

The Life History Approach to Human Differences A Tribute to J. Philippe Rushton Helmuth Nyborg

The Renaissance man of modern social sciences, and the left's devastatingly effective effort to muzzle him J. Philippe Rushton posed an immense problem for progressives. It was tough enough to dismiss intelligence researchers such as Murray, Herrnstein and Jensen who continually reinforced findings dating back to the First World War that there are significant differences in the average intelligence of the races. They smeared them as mightily as they could, and disparaged the whole field of intelligence measurement.

Then came Rushton advocating a life history approach, an r/K approach to explaining differences among populations, that integrates observations and measurements of every facet of the human animal: the big 5 personality traits (OCEAN, for Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism), educational accomplishment, criminality, fertility, sexuality, muscularity, physical dimensions, length of gestation, incidence of twins... literally hundreds of measurements. Rushton demonstrated that all of the variables correlate along a continuum: black – Caucasian – East Asian. Moreover, his life history theory provided a satisfactory evolutionary explanation of how these differences came about. It all fit together.

Rushton had to be silenced. In this the left was effective. They managed to prevent some papers from being published. They worked feverishly to get him fired, despite tenure. They prevented his speaking at conferences. They smeared him, quite effectively, as a sex-obsessed racist. Please, readers, let us know what you have heard of Rushton via your comments on this review.

Though the major thrust of this book is the substance of Rushton's work, a theme running through most of the articles is the abuse that was heaped on him. Rushton's only defenses were his impeccable manners, his absolute refusal to be ruffled or to give up, and his prodigious intellect and energy. The piece by Linda Gottfredson which describes this perfectly appears independently on the Internet. Google "Resolute Ignorance on Race and Rushton" for the excruciatingly well written and documented paper describing the systematic abuse to which he was subjected and the willful misinterpretation of science.

The r/K theory of reproduction strategies is the unifying theme running through Rushton's work. r-specialized organisms produce vast numbers of offspring and make no parental investment in them. Oysters spew hundreds of thousands of eggs into the water. Enough of them survive to perpetuate the oyster. The K-specialized gorilla, on the other hand, gives birth every five years, but a high percentage of those young gorillas survive to adulthood. In brief, r-specialized animals make sure via copious reproduction that there are always young animals in place to fill an available niche. K is a shorthand for carrying capacity. K specialized animals' strategy is to saturate the carrying capacity of their ecological niche. r/K is non-controversial, mere common sense when talking about oysters and elephants, aspens and avocados. When applied to human beings it becomes highly inflammatory. Yet, as Rushton shows, it fits.

East Asians have less sex, smaller sex organs, longer gestation, bigger skulls, higher intelligence, fewer babies, less testosterone, less musculature, less impulsiveness, less crime, more stable societies, higher levels of education, higher levels of life achievement, etc. etc. than Caucasians. Nobody disputes this.

Why this is so seems clear. As humankind migrated out of Africa about 50,000 years ago there was strong selection pressure for traits that enabled them to survive in the cold. They needed to develop clothes and warm housing. They needed to plan ahead, as plant foods and even game animals were scarce for substantial portions of the year. They needed to cooperate in the hunt... they became so effective that they hunted the mammoth to extinction, whereas their African cousins left the elephants alone – other game was easier. They needed the stability that comes with pair bonding. They could not afford to have men competing with one another for sex, and there was more and more to teach the children.

These suites of traits appear to have evolved independently, but the r/K driver was the same for each. Caucasians, under less severe environmental stress, evolved in the same direction as the East Asians but by almost every measure to a lesser extent. No argument here either. The controversy attaches itself to the populations at the other end of the spectrum. That is why progressives, and their confederates in academia such as Stephen Jay Gould, were so vicious in their attacks.

This book is a collection of papers which had appeared elsewhere. If you Google [rushton-the-great-theoetician.pdf](#) (with the misspelling intact) you will get a 20-page paper providing a much fuller summary of his contributions to science than this review. For readers who prefer the convenience of an e-book, the Ulster Institute offers this book in downloadable form.

This book absolutely rates five stars. It provides a good overview of Rushton's life work, a survey of the state of the art in Evolutionary Psychology, Behavioral Genetics and Differential Psychology. It describes Rushton the man and the hostile intellectual environment in which he worked. It affords the statistician a good overview of the uses to which the most advanced statistical techniques are being used, and of Rushton's contribution to that field as well.