

## BOOK REVIEW ARTICLE

**Race Differences in the Annals of Science**

Kevin Lamb

**The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts  
of Race in Britain and the United States Between the World Wars**

by Elazar Barkan

*Cambridge University Press, 1992: 381 pp.***The Evolution of Racism:****Human Differences and the Use and Abuse of Science**

by Pat Shipman

*Simon and Schuster, 1994: 318 pp.***The Science and Politics of Racial Research**

by William H. Tucker

*University of Illinois Press, 1994: 371 pp.*

From this lack of knowledge there has arisen that fine dictum of morality so much bandied about by the philosophical crowd, that men are everywhere the same, and that having everywhere the same passions and the same vices, it is rather useless to attempt to characterize the different races; which is just about as reasonable as if one were to say that one could not distinguish Peter from James, because each of them has a nose, a mouth and eyes.

Will one never see the return of those happy times when people did not concern themselves with philosophy, but when such men as Plato, Thales, or Pythagoras, smitten with an eager desire for knowledge, undertook the longest journeys solely to obtain information, and went far away to shake off the yoke of national prejudices, to learn to know men by their conformities and by their differences ...?

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens  
de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques 1755. *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. Amsterdam (Rey); See also: Baker, John 1975. *Race*. Oxford University Press, p. 16.

Nothing infuriates egalitarians who are committed to the dream that all people are biologically "equal" more than the scientific study of race differences. The recent furor over *The Bell Curve* shows how egalitarian dogma encroaches upon scientific matters. Two chapters and one appendix from this book (100 pp. out of 845 pp.) survey the empirical record on ethnic differences. Instead of evaluating the merits of the data cited on these pages, critics dismiss the evidence with groundless rhetoric: "tainted sources," "right wing" analysis, "racist drivel," "genetic determinism," and so forth.

The late Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray explain in *The Bell Curve* why genetic factors *plausibly* account for persistent ethnic differences in IQ. Overall, two deciding factors sway their view: the validity of the genetic hypothesis on the one hand and the inadequacy of environmental explanations on the other. While Herrnstein and Murray show why genetic factors most likely contribute to the explanation of the race differences in intelligence persistently identified by psychologists, they express the belief that the evidence to date is incomplete and further research is required in order to draw any definite conclusions.

The hysterical reaction to this book fits a clear pattern among critics who question the study of race differences. Character assault overrules any rational consideration of the evidence that supports genetic-based race differences. Consider Charles Lane's "The Tainted Sources of *The Bell Curve*" from *The New York Review of Books*. In his ad hominem attack on *The Mankind Quarterly*, Lane neither refutes any of the research findings published in this journal nor provides any evidence for environmental theories that demonstrate *why* genetic factors are irrelevant in IQ differences. Lane succeeds in simply extending the definition of "racism" to include respected scholars who attempt to explain the nature of race differences. He intentionally tries to put the most sordid spin on a reasonable scientific endeavor. Why? In essence, the validity of innate race differences in intelligence (or other behavioral traits) completely undermines the egalitarian concept that "all men are created equal." The legitimacy of the modern welfare state and the rationale for egalitarian policies become highly suspect.

Three recently-published books focus on the history and development of scientific research into race differences. What these

*The Mankind Quarterly*

studies inadvertently confirm is that the empirical record of the behavioral sciences has scientifically discredited egalitarianism.

Barkan's historical narrative as well as the more recent work by Shipman explore how changes within the social sciences have influenced the scope and direction of racial research. On this point, Barkan is direct and to the point: "The social diversification of the scientific community has been an important factor in the redefinition of the race concept".<sup>2</sup> One of the key facts to understand is that for most of this century, social ideology has defined the concept of race. Aside from this essential point, all three works explore the historical ties between Darwinian evolutionary theory, eugenics and the study of race differences. Despite some similarities on historical matters, each account differs in how the author approaches this subject and in the selective use of supporting material.

Barkan and Shipman provide some revealing details on the egalitarian takeover of anthropology, a development that flourished under the influence of Franz Boas and Ashley Montagu. Most of the field's leading figures are recreated into heroes or villains. In Barkan's view, a blind devotion to the concept of equality delineates legitimate scientific research from pseudoscientific endeavors. The protagonists are scientists who have embraced egalitarianism: Haldane, Huxley, Penrose, Hogben, Malinowski, Boas, Montagu, Mead and Klineberg. The detractors, mainly eugenics advocates, consist of a familiar cast of characters: Castle, Davenport, East, Fisher, Gates, Goddard, Grant, Hooton, Keith, McDougall and Pearson. Their work is constantly suspect for the implied reason that these men had an undesirable axe to grind.

This kind of ad hominem attack, one that Tucker also relies upon, distorts the motives of scholars who investigate ethnic differences. The basis for rejecting what Barkan calls "scientific racism" rests upon subjective judgments of another scholar's work. Hence, objective standards for evaluating research that is "racist" is never put forth by any of these authors. Just as dubious is the presumption of human equality by Barkan and Tucker. Such proof

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<sup>2</sup> Barkan, Elazar 1992 *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*. Cambridge University Press, p. 343.

is grounded in ideological assumptions that have not been critically examined. Early setbacks in classifying and defining race in biological terms reflect primitive techniques of anthropometry as much as it discredits race as a biological concept. As Carleton Coon notes in his seminal work *The Origins of Races*,

In studying racial differences in living men, physical anthropologists are now relying less and less on anthropometry and more and more on research in blood groups, hemoglobins, and other biochemical features. This is all to the good because the inheritance of these newly discovered characteristics can be accurately determined. In them, racial differences have been found, differences just as great as the better known and much more conspicuous anatomical variations.<sup>3</sup>

Barkan shows why egalitarians were effective in contesting race as a biological division within mankind. Their effectiveness had very little to do with advancing a valid alternative theory that refuted the biology of ethnic differences. As Carl Degler points out, these critics were skilful polemicists who successfully promoted their own ideological preconceptions:

Certainly a general urge to know, combined with a professional and scientifically derived willingness to accept new information and insights were among the forces behind the transformation in outlook that removed race in particular and biology in general from the study of human behavior. But as we have seen in regard to the shift in outlook among anthropologists and sociologists, professional or scientific attitudes were not the full explanation. One needs to look beyond professionalism and standard science; for the change in outlook was too fundamental, too radical to be accounted for on those grounds alone. After all, we are not dealing here with a long-held, well-substantiated theory (that is, race) which new and conclusive evidence had unambiguously disproved and overturned. Rather we see essentially the substitution of one unproved (though

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<sup>3</sup> Coon, Carleton 1962 *The Origins of Races*. New York: Knopf, p. 662.

strongly held) assumption by another.<sup>4</sup>

The praise Barkan heaps upon Boas, Benedict and Mead stands in sharp contrast to his unrelenting criticism of Keith, Davenport, Fisher, Gates and Hooton. Here is how he summarizes Boas's contributions to anthropology,

The growth of anti-racist thought in the social sciences is often associated with the name Franz Boas. Boas's overwhelming influence on American anthropology of the first half of the century, through his own work and that of his disciples, has been acknowledged in memoirs and anecdotal biographies, mostly by admiring students. His list of honors during a long professional career, the numerous distinguished students he taught, and his recent popularity in historical literature, all testify to his justified importance.<sup>5</sup>

By comparison, Barkan's condescending description of the legacy of R. Ruggles Gates is just as ideologically tainted. Identified as a stubborn maverick, Gates is depicted as "among the most radical racists in British science and one who was to carry the banner of scientific racism for four decades".<sup>6</sup> Barkan cites two sentences from J. A. Fraser Roberts' obituary notice that he claims reveals Gates as an "outcast" and notorious racist. The full text of this detailed obituary shows nothing of the kind. What is clear in this instance is that Barkan's portrait of Gates is a distortion whereby two sentences are taken out of context in order to tarnish an otherwise distinguished scholar. Consider Roberts' depiction of Gates,

Reginald Ruggles Gates died in London on 12 August 1962, at the age of eighty. He was a remarkable figure, alike in the picturesqueness of his antecedents, in his unusual upbringing, in the variety of his scientific interests, in the vicissitudes of his life, in his

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<sup>4</sup> Degler, Carl 1991 *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> Barkan, E. p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> Barkan, E. p. 169.

contributions to science at times of vital change and in the sheer volume of his published work, the product of a long life of intense industry. It was well said of him that in one obituary notice that he was a man who influenced the thinking of his time...

Gates was not a 'racist' in the sense of believing in superiority and inferiority. He once said, apropos of race: 'To say that all men are equal has not got us very far. It is more accurate to say that all men are different, and then to respect each other's differences.'<sup>7</sup>

The handling of Margaret Mead's discredited *Coming of Age in Samoa* puts to rest any questions about Barkan's ideological leanings. He glosses over Derek Freeman's expose as a "controversy that was part of a sociobiology debate". (Freeman is never mentioned by name nor are there any direct references to his study.) Barkan admits that Mead's most popular work, flawed though it may be, has served a useful purpose by promoting cultural relativism. This confirms what Barkan admits throughout his book, namely that the field of anthropology in this century has been dominated by egalitarian ideologues who were primarily concerned with advancing their own political agenda. That agenda primarily has been to discredit scientific research into race differences. Although equally critical of previous attempts to study race differences, Shipman's account is more balanced and objective than the other two volumes. The title of Shipman's book, *The Evolution of Racism*, conveys a misleading impression of the story she presents to her readers. Her main concern is the "use and abuse of science". In this regard, she rejects the use of scientific findings to bolster preconceived political views, be they on the extreme right or left. Unlike the Barkan or Tucker accounts, a fair amount of space exposes the activities of left wing scientists who suppressed the study of race for egalitarian purposes. Shipman revisits the controversy over the drafting of the UNESCO statement on race by showing how politicized the whole ordeal had become. She also takes Ashley Montagu to task for injecting his own political biases in scientific

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<sup>7</sup> Fraser Roberts, J. A. 1964 "Reginald Ruggles Gates 1882-1962" *Biographical Memoirs of the Royal Society*. Vol. 10, pp. 82-106.

disputes. Montagu's resolution denying the biological basis of race was soundly rejected after a number of leading geneticists opposed this part of the early UNESCO draft.<sup>8</sup>

The mistake that egalitarians continue to make, according to Shipman, is in rejecting the concept of race. Although she seems ambivalent about fully accepting this as well, Shipman comes to terms with the fact that race differences are not going to vanish over night. In her view, appreciating a true sense of diversity is a legitimate basis for studying race differences. This diversity fundamentally rests upon ethnically unique cultures.

Shipman helps to restore the work of Carleton Coon and William Sheldon, two scholars whose research has not been fully appreciated. Coon's work finally receives the proper respect that it lacked for so many years. As a towering figure in anthropology, Coon published several major monographs, became a member of the Harvard faculty and was fluent in ten languages. Over the years, he became embroiled in several heated exchanges with Montagu, Washburn and Dobzhansky on the issue of race. Shipman accurately portrays Coon's theory of racial origins as being controversial, but not the "racist" piece of work that Montagu and others had charged. Montagu's hatred of Coon is as obvious eleven years after Coon's death as it was when he clashed with Coon at scientific gatherings. In August 1992, Montagu described Coon's work in a letter to *The New York Times*:

The findings of the Carleton Coon book [*The Origins of Races*] were neither scientific nor sound, and its conclusions were rejected by physical anthropologists as both genetically ignorant and socially prejudicial.<sup>9</sup>

Sheldon's contributions in constitutional psychology are briefly

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<sup>8</sup> Further detailed accounts of the UNESCO statement can be found in Kuttner, Robert E. (Ed.) 1967 *Race and Modern Science: A Collection of Essays by Biologists, Anthropologists, Sociologists and Psychologists* New York: Social Science Press. See also "Anatomy of A Controversy" *Mankind Monographs* (Part II), November 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Montagu, Ashley 1992 *The New York Times* Letter to the Editor, August 29, 1992 p. 18.

mentioned. Sheldon, a pioneer in devising somatotyping techniques, published the results of his work in a series of books that showed how temperament and delinquent behavior correspond to differences in physique. Shipman correctly notes that race had very little to do with Sheldon's work. Oddly enough, she fails to mention the results of *Physique and Delinquent Behavior: A Thirty-Year Follow-up of William H. Sheldon's Varieties of Delinquent Youth* by Hartl, Monnelly and Elderkin. This 1982 report confirmed what Sheldon discovered in his original study: a consistent "association of mesomorphic body build with juvenile delinquency".<sup>10</sup>

On one matter, however, Shipman is unjustifiably insistent, and factually incorrect. She claims that "the abundant evidence of the variance in absolute brain size among races was virtually useless, for there was not (and is not) any demonstrated correlation between brain size and intelligence among humans. In other words, having a larger cranial capacity inside your skull is no indicator of your innate intelligence".<sup>11</sup> This statement fails to address a growing amount of evidence to the contrary. Arthur Jensen has published several recent papers that show a modest but consistent relationship between some physical and mental traits. In "Race and Sex Differences in Head Size and IQ", Jensen and Fred Johnson point to positive correlations between head size and IQ. They also show that when "white and black children who are matched on IQ show, on average, virtually zero difference in head size".<sup>12</sup>

Tucker begins with the study of race in the social sciences prior to the turn of the century. Early on he establishes his central thesis:

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<sup>10</sup> Hartl, Emil M., Edward P. Monnelly and Roland D. Elderkin 1982 *Physique and Delinquent Behavior: A Thirty Year Follow-Up of William H. Sheldon's Varieties of Delinquent Youth* New York: Academic Press pp. 532-542.

<sup>11</sup> Shipman, Pat 1994 *The Evolution of Racism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 198.

<sup>12</sup> Jensen, Arthur R. and Fred W. Johnson 1994 "Race and Sex Differences in Head Size and IQ" *Intelligence*. Vol. 18, pp. 309-311. See also Jensen, A. R. 1994 "Psychometric g Related To Differences in Head Size" *Personality and Individual Differences* Vol. 17, No. 5 pp. 597-606 and Jensen, A. R. and S. N. Sinha "Physical Correlates of Human Intelligence" in *Biological Approaches to the Study of Human Intelligence*. (Ed.) Philip A. Vernon, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation. pp. 139-242.



scientists who have pursued the study of race differences have done so in order to justify their own political ends. Tucker's attempt to portray eminent scholars, like Cattell, Eysenck and Jensen, as pariahs rests on the flimsiest of evidence. His primary quarrel rests with research findings from differential psychology and behavior genetics rather than personalities. Unlike Shipman, who accepts the legitimacy of examining the causes of race differences, Tucker finds this line of scientific work completely useless. After beginning with an overview of eugenics, Tucker shifts to the early period of mental testing and concludes with what he calls 'Jensenism'.

This approach is what passes in journalistic circles as a 'cut and paste' hatchet job. Tucker gives the term 'McCarthyism' new meaning. This blatant political tract links some of the most prominent scholars with the most outrageous assertions of some eugenicists. This guilt by association tactic is used in order to discredit valid and empirically tested scholarship.

Tucker's work is clearly the most dishonest and hostile of the three titles, and it's clear that his knowledge is rather limited on a number of matters. For instance, Tucker's depiction of factor analysis and "heritability" of intelligence as two "psychological antiques [and as] old concepts that have been gathering dust in psychology's basement" reveals his limited understanding of these two concepts. It is certainly true that factor analysis is not new to psychometricians, but the fact that it isn't new does not render it useless or invalid. Bouchard properly refers to this type of criticism as "pseudo-analysis".<sup>13</sup> This accurately depicts Tucker's book from cover to cover. The fact that egalitarians conveniently use race related research to justify redistributionist social policies, whether it consists of income transfers or busing to promote racial "balance", somehow escapes Tucker's own portrayal of politically driven science.

All three authors emphasize the obstacles to defining and classifying the racial divisions of humanity. Do these limitations reflect the state of knowledge from an earlier historic period or are

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<sup>13</sup> Bouchard, Thomas J. 1987 "The Hereditarian Research Program: Triumphs and Tribulations" in *Arthur Jensen: Consensus and Controversy* by Sohan and Celia Modgil, The Falmer Press. pp. 55-70.

they equally applicable now? Is it scientifically impossible to decipher the meaning of race differences in the absence of "pure" races? Although Shipman accepts the innateness of human differences, in her epilogue she questions the role that race plays in these differences,

People are different from one another and in this sense human races exist. But human groups evolve, have evolved, will evolve; with each birth and each death the genetic attributes of human populations alter. Drawing a line around an ephemeral entity like a human race is an exercise in futility and idiocy.<sup>14</sup>

The distinguished British scientist John Baker answered this very point in his 1974 landmark study:

It is sometimes claimed that the existence of intermediates makes races unreal. It scarcely needs to be pointed out, however, that in other matters no one questions the reality of categories between which intermediates exist. There is every gradation, for instance, between green and blue, but no one denies that these words should be used. In the same way the existence of youths and human hermaphrodites does not cause anyone to disallow the use of the words 'boy', 'man', and 'woman'. It is particularly unjustifiable to cite intermediates as contradicting the reality of races, for the existence of intermediates is one of the distinguishing characters of the race: if there are no intermediates, there are no races.<sup>15</sup>

One reviewer of *The Evolution of Racism* made a similar point about Shipman's claim that "over 99 percent of our genes are held in common with the Chimpanzee...[for humans] less than 1 percent of our genes can possibly differ from each other. How can the differences be anything but trivial when viewed in this perspective?" The reviewer noted that:

This statement is meaningless. Minuscule genetic changes can

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<sup>14</sup> Shipman, P. p. 263-271.

<sup>15</sup> Baker, J. R. p. 100.

produce very non-trivial effects. A change of just one out of several hundred amino acids in the protein hemoglobin is all it takes to cause sickle cell anemia, a genetic disease most prevalent in blacks. A tiny change in another gene causes Tay-Sachs disease, most common in Ashkenazi Jews.<sup>16</sup>

The hurdles attributed to the scientific clarity of race, the study of ethnic differences and what these differences mean are primarily ideological rather than technical. Although this is the unintended lesson drawn from these titles, it is nonetheless a major part of the story. The detailed studies of Coon, Baker and Rushton indicate that the bio-social aspects of race are far from being completely resolved. Herrnstein and Murray arguably note that the jury is still out. Even so, researchers like those mentioned above have plowed some significant ground. The fact that so much remains unknown should not be an excuse to avoid further research in this area.

Thirty years ago Dwight Ingle, editor of *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* and a respected physiologist at the University of Chicago, urged scientists to investigate racial differences in intelligence.<sup>17</sup> The American scientific community refused to officially examine this issue then and dismissed this idea again when a controversial Nobel prize winning scientist challenged the National Academy of Sciences to thoroughly investigate the bio-social implications of race differences. By following the objective lead of Baker, Coon, Rushton and others, the American scientific community should finally address this unresolved scientific issue once and for all.

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<sup>16</sup> Barinaga, Marcia 9/22/94 *The Washington Post* Sec. D, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ingle, Dwight J. 1964 "Racial Differences and the Future" *Science* 10/16/64, Vol. 146, pp. 375-379.

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## BOOK REVIEW ARTICLE

**Surveying Multi-Ethnicity**

Daniel R. Vining

*University of Pennsylvania***The First Universal Nation: Leading Indicators****and Ideas About the Surge of America in the 1990's***Ben J. Wattenburg*

New York: The Free Press, 1991

This is a book with a good title. Unfortunately, most of what is inside the covers is a collection of reprinted columns from newspapers and periodicals. So reading it is like reading old newspapers. We cannot say, with Ezra Pound, that literature is news that stays news. The book comprises a collection of reprinted news columns, and not very interesting ones either, about Johnson (the late U.S. president), baseball, Charles Murray's book about welfare in the U.S., a former governor of Colorado (Lamm) and his ideas, the population meeting in Mexico City in 1984 and a defense of the American position (which Wattenberg says was misrepresented), Reagan, Bush, Scoop Jackson (the late American Congressman, who had a great influence on Wattenberg), Weinberger (former Secretary of Defense), Jeanne Kirkpatrick (former American ambassador to the U.N.), etc.

In other words, the book is a very much mixed bag of columns, some dating all the way back to 1982. It isn't a book built from scratch, like his *The Birth Dearth*, which acquainted the general public with the below-replacement fertility of the developed world and argued that fertility was too low in many countries. This book *has* a theme, but it is hard to ferret out, the book not being built from scratch but consisting mainly of reprinted columns.

Let me try to tell you what that theme is. The first "universal nation" means that the U.S. is rapidly becoming a country with all the diverse races and ethnic groups of the world in it. Wattenberg is optimistic about this development, but doesn't tell the reader why he is so optimistic, or why the U.S. should be any different from the