could be discovered**

– these are **not** assumption about reality that are necessarily **shared** by the rest of humanity

B. as **exemplified by Evolutionary theory**, e.g., **Darwin** (though around over 100 years before) – “natural selection” and “evolution of species”

– a model explaining **change and diversity in the natural biological and physical worlds**

2. **Printing Press** and wide spread literacy – Gutenberg 1440

– enhanced communications, the rapid sharing of information, and widespread dissemination to a big audience

– helped spawn intellectual class

3. **Societal Chaos** (maybe intimate relationship of two) – 17th and 18th dislocation and change

a. – with collapse of the “**Feudal System,**” stability and authority of the Roman Catholic **Church** weakened, and the rise of the “**Industrial Revolution,**”

result in **tremendous disruption** to structure of society – peasants and farmers displaced, emergence of huge cities and urban working classes – **internal chaos**

= all of which had to be **explained and justified**

b. – in midst of the “Age of Discovery” and “Age of Conquest” – the colonialization of much of the rest of the world – **exterior chaos**

– Europe flooded with **stories of the “strange and exotic**” – “Dr. Livingston I presume” and work of Christian missionaries

= all of which **had to be explained**

– Europe and America had a new appetite (via industrialization) for raw materials and natural resources. **Colonialization** offered opportunity to exploit and bring home the needed resources to continue industrialization

= all of which had to be justified

– part of that colonialization was not only exploiting the natural resources and labor of the conquered, but capture their “souls” as well – “saving the souls of the heathen” — Christian **missionizing** of world

= all of which had to be justified

4. **“Justificationist”** – and with these three elements coming together and more, development of **intellectual elites**, with time on their hands. – to provided explanation and justification theories

What they come up with – **Classical Evolutionist** – “arm chair anthropologist” apply the “Survival of the Fittest” to the “other” – the first “anthropologist”

– it explained world in terms of inevitable “progress” from “primitive” and “barbaric” to “civilized”

A great concept for **explaining why there are differences and for justifying conquest of “souls” and exploitation of “resources”** Simply put:

We are advanced – you are “primitive” You are where we had progressed from - a sort of archaic hold-over

– hence you are different (explanation)

– hence we superior and you are inferior

– hence we have the “right” and should in fact teach and convert, as well as exploit and enslave you to help bring you up to our level (justification)