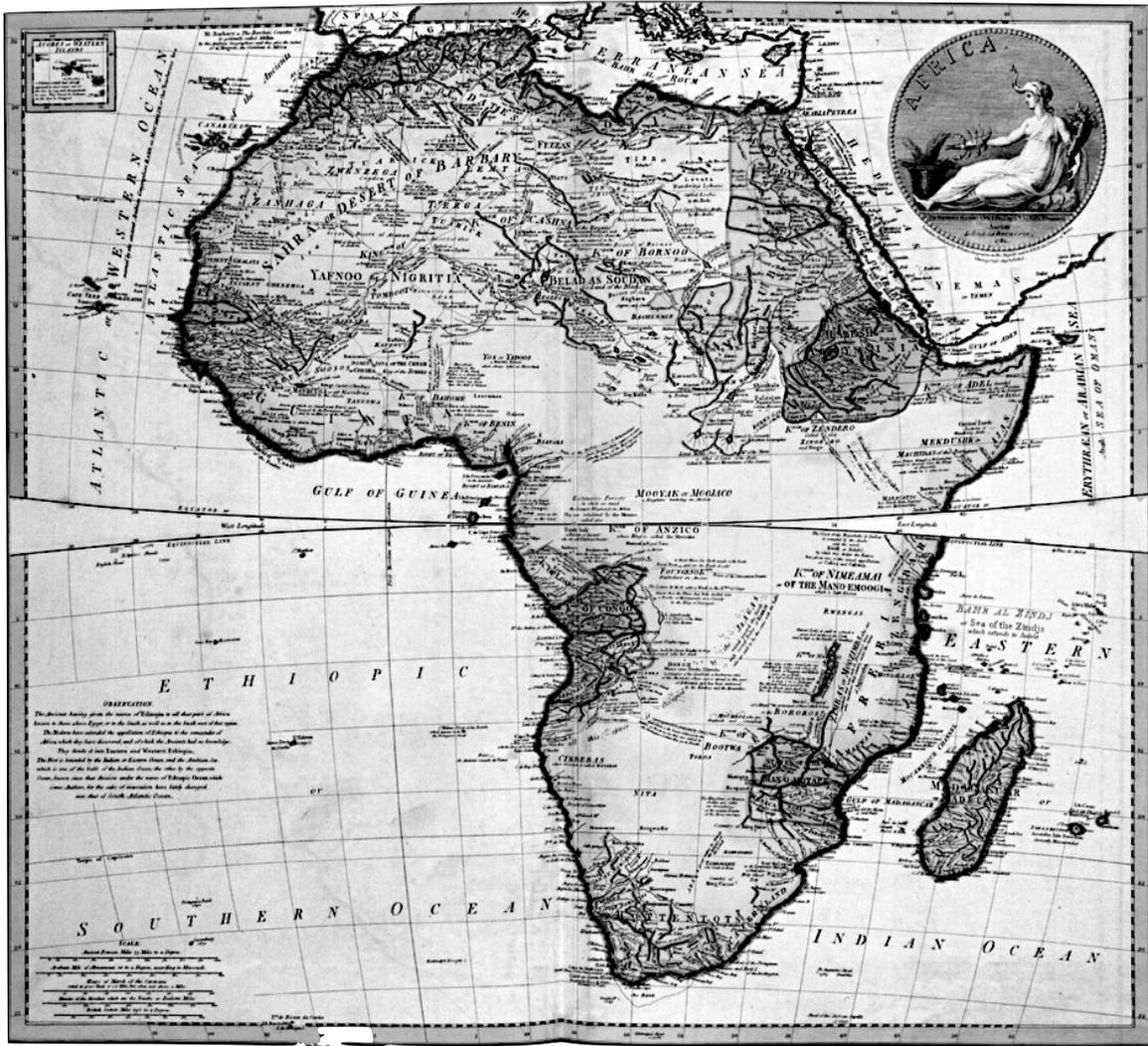


Using the following documents, analyze the attitudes of Europeans toward Subsaharan (black) Africans in relation to Enlightenment ideals during the Eighteenth Century.

Historical Background: The Portuguese began exploring the coast of West Africa in the early 15th Century leading to Vasco da Gama rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. European contact with Subsaharan Africa increased as European powers sought African slaves to work on their sugar plantations in the Americas.



18th Century Map of Africa

Document 1

Source: John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, in his essay, "Thoughts Upon Slavery," 1774.

Upon the whole, therefore, the Negroes who inhabit the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the southern bounds of Angola, are so far from being the stupid, senseless, brutish, lazy barbarians, the fierce, cruel, perfidious savages they have been described, that, on the contrary, they are represented, by them who have no motive to flatter them, as remarkably sensible, considering the few advantages they have for improving their understanding; as industrious to the highest degree, perhaps more so than any other natives of so warm a climate; as fair, just, and honest in all their dealings, unless where white men have taught them to be otherwise; and as far more mild, friendly, and kind to strangers than any of our forefathers were.

Document 2

Source: Scottish philosopher, David Hume, in "Of National Characters," 1748.

—I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences...

Document 3

Source: Scottish philosopher and judge, Lord Kames, in *Sketches of History of Man*, 1774.

... the negroes of the kingdom of Ardrah, in Guinea, have made great advances in arts. Their towns, for the most part, are fortified, and connected by great roads, kept in good repair. Deep canals from river to river are commonly filled with canoes, for pleasure some, and many for business.

Document 4

Source: "Study of a Black Man" by Sir Joshua Reynolds, c. 1770.



Document 5

Source: Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) in *Systema Naturae* (1767) describing what he believed to be varieties of human species.

- The *Europeanus*: white, sanguine, browny; with abundant, long hair; blue eyes; gentle, acute, inventive; covered with close vestments; and regulated by customs.
- The *Afer* or *Africanus*: black, phlegmatic, relaxed; black, frizzled hair; silky skin, flat nose, tumid lips; females without shame; mammary glands give milk abundantly; crafty, sly, careless; annoints himself with grease; and regulated by will.

Document 6

Source: An entry in the *Großes Universallexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, one of the most important German language encyclopedia's of the 18th century, 1739.

Amo (Anton Wilhelm), a baptized Moor, originally from Guinea in Africa. His Highness the Elector of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, at his own expense, sent Amo to study philosophy and law for some years at Halle. In the year 1729, in the month of November, he defended a dissertation in law, with the Chancellor von Ludwig presiding, entitled *De jure Maurorum in Europa*, or on the law of Moors. In this work he showed from laws and histories that the kings of the Moors were enfeoffed under the Roman Emperor, and that each of them had to obtain a royal patent, which Justinian also issued. After this, he investigates how far the freedom or servitude of baptized Moors in Europe extends according to the usual laws. From this he obtained the Master's degree, and for some time gave private lessons in Halle. He must however have subsequently visited the University of Wittenberg, since we possess from him a *Disputationem philosophicam, continentem ideam distinctam eorum, quae competunt vel menti vel corpori nostro vivo & organico*, which he publicly defended *aspraeses* in Wittenberg on 29 May, 1734. In this dissertation he refers several times to another dissertation he defended, the *Dissertatio de humana [sic] mentis apatheia*.

Document 7

Source: German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, in "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime," 1763.

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour. The religion of fetishes so widespread among them is perhaps a sort of idolatry that sinks as deeply into the trifling as appears to be possible to human nature. A bird's feather, a cow's horn, a conch shell, or any other common object, as soon as it becomes consecrated by a few words, is an object of veneration and of invocation in swearing oaths. The blacks are very vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings.

Document 8

Source: Portrait (c. 1790) of French Général Thomas Alexandre Dumas, son of a French Nobleman and a Haitian slave. He is the father of the French novelist, Alexandre Dumas.



Document 9

Source: Letter from Reverend Laurence Sterne to Ignatius Sancho, a freed African slave who became a famous composer, actor, and writer in England.

There is a strange coincidence, Sancho, in the little events (as well as in the great ones) of this world: for I had been writing a tender tale of the sorrows of a friendless poor negro-girl, and my eyes had scarce done smarting with it, when your letter of recommendation in behalf of so many of her brethren and sisters, came to me—but why her brethren?—or your's, Sancho! any more than mine? It is by the finest tints . . . to the sootiest complexion in Africa: at which tint of these, is it, that the ties of blood are to cease? and how many shades must we descend lower still in the scale, 'ere mercy is to vanish with them?—but 'tis no uncommon thing, my good Sancho, for one half of the world to use the other half of it like brutes, and then endeavor to make 'em so.