

At present such within-group differences, if they exist, produce variance which could be masking the true extent of any differences between groups.

In conversation with Rushton, it is clear that he feels that the quality of evidence available, or likely to be available, about the ecological conditions of the various races is too poor to justify expenditure of research time on it, as an alternative to collecting other types of data. While this argument has considerable force, it does imply that the whole edifice of the theory could be built on foundations of sand. The differences between groups could instead, as I. Silverman suggested at the Edinburgh conference, be related to differences in male-male competition. If African peoples were better able to rely on plant food than Caucasian or Oriental peoples in colder climates, male involvement in feeding a family might have been less vital. As in recent African hunter-gatherers, female gathering would have been the main foundation of the diet. The limited responsibilities of the male hunters would have allowed them much more freedom of action to spend their time competing for women than hunters in colder climates whose families were dependent on their efforts. Equally if a northern hunter was killed or injured in a quarrel over women, his existing children might starve, while the children of a disabled tropical hunter might survive on what their mother could gather.

This explanation seems to me as convincing, and as uncontaminated by evidence, as that advanced by Rushton.

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## Race: Differences, Concepts and Politics

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Jean-Philippe Rushton has provoked hot and antagonistic political controversy with his theory of racial differences in peoples' genetic selectedness along the r/K reproductive strategy continuum (Rushton, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c). In claiming consistent superiority, amongst several dimensions of behavioural 'advances', in the increasing order: Negroid, Caucasoid, Mongoloid populations, Rushton has been charged with giving unintended or even deliberate ammunition for ideologues of racial supremacy. Media dissemination of his theory will certainly have caused perceived insult and distress to many black people.

As I have argued against sociobiology's political critics — like Rose, Kamin & Lewontin (1984) — (Vine, 1985), in fact most of its offences are in the distorting eye of the beholder when hypotheses of genetic differences are advanced. Censoring dangerous ideas in science is a serious compromise of the unfettered search for truth — and evolution's value-neutrality is precisely what cannot preclude uncovering morally uncomfortable facts about our natures.

Yet truth is arguably not the pre-eminent human value in every case and context. At times the prevention of human misery is both closer to reproduction-related values which natural selection *does* promote, and more in accord with our

fitness-transcending, self-conscious, *moral* choices. There is at least an extra-scientific political case for particular caution in promoting ideas which stress only one, potentially divisive side of our evolution by highlighting genetic competition and differences (e.g. Bateson, 1986; Kitcher, 1985). Vine (in.prep.) examines the nature and limits of our political, moral, and scientific responsibility as ethological theorists and researchers, proposing ethical guidelines which would set some constraints on the publicizing of contentious claims about race differences — but would in no way obstruct the scientific discovery process itself.

My main concern with Rushton's ideas is, however, at that morally evaluative level closest to the scientific issues themselves. I make no attempt here to address other more technical empirical issues on which Rushton may deserve to be squarely challenged (e.g. Zuckerman & Brody, 1988; and I.S.H.E. 1989 conference papers by Feierman and by Silverman — cf. *Ethology & Sociobiology*, 10(5), 1989). But what I do wish to challenge is the intrusion of socially evaluative concepts, where the theory should deal rigorously with more value-neutral ones, if it is not to be unnecessarily and offensively more amenable to abuse by racists than is acceptable.

Differing cultural traditions will put social *value* upon a variety of human attributes *even if dominant human cultures regrettably strive to impose theirs on all dimensions of social comparison and judgmental preference. Thus hypotheses of Rushton's racial ordering for maturation rates, birthrates, longevity, sexdrive, and even temperament variables happen to be relatively free of cross-cultural uniformity as to what is judged most desirable. Blacks may feel proud of being attributed a higher level of sexual activity, for example — whereas puritanical Caucasoids from Christian and Muslim moral traditions value its reduction.*

This does not hold for intelligence, which is valued ubiquitously in some form or other, nor for Rushton's 'social organization' cluster of variables, which encompasses marital stability, mental resilience, law-abidingness, and altruism. The issue of racial variation in intelligence is one around which controversy still abounds strongly (cf. Flynn, 1988 on Mongoloid IQ scores). But here debates have been potentially constructive in exposing how readily the 'heritability' concept misleads us about how crucial favorable environments are for realizing performance manifestations of genetic 'potential'. This may also prove true through further investigation of Rushton's social variables *k* but meanwhile genetic differences are being held to underlie racially differentiated attributes for which the consensual norms relate high scores to *moral worth*.

Clearly the measures underlying this part of Rushton's research can be challenged as to how culture-fair they are — as is the case for another measure of moral maturity, namely that used by Kohlberg in his pursuit of scores for moral reasoning about justice and rights (Vine, 1986). The difference is that while Kohlberg pursues the safe, liberal hypothesis of human equality in moral potential, Rushton argues for ethnic variations. The latter claim is at least as analytically problematic in terms of disconfounding moral "advances" from co-variations in sociopolitical context, the legacy of imperialist domination, the content of normative codes and their relation to conduct, and — in cases like crime within multi-ethnic societies — the influence of prejudice itself. (For example, a recent British survey has revealed police selectivity in apprehending and charging blacks, while legal discrimination makes them mas-

sively more likely to be imprisoned for a given crime than whites.)

Too much of Rushton's "socio organization" or morality-related data hinges upon highly ambiguous questionnaire measures, susceptible to systematic cultural difference in the significance of items — which may advantage Mongoloids and disadvantage Negroids. In fact, even in Britain, his altruism measure failed to predict readiness for donations to the charity Oxfam (Plant, in prep.). Whether altruism is considered in the service of in-group members *or* racially alien strangers, by an informant, must be sensitively and intensively explored. Scores on this variable, and related ones like empathy, nurturance, aggression and even assertiveness may mean little — in terms of behavioural differences in basic prosocial dispositions between ethnic groupings — without careful monitoring of the content of moral codes, and the extent to which moral self-extension is universalised beyond one's in-group (Vine, 1986, 1987).

The problem of comparisons is highlighted further in measures of law-abidingness. A group that is culturally dominated by a surrounding and often oppressive majority from another ethnic background, may assimilate the latter's norms, or reject them in favour of a differing *in-group* morality coupled to *out-group* hostility. This undoubtedly plays a part in the higher crime rates for blacks of Negroid origin in North America and Europe, in contrast to the lower rates for Mongoloids. Caucasoid minorities dominated by other groups in the latter's indigenous societies are rare, thanks to the continuation of covert imperialism and the fact that Western liberal values have had such impact upon some of the most powerful Mongoloid societies' norms.

In research involving ethnic differences, valid science cannot avoid taking account of how power-politics impacts upon minorities within multi-cultural societies. Any simple measures of moral maturity may measure little more than *readiness to conform* to the dominant culture's normative prescriptions. This may bear no simple relation to the *in-group* conformity which would have been often critical for reproductive success in our ancestral environments. And ease of assimilation to a dominant culture will depend upon overlaps in normative content, and a readiness to extend in-group boundaries, that will hinge upon the groups' diverging historical traditions and inter-group relations.

My first conclusion is that Rushton should re-conceptualize his moral and prosociality variables in line with what his measures are likely to signify at the level of psycho-social realities. Preparedness for ready *assimilation* of cultural norms, and for their situational adjustment, is the kind of variable which — while being more psychologically 'basic' than culturally-shaped normative *content* of rules — seems more likely to differ between populations with differing ecological histories (cf. Hinde, 1987). And it has the appropriate level of value-neutrality to make it less easily susceptible to supremacist interpretations. It also reduces the temptation to infer that Negroids are somehow less morally good on principles — which is bound to cause deep offence and resistance.

In fact Kohlbergian data place *most* people, even in socio-educationally advantaged Euro-American societies, at the intermediate 'conventional' moral level of his stages 3 and 4. Morality *is* compliance with authority, or conformity to ethnocentric and collectively approved normative rules. (In contrast with the rarity of fully 'principled' morality in the sense of universalized conceptions of human moral equality.) If the

predominant motives for respecting moral precepts are linked to social compliance, then the content of the norms should be most predictive of how most people act — but remain heavily shaped by cultural history.

Rushton has every right to hypothesize that an r/K gene-selection framework predicts his racial ordering of what I have identified as *conformity and assimilation-readiness* variables. But formulating the hypothesis this way helps to expose how fragile a genetic differences claim may be. For one thing, we may argue that r-selected groups should score higher rather than lower — in that effectiveness as an opportunistic procreator requires greater skill in making oneself acceptable to strangers by mimicry of their value-systems. If Negroid moral conduct reflected r-biased genotypes, this ethnic groups might — be more predisposed for assimilating alien norms than K-biased races. In fact the complex, largely cultural nature of conformity and related phenomena seems evident. Muslim Asians in Britain were exceptionally law-abiding until the Salman Rushdie controversy exposed fundamental moral differences in commitment to liberal values. Now those most committed to conservative Islamic values have begun to reject and violate our legal framework for personal liberties. The focus of conformity is now on in-group values instead.

These kinds of counter-examples may be susceptible to accommodation with Rushton's theory, as he claims is possible with another — the low 'social organization' scores of Mongoloid Amerindians. But it is clear that much more empirical and theoretical refinement are required before his thesis can be adjudged well-confirmed. I welcome his resilient determination to continue in such a task; but I would respectfully urge him to at least adopt less evaluatively problematic conceptualizations of some of his measures, and to stress the tentative nature of any conclusions which can be drawn at his stage.

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## Comments on the Non-naive Social Responsibility of Intellectuals

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The furor in response to the media's presentation of Philippe Rushton's work was entirely predictable. And so was the inflammatory nature of that presentation. Some readers will recall a similar uproar in the mid-60's over Arthur Jensen's claim that heritability estimates of IQ proved a genetic basis for the average 15 point difference between Western blacks and whites.

In both cases, the public media played a key role by representing the researchers' ideas and their social implications (which the researchers did not publish or which they qualified in careful but academic style) as the WORD of SCIENCE. That is, as the final word. Public media are not designed, nor are its average consumers oriented, to characterize a scientific report as a developed hypothesis requiring serious questioning and further test. This is even less likely for a report with emotionally provocative social implications.

We all know these facts about the media and the public, of course. Yet, it must be a very academic knowledge. Over and over again, intellectuals — or academics — seem to forget the predictable consequences of media presentations of their work. Perhaps, however, they do not forget but hold the opinion that they have no responsibility for what others do with their intellectual products. I must agree that one can have no full responsibility for what one cannot control. But as was demonstrated last year by a man who had the political savvy to become candidate for president of the US, to say nothing on a topic because its public interpretation is morally or intellectually beneath oneself or beneath one's intentions for the topic, can have devastating effects for that self through public opinion. Ahh, egocentricity.

In the present case the damage goes beyond what might

accrue to the individual researcher and his theory. The greatest potential damage is to the conception of ethology's (and ISHE's) rigor and disinterestedness, as held by respected persons who might know very little about ethology: our non-ethological colleagues, our young students, and the public and officials who sponsor our work. (Please notice that there is, in the public and brief presentations of Rushton's claims, the public *appearance* of lack of rigor and of great social insensitivity. This public appearance exists even if other forms of the work should belie that appearance, and public appearance is all that these comments are meant to address.)

By here singling out public media presentations as a key contributor in the Rushton case, in past cases, and in future cases, I gingerly make three proposals for ISHE, for ethologists, and for all other socio/psychological/biological researchers:

1. That the ISHE Newsletter always carry a paragraph in a prominent place that states that no material in the Newsletter is selected by critical peer review and thus material is printed only to foster free and creative exchange of (even outrageous) ideas between researchers. That material appears in the Newsletter never implies the truth of those ideas, ISHE's support of them, nor any support for any policy implications that one might be able to draw from them.

2. That ISHE (and other intellectual organizations of social/psychological/biological researchers pass two policies (not "ethical policies," as that would assume less naivete and less egocentricity of ourselves and our peers than I believe is realistic):

- a. Formally disapproving of researchers *bringing* their work to the attention of the public media, but formally urging researchers whose work has come to that attention to stay in that area in order to clarify misconceptions and oversimplifications and, most importantly, to hold the same responsibility that one does in intellectual publications: to put forth the arguments *against* one's own position. Furthermore to urge researchers to be alert to the flavor of the particular public media contexts in which they allow themselves to be involved.

- b. Formally disapproving of statements, whether in the academic or public media, that are worded in ways that corroborate simplistic social stereotypes. Statements that could be so construed should have immediate and clear qualifications of how the simplistic stereotype is not an accurate characterization of the findings nor of persons in that category.

3. That ISHE or ethologists generally start a function that could be construed as "Ethologists for Media Responsibility." This could be a cadre of interested and media-sophisticated ethologists who would be notified when a big public media fuss appears to be showing ethology as simplistic/non-rigorous/biased/political/etc. They would quickly devise a way to get the further attention of the media to show the complexity of the real issue/methodology. They would have to be quite creative in making this non-inflammatory information attractive enough to get the expanded attention.

By making these suggestions I could be charged with lingering amounts of the same naivete and/or egocentricity that I am