

Reconstructing the Social Sciences and Humanities

Anténor Firmin, Western Intellectual Tradition, and Black Atlantic Tradition

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3 Reinventing Europe

Joseph Anténor Firmin and the Legacy of the Nineteenth Century

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Joseph Anténor Firmin and the Legacy of the Nineteenth Century¹

Gudrun Rath

When I write these lines, families and friends in Hanau, Germany, are mourning their relatives, murdered in a racist killing on February 19, 2020.² The first decades of the twenty-first century have given rise to a revival of white supremacist thought and nationalist movements in Europe as well as in the Americas. Within the European Union, “racism and ethnic discrimination remain at levels that raise serious concern.”³

It is thus evident that racism does not belong to the past, and neither does the category “race.” The latter continues to haunt everyday life as well as scientific realms. As the anthropologist Jean-François Vèran states, “it has been impossible to bury this past, and it has become obvious that in spite of claims about its scientific irrelevance, the heritage of raciology cannot simply be dismissed, at least in its political consequences and continuities.”⁴

It is thus only logical that relatives and organizations in the aftermath of the racist killings in Hanau have called for societal and political change.⁵ In academia, demands such as those made in Germany remind researchers working on the history of scientific racism of the fact that a critical exploration of this past has not yet come to a closure. It must, on the contrary, continuously be kept on the academic agenda, requiring critical reflection of how the past keeps trickling into the present, as well as new perspectives and counternarratives.

In light of these developments, a reexamination of publications such as Haitian diasporic author, diplomat, and politician Joseph Anténor Firmin’s *De l’égalité des races humaines*, a text that stood up to anthropology’s physical anatomic methods and racialization at a very early stage, seems more than urgent, and not just to imagine “alternative histories”⁶ and provide a different view of the nineteenth century.

“What would a world without prejudice look like? Would presuppositions of racial superiority always be present in scholarly thought, although their falseness had already been proven?”⁷

At the end of the nineteenth century, when Firmin wondered about the future of racial ideologies while living in the French capital, such thoughts still belonged to “utopian futures.”⁸ Today, the “revolution of love,”⁹ leading to a “future beyond race”¹⁰ that Firmin and other

Caribbean diasporic intellectuals such as Puerto Rico's Ramón Emeterio Betances envisaged, is not only still pending, but seems to have drifted into a far-away, ungraspable future.¹¹

This chapter discusses how nineteenth century racist ideologies were contested and shaped a current of thought that has recently been named "Haitian Atlantic humanism."¹² It argues that Haitian diasporic thinkers not only put their birthplace and the legacy of the Haitian Revolution at the center of their work, but also actively intervened in intellectual circles on the European continent. In this chapter, this reexamination will thus lead us to ask: How can the critical reflections of the past provide a frame for contemporary positions? And how can the "utopian futures" envisaged in the past be reactivated for the present?

"le crâne, il reste muet"

In 1885, only two years after his arrival in Paris, Joseph Anténor Firmin published *De l'égalité des races humaines*. In Haiti, Firmin had studied law and been a successful attorney and politician in Cap-Haïtien and Caracas before moving to Paris as a diplomat, where he stayed until 1888, when he briefly returned to Haiti for political purposes.¹³ Back in Paris in 1891, he continued to form part of its intellectual community both on a national as well as on a transnational level.

As the title indicates, Firmin's book *De l'égalité des races humaines* was clearly directed against Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* dating from 1853.¹⁴ In his text, de Gobineau famously argued for a golden age of "Arianism" that was inexorably in decline, and the superiority of whites over Blacks.¹⁵ Firmin's publication, however, was not merely targeted against de Gobineau. His systematic study provided his readers with a general overview of the most established European and American scientific positions – which comprised, among others, the Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist Carl von Linné; French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc; Comte de Buffon; German physiologist Friedrich Tiedemann; German anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach; Kant; and Goethe.¹⁶ It also presented the different positions intellectuals took in contemporary debates such as monogenism versus polygenism, that is, the discussion whether humankind had one or multiple origins, the question of hybridity and its moral and physical effects, or the debate on whether physical differences between humans should lead to the conclusion that humankind consisted of different "species." However, Firmin's analysis was not only a detailed survey of different intellectual positions, but also a targeted critique. Although the title – and the posterior popularity de Gobineau's publication achieved – might suggest the contrary to present-day readers, de Gobineau was not the primary target of the book.¹⁷ Due to its precise structural frame, within which every argument is followed by a counterargument, Firmin's study can be related to juridical rhetoric: *De l'égalité des races humaines* is a

written objection to the majority of scientific positions of the era, specifically of the ones held by most members of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris.

Firmin had been elected as a member of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris in 1884, where, along with Paris-based Haitian diasporic intellectual Louis-Joseph Janvier, he was among the first Black members.¹⁸ The Société d'Anthropologie de Paris had been founded in 1859 by the French anatomist and anthropologist Paul Broca. Although not the first organization that sought to promote this emerging academic discipline in Europe, the Société was the first scholarly association to use the term *anthropologie* and became the most acknowledged anthropological institution in nineteenth-century France, with around three hundred seventy members in the 1890s.¹⁹ Decades before “anthropology” would be recognized as an academic discipline at the end of the nineteenth century, the Société placed its focus on “anthropology” as a natural science, especially racializing physical anthropology.²⁰ Its members employed methods such as anthropometry and craniometry in the comparative and racializing interpretation of human physical data, which “viewed the inferiority of the black race as an incontestable fact.”²¹ The anatomically based methods developed by members of the Société were put to the test on a large collection of skulls and other human remains, partly still property of today's Société d'Anthropologie.²² At the beginning of the twentieth century, Marcel Mauss, Paul Rivet, and others would introduce a shift toward sociological parameters by promoting the study of what they named *ethnologie*, in opposition to the direction the Société d'Anthropologie had been establishing.²³

Firmin's admission to the Société d'Anthropologie had been arranged by three other members. French physician Ernest Aubertin, French anthropologist and archeologist Gabriel Mortillet, and Haitian-diasporic anthropologist and intellectual Louis Joseph Janvier nominated him as a new member whereupon he was elected “with majority vote by secret ballot of the society.”²⁴ His admission has to be seen within the developments that had taken place in the Société after Broca's death, when Paul Topinard, assistant director of the Broca laboratory and his protégé, was trying to appropriate Broca's legacy and take over the institution. One of his main opponents was Gabriel Mortillet, who “sought to shift anthropology's emphasis away from biological questions and towards problems of prehistory, archeology, and sociology.”²⁵ His “theoretical agenda had clear ideological and practical implications: anthropologists must reject the ideal of pure science, commit themselves to furthering progress and transform their discipline into an applied science of society.”²⁶ Topinard, on the contrary, like Broca, insisted that anthropology should remain neutral on ideological and political questions.²⁷ The confrontation between the Mortillet group and Broca's self-declared successor Topinard, thus was not only theoretical but also ideological, and Firmin's admission to the society can be seen as an effort by the Mortillet group to give the Société a new direction.²⁸

Firmin's essay therefore not only confronted de Gobineau, but was also a "groundbreaking critique of scientific racism,"²⁹ a fierce attack on the views most members of the Société held, along with the 'scientific' methods they had developed.³⁰ Firmin's analysis was especially directed against the legacy of the then already deceased Broca. Firmin's own definition of the discipline as "positive anthropology" in the subtitle of his study as well as his personal approach differed from the consensus on racial hierarchies most of his colleagues had reached and can be situated within the efforts of a renewal of anthropology colleagues such as Mortillet were making. In his positions Firmin, however, went far beyond Mortillet, who did not entirely reject Broca's legacy.³¹

De l'égalité des races humaines is also a critique of the one-sidedness of anthropological methods of the era. Beyond physical data, Firmin incorporated cultural, social, linguistic, historical, and archaeological dimensions into his study, which in this respect predates posterior anthropological approaches such as the one developed by Franz Boas by decades.³² Firmin's repudiation of compared craniometry – the measurement of human skulls, that ultimately resulted in parallels drawn between size of skull, brain, and intelligence, which had been particularly promoted in France by Broca and his successors – concerned not only the comparison of but also, more fundamentally, the attempt to classify human physical data at all.³³ According to Firmin, any attempt of classification could only be arbitrary and was always led by subjective criteria, trying to impose order where nature had put its "most capricious irregularity."³⁴ It was thus only logical that different scientists had established different systems of classification, thereby causing a "fluctuation" of arbitrary classifications.³⁵ What was at stake was, according to Firmin, not only anthropology's reputation but science itself:

Les anthropologistes, en étudiant la forme et le volume du crâne, cherchent surtout à découvrir les différences qui existent entre les races humaines, après [sic] avoir assigné arbitrairement à chaque race une certaine forme ou une certaine capacité crâniennes spéciales. Plus tard, il est vrai, on s'appuiera sur ces mêmes spécialisations pour proclamer que telle race est inférieure ou supérieure à telle autre; mais cette conclusion, sans avoir plus de poids que celle des phrénologistes, ne sera pas moins revêtu d'un semblant scientifique.³⁶

While de Gobineau, with his well-known publication from 1853, had preceded the foundation of the anthropological society, its members, rather than questioning de Gobineau's hypothesis, had, according to Firmin, "imagined" scientific practices in order to confirm, mainly on a physical basis, the superiority of whites in comparison to non-whites.³⁷ This also held true for other comparative methods from the "arsenal of anthropology" that only led to an "imagined comparative proceeding."³⁸ In the end, all of the established approaches in craniometry were in vain,

Firmin argued: One could twist and turn the skull, it still remained silent.³⁹

“Tous les hommes sont l’homme”: Haitian-Atlantic Humanism, Revisited

For Firmin, comparative anatomy was not the only anthropological method that showed too many insufficiencies.⁴⁰ His critique also targeted comparisons of attributions concerning moral judgment, grades of civilization, or evolution. For the author, comparisons of physical, moral, or other non-physical attributions were clearly “comparaisons *imaginées* dans le but d’établir ou de consolider la doctrine de l’inégalité des races humaines.”⁴¹ According to the author, these comparisons did not work out because historical factors and probable future progress were not considered sufficiently. As Michael Dash has rightfully argued, “Firmin’s main thesis is not essentialist but universalist as he sees the differences between cultures and civilizations as not based on any innate, genetic qualities but historical and material conditions are used to explain cultural difference and evolution.”⁴² His understanding of race, consequently, is equally based on historical and social factors rather than biological ones.⁴³

While Firmin did not go so far as to completely renounce the concept of “race” – in consistence with the consensus of his era – he vehemently disputed the idea of a “purity” of races as well as the “anti-philosophical and pseudo-scientific” idea of racial inequality.⁴⁴ For Firmin, the insistence on the inequality of human races clearly served only one purpose: the legitimization of enslavement and servitude, as well as men’s exploitation by men.⁴⁵ Science, the author argued, had made itself an “accomplice” to the “dumbest prejudice” and to the “most unjust system,” either due to “flattery” or due to “insufficiency of observation.”⁴⁶ If anthropology only served to proclaim that Black men were destined to serve white men, Firmin insisted, he had the full right to say to this “false anthropology”: “Non, tu n’es pas une science!”⁴⁷ Firmin’s own concept of science was clearly shaped by the values of the Enlightenment, above all, reason. But also, other references, such as the achievements of progress and civilization and Comte as an alternative reference give us some insight into Firmin’s ideas.⁴⁸

At the same time, Firmin also denounced false condemnations of enslavement in Europe. As the author argued, such condemnations could only be contradictory when they were brought forward while simultaneously maintaining the argument of the “comparative inequality” of human races.⁴⁹ This critique was explicitly directed at anthropologist Paul Broca who, according to Firmin, only condemned slavery because it did not fit into the theory of a polygenistic origin of humanity. Firmin’s argument can still be reactivated today and brought forward to the twenty-first century’s descriptions of Broca’s work that relativize the dimensions

of his scientific racism by referring to his anti-slavery positions and his engagement for the republican left.⁵⁰

In accordance with the title of his publication, Firmin came to the following conclusion:

les hommes sont partout doués des mêmes qualités et des mêmes défauts, sans distinction de couleur ni de forme anatomique. Les races sont égales; elles sont tous capables de s'élever aux plus nobles vertus, au plus haut développement intellectuel, comme de tomber dans la plus complète dégénération. [...] C'est qu'une chaîne invisible réunit tous les membres de l'humanité dans un cercle commun.⁵¹

This, the author argued with Victor Hugo's famous words, "Tous les hommes sont l'homme," was where his argument was leading up to. He closed his study with the biblical invitation to love one another.⁵² It is by no means by chance that the first edition of *De l'égalité des races humaines* showed an image of Toussaint Louverture, hero of the Haitian Revolution, on the second page.⁵³ Undoubtedly, Haiti and the intellectual legacy of the Haitian Revolution were at the heart of Firmin's argument. Scientific racist positions of the era, among others de Gobineau, often used Haiti and the outcome of the Haitian Revolution "as proof of black incapacity for self-government, but Firmin and other Haitian intellectuals of his generation turned that logic on its head. Haiti was exemplary, yes – exemplary of black equality, achievement and potential."⁵⁴ This becomes particularly clear when we consider the dedication that opens Firmin's study: *De l'égalité des races humaines* is dedicated to Haiti, but also to all the "children of the black race"; "love of progress, justice and liberty"; and to the "dispossessed of the present and the giants of the future."⁵⁵ At a moment when new European colonial expansions were being undertaken on the African continent, Firmin thereby underlined the importance of Haitian history as a symbol for and motor of universal equality and liberty in the future.⁵⁶ In this regard, *De l'égalité des races humaines* is a precursor of Firmin's later transnational political argument for an "Antillean confederation" as well as a new "geographic imaginary where metropolitan France and post-independence Haiti [...] are no longer opposed."⁵⁷

Firmin's position can be situated within the wider context of what has recently been named "Haitian-Atlantic humanism," that is, "a long-standing way of thinking about eradicating the problems of racism and slavery *through* and *from* the nation state of Haiti, but also *in collaboration* with European and American world powers."⁵⁸ For centuries, the Haitian Revolution has been regarded as an "exceptional event" that could be discarded or "silenced" from official records.⁵⁹ In scholarly research outside of Haiti, this perception has shifted since the increase of international interest in the Haitian Revolution during the bicentenary; a development that ultimately led to the "Haitian turn."⁶⁰ Within this

context, scholars have focused on the universal importance of the Haitian Revolution and have emphasized its significance as part of a “modernity disavowed” as well as part of “universal history.”⁶¹ However, within history of knowledge, currents of “Haitian-Atlantic humanism” have often been overlooked. Only recent research has highlighted the contribution of nineteenth-century Haitian diasporic intellectuals to “hemispheric,”⁶² cross-cultural thought, normally attributed to writers such as Cuba’s José Martí or Puerto Rico’s Ramón Emeterio Betances, as well as their importance for Pan-Africanism and Pan-Americanism and the transatlantic space, decades before writers such as Édouard Glissant or Paul Gilroy brought forward ideas on the “poetics of relation” or the “Black Atlantic.”⁶³

Indeed, Firmin is not the only Haitian intellectual residing in Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century whose contribution, both in his publications and in his intellectual life, to the shaping of “cross-cultural” thought has been widely ignored. The same holds true for other Haitian-diasporic intellectuals of his generation, such as Louis Joseph Janvier, author of *La République d’Haïti et ses visiteurs* (1883). Janvier was one of the members of the Société d’Anthropologie who made Firmin’s election possible. He had been trained as a medical doctor and anthropologist in France and collaborated with intellectuals such as the abolitionist Victor Schoelcher or Ramón Emeterio Betances in a collaborative work, *Les détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d’Haïti*. He was an acknowledged member of intellectual circles in the French capital and was close to the Parnassians Charles Leconte de Lisle, Judith Gautier, and Stéphane Mallarmé.⁶⁴ Firmin and Janvier, like other intellectuals of the era, used Paris as a “strategic site for spreading their political messages and as a locus of community that brought together Latin American exiles alongside French liberals.”⁶⁵ As Michael Dash has argued, these intellectuals thus employed a “strategy of performative cosmopolitanism.”⁶⁶ Within this performance, however, – whether intentionally or not – Europe was given pride of place.

Intruding into Europe’s Space and Time?

How, then, has it been possible that the reexamination of these intellectuals has been (and still is) undertaken mostly within a national frame, classifying them as “Haitian” intellectuals and reading their work as part of a “Haitian” canonical history of knowledge, while both their established position within intellectual circles in Europe as well as their work on and with transnational communities proves this view untenable?⁶⁷ How come, at the same time Arthur de Gobineau’s *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* was not only translated into English almost immediately after its first publication but also edited as an “Oxford classic,” as late as 1966, after having served as an inspiration for Nazi ideology, Firmin’s *De l’égalité des races humaines* had to wait until 2002 for a translation

into English (not to mention a German edition)?⁶⁸ Most certainly, all of these indicators point to the fact that Europe, on the one hand, has for a long time been – and still is – conceived as the opposite of the Caribbean; a position that seems even more untenable given the fact that not only Europe’s colonial past but also some present parts of the European Union are geographically situated in the Caribbean.⁶⁹ On the other hand, this past and current history of reception of intellectuals such as de Gobineau and Firmin sheds light on the desire (or the unconsidered implication) to think of Europe as a space of “purity,” within which intellectual positions that stood up to and spoke out against the ideological framework of scientific racism from a position of transnational entanglements seemed and still seem unthinkable.⁷⁰ Consciously or not, the continuous reception of de Gobineau and the marginalization of counterpositions such as Firmin’s – even by academics critical of scientific racism – has thus perpetuated the arguments of scientific racism and promulgated the view of the European intellectual space as well as European scientific communities of the nineteenth century as only conceivable within national parameters.

That the legacy of scientific racism is still present today also becomes clear through a view on the current development of the fields of research it originated from. Although in the evolution from physical to biological anthropology its “heavy responsibility for having produced a radiology that scientifically endorses the division of humanity”⁷¹ has been critically reflected by researchers in the field, its original involvement in the production of these theories can no longer be negated – even more so when forensic anthropology, one of its present-day scientific outcomes, still uses the instruments developed by Broca in the nineteenth century.⁷² It thus seems contradictory when the history of forensic anthropology is, on the one hand, traced back to the nineteenth century as a linear development from Broca to the present in several phases, while on the other hand, this connection is downplayed through the imagery of family lineage, through which forensic anthropology is shaped as a “sister” rather than as a “daughter” of physical anthropology.⁷³

In recent years, other lineages have raised dust of the nineteenth century’s anthropological collections, when descendants of people whose human remains were kept in these collections have stepped forward to claim restitution, reparations, and official apologies for crimes that directly linked European colonial expansion to the scientific ideas and methods of the past. In 2014, in a complicated legal procedure, the Société d’Anthropologie de Paris restituted the skulls of rebel chief Ataï and of his companion from the South Pacific island New Caledonia that to the present day is, as French collectivité *sui generis*. In 1878, Ataï had been beheaded for rebelling against the French colonial regime.⁷⁴ Ataï’s skull had formed part of the Société’s collections after being depredated by an officer of the French marine corps and had been anatomically prepared by Broca. When twenty-first-century research claims Broca’s and the

Société's craniological collection to be "*riche de plus de 4900 pièces*,"⁷⁵ it becomes clear that the nineteenth-century view imposed on human remains like Atai's skull is still at least partially present today, consciously or not. In the ceremony of restitution, Berge Kawa, the chief's direct descendant, stated: "These remains bring us back to our own reality [...] We were ravaged by the French state. It is therefore up to the French state to give us back our property."⁷⁶ Although the skulls remain silent, one could argue following Firmin, the voices of their descendants need to be heard.⁷⁷

In his introduction, Firmin acknowledged that, while attending the Société d'Anthropologie's discussions on the inequality between human races, he had come to the conclusion that counterarguments could only be brought forward in written form, for he felt he would have been regarded an "intruder" if he had directly expressed his arguments in the discussions.⁷⁸ The result of this process was *De l'égalité des races humaines*, a work of almost seven hundred pages that was published by the Parisian publisher Cotillon. Firmin's decision has ultimately made his objections more durable; it has provided a persistent and more effective form of 'intrusion' from within the European intellectual communities of the nineteenth century – an "intrusion" that can still be reactivated for the present. It also gives some rare evidence of the fact that the history of knowledge of the nineteenth century should be reconsidered beyond national boundaries. Europe's past, after all, has always been subjected to transnational entanglements. And this also holds true for its present and future, despite claims to the contrary.

Notes

- 1 An earlier version of this chapter has been published as "Contesting Inequality. Joseph Anténor Firmin's *De l'égalité des races humaines*, 133 years on." *Forum for Inter-American Research* 12.1 (June 2019), 21–28.
- 2 Christoph Schmidt-Lunau. "Hanau nach dem rechten Anschlag." *TAZ*, February 26, 2020. <https://taz.de/Hanau-nach-dem-rechten-Anschlag/!5664375/>.
- 3 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report comes to the disillusioning conclusion:

Seventeen years after the adoption of the Racial Equality Directive and nine years after the adoption of the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, immigrants and minority ethnic groups continue to face widespread discrimination, harassment and discriminatory ethnic profiling across the EU, as the findings of FRA's second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II) show. The European Commission supported EU Member States' efforts to counter racism and hate crime through the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. It also continued to monitor closely the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive and of the Framework Decision. Although several EU Member States have been reviewing their

anti-racism legislation, in 2017 only 14 of them had in place action plans and strategies aimed at combating racism and ethnic discrimination.

FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights). *Fundamental Rights Report 2018*, 8. Accessed January 28, 2020. <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/fundamental-rights-report-2018-fra-opinions>.

- 4 Jean-François V éran. "Old Bones, New Powers." *Current Anthropology*, The Biological Anthropology of Living Human Populations: World Histories, National Styles, and International Networks, vol. 53, no. S5 (2012), S246.
- 5 Bundeskonferenz der Migrantenorganisationen. "Offener Brief an Bundeskanzlerin Merkel." Accessed February 26, 2020. www.tgd.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/260220_Offener-Brief-der-MO-an-Bundeskanzlerin-Merkel-2.pdf
- 6 Kahlil Chaar-P érez. "'A Revolution of Love': Ram 3n Emeterio Betances, Ant 3nor Firmin, and Affective Communities in the Caribbean." *The Global South*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2013), 29.
- 7 Ant 3nor Firmin. *De l' 3galit 3 des races humaines : Anthropologie positive*. Paris: Cotillon, 1885, 661.
- 8 Chaar-P érez, *A Revolution of Love*, 29.
- 9 Chaar-P érez, 11.
- 10 Michael Dash, "Nineteenth-century Haiti and the Archipelago of the Americas: Ant 3nor Firmin's Letters from St. Thomas." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2004), 49.
- 11 Ram 3n Emeterio Betances, Puerto Rico's leader of independence, coined the term "revolution of love" to refer to "revolutionary communities." See Chaar-P érez, *A Revolution of Love*, 14.
- 12 Marlene Daut. "Caribbean 'Race Men': Louis Joseph Janvier, Demesvar Delorme, and the Haitian Atlantic." *L'Esprit Cr 3ateur*, vol. 56, no. 1 (2016), 9–23.
- 13 Yves Chemla. *Ant 3nor Firmin*. Accessed January 28, 2020. <http://ile-en-ile.org/firmin/>. Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. "Ant 3nor Firmin: Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 102, no. 3 (2000), 450.
- 14 La 3nnec Hurbon. *Le Barbare imaginaire. Sorci 3rs, zombies et cannibales en Haïti*. Paris: Cerf, 1988, 65.
- 15 Chemla, *Ant 3nor Firmin*; Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 449; Michael Banton, "The Idiom of Race. A Critique of Presentism." In *Theories of Race and Racism. A Reader*, Edited by Les Back and John Solomos, London: Routledge, 2000 [1980], 55.
- 16 Gordon K. Lewis. *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983, 317.
- 17 Bernasconi, Robert. "A Haitian in Paris: Ant 3nor Firmin as a Philosopher against Racism." *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 42, no. 4–5 (2008), 372.
- 18 As Robert Bernasconi notes, a third member from Haiti, the physician Jean-Baptiste Dehoux, had been elected as a member in 1883. Bernasconi, 365.
- 19 Wartelle, Jean-Claude. "La Soci 3t 3 d'Anthropologie de Paris de 1859 3 1920." *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2004), 126; Elizabeth Williams. "Anthropological Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France." *Isis* 76, no. 3 (Sep., 1985), 331. Ethnological societies had previously been founded in Paris in 1839, in London in 1841, and in New York in 1842. See Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 453.

- 20 Williams, *Anthropological Institutions*, 331–333; Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 453.
- 21 Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 453; see also Bronwen Douglas, and Chris Ballard. *Foreign Bodies. Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2008, 56ff.
- 22 François Marchal, Anne Nivart, A. Fort, Yann Ardagna, and Dominique Grimaud-Hervé. “La restitution des têtes osseuses d’Ataï et de son compagnon.” *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d’Anthropologie de Paris* 28 (2016), 101.
- 23 On Rivet’s role in the establishment of *ethnologie* as a counterposition to the Société (that does not take notice of previous counterpositions like Firmin’s), see Christine Laurière. “De la collaboration à l’affrontement: les relations de Paul Rivet avec la Société d’anthropologie de Paris (1902–années 1930).” *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d’Anthropologie de Paris* 22 (2010), 17–23.
- 24 Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 453.
- 25 Williams, *Anthropological Institutions*, 337.
- 26 Williams, 337.
- 27 Williams, 337. Véran has recently pointed to the entanglement between anthropology as a supposedly “hard science” and political involvement. Véran, *Old Bones, New Powers*, S247.
- 28 The conflict between Mortillet and Topinard was ultimately taken to court, where Topinard – without success – tried to achieve reinstatement to his dismissal from the Ecole faculty. Williams, *Anthropological Institutions*, 337.
- 29 Murphy, Kieran. “Haiti and the Black Box of Romanticism.” *SiR* vol. 56 (2017), 38.
- 30 Haitian anthropologist Jean-Price Mars has argued in his biography of Firmin’s life that this must have been a “cruel paradox” (cited in Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 453).
- 31 Williams, *Anthropological Institutions*, 337.
- 32 Watson Denis. “Review: The Equality of the Human Races. (Positivist Anthropology) by Anténor Firmin and Asselin Charles.” *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), 332.
- 33 For an overview of anthropology’s relation to the body, see Anthony Synnott and David Howes. “From Measurement to Meaning. Anthropologies of the Body.” *Anthropos*, vol. 87, no. 1./3. (1992), 147–166 ; see also Douglas and Bronwen, 2008.
- 34 Firmin, *De l’égalité des races humaines*, 23.
- 35 Firmin, 26; 40.
- 36 Firmin, 180.
- 37 Firmin, 213.
- 38 Firmin, 228.
- 39 Firmin, 229.
- 40 Firmin, 495f.
- 41 Firmin 215; emphasis added.
- 42 Dash, *Nineteenth-century Haiti, and the Archipelago of the Americas*, 47.
- 43 Denis, *Review: The Equality of the Human Races*, 328.
- 44 Firmin, *De l’égalité des races humaines*, 95; 204)
- 45 Firmin 209; 204.

- 46 Firmin, 489.
- 47 Firmin, 230. See also Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 451; Denis, *Review: The Equality of the Human Races*, 333; Murphy, *Haiti, and the Black Box of Romanticism*, 38.
- 48 Bernasconi, *A Haitian in Paris*, 376.
- 49 Firmin, *De l'égalité des races humaines*, 204f.
- 50 This description can be found on the website of the current Société d'Anthropologie de Paris, under a section entitled "Histoire de la SAP": "Il est parfois le reflet des préjugés de son temps (il croit en la hiérarchie des 'races') mais est aussi un homme engagé, évolutionniste convaincu, lié aux libres-penseurs, anti-esclavagiste et sénateur de la gauche républicaine." www.sapweb.fr/index.php/la-societe/histoire.html
- 51 Firmin, *De l'égalité des races humaines*, 661–662.
- 52 Firmin, 662.
- 53 Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 460. The image is not included in the 1885 edition of the French National Library that was used for this chapter.
- 54 Kate Ramsey. *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, 95.
- 55 Firmin, *De l'égalité des races humaines*, v.
- 56 Firmin, xvi.
- 57 Dash, *Nineteenth-century Haiti and the Archipelago of the Americas*, 50; see also Chaar-Pérez, *A Revolution of Love*, 2013.
- 58 Daut, *Caribbean "Race Men,"* 12; emphasis in original.
- 59 Michel-Rolph Trouillot. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.
- 60 Celucien Joseph. "The Haitian Turn: An Appraisal of Recent Literary and Historiographical Works on the Haitian Revolution." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 5, no. 6 (2012), 37–55.
- 61 Michael Dash. "Haïti Chimère. Revolutionary Universalism and its Caribbean Context." In *Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution and its Cultural Aftershocks*, 9–19. Edited by Martin Munro and Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw, Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2006. Sibylle Fischer. *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Susan Buck-Morss. *Hegel und Haiti. Für eine neue Universalgeschichte*. Translated by Laurent Faasch-Ibrahim. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011 [2009].
- 62 Dash, *Nineteenth-century Haiti and the Archipelago of the Americas*, 45.
- 63 Along with other Paris-based Haitian diasporic intellectuals such as Bénito Sylvain, Firmin attended the First Pan-African Conference in London in 1900. Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 460.
- 64 Yves Chemla. *Louis Joseph Janvier*. Accessed January 28, 2020. <http://ile-en-ile.org/janvier/>. On Janvier as a transnational intellectual, see also Daut, *Caribbean "Race Men."*
- 65 Chaar-Pérez, *A Revolution of Love*, 27.
- 66 Dash, *Nineteenth-century Haiti and the Archipelago of the Americas*, 47.
- 67 Intellectual positions such as Firmin's have been marginalized within the history of knowledge for decades. A reexamination in Haiti and, to a lesser extent, also elsewhere in the Americas and in Europe in the twentieth century has been made possible by the insistence of farsighted – mainly Haitian

- or Haitian-diasporic – intellectuals. See Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 449.
- 68 Denis, *Review: The Equality of the Human Races*, 325f.; Fluehr-Lobban, *Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology*, 450.
- 69 Shalini Randeria and Regina Römheld. “Das postkoloniale Europa: Verflochtene Genealogien der Gegenwart – Einleitung zur erweiterten Neuauflage.” In *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, 9–31. Edited by Sebastian Conrad et al., Frankfurt: Campus, 2013.
- 70 On the afterlives of “race” in contemporary France, see Tyler Stovall, “Universalismo, diferencia e invisibilidad. Ensayo sobre la noción de raza en la historia de la Francia contemporánea.” Translated by Eva Montero and Hasan G. López Sanz, *Pasajes*, no. 44 (2014), 6–30.
- 71 Véran, *Old Bones, New Powers*, S247.
- 72 Eugénia Cunha. “Some Reflections on the Popularity of Forensic Anthropology Today.” *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d’Anthropologie de Paris* 22 (2010), 190.
- 73 Dennis Dirkmaat, L.L. Cabo, S.D. Ousley, and S.A. Symes. “New Perspectives in Forensic Anthropology.” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 137 (2008), 46. Cunha, *Some reflections*, 191. Research has shown the involvement of forensic methods in the production of “truth,” despite claims of forensics as a “hard science.” See Eyal Weizman (2017), *Forensic Architecture. Violence at the Threshold of Detectability*, New York: Zone Books.
- 74 François Marchal et al., *La restitution des têtes osseuses d’Ataï et de son compagnon*, 101.
- 75 François Marchal et al., 101, emphasis added.
- 76 Cascone, Sarah. “France Returns New Caldonian Rebel Chief’s Skull.” *Artnet News*, August 29, 2014. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/france-returns-new-caldonian-rebel-chiefs-skull-89168>
- 77 The Société apparently expects more restitutional claims in the future, as they have prepared a legal procedure for how to react in the case of restitution claims. See François Marchal et al., *La restitution des têtes osseuses d’Ataï et de son compagnon*, 103.
- 78 Firmin, *De l’égalité des races humaines*, viii.

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