

American Renaissance

There is not a truth existing which I fear, or would wish unknown to the whole world.

— Thomas Jefferson

Vol. 6, No. 4

April 1995

The Evolution of Racial Differences in Morality

Races appear to have evolved different levels of morality; this has important social consequences.

by Michael Levin

Readers of *AR* will be aware of the well-documented race differences in intelligence and temperament. The mean black score on valid IQ tests is 85, while the white mean is 100 (and some Asian groups outscore whites). Black children adopted into upper-middle class white families fail to attain IQs much above 85, which implicates genes as the cause of this difference. Twin studies and cross-cultural comparisons implicate genes in the greater levels of impulsiveness and aggression also found in blacks.

A less frequently noted point is that these psychological differences suggest race differences in morality. Part of the difference may be due simply to different levels of intelligence. The mean IQ of incarcerated felons is about 90, and Lawrence Kohlberg's extensive research on children found that IQ is correlated with moral development. It should not be surprising that mental ability is linked to moral character, since the latter requires grasping rules and thinking through the consequences of one's actions.

However, different levels of intelligence are not likely to be the sole cause of racial differences in morality. Data reported in *The Bell Curve* (and noted in the February issue of *AR*) show that black and white populations differ in crime and illegitimacy rates even when IQ is held constant. Thus, in one large-scale study, blacks in general were 6.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites, but when

the comparison was restricted to blacks and whites with IQs of 100, blacks were still 2.5 times more likely to be incarcerated.

Temperament therefore appears to have an effect on behavior that is independent of intelligence. This is intuitively



obvious, as aggression easily becomes heedlessness of the rights of others; we should therefore expect black and white standards of behavior to differ.

Examples of this difference abound. "Trash talk," the stream of arrogant banter with which black basketball players seek to intimidate and humiliate opponents, is alien to white ideals of sportsmanship. Likewise,

"Dissing" is a practice that indicates disregard for the golden rule.

Montel Williams, the host of a television talk show, claimed to have discovered racial bias in a question on an IQ test that asked children what they would do if they threw a baseball through a neighbor's window. The answer scored as correct was offering to pay for the window, but Mr. Williams, who is black, objected that in his

old neighborhood a "Sorry, man" would have sufficed. No doubt, Mr. Williams was right that blacks do attach less urgency than whites to compensating damage.

Numerous fights among blacks result from "dissing" — males seeking dominance over each other by shows of disrespect — a practice that indicates disregard for the golden rule. Moreover, it is hard to imagine a more blatant violation of the golden rule than the constant demand for royalties by Martin Luther King's estate whenever his speeches are published — especially when his own plagiarism is justified as "voice merging."

What Morality Is

Evolutionary biology suggests an explanation for race differences in moral values. But first, to begin with a definition: An individual's "morality" is *the rules he wants everyone to follow, and that he wants everyone to want everyone to follow*. Honesty is a moral value for him if he tries to be honest, tries to make his children honest, hopes others will be honest, and encourages others to reinforce honesty. A group's morality is the moral rules its members share.

The clause about "wanting everyone to want everyone" is needed to distinguish moral questions, like honesty, from other "universal" concerns. If you are like most people, you think others ought to be honest. But you may also think everyone should exercise, without considering exercise a "moral" value. The difference between the two is not in their usefulness, since both are useful: jogging is healthful, and honesty facilitates such

Continued on page 3



Letters from Readers

Sir — As co-editor of a ten-volume history entitled *German-Americans in the World Wars*, which will be released later this year, I must take exception to the falsehoods expressed by W. Dranem of Huber Heights, Ohio regarding the World War II internment policy of the U.S. government, which appeared as a letter in the March issue.

According to government records from 1939 to 1948, many of which were obtained under the "Freedom of Information Act," 56 percent of all non-renunciating internees (14,426 out of 25,655) were European-Americans. German-Americans numbered 10,905. These included German-Americans and German Latin Americans. The latter were citizens or legal resident aliens of Latin American countries whom the Roosevelt administration had transferred to the U.S. for internment. Among these internees were Jewish German refugees from Hitler.

After the U.S. entered the war, 5,620 Japanese Americans, native-born U.S. citizens, publicly renounced their allegiance to the U.S. There were no reported cases of renunciation among European-Americans.

The arrest and internment of German-Americans and Italian-Americans began on December 7, 1941 — four days before the U.S. was at war with Germany or Italy. The last German-Americans were not released until July, 1948 — more than three years after the war in Europe had ended.

Since 1948, there have been nine separate laws enacted to provide financial compensation exclusively to

Japanese-American former internees, and they are still demanding more. European-American former internees have never received an official apology from the U.S. government, let alone any financial compensation.

Joseph Fallon, Rye, N. Y.

Sir — Mr. Francis rightly cites white liberalism as the root cause of today's multiculturalist conquest over America's once Eurocentric culture. His solution is to reverse the last half-century of cringing, but support for such a reversal is weak. Even Newt Gingrich's conservatives must remain in essence liberals, pruning token branches from the \$200 billion-per-year welfare mess, but never daring to strike at the roots: antidiscrimination and civil rights laws that abolished white freedoms and social order. Efforts at policy reversals have failed for decades; in today's "politically correct" U.S., most would be *illegal*.

Let us continue the reversal efforts expounded by Mr. Francis but in addition let us launch the first steps of 10th-Amendment separatism outlined by Mr. McCulloch, Rabbi Schiller, and myself in my own writings. Even the firm *threat* of separation might trigger critical renewals of white Eurocentric culture. Then, let us plan the next steps.

James Owens, Arlington, Va.

Sir — Mr. Francis' critique of racial separatism was nothing short of brilliant. Unfortunately, nearly every one of his reasons for predicting the failure of separation should make him sceptical of the prospects for his own proposal: reconquest. As he points

out, if they wanted to, whites could dictate solutions to the racial problem tomorrow. The mystery and tragedy is that they appear not to want to. Collective survival, whether through separation or domination, is a question of will — without which nothing can be achieved.

Tom Hooper, Memphis, Tenn.

Sir — Your March issue review of *Crying Wolf: Hate Crime Hoaxes in America* was so good that I immediately ordered the book. Recent experience here in Arkansas mirrors author Laird Wilcox's thesis. Currently the Anti-Defamation League is aggressively lobbying the Arkansas legislature for a hate crime law, but the only notable hate crime in memory was a hoax.

In Little Rock, the offices of a prominent black judge, Marion Humphrey, were vandalized, and "KKK" and threats were painted on the walls. Judge Humphrey was outraged. The story was a major front page newspaper feature and led the local television news. The hunt for right-wing haters ended when a black man, one of Judge Humphrey's own court employees, confessed to the vandalism.

The culprit, a court pre-sentence officer, had also claimed that whites had fired shots at his wife's car. He later confessed that he had done the shooting himself, "to divert attention away from the other incidents."

Robert DeMarais, Russellville, Ark.

Sir — Your magazine is the perfect remedy to the public perception of racist "thuggishness" that Rabbi Schiller referred to in his thoughtful essay in the February issue. Of course, many people "see" implications in *AR* that are not there, but it has been gratifying to get *positive* responses from friends, as well.

It has also been exciting for me to have my own letters appear in the same pages as correspondence from heroes of mine like Professors Richard Lynn and Garrett Hardin. I hope you continue publishing essays or speeches by the participants in last summer's *AR* conference. I have enjoyed and shared them all.

Paul Neff, Cambridge, Mass.

American Renaissance

Samuel Jared Taylor, Editor
Thomas Jackson, Assistant Editor
Marian Evans, Contributing Editor

American Renaissance is published monthly by the New Century Foundation. NCF is governed by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; contributions to it are tax deductible.

Subscriptions to American Renaissance are \$20.00 per year. For first class postage, add \$8.00. Subscriptions to Canada (first class) and overseas (surface mail) are \$30.00. Overseas airmail subscriptions are \$40.00. Foreign subscribers should send U.S. dollars or equivalent in convertible bank notes. Back issues are \$2.50 each.

Please make checks payable to: American Renaissance, P. O. Box 1674 Louisville, KY 40201. Facsimile: (502) 637-9324

Continued from page 1

profitable activities as trade. But honesty, unlike exercise, is advantageous *only if everyone else is honest*. Jogging strengthens my heart whether or not you jog, whereas being honest helps me only insofar as it induces others to reciprocate, allowing me to rely on their words. This is also why it is smart to be honest even when tempted to lie—if you are found out, others will feel no obligation to be honest with you.

On the other hand, if everyone else is a liar, honesty only lets others take advantage of you. Therefore, since honesty, self-restraint, and other moral virtues are good ideas only when everyone thinks they are good ideas, you not only want everyone else to be honest, you want everyone to encourage others to be honest, and to ensure that honesty is widespread.

The advantages of honesty and other virtues have a biological dimension. Since moral individuals in a moral community do better than scoundrels, they live longer and have more children. Obeying and reinforcing moral rules is adaptive. If there is any genetic tendency to obey and reinforce moral rules, a tendency to obey and reinforce them and to be susceptible to reinforcement will be passed on to offspring.

However, selection for morality need not have been uniform, since honesty, cooperation, and the other virtues need not have been equally important in all environments. Cooperativeness (like intelligence) was probably more adaptive in the colder, harsher, Eurasian environment in

which whites and Asians evolved than in sub-Saharan Africa. Food grows year-round in a warm climate. There is little danger of freezing to death, so it is not necessary to work together to build large shelters. Sexual patterns are also influenced by environment: Since a woman abandoned by her



mate has a better chance of supporting herself and her children in a benign environment, there is less pressure on women to evolve a demand for male fidelity, or for males to evolve a strong sense of attachment.

The situation was otherwise in Eurasia, where large game was a dietary staple. Bringing down a cornered mastodon takes cooperation, with each man in his assigned position, ready to respond to shouted instructions. There must be jointly acceptable rules for dividing the kill. And, since females depend on male hunters for their own survival and that of their children, an advantage would accrue to females who chose mates likely to support them for a lifetime. Sexual selection would then mold

males more inclined to satisfy the female demand for fidelity.

Environment does not consist merely of natural factors like climate. Since morality is advantageous only when others are moral, a major determinant of the fitness of an individual's "gene for morality" is the character of those with whom he interacts. As Robert Axelrod and William Hamilton put it in their classic study, "The Evolution of Cooperation" (*Science* 1981), "there is no single best strategy regardless of the behavior of others in the population." In fact, seemingly irrational levels of mistrust can become locked into a group. Suppose a mild physical environment has selected for weak cooperative tendencies. A worsening of the environment might make greater cooperation in everyone's interest, but not necessarily more fitness-enhancing, for any honest, helpful mutants who appear will simply be exploited until they die without issue. It is perfectly rational to be indifferent to others when they are indifferent to you.

In short, observed race differences in honesty, sexual self-restraint, and cooperativeness may be due to the fact that these traits did not have the same evolutionary value in Africa that they did in Eurasia. Indeed, since universality and reciprocity are built into the very concept of morals, it is incorrect to talk of "different moralities." It is more accurate to say that individuals of Eurasian descent tend to be more moral than individuals of African descent.

Consequences

Nobody can go back in time to verify whether the races really developed in the way outlined. Still, the hypothesis sketched above is plausible enough, and it may be useful to note some of its implications.

1) Black behavior that is unacceptable by white standards—*theft, drug use, preoccupation with sex*—is not "sick." It is how traits that were once adaptive in Africa express themselves in Western urban society. This may be part of the reason blacks seem not to experience white laws and standards of personal responsibility as binding, and why black spokesmen are so curiously unapologetic about black crime. They will caution black males

that crime is "stupid" (i.e. apt to lead to punishment), and a Jesse Jackson may denounce black-on-black crime as harmful to blacks, but they do not say that crime, particularly black-on-white crime, is intrinsically bad.

In one remarkable incident, Edmund Perry, a Harlem teenager recruited on full scholarship to the prestigious boarding school of Exeter, was killed a few weeks after graduation when he attempted to mug a plain-clothes policeman. Angry demonstrations ensued, in which blacks complained of Perry's alienation at Exeter. Far from expressing regret over Perry's actions, blacks blamed white society for them. In fact, the difficulties blacks experience in conforming to American society cannot really be blamed on black attitudes or white norms, but on the mismatch between the two.

2) Black children cannot be expected to respond as white children do to externally imposed white socialization. If the races evolved different values, black and white children will be receptive to different sorts of training and exhortation, a point with important practical consequences. It is often suggested, for instance, that black children would do better in school if told, as white and Asian children are, that school is important. But black children will not care about grades and the esteem of teachers, no matter how much they are told to, if valuing knowledge is a more weakly evolved norm among blacks. Since black societies never evolved formal education, it would make no sense for black children to be ready to internalize praise of education.

3) Violence will skyrocket when a group acquires a killing technology it did not develop. Groups that have invented such things as firearms without killing themselves off must also have developed sufficient inhibitions about using them. Groups that acquire weapons from outside sources are less likely to have evolved the same level of self-restraint, just as groups that do not discover fermentation are unlikely to develop a tolerance for al-

cohol, and often fall prey to drinking problems when alcohol is introduced from outside. Blacks may have been unprepared for access to the firearms developed in Western society.

Consider the remarkable increase in gunshot homicides among black men in the last half-century. In 1943 there were 44 handgun homicides in New York City; in 1992, 1,500 black males died of gunshot wounds inflicted by other black males. Since 92 percent of the 2,200 murders recorded in New York that year were committed by blacks, black males must have also killed several hundred non-blacks with firearms as well. The parallel increase in gunshot homicides nationally over the same period is essentially an increase among blacks.

Now, the sheer availability of guns does not automatically mean murder. Guns have been available for centuries to the whites who invented and manufacture them. Every adult male Swiss citizen owns a gun, yet the annual homicide rate in Switzerland is one two-hundredth that of Washington, D.C. or Harlem. The immediate cause of the rise in homicide has been the sudden availability of guns to blacks, who seem ready to resort to firearms in disputes that whites would regard as trivial. (Gunfights over calls in pick-up basketball games are not uncommon in New York City.) It may well be that blacks lack the restraints that would have evolved during the march to the invention of firearms—a possibility that should be considered in any discussion of gun control. If the "gun problem" is really the problem of black access to firearms, forbidding whites to have guns is pointless and unjust.

4) Moral signals may become confused when divergent groups interact. To explain the point with a crude example, suppose that blacks, being less empathetic than whites, must use stronger signals to rouse each others' solicitude. It takes angry shouting to get another black to notice an injury that a white can be induced to attend



to by less strident means. Likewise, a white will take an angry shout as expressing a more serious injury. If these signal patterns have themselves become innate in the two populations, whites will interpret the signals of blacks as if they were coming from other whites, and consistently *overestimate* the seriousness of injuries claimed by blacks.

The tendency of whites to interpret the angrier manner of blacks as if blacks were other whites leads whites to respond to black complaints with inappropriate generosity, thereby reinforcing black anger by teaching blacks that anger is rewarded. The result is intensified demands and further white confusion—a dynamic that may explain the puzzling phenomenon of white guilt, and the indulgence of many whites toward even the most unreasonable black demands.

Neither is Better

The idea that blacks and whites evolved different systems of values says nothing about which values are "better," and each group can be expected to think its values best. Whites will continue to consider blacks "irresponsible" and blacks will, more openly, continue to call whites "up tight." But the practical decisions of life require the adoption of some standards, and a group can use only those standards evolution has given it.

Black children cannot be expected to respond as white children do to externally imposed white socialization.

What by white standards is a black deficiency in morality—defined as conformity to the golden rule—explains the persistent unwillingness of the races to associate with each other. People almost by definition prefer the company of those who share their values, so it is no wonder that whites feel more comfortable with whites. Indeed, while blacks—even including Malcolm X—prefer to send their children to white schools and to use the other amenities of white society, blacks nevertheless prefer the company of blacks. The conventional idea is that these preferences are entirely

due to "prejudice" that can and should be extirpated by education (i.e. propaganda). But if preference for one's own kind is due to deep-seated differences in values, there seems nothing wrong with it, and there certainly seems no reason for it to be illegal.

Moreover, from their own point of view, whites are *right* to prefer their own company. By white standards, adherence to the golden rule and norms associated with it are the chief criteria of personal merit. Since blacks are on average less likely than whites to adhere to the golden rule — less cooperative, more aggressive, less respectful of property and persons — the average black is, by white standards, not as good a person as the average white. This is perhaps the least politically correct statement it is

possible to make, but it is true and must be made. And, put in non-racial terms, it is one that even liberal egalitarians would assent to. Even they would admit to preferring the company of people who are less apt to steal, kill, lie, cheat, and shout them down in a debate.

It is possible to argue on purely philosophical grounds that people should be able to associate with whomever they please. This right, after all, can be enjoyed by everyone, and is itself in conformity with the golden rule. And this right, which implies that whites can "discriminate" in favor of other whites in housing, employment, and the schools to which they send their children, has been contravened by civil rights laws. This was allowed to happen because Americans, who respect freedom but

also like to see that freedom is not abused, became convinced by the 1960s that use of the freedom of association to avoid blacks was entirely arbitrary. They became convinced that it could be motivated only by ignorance and hatred, and saw no reason not to forbid actions so maliciously based. Race differences in moral outlook, which people have long sensed, are perfectly good, non-arbitrary reasons for whites to wish to avoid blacks. Perhaps when this is more widely realized whites will once again permit themselves this liberty. ●

Professor Michael Levin teaches philosophy at City College of New York. This article is adapted from his book, Why Race Matters, for which he is still seeking a publisher.

Not in our Stars but in our Genes

Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life*, Pantheon Books, 1994, \$27.50, 466 pp.

Morality may be nothing more than an evolutionary strategy.

reviewed by Thomas Jackson

Sociobiology, the discipline named after E.O. Wilson's 1975 book of that name, claims that evolution can explain not only human biology but human behavior. It was a decisive departure from the view that has dominated social science for most of this century: that there is essentially no such thing as "human nature," and that behavior is determined by environment.

A view so utterly and obviously wrong prevailed only with the help of radical egalitarianism. Since sociobiology was an open attack on the foundations of egalitarianism, it had to be driven underground amidst accusations of racism and sexism. Happily, as Robert Wright explains in *The Moral Animal*, it has been quietly thriving even while its practitioners cover their tracks by calling themselves evolutionary psychologists or Darwinian anthropologists rather than sociobiologists. Mr. Wright's book is



an illuminating survey of recent work in the field, with a particular concentration on theories about the origin of moral values.

The Primacy of Evolution

"If psychologists want to understand the processes that shape the human mind, they must understand the process that shaped the human species," writes Mr. Wright. This re-statement of the premise of sociobiology—that behavior has genetic and evolutionary origins—has received strong confirmation in recent studies

described in these pages (see, especially, Aug., 1993 and Dec., 1994). Behavior, just like physiology, appears to be the result of millions of years of random experiments, in which only the useful results were kept.

Evolution can be most easily understood at the level of the gene, not the group or the individual. A tree or a man or a virus can then be seen as a vehicle for carrying genetic information into the next generation. It is only genetic information that is potentially immortal; evolution operates for its benefit, and only indirectly for that of the organisms that carry it. The entire living universe can therefore be understood as a vast battlefield, in which organisms engage in constant struggle in the service of the genes they carry. A gene that confers a physical or behavioral advantage that helps its carriers survive and reproduce ensures the gene's survival; one that confers no advantage comes to a dead end when its carrier dies or fails to reproduce.

As Mr. Wright explains, it is evolution that has done most of the "thinking" in nature. Bees do not build combs of hexagonal cells because every bee determines for itself that this