

[ CHAPTER FIFTEEN ]

## The False Concept of Race



The ploy of pitting American “races” against each other began as a divisive game played for political profit. In time, however, race riots and race-related gang wars made the game politically unrewarding. As president, you inherited a race-based plague of epidemic proportions. Perhaps I can give you a more realistic understanding of human variations on which to base your racial decisions, as the generally accepted world concept of race and attendant racial assumptions are false, including attempts to ally race with intelligence and achievement.

Evolution acknowledges that visible physiological human differences occur and are transmitted through genes from generation to generation. This knowledge leads many scholars and scientists to conclude that genes are also the major determinant in the distribution of intelligence and achievement among the earth’s population.

Another element of confusion lies in the word “race.” The concept of “race” or “racial origin” is a contemporary one. Racial determination, from its inception and as it exists today, occupies a minuscule time frame in the evolutionary process relative to the millennia humans have occupied the earth.

Possibly the concept of “race” began with Aristotle, was then passed to Bernier in 1684, to Linnaeus in 1735, thence to Buffon

in 1749. However, both Linnaeus and Buffon knew that all humans belonged to a single species. Buffon used the term "race" for convenience only.

In the essay "The Concept of Race in the Human Species in the Light of Genetics" from *The Concept of Race* (1964), Ashley Montagu states: "To sum up, the indictment against the anthropological conception of race is (1) that it is artificial; (2) that it does not agree with the facts; (3) that it leads to confusion and the perpetuation of error, and finally, that for all these reasons it is meaningless, or rather more accurately such meaning as it possesses is false. Being so weighed down with false meaning it were better that the term were dropped altogether than that any attempt should be made to give it a new meaning." Montagu notes that past scholars critical of the concept of "race" included Franz Boas, Blumenbach, Joseph Deniker, William Flower, Alfred Haddon, Herder, Lancelot Hogben, Julian Huxley, and T. H. Huxley.

Geography is the primary factor for identifying "racial origin" and "races," including: African Negroids, American Indians, Asian Mongoloids, Australoids, European Caucasoids, Melanesians, Micronesians, and Polynesians. But there is no evidence, for example, that American Indians existed as a "race" thirty thousand years ago. And no biological basis exists for determining "race."

And while biological evolution is assumed to be occurring, the rate of change is imperceptible. Cultural rather than biological evolution has been the primary cause of change in human societies for at least the past thirty thousand years and especially the past ten thousand years. The difference in thoughts and attitudes among diverse groups of people, psychological mankind, result from cultural rather than biological transmission. *There is no evidence of the influence of biological evolution on human affairs during these periods.*

Further, the physiological trait of color is easily traced. Ancient humans and their descendants who remained in the direct sunlight of equatorial Africa retained their dark skin. The descendants of those who moved further north adapted to the lesser amounts of sunlight by gradually lightened skin color, which corresponded in degree according to the distance moved from the tropics. Lati-

tude determined skin color. Other recognizable evolutionary changes include exterior facial features and hair.

We readily accept that nature adjusts animal color in accordance with environmental need. For example, the arctic rabbit is white in winter and brown in summer; this is a proven annual occurrence that people willingly acknowledge. Yet many find it strange to think that ancient black men became brown, then tan, then white after they settled in different latitudes. To some it is simply unbelievable; to many it is emotionally unacceptable. As Arthur Schopenhauer states in *Supplements to the World as Will and Idea*, "the white color of the skin is not natural to man, . . . by nature he has a black or brown skin, . . . consequently a white man has never originally sprung from the womb of nature, . . . there is no such thing as a white race, . . . every white man is a faded or bleached one."

Skeletal construction has been the same in all humans for at least thirty thousand years. Today human bone configurations, including the skull, reflect little or no changes among populations. They are the same for Africans and for those living in northern areas such as Sweden.

THE phrase "nature versus nurture" is euphonious but also latitudinal and ambiguous. "Heredity versus environment" places a simple concept (heredity) against an all-encompassing one (environment). "The word 'environment,' which is deliberately imprecise," writes Albert Jacquard, "covers such things as the nourishment absorbed . . . the radiation he was exposed to, the shocks he endured, the affection with which he was surrounded, the teaching, of all kinds, which he was given: in short, all the physical and moral influences which shaped the individual in the course of its development from the embryo."

Perhaps the phrase *heredity versus child-rearing practices* is more descriptive when contemplating the origins of intelligence and achievement. Such a comparison counters the premise of sociobiologists that "genes hold the culture on a leash." Despite all their Mendelian formulas, hereditarians cannot gauge adult success at childhood. Child-rearing practices offer an uncomplicated guide

for estimating the adult achievement level of a child: look to the successes or failures of the mother's brothers.

Technology presents an analogy. Computer hardware is dormant and unproductive by itself, as is computer software. Only when software is introduced to hardware will the computer function and produce. Could the human body and brain be compared to hardware and child-rearing practices and education to computer software?