

RACE

Everybody knows about evolution by natural selection, mutations and survival of the fittest. It is the mechanism that has made intelligent life possible; without this means of improving efficiency we should still be part of the primeval soup. The mechanism leads to the infinite variety of life; here a variation leading to a better suitability for a particular environment, there another giving one group a competitive edge that leads to dominance, or to elimination of a competitor. It is a complex mechanism, for example temporary isolation of a group can shield it in such a way that it later cannot stand up to others who have been selectively improved by a more competitive situation.

Variety leads to sub-species, leads to species, leads to genus and leads to phylum eventually. In man, sub-race leads to race, leads to sub-species *Homo sapiens sapiens*, leads to *Homo sapiens*, leads to genus *Homo*, and leads to order *Primate*. These subdivisions usually seem to merge into each other whenever we can see the full story. Biologically there is nothing special about man's relation to this mechanism except perhaps that *Homo sapiens sapiens* may be supposed to have dealt particularly ruthlessly with all other competing sub-species and species of *Homo*, presumably having committed genocide against them with a degree of efficiency derived from his reliance on intelligence as a weapon.

For evolution to occur in any incipient species, which is not living in a physically isolated situation, it is necessary somehow to identify groups of individuals who prefer to interbreed with each other but not with members of related groups; only in this way are they able to perpetuate their particular set of characteristics. This amounts to it being an evolutionary advantage for the group to feel that it is the best group, that its members are the most beautiful, smell good and are generally altogether those with whom the individual prefers to identify himself, at least for the purpose of breeding. The other side of this coin is the feeling that members of a competing group are relatively ugly, smell bad and are rather peculiarly horrible.

In the case of social animals there is, superimposed on this essential mechanism

for evolution, another mechanism; that which enables the interbreeding group not only to come into existence with its own characteristics, but for the individuals to carry out cooperative activities as a group. It has therefore become an important built-in element of the evolutionary kit of social animals.

Ideally it means trying to be kind and considerate, i.e. 'Christian', to members who obey the social rules of one's own group, but forceful and insistent in the group interest, i.e. horrible to non-conformers and members of other groups. This seeming anomaly of behaviour is regularly achieved to varying degrees in human societies.

These two basic and essential built-in mechanisms go a very long way towards explaining the past history and present state of man, although from ape-days their application has been exceedingly complicated by factors of personal self-interest, pecking order, and an increasingly elaborate social structure. On top of these disruptive constraints man now has an intelligence that permits him to begin to see through the entire dubious biological sign, awareness that essentially the whole world is becoming his village and a distracting feeling of belonging anyhow to half-a-dozen or more overlapping groups including international schools of thought or faith.

Leaving aside these recent disruptive factors, to which it will be necessary to return later, we can now see what race is about. It is the unthinking biological mechanism, which has got us where we are. It enabled Cromagnon man, with his infinite potential, to annihilate and replace the slower Neanderthal; it enabled wave after wave of invasions to sweep across Europe; it caused a thousand wars, and in the crucible of war was moulded modern western man with his devastating ingenuity and flexibility. When western man impinged violently on the rest of the world, it had little option but to adopt his techniques.

It is idle to deny that race has often to do with efficiency. White Australians annihilated the aboriginal Tasmanians by greatly superior efficiency, white Americans over-rode the American Indians for the same reason and the Normans

the Anglo-Saxons. Relative efficiency relates to the totality of the effort put out by each group in each case and it can partly relate to factors that can change. Empires can fall.

The essential human characteristic, which is also unique, is the high degree to which intelligence is developed and used as a weapon against competitors. Because it is so important, the biological factor of group morale requires that each group be proud of its level of intelligence and unwilling to admit to any inferiority in this respect. Whilst one can understand the reasons for this unwillingness, an impartial observer will note that innate intelligence is a physical characteristic that is likely to vary between groups just as do other physical characteristics. It is notoriously difficult to measure intelligence, but since the story of man's emergence from the ape days is a story of natural selection of groups with higher levels of intelligence, the surviving races and sub-races of *Homo sapiens sapiens* are likely to show variations in this respect. This is, nevertheless, not a view to which presently less successful groups are likely to subscribe with any enthusiasm, and there seems little to gain by trying to persuade them.

So far in this discussion, the emphasis has been on the benefits of evolving human racial differences and the improvements that have come from them. What has happened has been mechanical, brutal, inevitable and advantageous to us as we now are. If there must be five thousand million of us we are more likely to be reasonably comfortable if we are as intelligent as circumstances permit.

Here in the heartlands of the Golden Age however, powerful constraints have quite suddenly developed on the normal operation of our mechanisms of biological evolution. This to such an extent that they seem unable to continue to operate as designed, either in terms of individual improvement upgrading a group, or of major changes in group ascendancy is likely.

Unfit individuals no longer go to the wall; they survive and their descendants are incorporated into the breeding stock. This is a simple development from medical advance.

On the wider plain, mass movements of peoples are no longer possible in the way that they have occurred by right of strength until recently and throughout history and prehistory. On the contrary, western races that entered Africa by right of strength now have to withdraw, albeit with varying degrees of reluctance, despite the fact that if they had been willing to use their full strength they would have undoubtedly remained, if necessary by means of genocide.

The fact is that the decision takers in the western races have had an attack of conscience that started coming on a hundred years or so ago, and this primary reason would appear to be that because of instant communication the recognised boundary of each man's village has come to be the world. The biology of evolution dictates that compassion is reserved almost wholly for internal group use; if the main group recognised by the decision takers comes to be the world, the whole of *Homo sapiens sapiens* then that is the end of racial competition in any sense meaningful in terms of evolution.

There are other factors too, but probably much less important than the automatic response to the shrinking world. It would be nice to believe that large segments of mankind have applied their power to think logically and have decided that racial instincts, being relics of our biological evolution like an appendix, should be discarded if troublesome. Logic, however, plays a much smaller role than instinct in human affairs.

There is another aspect of compassion, and that is exemplified by a child who puts a floating leaf below a drowning fly or by two dolphins that lift an exhausted swimmer back to the beach. These acts involve instinctive behaviour that gives a biological advantage, and are straws in the wind, which show that life's different forms are able to recognise their essential togetherness when they have effort to spare.

Such disinterested compassion is normally swamped by requirements of personal or group interest, but at a time when the group is becoming the whole of mankind,

and when there is a good deal of effort to spare, it has a chance to channel itself by reinforcing the instinct of wider group solidarity. No doubt it had much to do with the moral fervour applied by the Victorians to the abolition of slavery.

Disinterested compassion is a force that operates against racial instincts and against evolution; in a subordinate form it runs through everything and is always there, but in the long run it is bound to yield to the essential biological interests of the group, however the latter may be defined. If it became dominant in any particular group it would cease to be part of the breeding stock.

Disinterested compassion, togetherness, is the mainspring of all religion and is perhaps the most fundamental and deep rooted of the entire complex interlocking instincts we inherit through the plexus of biological descent. That is, however, another topic. The point to make in this discussion is that when disinterested compassion surfaces through the welter of conflicting factors that motivate an intelligent social animal, it places a fairly firm limit on the degree of intelligence to which the animal can evolve.

The chain is thus: intelligence evolves by natural selection of groups held together by racial feelings; communications improve; the group expands to world size; disinterested compassion reinforces group loyalty resulting in a collective attack of conscience; no further biological evolution is possible. The chain is strengthened by the improvement of weapons to the point that they are unusable without creating a major evolutionary setback, and this remains one possibility.

Hence there is an absolute limit to the evolution of intelligence, and at that barrier *Homo* would appear to have arrived. By the same reasoning, the same constraint will apply to social animals in other worlds and other times; for example when the descendants of the rat come to occupy the same biological niche in several tens of millions of years they too will reach the barrier.

It means that there are unlikely to be any little green men with the power to reach us from beyond the solar system. They must be there all right, but probably

bumbling helplessly against the same barrier as ourselves.

Such then is the place of race in evolution. What is its present status as we become dimly conscious of the barrier before us: as we stand on the high plateau of the Golden Age? It is only too clear that *Homo* is wallowing in the rubbish of his own evolution, surrounded by semi-defunct, semi-irrelevant instincts mixed with concepts incorporating varying proportions of logic. It seems that we must do our best to make the most of this Golden Age, standing amidst our own compost heap, for that is what it is all about.

Firstly then, in the less advanced back-of-beyond the racial mechanism is still working as it was designed; witness Uganda, Ethiopia and Rhodesia, amongst others. It will continue working as designed in the Ugandas and Ethiopias whilst Rhodesias will revert to Zimbabwes. The strongest will everywhere prevail. Secondly, in the heart of things local racial instincts are dead but will not lie down; witness Notting Hill, New York and the liberal, well-organised Dutch. We shall have to put up with this, and it will provide a useful arena, as circumscribed as possible, in which our young can exercise the relict jungle instincts that in the past served so well.

Thirdly, in the peripheral areas between the heartlands and the back-of-beyond lies a wide and varied territory where racial relationships may be said to be frozen into stability or semi-stability for various reasons. In Russia and China ruthless neo-racial group loyalties have become dominant in the course of a convulsive abolition of irrelevant social structures; in India, South America and much of Africa a balance has been reached, there being either no desire or no strength to alter it for the time being.

South Africa, Australia and now even the Near East fit awkwardly and perhaps temporarily into this stable category. Each of these is by any normal criteria racially unstable, but in each case power lies with racial groups that in the last extreme could if necessary commit nuclear suicide. This remains perhaps a most likely next step, perhaps the first step out of the Golden Age.

Racial loyalties have therefore got us to where we are now, and perhaps because they are built-in they remain firmly rooted in our outlook, but their inherent nature has caused them to run out of steam. We need however to continue to live with them as we do with our biology generally, and to make the best available provision for their sublimation.