

## Take Your Choice – Separation or Mongrelization

Theodore Bilbo

This is a dangerous book to review. Anything I say is bound to be wrong.

It is a matter of guilt by association. Many will contend that just by reading this book I brand myself as a racist. Others will object when I find fault with Bilbo's history and science. He makes misstatements that can be dismissed because of the limits of the science of his age, and others that seem less excusable.

Nonetheless, this book is an important expression of a body of thought current in Bilbo's time and place. The first surprise is how late in time it appears. Bilbo had been in public life since his election as Governor of Mississippi in 1916. This book, appearing in 1947, the year of his death, refers to the atom bomb and Gunnar Myrdal's pivotal book, "An American dilemma."

Bilbo was familiar with the writings of the European philosophers, the American founding fathers, and especially America's African-American intellectuals, the best remembered of whom today are W E B DuBois and Booker T. Washington.

I have several objectives in writing this review. The first is to establish a historical context for the racial problems that continue to exist in the United States. The second is to reassess the points that Bilbo raised eight decades ago and compare his views with those of modern science and political figures. My third objective is to tie together a great deal of reading from disparate sources on the topics Bilbo raises. To that end I am including links to many books I have reviewed on Amazon.

Choosing a star rating for this book is exceptionally difficult. Readers have a tendency to evaluate the review according to their feelings on the book's topic. By that criterion any right-thinking modern American, finding the book's topic reprehensible, would vote this review as unhelpful. Please don't do that. Please read the review and decide for yourself whether or not it seems to be an accurate reflection of the contents of the book, and useful as a modern assessment of the topics in question. That is my objective.

As this is a long review, I have organized it according to Bilbo's table of contents: introduction and 15 chapters.

### Introduction

The introduction, by Methodist preacher and segregationist Ernest Sevier Cox, credits Sen. Bilbo with introducing the Greater Liberia bill in 1939. The objective was to provide financial aid to the Negroes who wanted to migrate to Liberia. Bilbo submitted it with a petition of support signed by 2 1/2 million black Americans. The bill called for negotiation with France and Great Britain, which at that time held the neighboring Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast as colonies, to assure enough land for resettlement. The idea was to forgive debts from World War I still owed by these countries in exchange for land.

Needless to say, the bill had a great deal of white support. Cox in his introduction writes "Neither race doubts that, if the Negro is not given a home of his own, the blood of the two races will tend to form a composite race and that the United States will eventually be a negroid nation. Separation and amalgamation are alternatives, and from these alternatives there can be no escape. Senator Bilbo presents the alternatives in the title of his work, Take Your Choice - Separation or Mongrelization."

Cox mentions his own work through the 20s and 30s with Negro nationalist leaders to acquire a black homeland. This was considered by black and white religious leaders of the time to be a workable and reasonable solution to America's race problem. Bilbo's primary theme is that the future would be uncomfortable were the races to remain together. We are living that future. How accurate was his prediction?

### Chapter I      The Race Issue - Our Greatest Domestic Problem

There is not much dispute with regard to Bilbo's claim that race is America's greatest problem. It was the greatest problem in framing the American Constitution. Jefferson had written "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free: nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government." Tocqueville, writing [[ASIN:0679728252 Democracy in America]] in the 1830s, saw it as America's greatest problem. Google "the present and probable future condition of the three races that inhabit the territory of the United States" for his pessimistic, and prescient analysis.

Bilbo made the accurate observation that the problem demanded a solution. "Let those who now plead that this is not the time for discussing the race question obtain any of these two hundred books or any current Negro newspaper or magazine and read the demands of the Negro leaders for complete political, economic, and social equality. They openly advocate the intermarriage of whites and Negroes, and this inflammable doctrine is being spread among the Negroes throughout this country. This group purposely forced the race issue with all its implications to the front in the midst of our Nation's all-out war-effort; they have demanded an answer."

The problem did find a solution – the opposite of what Bilbo was advocating. At his writing, Truman had just desegregated the Armed Forces. Segregation was under attack on all fronts, with strong support from the federal government. Academia, personified by Frans Boaz, the founder of the field of anthropology, was advocating the thorough mixing of bloodlines. This was Bilbo's ultimate fear – miscegenation.

## Chapter II Race and Civilization

Bilbo claimed that there are three primary races of man: black, white and yellow. Today we acknowledge that there are no sharp boundaries, only fuzzy borders known as clines. Moderns would more likely choose a five race categorization including the colors red and brown.

Bilbo is approximately right in claiming that there is a 6,000 year history of interaction between Blacks and whites, and 4,000 between yellow and white. Bilbo claims that the Caucasian race has been responsible for all great civilizations. He claims the Indian, Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations for the Caucasian race. Even if so, most would now claim that East Asian civilizations attained heights that were equivalent to the Caucasian civilizations of their day, and the Mesoamerican civilizations had been more advanced than Bilbo knew.

What remains mostly undisputed is that sub-Saharan Africa did not develop much civilization. Jared Diamond in [[ASIN:0393317552 Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies]] attributes this to several factors: few navigable rivers to foster trade, an impenetrable desert separating Africa from the rest the world, and a warm climate that did not demand innovation. The Neolithic Revolution (agriculture) was many millennia later arriving in Africa than Mesopotamia and China. Without agriculture Africa did not develop large population clusters that are essential to the development of advanced civilization. See [[ASIN:B0042FZRPC The 10,000 Year Explosion: How Civilization Accelerated Human Evolution]].

Bilbo is on shakier ground when he attributes the decline of the Egyptian, Phoenician and Greek civilizations to the admixture of African blood. The error he makes repeatedly is to assume that there is a qualitative rather than quantitative difference between human populations. Put another way, although there are differences among human populations in the averages of every measurable trait, there are few all-or-nothing differences to be found.

Bilbo would like to believe that monotheism is a marker of high civilization. This hypothesis simply does not stand up to analysis. The great civilizations east of Iran were not monotheistic, nor were Greece, Rome, or our northern European ancestors.

## Chapter III The Negro Problem in American History

Bilbo offers a short but useful history of slavery in America, beginning with Dutch traders' sale of black slaves to the colony of Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. Not noted is the fact that there were many white and Indian slaves as well;

slavery was a widely accepted institution in Europe and the Americas. Bilbo does go out of his way to place blame on the New England-based slavers who brought them to the American South.

Bilbo recognizes the impossibility of his own proposal to transport America's 12 million Blacks back to Africa. He likewise sees the futility of any other solution. In advocating continued segregation, he recognizes that it is a rearguard action that cannot succeed as a permanent solution.

He quotes many American statesmen, beginning with Lincoln, with regard to the futility of African-Americans ever becoming equal to the whites. What he is slower to recognize is the futility of attempting to draw black and white boundaries in a matter in which difference is a matter of shading.

Bilbo provides a Southerner's perspective of the period of Reconstruction, a disaster for the South that left enduring bitter memories. Northern carpetbaggers arrived, obtained office through the black electorate, and instituted a regime of fraud and oppression as revenge against the downtrodden white population. This history was within living memory in Bilbo's lifetime, and should not be excluded when assessing his points of view.

#### Chapter IV Southern Segregation and the Color Line

In this chapter Bilbo gives as strong an argument as he can for the policy we know from the Brown versus Board of Education decision as "separate but equal." He advocates legal equality but social segregation. The Brown decision found correctly that it was a fiction – impossible to implement. Bilbo was right, as were the Rhodesians, South Africans and contemporary Israelis, in recognizing that two very different populations could not coexist in the same territory without an official policy of apartheid. Apartheid was, however, politically untenable.

Bilbo points to South America, Brazil at the forefront, as an example of unrestrained miscegenation. He claims that the superior success of the United States is due to the fact that the European population had not so intermingled.

Bilbo vowed that the southern whites would never cave in. In fact, within 15 years of the appearance of this book, they had quite completely capitulated to a Washington DC dominated by Northerners.

#### Chapter V The Demands of the Negro Leaders

Bilbo had read black authors quite extensively. This chapter provides a surprisingly sympathetic review of their demands. The surprise is that he could recognize what they wanted and yet not concede the inevitability of their receiving it. Here is the first of a number of such lists, points that we would consider today to be beyond argument:

- "1. Equality of opportunity.
- "2. Equal pay for equal work.
- "3. Equal protection of the laws.
- "4. Equality of suffrage.
- "5. Equal recognition of the dignity of the human being.
- "6. Abolition of public segregation."

In this chapter Bilbo provides a useful list of sources for arguments that go entirely against him. He quotes extensively from W E B Dubois, whom he took to be dangerous and unrealistic, and Booker T. Washington, whom he holds up as an intelligent realist. See [[ASIN:1438527365 The Future of the American Negro]].

#### Chapter VI Inequalities of the White and Negro Races

Bilbo starts the chapter with a reiteration of his claim that Africans had not developed a civilization and had contributed virtually nothing to human culture or knowledge. They had no architecture, no literature, no science. Several modern

authors, writing about growing up in Africa, shed light on the Africa of Bilbo's age, among them [[ASIN:1439164991 Derman]] and [[ASIN:0062225804 Dawkins]]. [[ASIN:B0023FJXK8 Norman Cousins]] reports sympathetically about the Africa he saw when visiting the great Albert Schweitzer in the 1950s. Axelle Kabou, a Cameroonian, does an assessment in [[ASIN:2738408931 Et si l'Afrique refusait le developpement?]]. Longtime teacher in Africa Gedaliah Braun gives an assessment in [[ASIN:B00F2MPO2U Racism, Guilt, Self-Hatred and Self-Deceit]]. And lastly, the daughter of the rabbi who led the campaign against apartheid gives her assessment of how it turned out in [[ASIN:0984907017 Into the Cannibal's Pot: Lessons for America from Post-Apartheid South Africa]]

He next embarks on a long catalog of differences in physical traits between Africans and Caucasians. His observations on skin, hair, facial features and so on are no more than a statement of the obvious. He states that the average cranial capacity of Africans is 35 ounces compared to 45 for Caucasians. This difference is more than the first researcher, Samuel Morton, found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Modern researchers state the difference in cubic centimeters, but converting the statistics in [[ASIN:1593680198 Race Differences in Intelligence]] into ounces, one finds Africans at 43.5 ounces and Caucasians at 46.5. Incidentally, East Asians are the highest at 48.0.

Bilbo is wrong to claim: "The Negro has, in fact, no morals, and it is therefore out of the question for him to be immoral; in other words, he is non-moral rather than immoral." Statistical analysis shows that self-restraint, which one might call morality, is relatively strongly correlated with intelligence. The intelligence distributions of all races of man overlap, although the averages are different, rising increasingly through African, Amerindian, South Asian, Caucasian, and at the top, East Asian. See [[ASIN:0275961036 The g Factor: The Science of Mental Ability]] and [[ASIN:0521707811 Human Intelligence]] for details.

Temperament is a different psychological construct, most commonly characterized by the five traits in the OCEAN acronym: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and (lack of) neuroticism. Although per Rushton [[ASIN:0965683621 Race, Evolution and Behavior]] Africans are on average more impulsive than other races, this is merely a matter of degree. It is surprising that Bilbo could hold that there are categorical differences between the races given the number of exceptional African-Americans even in his day. This book refers to Dubois, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. Among his contemporaries were the intellectual and musical prodigy Paul Robison, diplomat Ralph Bunche and Senator Edward Brooke.

The intellectual climate changed strongly during Bilbo's lifetime. Francis Galton, Herbert Spencer and many others advance the eugenics movement in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was the very Darwinian belief that intelligence was highly heritable. The behaviorists, Harvard's Skinner and Watson prominent among them, stood that concept on its head in the 1930s. They held with the blank slate thesis that environment was everything – any human infant could be molded into any kind of adult. These beliefs became part of the political dogma of the New Deal and the Soviet Union. From this belief followed the conclusion that any observed differences among peoples – between Blacks and whites in particular – must be the result of nurture and environment.

This belief in innate equality, called the Standard Social Science Model, persists in political life today. It underlies government policy, especially Affirmative Action. The scientific basis for such belief has long since eroded. The last prominent scientist to support it was Stephen Jay Gould a quarter century ago in [[ASIN:0393314251 The Mismeasure of Man]], and not much has been written since rebuttals to the [[ASIN:0684824299 Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life]] such as [[ASIN:0465006930 The Bell Curve Wars]].

Genetic researchers around the world are searching for gene patterns that are associated with intelligence. They have found certain clusters of genes that correlate moderately with intelligence. Given the high level of interest in the question, one can expect that they will know quite a bit more within ten years. This all seems to confirm the beliefs of Jensen, Lynn and Hunt above that intelligence is about 80% hereditary. Of course, race also being hereditary, intelligence is correlated with race.

**Bilbo writes: "It cannot be forgotten that Thomas Jefferson who wrote that 'all men are created equal' also wrote the following lines concerning the Negro. 'Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free; nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government.'"**

This is the paradox, the conundrum of the races in America. Equality is our doctrine. Accepting that doctrine, there cannot be anything less than full equality at a civic level. However, although we can observe and measure the inequality, it is always a matter of degree, and there is no fair mechanism for legislating how the inequality should be accommodated. In this chapter Bilbo attempts, unsuccessfully, to reinterpret the principles of the American democracy.

#### Chapter VIII False Concepts of the Christian Religion

It has been noted that one can quote Scripture to justify almost any position. Bilbo was quite knowledgeable about the Bible and he finds support in it for segregation, which he presents in this chapter.

#### Chapter IX The Campaign for Complete Equality

This chapter is sadly amusing. Black Americans have enjoyed full equality under the law for half a century as I write this. Growing up as I did in California, I have never been to a place in which this was not so. In fact, the battle fronts moved so rapidly that for most of my lifetime the fight has gone the other way. Since the Johnson administration black Americans have been receiving preferences in university admissions, hiring and other realms of civic life. In this year 2017 many read into Donald Trump's election the belief that white Americans are fed up. They believe in equality – and they want to win some back for themselves. At any rate, Bilbo's observations in this chapter are of merely historical interest. His side lost the battle quickly and in a resounding fashion.

#### Chapter X Astounding Revelations to White America

This might be called the cultural Marxism chapter. Bilbo starts out by attacking Frans Boas, identifying him as a Jew, as a person who wants to mongrelize America by tearing down all racial barriers. His disciples Ruth Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish adopted the Standard Social Science Model in its entirety and declared that there were none but superficial differences among the races. They went on to assert in a pamphlet entitled "The Races of Mankind" that Blacks in the American South were smarter than the whites among whom they lived.

Bilbo next attacks Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish professor who was invited by the Carnegie Corporation to study the race situation in America. Brimming with the naïve confidence that comes of having lived in a totally homogeneous country, and in keeping with the Standard Social Science Model, Myrdal attributed the unequal position of the Negro in America exclusively to discrimination and racism in his 1700 page, two volume tome entitled "An American Dilemma." This work served as much as any other as the intellectual foundation for the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

I add, with sad irony, that this same Swedish naïveté compounded with unbounded altruism has led the Swedes to exceed all other European countries in admitting refugees from Africa and Syria in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Swedes find themselves at an absolute loss for what to do about the fact that these immigrants are not assimilating and are responsible for a vast amount of crime. See [\[\[ASIN:1484873831 The Swedish Story: From extreme experiment to normal nation\]\]](#) for a calm, balanced assessment of their situation as of 2012.

The balance of the chapter cites other authors who write in a similar vein. In retrospect, it is clear that Bilbo was fighting an intellectual tide that was bound to sweep him away. See David Gelernter's [\[\[ASIN:1594036063 America-Lite: How Imperial Academia Dismantled Our Culture\]\]](#), [\[\[ASIN:0231134177 Theory's Empire: An Anthology of Dissent\]\]](#) and [\[\[ASIN:0300069200 Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of the Humanities\]\]](#) for a history of how it happened in the US, and [\[\[ASIN:1910524492 The Real Right Returns\]\]](#) for the European perspective.

#### Chapter XI The Springfield Plan and Such

The Springfield plan was one of many of the time, inspired by Frans Boas and other progressives. According to this plan, advocated by a large number of northern churchmen from the mainstream denominations, America would become fully racially mixed in 300 years. The claim was that even at that time no more than 10% of American Blacks were of unmixed blood. That figure is probably incorrect. Recent genetic analysis shows a white admixture of somewhere between 20% and 30% in most American Blacks, more in the north than in the South.

At any rate, this chapter is mainly of historical interest. It shows the direction that America's intellectual elite of the late 1940s wanted to take the country.

## Chapter XII The Dangers of Amalgamation

Amalgamation is another word for miscegenation, or race mixing. This chapter is another litany of reasons why it is a bad idea. It was interesting as history to note that there was only one African-American member of Congress at this time, and that all members of Congress had married people of their own race. Although the idea of race mixing was in currency, there was a natural conservatism weighing against it among both races.

I will add my own anecdote. In California, where I was in kindergarten as this was written, there had never been any legal segregation. The races nonetheless kept pretty much to themselves. I sat in class with a few black students. It was remarked that some of them were reasonably attractive, but neither I nor any of my peers would have thought of them as romantic partners. One of my classmates confesses years later that on a dare he kissed a black girl in the sixth grade.

## Chapter XIII Physical Separation Proper Solution to The Race Problem

Bilbo makes the absolutely accurate observation that wherever the races live together in proximity, there will be some interbreeding. In 1681 20% of the Blacks in Pennsylvania were recorded as mulattos. The Union soldiers occupying the Confederacy did what soldiers everywhere do – took sex where they could find it. Russian author Romanovsky takes great pleasure in writing about the white man's dalliances with blacks in [\[\[ASIN:B008KH2ZLC &#x410;&#x43C;&#x435;&#x440;&#x438;&#x43A;&#x430; &#x43A;&#x430;&#x43A; &#x435;&#x441;&#x442;&#x44C;\]\]](#) This pattern goes way back. Recent genetic research shows that something like 3% of the European genome – though none of the African – comes from Neanderthal women.

The bottom line is that Bilbo understood that there was only one workable solution to the problem as he saw it. Unfortunately, the solution was unviable. It was unpopular and would have been impossible to implement.

## Chapter XIV Outstanding Advocates of Separation

The advocates of separation mentioned by Bilbo date mostly from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, before the Civil War. A great many American-Statesman, Henry Clay among them, supported the back to Africa movement. This did result in the foundation of Liberia. However, Liberia was never enough of a success to attract American Blacks to freely move there in large numbers.

## Chapter XV The Negro Repatriation Movement

This is a history of Marcus Garvey and the Africa for Africans movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and of Bilbo's own efforts in the 1930s to encourage black Americans to emigrate.

## Chapter XVI Standing at The Crossroads

In his conclusion, Bilbo states that it is now or never. Unless the races are physically separated, there will continue to be turmoil in the United States and the problem will not find a resolution. Now, 70 years after publication, we are in a position to judge whether or not he was prescient.