

An Empirical Consideration of Differences Between the Bantu and the European

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From time to time I have drawn attention to marked differences between the Negroid and the Caucasoid races. In particular this was dealt with as extensively as the facts at our disposal will permit in the paper entitled "Practical Considerations Which are Fundamental in Bantu Affairs in Rhodesia and for an Understanding of Negroid-Caucasoid Problems Generally," which was published in this journal, Vol. X, No. 2, October-December 1969.

In the light of those facts it seems impossible to escape from the conclusion that there are marked differences in evolution, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual qualities between these two major stocks of mankind. The views of Professor Coon as to the time lag between that of the Negroid in comparison with the light-skinned stocks (Caucasoid and Mongoloid) is consistent with this evidence. The pace has been set by the latter two stocks in the direction of the evolution of technology, and it is in this field where the Negroids as a whole lag behind. Since all of what we call "civilization" is based on technological societies, from the beginning of time, it explains why out of Negroid Africa have never come civilizations comparable with those of the white Berber and Atlantic peoples of Northern Africa, or the Semito-Hamitic of the north-east.

I have associated this difference between the Caucasoid and Mongoloid (an offshoot of which is the Amerindian) on the one hand, and the Negroid on the other, with the difference in the frontal part of the brain (the frontal lobes), situated at the forward part of the temple, where, it seems fairly evident, the mechanism of the brain which particularly controls foresight, planning, three-dimensional thinking, and the anxieties and drives to what, in the end, is technology, are located. The lesser development of the Negroids in this region is consistent with what we find to be the character and temperament of these races, including the Bantu peoples.

There is significant anatomical evidence, even if not as complete as one would like to see it, to support this view (as we have shown in the paper to which I have referred), there is less for the temporal lobes, which are located towards the back of the two hemispheres of the brain. Nevertheless, the temporal and parietal parts of the brain appear to have anatomical differences. Professor Cornelius J. Connolly (*External Morphology of the Primate Brain*, 1950) says that the parietal lobe (which is just above the temporal) and the

temporal pole are relatively more developed in the Negroids. This seems to be pointing in the direction of a greater development as being likely in the temporal lobes. This is what one would expect inferentially, since the temporal lobes are concerned with *hearing*, smell, *speech*, and balance, qualities in which Negroids excel, as we shall proceed to show. If such differences exist, which, as I have said, inferentially one can reasonably postulate (quite apart from any direct anatomical evidence) it will be in favour of a greater development in the Negroids than in the Caucasoids, despite the evidence which seems to show that the former have a larger brain.

In this paper, it is my intention to restrict myself to that Negroid amalgam which is called the Bantu. For, while I know most of the principal stocks of Africa, having been in nearly every country of Africa, some of them many times, it is the peoples of Southern Central Africa and Southern Africa that I know best.

Furthermore, because any discussion of racial differences arouses a blinding, emotional, irrational, reaction from so many people, I wish to draw my comparisons and empirical evidence from the works of the most literate, and, I would say, learned Bantu of our times, or all time, namely Vusamazulu C. Mutwa (*Indaba, My Children and Africa Is My Witness.*)

As the Bantu have an infusion of Hottentot, Bushman, Cushitic and Caucasoid elements, they are not entirely typical of the truer Negroid stock (as in the Congo region). Nevertheless, they are Negroid, and so while they may differ somewhat from the purer Negroid peoples, the comparisons will be valid, subject to these limitations.

This discussion is not solely an academic exercise in evaluating racial differences, but it has its practical application, as will become apparent as we proceed.

Taking as our two fixed points, the difference in the frontal lobes (and the aptitudes to which they give rise) and what I infer is likely to be a difference in the temporal lobes (and the aptitudes to which they give rise), we can summarise the values and abilities of the European and the Bantu in general terms as follows.

The European has the restless dynamism to create technological processes, to build them into a society which drives forward towards urban-living and industrialisation, and these are marked by an individualism and a personal acquisitiveness. In the Negroids this is much less marked, and to this the Bantu is no exception.

In order to eradicate a *non sequitur* which always arises at this stage, whereby it can be pointed out in Natal there is a Bantu millionaire, and some Bantu are good mechanics, while there are completely thriftless, shiftless, and spendthrift Europeans of low technical ability, it must be made clear that we are dealing with averages where statistics are available (as in the comparison of the I.Q. tests), or generalisations to which there must always be excep-

tions, when dealing with the matter empirically. As a consequence there is an "overlap" so that some Europeans are below the average of the Negroids in these qualities, while some Negroids are above, when discussing the European average. These exceptions do not destroy the rule, but prove it.

When we come to deal with qualities in which the Bantu (and probably all Negroids to some degree or another) excel the same problem of overlap exists. As a consequence, some Caucasoids may well rise above the Negroid average, while others fall below.

Passing, therefore, to the qualities which it seems to me are to be associated with the temporal lobes, in which qualities the Negroids excel, it would seem that we can say that their minds are very highly developed in matters which are of an auditory nature, involving language, rhythm, and in that which, I would add, have marked psychic qualities.

Given these differences it follows that the Bantu ought to have (as we have indicated in the paper to which I have drawn attention) a vastly rich group of languages, with an organisation of society in which rhetoric is marked, where individual personal ambitions and acquisitiveness is not unduly noticeable (leading to a marked degree of communal life, but not necessarily prone to communism), one in which there is not a strong desire to excel in engineering and planning, and one which values leisure much more than the restless, acquisitive, often grossly selfish, European social order.

In the United States of America the Negro question is associated in the towns with a considerable incidence of crime. In Southern Africa the urbanised Bantu is not so violently dispossessed of his cultural background. He still speaks his own language, and knows whence he comes, and, indeed, who is his chief in the homeland of his nation. To that degree he is not de-cultured, although he has been partially acculturated to the European way of life, and is dependent upon the White man for his livelihood and all the services he enjoys. Nevertheless, while not on the American scale, a higher than normal incidence of crime is a feature of the Bantu townships.

This I attribute to the divorcing of the Bantu from the way of life for which he has developed, and in which he feels secure, and has a place.

At this stage I will be attacked from two quarters, firstly the so-called "liberal," and secondly by the industrialist. The former will accuse me of trying to keep the Bantu down, depriving him of the benefits of the European way of life; while the latter, using the same arguments, will do so because he wants the cheap manual labour which the Bantu provides. Any perusal of documents, papers, and factual articles from financial journals, financial editors of newspapers, and from the circulars of the mining houses and stockbrokers of South Africa, will reveal a constant attack upon the policy of the South African Government of separate development, or

self-determinism, because it is denying them this pool of cheap labour.

I do not wish in this paper to go into this aspect of the subject in depth, and the solutions which can be found, without the exploitation of the Bantu. I have only mentioned it here to make the point that there are enormous vested interests to force the Bantu into a European society. The so-called "Liberal" (not to be confused with the true liberal) suffers from an arrogant "spiritual" imperialism whereby he must turn everyone who is different from himself into a Black "Englishman," "American," or "Dutchman," while finance and industry are blatantly interested in their own gains and so they pursue the same policy, using the same apparently liberal and humane arguments.

It is at this point that I propose to rely upon Vusamazulu Mutwa, to show that what I have been propounding has the support of a highly intelligent and enlightened Bantu.

Vusamazulu Mutwa is descended from a long line of Zulu witchdoctors, but his immediate ancestry is a cross between Bantu and Bushman, as a consequence he refers to himself as illegitimate. He was educated at a Roman Catholic school. Later, he abandoned Christianity and relapsed into the beliefs of Bantu religion, rightly or wrongly, believing that the Christian faith was not suitable for the Bantu. His fiancée was, according to his statement, one of those killed at Sharpeville. Therefore, by no stretch of the imagination can he be considered some kind of lackey of the White man.

His books are full of strictures against the Europeans and particularly the British rather than the Afrikaner. The reason for this being that while the latter was more severe in his treatment of the Bantu, he was not as wounding as the British with their aloofness and refusal to associate with him. He says that the Bantu, under their own native authorities, and later, were conditioned to severe treatment. This is something they can endure, but not the patronising distant attitude of the English-speaking peoples.

This brings us to one of the marked differences to which I have referred and attempted to define elsewhere. I have remarked upon the complexity of the Bantu languages, far beyond that of the Aryan or Semitic tongues of the White races. As a consequence, these Bantu tongues allow for much greater exactness for expressing matters within their range of knowledge. Associated, therefore, with this superior faculty of the Negroids over the Caucasoids is the fact that the Bantu have a ceremoniousness in greeting and address which is more comparable with what one would expect from some of the Mongoloid languages (such as Chinese) than the European.

It is here that Mutwa compares unfavourably the English-speaking people in South Africa with the Afrikaner. The unanswered greeting, the stony stare, even in times of the British officers in

South Africa, the failure to acknowledge salutes, were more wounding to the Bantu than the *sjambok* of the Afrikaner farmer over his employees.¹

Be all this as it may, it is only recited here to show that Mutwa is no Europeanised Bantu, and not a man infatuated with currying favour with the European in South Africa. As a consequence his evidence is highly valuable for any understanding of the differences of mental aptitudes of the European compared with that of the Bantu.

The first thing that Mutwa emphasizes is that while the Bantu expects to be treated as an equal, this does not mean that he aspires to assimilation, intermarriage with the European, or even dining with him:² “The Bantu could never be induced to change his outlook, peace of mind, most of his inborn nature and many of his habits. He wishes, and still wishes, to maintain his identity of race and even as a member of a particular tribe.”

Therefore, he rejects racial assimilation. Because of this he also rejects cultural assimilation as bad for the Bantu. It is here that we see the distinction which exists between stocks evolved on a technological basis and the Negroid lacking the drive to such an end, while possessing tendencies based on the communalism of complex languages, and ceremoniousness of manners and customs which are to be associated with the exercise of those functions which are derived from different inborn aptitudes.

Mutwa emphasises these differences when he says:³

It should be realised that by creating townships around the cities the White man did the Bantu people a great deal of harm both spiritually and bodily. It is the townships which are responsible for the decline in morals and in health among my people. The Black man, as a human being, is totally unsuited for life in these vast communities. The Bantu lives best and feels most secure in small, compact villages where everyone knows everyone else and where neighbours gather under the tree and settle whatever differences they have peacefully. Such

¹ Vusamazulu Mutwa, *Africa Is My Witness*, Blue Crane Books, Johannesburg, 1966, p. 336, writes: “Behind the fact that the White race is by far the most hated race in Africa lies the persistent failure to respond to the greetings by the Bantu. The White—and particularly the English [presumably he means English-speaking]—generally refuse to greet anybody other than a personal friend or an old acquaintance. This has also happened frequently in the Force Publique of the erstwhile Congo . . . Englishmen and Germans are the worst offenders . . . Afrikaners are less inclined to be offenders, and I know for a fact that even our arch-enemies, the Arabs, and the Chinese and Indians, never fail to respond civilly to out greetings; these are the races that will step in where the Europeans left off in Africa.”

² Vusamazulu Mutwa, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

³ Vusamazulu Mutwa, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

new villages should be built on the principle of tribal clan-communities and would have a properly appointed *induna* and a council of the oldest citizens to administer them, assisted by young clerks.

In this we see that Mutwa considers that the type of industrialised or technological civilization is not inborn in the Bantu—and the ultimate solution of all difficulties is not the executive order but the *indaba*, discussion, under the tree, until by process of rhetoric and argument peaceful settlements are found.

He also draws attention to the fact that while the great Bantu townships around places such as Johannesburg are hot-beds of crime, this is not so in the George Goch Native Township, which is organised on this small village community basis, despite its nearness to Johannesburg:⁴

There is friendliness there too because everyone knows everyone else, and when criminals from other townships arrive to cause trouble there the citizens deal with them.

He says of the large urbanised townships:⁵

I challenge anyone who disputes my word to tell me just how many scores of weekend murders committed in the townships around Johannesburg are ever solved. I say very few of them are. Whole families have been butchered while onlookers watched helplessly This would not happen in a small village People live in fear in the great townships; they live in fear of their lives day and night.

In the United States of America, although the Negro has been de-tribalised and has lost the cohesiveness of his culture, we find the same phenomena. In the Deep South, in his small communities, the Negro has no real crime problem. However, when the Negro moves into the big cities of the North the crime problem becomes acute. We suggest that if we faced the same problem honestly in Britain, the same trends would be observed.

The Negroid races have a much lessened aptitude for making a success of industrialised urbanised society than those races which created such conditions.

A difference which we would associate with the non-technological part of the brain (which technological state we attribute to the frontal lobes) and which we would attribute probably to the same phenomena associated with the temporal lobes, is the expression given to religious worship. This is seen in Bantu and Negroid religions generally in Africa, its effect on Negro Christianity, and is markedly observable in the American Negroes' manifestation of

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Vusamazulu Mutwa, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

religion, with the “spirituals,” dancing, drumming and all else.

This outburst of emotive expression and loquaciousness is typical of Bantu religion, as distinct from the formalised, philosophical and theological concepts of European Christianity.

Mutwa has summed up the Bantu attitude as follows:

When the Bantu feel that their prayers have been granted . . . they want to come dancing before God, clapping hands and booming drums, leaping, twisting and turning—no solemn clasping of hands and closing of eyes, with a barely audible and completely emotionless “I thank thee, Father, for all thy goodness . . .”

A typical Bantu prayer would be more like the following: “Oh Great God, Oh High Chief of the skies and earth, of all that I can see and cannot see, Father of all that I know and do not know, I pray to You, and You have heard my prayer. The White man granted me a rise in wages, Oh Great God of all my ancestors. He raised my wages to five pounds a week—see, here it is, here I have got it in my hands, look at it! Oh God see the gratitude in my heart! I can now pay the superintendent the rent I owe him, and when I pay him, I shall thank You again, dear Lord.”

Without wishing to go deeply into the matter, it is sufficient to say that all the Negroid races (even the de-tribalised American Negroes) have an intense psychic sense. As a consequence, besides a belief in God, and the gods, they have a realisation of spiritual forces which the average European cannot comprehend, as a consequence of which the Ancestors have to be consulted at every stage in the history of a man, of his clan, or tribe. This is, again, something quite different from that of the type of mind which is technological and materialistic.

Furthermore, with the Caucasoids, because of their analytical attitudes, religious and philosophical concepts became divisive, whereas, among the Bantu no such mental attitudes are involved, so Mutwa⁶ can say: “To the Bantu, religion means solidarity.”

Mutwa also draws attention to the fact that the Bantu cannot understand European music, especially that produced by the violin. He points out, that at the same time White people cannot appreciate Bantu tribal singing. He concludes:⁷

The fact that no two races think alike be they black, white, brown or red—that they have completely dissimilar mind patterns—cannot be sufficiently stressed. This can be demon-

⁶ Vusamazulu Mutwa, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

⁷ Vusamazulu Mutwa, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

strated in countless different ways, ranging from crude weapons and primitive architecture to feats of engineering skill.

Mutwa sums up the attitudes of these two racial stocks, White and Black, when he says:⁸

I do not wish to live the sort of life that the White man leads—a life of tension, fear and ceaseless worry; a life of competition and rivalry—a life of selfish ambition and of “doing unto others before they do unto you.” Yes, the White man can keep his way of life—of giving with the one hand and taking doubly back with the other; of saying one thing when he means another—the kind of life where success is conditional upon stripping oneself of all human feelings, moral standards, yes, even one’s conscience to sell body and soul to the spirit of money. I do not wish to have ulcers in my belly, the White man can keep his coronary and cerebral thromboses. The White man can keep his way of life with my fullest compliments. But he must never ask me to share it with him.

Perhaps this, and much else he says, may be unduly harsh upon the European, but he touches the core of the matter. The stress diseases are not naturally Negro complaints. As I have said elsewhere I attribute this to the fact that the Europeans’ dynamic technological world is due to the frontal lobe development. This way of life the Bantu (and all Negroes) tend to reject, as their ways are based upon other mental drives. That these are not primarily based upon social conditioning and environment is clear, as they are typical of tribal Bantu, as well as of English-speaking orientated American Negroes reared in the thrusting technical civilization of America.

I am quite prepared to be proved wrong as to the location of the drives or lack of them, or the predispositions, in the anatomy of the brain, which distinguish these two great stocks—Black and White. But that the differences are mainly cerebral is evident from any deep study of the subject not only in its current aspects, but in any synthesis of them with those of the past, over a wide range of discipline.

Therefore, I have no hesitation in believing that Vusamazulu Mutwa and I are right in stating that the differences in mental, emotional and religious feelings are inborn and inherent to these two stocks. As a result there is a difference of outlook, feeling and desires. What is good for one is not necessarily good for the other. It seems to me that these facts are self-evident, and those that seek to deny them, and postulate the Pavlovian concept of conditioning by education or environment, must now prove their case, and prove it up to the hilt, as every *a priori* assumption is against such views.

⁸ Vusamazulu Mutwa, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

Until that is done it seems to me that we have to locate one great difference as due to the different character of the brain, and in particular in respect of the frontal lobes, on the information we have at present, and on which I wrote in my paper "Practical Considerations . . ." Whether we can locate some of the marked characteristics in the linguistic field, and the well-developed powers of expression, of the Negroids, to a greater average development of the temporal lobes, remains to be seen. But somewhere, in the brain, must be the seat of this marked difference between White and Black. It is my *a priori* assumption that the temporal lobes are involved in all this, just as such assumptions, supported, by what anatomical evidence that exists, points to the frontal lobes as the seat of the Caucasoid and Mongoloid development in the technological and dynamic fields.

In support of my empirical conclusion that the temporal lobes are much more developed in the Negroids than in the other major stocks (since speech and hearing are located in those lobes) are the facts which arise from a consideration of musical and linguistic ability, as noted by Arthur S. Boughhey.⁹

It would seem that speaking in general terms Negroid people, and those having Negroid genes, have more musical scales than have the Caucasoids and Mongoloids. The Caucasoids, for instance, have a scale of eight notes. Many Caucasoids are tone deaf, or sufficiently so, that they find it difficult to detect changes of pitch up to half a tone away from the note, and only when the difference is greater do they become conscious of being off the note. While Caucasoid singers can rise to high proficiency musically, it is normally only after arduous training, even although they undoubtedly have an inborn, or genetic, musical ability.

Furthermore, the fact that the Caucasoid languages are not tonal may also be affected by this same region of the brain, whereas a vast range of Negroid languages are.

Closely related to these aptitudes must be the readiness, or lack of it, to learn languages. As Boughhey points out it is no uncommon thing for Bantu and other Negroids to have to learn five languages and use them with facility. Furthermore, among these will be one or more European languages, the very structure of which is so different both in its musical notation and grammatical form from their own native tongues.

In the case of Europeans, where through belonging to smaller national or linguistic groups it is necessary to learn several languages, the number is usually restricted to three or four at the most, as in such a case as the Swiss, where French, German, Italian and Romansch are spoken in the one country.

⁹ Arthur S. Boughhey, *Man and the Environment: An Introduction to Human Ecology and Evolution*, Macmillan Company and Collier-Macmillan Ltd., New York and London, 1971, p. 211.

Even so all these languages are of the one Indo-European group, and as in the Swiss case I have just quoted, three of the languages belong to the Latin group. In the case of the Scandinavians all the languages are Teutonic, and where they learn German or English, or both, in addition to whatever Scandinavian language or languages they may possess, all of them are closely related tongues.

It seems hard, therefore, to escape the conclusion that since there is this marked difference between the Negroids and the Caucasoids, not to speak of the Mongoloids, and since speech, rhythm and tone, must be associated with the temporal lobes directly or indirectly, that there is also a difference in those lobes in favour of the Negroid races.

Plasticity of Neural Maturation :

A Review*

BY DONALD A. SWAN

The effect of experience and other environmental factors upon brain anatomy and brain chemistry has been the subject of considerable experimental work in recent years.¹ For the development of the brain in man and in many animal populations "includes a long postnatal period during which the emergence of order in the still growing and differentiating central nervous system depends not only on the forces of development, but also upon an interaction between developmental forces on the one hand and the effects of behaviour and learning on the other." During this developmental period, which in man extends over nine years, brain development "exhibits a special kind of functional plasticity and a special potency for the long-term shaping of brain organization and behaviour that is no longer apparent with the learning process alone after growth and maturation are finally completed."

The mechanisms underlying this extra functional plasticity of the still-developing brain are largely unknown, but are apparently related to "basic developmental events such as neuron differentiation, growth of neuron processes, selective membrane adhesion, protein synthesis, etc.," and also to the "unknown chemical and cellular mechanisms at the basis of learning, memory, imprinting and the like." In this article on "Plasticity of Neural Maturation," Dr R. W. Sperry explores the following questions:

To what extent can the preprogrammed processes of cerebral development be modified by function? Exactly how plastic is human nature? Can early function affect the *structural* patterning of the brain or just its *physiology*? Just what is it that a "head start" or early enrichment of experience can do for the cerebral cortex? Is the plasticity of learning and memory as seen in the adult a direct out-growth or evolvement of the plasticity of neural development? In this connection, might not the developmental approach to the basis of learning and memory offer some special advantages and insight perhaps for solving the ancient problems of the memory trace?

Dr Sperry, who is Hixon Professor of Psychobiology at the

* R. W. Sperry, "Plasticity of Neural Maturation," *Developmental Biology Supplement*, Vol. 2, 1968, pp. 306-327.

¹ M. R. Rosenzweig, E. L. Bennet and M. C. Diamond, "Brain Changes in Response to Experience," *Scientific American*, Vol. 226, February 1972, pp. 22-29.