

Meanings Beneath the Skin: The Evolution of African-Americans

Sherle L. Boone

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Questions about the identity of American-born people of African descent have been debated throughout American History. It is widely assumed that the process of adaptation to a racially stratified society influenced the attitudes, beliefs and emotions of African-Americans. This assumption begs the question, are African Americans a 'new people' with distinctive psychological and cultural traits? The author contends American-born Blacks were gradually transformed from 'Africans living in America' into a 'new people' with different racial conceptualizations and global worldviews from their African ancestors.

The author argues that meanings attributed to the concept of race are of paramount importance in the psychological functioning of African Americans. Novel circumstances surrounding the process of adapting to oppression in a racially stratified society compelled African Americans to attribute unique meanings to the concept of race in ways that reflected the nature of their experience in America. This book shows how African Americans' conceptions of race may operate in a manner that distinguishes them from others of African descent.



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