

### On Dr. Porteus

My thanks to Betty Porteus for her letter (4.9) about Dr. Stanley Porteus. He is to be honored for his pioneer work against racial and cultural prejudice. He said repeatedly, in many ways, that "racial prejudice has no support from findings of comparative psychology."

I regret, but am not surprised, that there are persons at the University of Hawaii who do not read. This occurs at the highest levels of government. For those who are literate I urge that they read the 1950 book by Dr. Porteus. The Maze Test and Intelligence, especially the chapter on racial group differences. Dr. Porteus recognized the group differences as having value in themselves, not as indications of superiority or inferiority.

Criticism of Dr. Porteus came up in 1975 when there was opposition to the naming of Porteus Hall on grounds that he was a racist.

The evidence was clearly in his favor, however. He was not a racist. But he warned those who might consider themselves superior. In 1950 he wrote, "I am not at all convinced that the traits in which white superiority can be demonstrated are the more important for social survival. The atomic bomb, for example, is the invention of the white race. It can easily mean our extinction."

In Hawaii we treasure racial differences, and try to keep alive the traditions and customs of our various ethnic groups. We appreciate intelligence that comes in many shapes and colors. So did Dr. Porteus. I suspect that he would have referred the likes of his detractors to a remedial reading class.

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pared with the relatively good performances of the Central Australian Arunta, the Tamils and Ghurkas of India, and the Ainu of northern Japan. This seems to indicate that commonality of interest and ability in Maze-threading exists among the most diverse cultures and peoples. Here again is proof that planning and foresight are highly developed among some so-called primitive peoples. Of course there are other very important facets of intelligence that the Maze Test does not measure. All that is claimed for it is that it tests planning capacity at a basic level. It is like testing an individual's ability to walk but not the speed with which he can run. According to Havighurst's and Hilkevitch's figures, performance in the Maze is affected but not very dependent upon white contact and acculturation, a conclusion to which I had already independently arrived. Any widely distributed racial group will contain tribes or peoples who vary as regards central tendencies in intelligence level. But if sufficient samples are chosen and sufficiently validated tests are used it should in time be possible to work out quite acceptable comparisons of racial inequalities. According to all available results the most universally applicable test and one which shows up primitive peoples' ability in the fairest light possible is the Maze.

Already a great number of samples of such peoples have been examined by this test, although only a beginning has been made. There are many more opportunities for similar investigations among tribes in Africa, Australia and the peoples of Asia. The island population of the Pacific is now accessible and a great opportunity for psychological anthropologists exists in the way of careful studies of the mentality of these populations. The primitive peoples mentioned in this chapter already cover an extremely wide range. It should be possible to enlarge these samples and extend the testing program to Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian peoples and especially to less known tribes in New Guinea. It is my belief that since thousands of dollars have been spent in work with the Binet, a small fraction of this amount would yield most interesting results in the development of more adequate testing of planning capacity.

Copied from: The Porteus Maze Test and Intelligence; Porteus, Stanley D.; Pacific Books, 1950

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