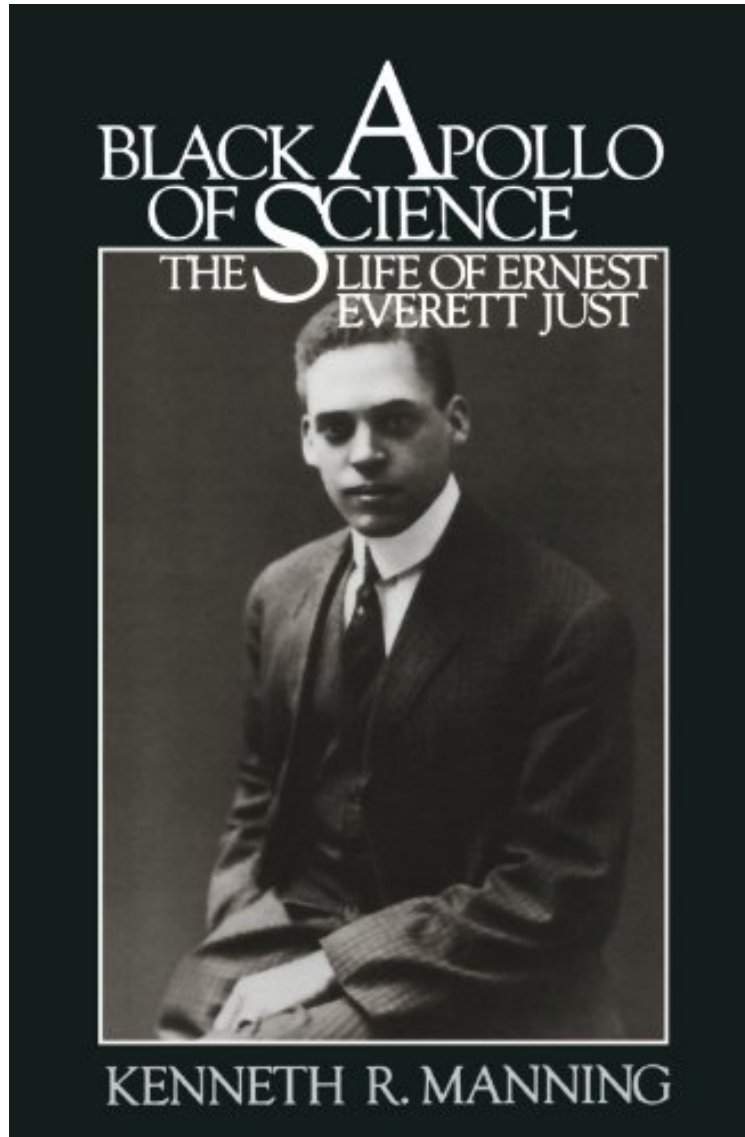


(Download free pdf) Black Apollo of Science: The Life of Ernest Everett Just

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Kenneth R. Manning

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#435739 in Books Kenneth R Manning 1985-01-03Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.31 x 1.00 x 8.00l, 1.05 #File Name: 0195034988416 pagesBlack Apollo of Science The Life of Ernest Everett Just | File size: 40.Mb

Kenneth R. Manning : Black Apollo of Science: The Life of Ernest Everett Just before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Black Apollo of Science: The Life of Ernest Everett Just:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A brilliant scholar we learned of his being a polymath at ...By C. M. StahlBiographies are often difficult to appreciate. The genre begets hagiography and telling fact from fiction becomes

difficult for the reader. Not so in this case. Manning described the life, trials and dreams of one of the most eminent scientists of the early 20th century. It comes with all the warts that human frailties are known to bring. E. E. Just was really a man ahead of his times. A brilliant scholar we learned of his being a polymath at prep school and later at Dartmouth. He was a poet, anthropologist and orator as well as a student. He settled on zoology and created a career for himself once matriculated with his PhD from the University of Chicago. Perhaps his work was of Nobel quality but that would never have come to be. Ernest Everett Just was a black American from South Carolina. While the Nobel Committee may have considered an award to one of African descent, that individual would have had to be in a faculty position or a laboratory that was famed for its research. The candidate would have had to have the mentoring and facilities to pursue their research goals. Just did not have either of those. As a professional he did not suffer the horrors of burning crosses or violence at least as far as Mannings story goes. Yet Just was the victim of a subtler but no less insipid form of racism. His peers were perhaps more refined in their interactions with him but he understood early on that he would always be very limited in professional options. He would be confined to teaching at Black colleges only and his research at Woods Hole would also be limited though it appears that he made the most of it. He spent many summers there and did make friends. It was during the leadership of Frank Rattray Lillie who built Woods Hole into what is now a pre-eminent Marine Biology Laboratory. Just was pretty much obligated to teach at Howard University. It was during his tenure, not the facility it is today. It was emergent during his time and with a dearth of leadership and funds. As time went on Just became discouraged with his relationships in zoology and the university he was stuck with. Likewise his marriage was unsatisfactory. He began to act out, abruptly quitting Woods Hole with a speech letting everyone present know how he felt about his overall treatment there. He took up with several other women, displeased the higher ups at Howard and let pretty much everyone know he was unhappy. On the surface this all may seem petty. After all Just was living an upper middle class life in the Georgetown section of Washington D.C. He was a part of the community that E. Franklin Frazier described in his book, *The Black Bourgeoisie*. Others might have been satisfied or even smug with the status the E. E. Just had attained. He was not and it was due to his always having career limitations. The closest he could come to escaping was to align himself with European scientists who he felt were more accepting of his work than his American counterparts. There was not much collaborative evidence of this in Mannings book but apparently Just believed that this was so. Just was not simply ahead of his time in terms of the role he could fill as a black scholar. He also lived when three very major world events occurred, impacting everyone. World War I was going on while he was a student. The depression arrived as he was well into his career. Hitler and Mussolini were taking over Europe while he did his annual researches there. It was apparent that Just was either in denial or simply naive to the events of the day. Exploring a life in Europe as a black American with white European girlfriends as the Nazis and Fascists came to power was less than circumspect. Writing directly to John Rockefeller and Mussolini appealing for funds likewise appears to be less than prudent. Though Manning portrayed the president of Howard negatively, Just took advantage of and alienated himself at the university which was not politically wise. All of us regardless of our personal position on race, can understand the powerlessness of menial labor and lack of education. We can understand the brutality of white supremacy as well. Justs was a unique suffering. His physical and intellectual maturity offered him excellent academic opportunities. This opened the door to his enrollment in the University of Chicagos doctoral program in zoology. These events all occurred in the first fifteen years of the 20th Century. He was a black man. Even in the north where he may not have to worry so much about racial violence, he was a sore thumb. His participation in campus life for instance was restricted. He could not reasonably attend a dance since there were no partners for him to dance with unless he dared to incur some wrath. He was forever an outsider. Social life for American black intellectuals and professionals has improved during the last one hundred years but the problems Just faced still exist today. During the investigations of police departments involving black arrest rates and shooting of black detainees a black police officer faces much the same pressure as Just. Trying to acclimate oneself to a white America has its perils. So Just excelled in his science. He was much published on cell research but marginalized in the scientific community. He did not suffer the scourge of overt KKK type hostility. Rather his was to endure professional paternalism. Since he was the only black male in his field fellow scientists viewed him too often as a good colored scientist. Justs professional career was almost solely at the hands of benefactors who wanted him laced into a niche. His social and professional engagements were limited for fear of miscegenation. One hundred years ago he was out of his league. Even his mentor Frank Lillie assumed that what was best for Just was to be a teacher in a black college. Justs visions for himself and his science had no bounds. Unfortunately they only came to fruition in a limited fashion by his trips to Europe. Those were plentiful at exactly the wrong time. His actions seem naive from a Monday morning quarterback perspective. It is hard to determine what Just was experiencing during those times. Attempting to carve out a life for he and his German girlfriend while the atrocities occurring in Europe on the surface seems at least uncritical of the events and at most simply mad. Yet his relationship and ultimate marriage to Hedwig Schnetzler lasted for several years. He ultimately fathered a child from this relationship shortly before he died too early at age 57. The terms of that relationship mostly occurred in Europe during his many visits. She did accompany him to America in the end but she lived in New Jersey while he tried to maintain his restricted profession at Howard University and he travelled to New Jersey on weekends. The point of these last many paragraphs is to indicate that the

grip of racism placed on a great mind. Just was unique and suffered for that. His time has not fully come today though the eminent black figures in science such as Erich Jarvis or Neil DeGrasse Tyson (and several more) did not have to go through quite the struggles as the pioneer of biology did. That is not to say that they also do not face a subtle form of racism. His extracurricular research was limited to Woods Hole and while the science there appears to be tight he was socially confined. He did make some friends but was not socially accepted by all. He was too unique and white propriety prevailed. Just had two professional options and that was to spend a career in academia at Howard and in research at Woods Hole. He simply was too intelligent to not have options. That was the fate of the first notable black American biologist. Just did not have crosses burning on his lawn. His wife did not have to witness his murder like Medgar Evers wife did. Just suffered a different way. He faced the limits that society placed on him for cultural reasons. It has been this reviewers belief that any field of talent ought to be open to all who can enhance it. Placing culturally binding restrictions on any talents minimizes the field. Hitler eradicated Jewish Science and American baseball refused to let players of African descent play in their leagues. The talent pool is diminished until all the skills are entered into the pool. It is just that simple. Denying a skill set for any reason limits the fruition of the best that can be. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Persistence By Taameir Ernest Everett Just. Hardly a household name. Yet an exceptional figure, fully meriting the conscientious scholarship that MIT historian of science Manning has put into this fine biography. From the opening pages describing Just's Charleston boyhood a century ago (1983 marks the centennial of his birth), to his death from cancer in Washington in 1942, Manning uses the close focus on Just's life to mirror the social patterns of academic life in America, the rise of philanthropic foundations, the role of the black bourgeoisie, the Harlem Renaissance, and the meaning of the European experience to black intellectuals 50 years ago. Just was a research scientist at a time when no positions were open to blacks in white universities. Life was a schizophrenic journey between Howard University, where he chaired the zoology department, and Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, where he spent summers as the protégé of director Frank Lillie. For years, he was the respected teacher whom younger Woods Hole scientists approached to learn the painstaking techniques--of collecting and microscopy--that he brought to the descriptive embryology of marine invertebrates. Yet he was not accepted by the community as a whole, and his attempt to bring his wife and family for the summer was a disaster that further estranged his wife from him. In the end, Just found a new life in Europe, welcomed by colleagues first in Naples and then in Berlin and Paris. He fell in love with two exceptional white intellectuals--Margret Boveri, of the Brown-Boveri engineering empire, and later her friend Hedwig Schmetzler, whom he married. Just's entire career was shadowed by anxiety to raise funds for his research and academic infighting at Howard. All this--along with Just's own ego problems and personality needs, his vacillations between passivity and grandiosity--Manning presents with sympathy and insight. Not to be overlooked either are the facts of Just's scientific career: though he was essentially a descriptive embryologist at a time when geneticists and embryologists were at loggerheads, he did come to see the need for an integrated approach to the study of genetics, fertilization, and subsequent cell differentiation. Manning has an admirable grasp of the life and those mean times. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Exceptional Biography! By Malcolm Byrnes I have to first make a comment about .com's blurb at the bottom of the image of the book. E. E. Just was not a "complex and unhappy man" so much as a brilliant and passionately-driven scientist. I have read Manning's book in depth at least three times, and each time I discover some angle I hadn't considered before. It is incredibly rich. There is so much there: scientific drama (Just was a major player on the international scene at a time when biology was undergoing dramatic change, and he challenged some of the biggest names in biology at the time); international intrigue (Just was in Germany during the rise of Nazism and he was in France during the Nazi invasion of that country); racial injustice (he was severely discriminated against as he tried to pursue science at the highest level); and ultimate triumph (he succeeded in making a mark on the history of biology despite the tremendous challenges he faced). Importantly, the reader is able to experience the power of Just's life without interference from the author, because Manning does not make any direct commentary. He just tells what happened; he lets the story, powerful as it is, speak for itself. Although written more than thirty years ago, this book is still highly relevant. Moreover, it is impeccably researched: I do not believe that there is a single shred of information about E. E. Just that is not in this book. This makes it the definitive source for any writing on Just, who we are now beginning to realize was a giant in the history of twentieth century biology.

This biography illuminates the racial attitudes of an elite group of American scientists and foundation officers. It is the story of a complex and unhappy man. It blends social, institutional, black, and political history with the history of science.

"A superior distinguished work...unique in its contribution to American cultural history, black history, and the history of science."--Edward Lurie, University of Delaware"Among the finest biographies I have ever read. Manning's book wins my highest praise....It is so well written and meticulously researched...it is a pleasure to read."--Stephen Jay Gould, The New York Times"A unique contribution to not only Black history, but also to American history and to the history of science."--The Black Collegian"Manning has created a remarkable portrait of a remarkable scientist....A

brilliantly sympathetic but skillfully tempered biography....Blends social, institutional, black, and political history with the history of science. Impressively, Manning succeeds with each of these separate threads and manages to weave them together into a vibrant fabric."--Science

"In this sensitive biography, Manning conveys the outrage and absurdity of racism with a measured restraint that is much more powerful than if he had indulged in the diatribes to which his material could easily lend itself....People, settings, atmosphere...are beautifully evoked in a book that makes a major contribution to understanding the forces that obstructed and warped Just's career."--American Scientist

From the Back Cover
This is a biography which illuminates the racial attitudes of an elite group of American scientists and foundation officers. It is the story of a complex and unhappy man. It blends social, institutional, black, and political history with the history of science.

About the Author
Kenneth R. Manning is Professor of the History of Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology