

LA DISCRIMINACIÓN POR COLOR DE LA PIEL EN EL DEBATE EDUCATIVO ACTUAL: ¿ANTROPOLOGÍA FRENTE A EDUCACIÓN?

The discrimination by skin color in the current educational debate: Anthropology versus Education?

Luisa Martínez O'Farrill¹

Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas "Enrique José Varona". Cuba
manuelamo@ucpejv.edu.cu

Resumen

El tema de las discriminaciones sociales por color de piel, sexo, religiones o estereotipos sobre los géneros, bien podría parecernos aspectos superados dentro del contexto de la Sociedad Cubana actual. Sin embargo, la supervivencia de este flagelo de la discriminación acompaña el desarrollo de nuestra sociedad en el presente, alimentando en algunas personas la toma de decisiones con respecto a individuos con los cuales entran en contacto bajo determinadas condiciones laborales, de estudio, relaciones interpersonales y de pareja. El objetivo 57, aprobado en la Primera Conferencia Nacional del Partido en Cuba, celebrada en enero del pasado (2011), habla de enfrentar los prejuicios y conductas discriminatorias por color de piel, género, creencias religiosas, orientación sexual, origen territorial y otros que son contrarios a la Constitución y las leyes, atentan contra la unidad nacional y limitan el ejercicio de los derechos de las personas. La Universidad ante el llamado del país, tiene una alta responsabilidad en la lucha por la superación de estas mentalidades que son rezagos del pasado. Pero sobre todo alejadas del ideal humanista tradicional de la Sociedad Cubana, a cuya conquista dedicaron sus vidas los mejores hijos, en toda la trayectoria temporal de nuestra historia y cultura.

Palabras clave: Raza; Racismo; Discriminación social; Discriminación racial en Cuba; Sociedad cubana, Universidad

Abstract

The theme of the social discriminations for color of skin, sex, religions or stereotypes on the textiles, very well I could look like aspects surpassed within the context of the present-day Society Cubana. However, the survival of this whip of discrimination accompanies the development of our society in the present, feeding in some people the

¹ **Autora para correspondencia:** Luisa Martínez O'Farrill. Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas "Enrique José Varona". La Habana, Cuba. manuelamo@ucpejv.edu.cu

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decision making regarding individuals with the ones that they enter with in contact under determined working conditions, of study, personal relations and of couple. The objective 57, pass mark in the First National Lecture of the Party of Cuba, celebrated in January of the past (2011), talk about confronting prejudices and discriminatory conducts for color of skin, kind, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, territorial origin and other ones that they are contrary to the constitution and laws, they threaten the national unit and they limit the exercise of the rights of the people. The University before the call of the country, deems a high responsibility the overcoming of these intentions that are aftereffects of the past in the fight as. But most of all far away of the humanistic traditional ideal of the Cuban society, to whose conquest the children dedicated their better lives, in the whole temporary trajectory of our history and culture.

Keywords: Race; Racism; Social discrimination; racial discrimination in Cuba; Cuban society; University

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“La Naturaleza no hace razas, sino individuos humanos. La raza es hechura social.”
Ortiz, p. 380:2, El engaño de las razas, 1946

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2000s have been prodigal in their progress and persistence in bringing to light with renewed force the issue of discrimination in any of its forms; but especially in the racial aspect, as many still call it when referring to this painful aspect of discrimination and social inequality based on skin colour.

The clothes under which they are presented are different depending on the social scenario that serves as a background, be it xenophobia, forced displacements of ethnic groups such as Palestinians, gypsies, Mexicans and others, who are contemptuously considered minorities, consciously forgetting that they are human beings.

It has been recognised by Dr. Esteban Morales, in an interview in the newspaper *Trabajadores*, published on 14 December 2009, which I quote: “It would be absurd to think that in Cuba there are no racial problems, negative stereotypes, discrimination and racism, as burdens, although not only as such, but as something that society is capable of reproducing in its imperfection.”

The need to revise the curricula and to include the treatment of the issue of discrimination on the basis of skin colour is a priority at present; the gradual elimination of this scourge in the consciousness of society, as well as of the cultural stereotypes

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that favour the survival of racism in any of its forms, will depend on its systematisation in the education of current and future generations.

It recognises in the journalistic work the differences in approaches to the issue in the country and the interpretations that have been produced around Cuba from abroad, by establishing an analogy between the situation of Afro-Americans and "Afro-Cubans".

The context of this situation was the declaration of some Afro-Americans in support of the struggle for civil rights in Cuba. A situation far removed from the social framework prevailing in the country under the triumphant Revolution since 1959, which has systematically and permanently combated manifestations of "racial discrimination" in spirit and through the expressions on the subject made by the country's top leaders.

The very term "Afro-Cuban" does not stand up to analysis, it does not support, in our case, a study of ethnic differentiation or social composition, by virtue of the gradual miscegenation of the Cuban population up to the present day, which has increasingly eliminated the traditional archetypes of skin colours: black, white, yellow and mestizo, with the latter increasing considerably, but this does not affect the survival in individual subjectivity of the differentiating archetypes and the pretensions to apply them in the social relations in which they participate, be they from religions, social folklore, music, dance, traditions or other popular cultural expressions.

There are many international and national congresses where the theme inspires numerous scholars, researchers, teachers, health personnel, who provide testimonies on the survival of this phenomenon on a regional and international scale, for example the Ibero-American Meeting of the International Year for People of African Descent: Afro XXI, in Salvador de Bahia, 2011, recognised and I quote: " Afro-descendant youth is one of the groups most affected by structural processes of exclusion, inequality and poverty " (end of quote); but in particular we are astonished by the presence it still has in Cuba.

The call of the National Assembly, published by the newspaper Granma, December 21, 2011, in which Ricardo Alarcón, member of the Political Bureau of the PCC expressed during the intervention before the Commission of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, states: " it is necessary to combat any action of discrimination, in violation of Cuban laws, as an intrinsic principle of the Revolution that essentially promotes unity and solidarity. "

Further on, he pointed out: " (...) it is urgent to assume History as the essence to destroy those scourges that persist to this day. " Finally he pointed out: " The essentially cultural phenomenon is incompatible with Socialism, (...) it is a latent evil before which it is impossible to close one's eyes.

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The call of the VI Congress of the PCC, of the National Conference, as well as the call of the press in which the subject has been sporadically dealt with, without affecting the scientific depth of the analyses, in which the role of education as an essential vehicle for the transformation of the mentality of the young generations and to confront the social struggle for a better society, more just in the equality of the groups within it, is constantly insisted upon.

The opportunities for individual and collective development have continuity in the work developed by the Party in the application and development of the agreements of the great meeting, in this regard I quote the Opinion of Commission No. 2: Political and Ideological Work, which under the format of summary of the Conference of the PCC, published in the Granma newspaper, February 1, 2012:

“ (...). Indispensable to guarantee the unity of all patriots and the exercise of people's rights is to confront all prejudice and discriminatory behaviour, in correspondence with Martí's desire declared in the Constitution of the Republic regarding the cult of Cubans to the full dignity of man. (...) ”

The most evident recognition of the presence of discrimination can be seen in part of the summary text of the working sessions of Commission No. 3 on the Cadres Policy, when it states:

“ (...) to increase in a progressive and sustained manner, the promotion of women, **blacks, mixed race** and young people to management positions, an issue on which, despite the reiterated signals made by the country's top leadership, work is still not being done with sufficient intentionality, which is why the aims outlined are not being achieved. (...) ” Periódico Granma, 2 February 2012.

The present calls us to revisit the near past, specifically the first half of the twentieth century. In this period, Cuba took the vanguard position in the fight against racial discrimination in the country, the Latin American region and internationally. It had an immediate antecedent in the thought of José Martí, who came to formulate a defining thesis of his action for the future of Cuba which I quote: “ There is no hatred of races, because there are no races. ”

It is essential to clarify that documentary analysis was used as a methodology for the elaboration of this article. In this order, the theoretical triangulation favoured the clarification of the relations between culture - race, society - race, as well as the expressions it has had in different historical moments. At the same time, reaffirming the social transcendence that an education in respect for diversity by skin colour can achieve.

2. ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD: RACE

The search for the etymological meaning of the word as part of the construction of the range of meanings in its content, which would allow a more objective analysis of the subject and its antiquity, has followed the following path:

The Dictionary of the Spanish Language ARISTOS. Race: caste or quality of lineage // Each of the groups into which some botanical and zoological species are subdivided, whose differential characters are perpetuated by inheritance.

In *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary*. Race²: noun: caste, lineage, lineage, lineage, race. The French-Spanish Dictionary, known by Manual Amador, MINED, 1978, understands Race as: raza. Racehumaine.

The Portuguese-Spanish Dictionary. Race: raça, lineage, caste. Avallardi Dictionary, Italian - Spanish, 1995, includes the word Raza: razza. Feminine noun.

By way of an evaluative summary, we can say that: **Race**: is a concept that alludes to the major human division, according to physical characteristics // Division into races, gender, species, castes, groups of people // Division of living creatures. Examining the concept from the most current positions recognised by the Dictionary of Philosophy, Herder, 2004.

Some authors such as Fernando Ortiz Fernández, in *El engaño de las razas*, 1946 and Armando Entralgo in *Problemas del estudio de la Historia de África*, pages 15 - 28. *Revista Etnología y Folklore*, No. 7, 1969, agree in pointing out that:

- o The concept of race has an unknown origin and unclear etymology.
- o There is agreement that the concept is used in the mercantile period towards Asia and America, before which there is no evidence of its use.
- o The word is considered to have arisen in Renaissance Europe, although its use has not been found in the accounts of travellers and historians. There is talk of the existence of different peoples in terms of culture, behaviour and customs.
- o Some suggest its origin in the Italian word *razza*, others place it in the Arabic word *ras*: group of descendants.

The author of this work and researcher of the subject for more than fifteen years, has not found this last meaning in Arabic for **ras**, but rather tip of land, chief, pronoun, according to French Language Dictionaries consulted, such as the one already referred to, therefore she considers that it may be a declension by linguistic use, to indicate belonging to a place.

She has also examined anthropological theories on race and shares the result:

2.1. Theory of the measurement of certain bodily characters or human types.

As a main characteristic, it presents a descriptive theory on non-biological morphological bases, i.e. cranial shape, stature, pigmentation, hair, face, nose. Examples are:

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- o 1st classification of breeds. Criterion: Skin colour. (A. Blumenbach, 1752 - 1840): 5 races - 5 continents: 1) Caucasian, white or Europid, 2) Mongolian, yellow and 3) Ethiopian or black. 4) American or coppery, 5) Malay or brown.
- o 1950. Boyd, classifies including blood group as a factor of human differentiation.
- o Coon, Birdsell and Gran, classify 34 breeds, based on genetic factors.

In essence they are racist conceptual evasions of **biological race**. Incidentally, current studies carried out at the University of Vermont, USA, produce research under Boyd's 1950 theory and have confirmed the existence of two new blood groups, L and J, and at the same time it has been recognised that these groups are more common than previously thought and are estimated to be very common in Asia.

On the one hand, the increased knowledge of the blood composition of human beings has a positive impact on the knowledge of incompatibilities and consequently eliminates the occurrence of the number of deaths due to incompatibilities. But on the other hand, this knowledge has led to a characterisation of personalities according to blood group, so that individuals of group A, according to the Japanese, are characterised by being perfectionists, but too anxious.

Group B individuals are cheerful, eccentric and selfish. ABs are described as creative, mysterious and unpredictable. O-groupers are described as curious, generous and stubborn.

The negative side of this knowledge has come to be included the knowledge of blood group for the granting of job vacancies, to the separation of children from kindergarten, under the pretext of personality, among other effects that are yet to be manifested and studied in the near future.

2.2. Theory of human racial hierarchy (Quadrumanos).

Main characteristic: it is a descriptive theory on morphological basis of pigmentation, hair, face, nose, as the basis of an evolutionary gradation: from monkey to black, to yellow and white: M. N. A. B.

- o Basis 1: by the opening of the facial angle, on a scale from lesser to greater: M. N. B. A.
- o Basis 2. for the relative evolution of the hair: M. N. B. A.
- o Basis 3. Basis 3. for the structure of the hair: M. A. B. N.
- o Basis 4: by relative abundance of hair: B. A. N.

2.3. Theory of the relationship between cranial capacity (size) and intelligence (2nd half of the 19th century).

Its main characteristic is that it is a descriptive theory that rests on anthropometric and morphological bases of the brain, examined as a whole as measures - determining values of the capacity for intelligence in great men. Its main representatives were: R. Wagner, P. Broca, Donaldson and others.

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Physical anthropology was the main stage for the development of the **Brain size theory**, in short, it established an analogy: great men - great brains.

R. Wagner destroyed the myth and asked great men of Europe to donate their corpses for such studies. Great men such as Beethoven, La Fontaine, Kant, etc. responded to the request, however, the studies carried out did not always corroborate the theory.

Bronislaw Malinowski, in the heat of the studies on which information was revealed, concluded: "You cannot prove that a man has a smaller soul by the fact that he has a smaller skull. You cannot measure a soul. "

In Cuba the echoes of such investigations led in 1899, three Cuban doctors to study exhaustively the skull of Antonio Maceo. The doctors were: J. L. Montalvo, Carlos de la Torre y de la Huerta, and Luis Montané Dardé.

The three doctors, initiators of anthropology in Cuba, proved that José Martí was absolutely right when he considered that the Bronze Titan had as much strength in his arm as in his mind. They took into account the study on the basis of P. Broca's measures

The study of **his thinking function** revealed:

- o Dividing Maceo's skull into two semi-circumferences, an impressive development of the anterior part in relation to the posterior part was verified.
- o Another important finding was the verification that his cranial sutures remained unusually open, despite his age, in frankly favourable growth from the intellectual point of view.

They took into account that, at his death, General Antonio Maceo y Grajales was 51 years old, yet his brain reflected a person of about 48 years.

The conclusions of the study carried out revealed from the anthropometric analysis (bone measurements) that **Maceo, a mixed race man, very close to two metres tall**, had an anomaly of a bony nature in the occipital cranial portion, known as epactal, Incal or Inca bone, present only in the skulls of exceptional people.

In a letter to General Antonio on 20 February 1894 (page 53, volume IV of the Epistolario de Luis García Pascual), Martí wrote: "You are for me, and I say this with my mouth full and my pen running, one of the most complete and vigorous men, the most lucid and useful to Cuba...".

He drew a magnificent portrait of the Lieutenant General of the Liberation Army of Cuba: "His thought is firm and harmonious as the lines of his skull". These statements

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by José Martí reveal his respect not only for the military man, but also for the exceptional man who was the Bronze Titan.

It is indisputable that the anthropological study of Antonio Maceo's corpse was intentional and in this sense instructive, on the one hand it was a scientific opportunity to provide truthful elements for the racist insinuations about his capacity, intelligence and the discrimination he was subjected to throughout the two wars, a situation that would haunt him until after his death. On the other hand, this act can be seen as a resounding denial of his incapacity and the fact that he was only a skilled and brave Mambi soldier, having far exceeded the required cranial and cerebral measurements.

In a letter, little circulated at present, Maceo gave us proof once again of his moral stature and personal integrity, his Cubanness above any doubt or dubious human emotions, the simple reading of the text is eloquent, and for this reason it is included in its entirety:

“ A complaint by Antonio Maceo

Antonio Maceo y Grajales, a native of the City of Cuba, Brigadier of the E. L. and at present Chief of the 2nd Division 1st Corps, before you, using the most respectful form, presents himself and exposes: **That from a long time ago**, if you will, **I have been tolerating, species and conversations that I truly condemned to contempt because I believed them to come from the enemy**; that I know, that he wields and has used all kinds of weapons to disunite us and see if in this way he can defeat us; **but later**, seeing that the **class question took on more and give it another form**; He tried to find out where it came from, **and was finally convinced that it did not come from the enemy**; but, painfully enough, from **individuals, our brothers**, who, forgetting the republican principles which they ought to observe, are rather occupied in serving their own particular political aims; therefore, in view of what has been said, he feels obliged to turn to the Government which you represent, so that, being well penetrated by the enemy, you may be able to find out where it came from. You are obliged, therefore, by reason of what has been said, to apply to the Government which you represent, so that, being well penetrated with the reasons which you will hereafter explain, it may proceed as justice would require; and, returning, **dictate the necessary measures, in order that at no time may the conduct of the exponent, nor his honour appear doubtful, nor his honour with the slightest stain; for the desires of his whole life have been, are and will be to serve his country**, defending the proclaimed principles, and to expose his life, as he has so often done, so that the cause may triumph and the Sacred-Holy principles of liberty and independence be maintained untouched.

The exponent, Co. President, learned some time ago from a person of good reputation and prestige, that there was a small circle, which propagated to have manifested to the Government “ **not wishing to serve because it was contrary to them, and to set its sights on superimposing coloured men on white men** “. Such is the question that this circle stirs up: and it is to be believed that they have launched it in order to hurt the exponent in the most vivid part; because **with it they want to serve**

particular political interests, and to see if they could thus render useless the one they consider a hindrance to their plans; trying to sink, because otherwise they cannot, the man who entered the revolution with no other aim than that of giving his blood to see if his country could be free and without slaves.

And as the exponent belongs precisely to the coloured class, without considering himself to be worth less than other men; he cannot and must not allow what he is not, nor wants to happen, to take shape and continue to spread, because his dignity, his military honour, the position he occupies and the laurels he has so legitimately acquired demand it. And he protests energetically with all his strength so that neither now nor at any time should he be considered a supporter of this system, nor should he be considered as the author of such disastrous doctrines; especially when he is a part and not despicable of this democratic Republic, which has established liberty, equality and fraternity as its principal basis, and which does not recognise hierarchies. (...)

Encampment in Barigua on May 16, 1876 9th of the Independence P. and L.
Antonio Maceo. "

Taken from the archive of the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, Havana (1)

3. SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT HAD THIS THEME AT THEIR CENTRE IN THE PAST 20TH CENTURY.

1938, E. United States. The Meeting of the American Anthropological. In it the agreement was taken: *Repudiation of racialism and of the use of Anthropology for racist arguments.*

1940, Washington. 8th Pan-American Scientific Congress. Agreement. " *That Anthropology refuses to lend any scientific support to discrimination against any social, linguistic, religious or political group, under the pretext of being a racially inferior group.* " (proposal made by F. Ortiz).

1943, Mexico. 1st Inter-American Demographic Congress. Ac. *That the word "races" applied in an improper sense to human beings be prohibited in official documents (legislative, judicial and administrative) of governments.* (Proposal by F. Ortiz)

Another agreement was: The foundation of the International Institute of Afro-American Studies, with headquarters in Mexico.

The founding act was signed by the Cubans Miguel Covarrubias, Julio Le Riverend and Fernando Ortiz. As a result of the elections for the Scientific Journal: Afroamerica, the composition was as follows:

- Executive Committee: Director: Dr. F. Ortiz
- Consultants: Prof. Miguel Covarrubias and Dr. Julio Le Riverend.

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1945, Chapultepec Castle, Mexico. The 1st Inter-American Congress of Demography was held, during which Resolutions were approved: XLI against racial discrimination, XLIII on Dissemination and XXIX. on revision of school textbooks.

The result of this work process in different congresses and academic spaces showed the active participation of Cuba, represented by some of its vanguard intellectuals, such as Fernando Ortiz, Julio Le Riverend and Miguel Covarrubias. It is interesting to note that the agreements and resolutions are still valid and that they deal with the proposals that are being put forward today for social improvement, which is why we should consider them as a continuity of the most revolutionary and progressive Cuban thought.

Re-education must understand the approach of education as the professional scenario which has before it the supreme task of humanisation of man, the appropriation of values, traditions, customs, which ultimately are produced by the apprehension of national and international culture.

Finally, it is important to recognise that the scientific and technological progress of the last decades of the 20th century has contributed to renewed studies on the subject:

1. The racial classification of the human species has ceased to have a rigorous scientific meaning. It considers genetic differences to be more important than the colour of skin, hair, lips or eyes.
2. They have shown that blood characteristics or the size of the teeth have different planetary distributions and in this sense, they are not sufficient measurements to establish raciality.

For his part, the notable biologist Luigi Cavalli-Sforza, declared at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), held in the city of Atlanta, 1995 (February) that: " Race is a rather useless concept, because humans cannot be grouped together, since the genetic differences between "races ", except in cases of continued geographical isolation, are very few. There is confusion between the notions of race and ethnicity.

Race is a biological notion. Ethnicity is a cultural notion. It is the most appropriate notion to deal with human differences. There are more cultures than races. The same ethnic group contains a diversity of cultures within it.

As a concept of biological classification and ordering: variety, species, subspecies and genus. It is or is intended to be a grouping of human beings according to their morphological, physiological and psychological characteristics, fixed and hereditarily transmissible. It implies a classification methodology inferior to species and genus, analogous to subspecies. Ortiz. El engaño de las razas, p. 370.

As a political concept: Race is confused with a historical nucleation, either with the people or the nation externally, or with the social class or caste internally. (Nation, people, people, caste, class) Ortiz. El engaño de las razas, p. 61.

As a cultural concept: Race is transtruded by forced synonymy with the concept of culture, applied as a distinctive feature of a given human grouping, in terms of its training, organisation and social behaviour. Ortiz. *El engaño de las razas*, p. 61.

As a scientific concept: race represents "a great division of mankind whose members, though individually varied, are characterised as a human group by a certain combination of mainly non-adaptive morphological traits, which are derived from a common descent. Hooton, Ernest, in *The Myth of Race in the Light of Anthropology*. The New Democracy, N. Y., September 1936.

Cuba as part of the development of Medical Genetics has carried out recent studies, 2011 - 2012, on the composition of the Cuban population, taking as a basis the ancestral genes, the study to everyone's surprise has shown that we have a mixed race genetic composition, 72% of us are carriers of European genes, 8% Amerindian and 20% black. This has nothing to do with the colour of our skin, hair and eyes.

In terms of ancestral genes, an individual with black skin colour may have more European or Amerindian genes than black, and vice versa, a white-skinned individual may be a genetic carrier of more black ancestral genes than a European, despite the external physical appearance.

These conclusions developed by Medical Genetics demonstrate the validity of martian's assertions, when in *Nuestra America*, a work published in *El Partido Liberal, Mexico*, on 30 January 1891, wrote: " *There is no hatred of races, because there are no races. (...) The soul emanates equally and eternally from bodies diverse in form and colour.* " (End of quote, *Collected Works*. Volume 6, page 22).

4. CONCLUSIONS

1. All human inheritance is a binary phenomenon (A+B=A'B').
2. Heredity is a word with a biological and social meaning. Then and as a consequence: A'B' is biologically and by inheritance unique. " Individual inheritance is in fact scientific. " Franz Boas.
3. In society man receives multiple cultural influences that define him. Nature and making, as Fernando Ortiz would say, in social participation, as Karl Marx would say. And in this process education is a vital part.
4. The conception of social differentiation based on race has been a socio-political deception that has been disproved by the development of scientific research in the 20th century and post-modern times.

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AUTHOR

Luisa Martínez O'Farrill

"Enrique José Varona" University of Pedagogical Sciences. Cuba
manuelamo@ucpejv.edu.cu

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Notes

- (1) The underlining in the text of the letter highlights the fundamental aspects of discrimination based on skin colour, denounced by the Lieutenant General of the Liberation Army, Antonio Maceo y Grajales. The document or letter has been reproduced in its entirety and is a faithful copy of the

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original that appeared in Revista Bimestre Cubana, No. 1, published at the beginning of the 20th century.

- (2) The role of re-education in overcoming the issue of raciality will be the subject of a second part of this work, as recommended to us.