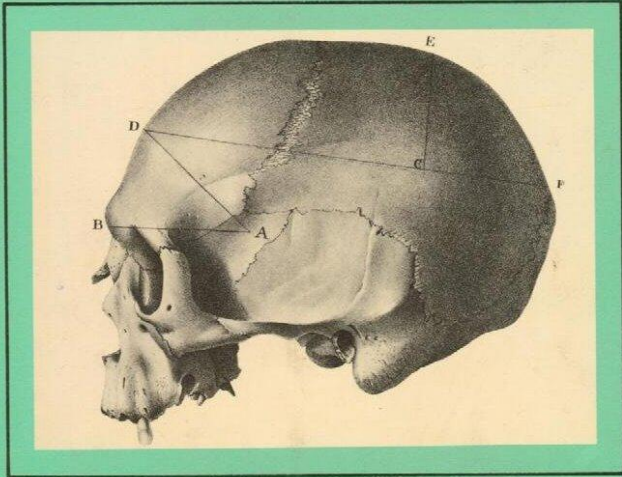


# Introduction

***The Mismeasure of Man*** is a 1981 book by paleontologist [Stephen Jay Gould](#). The book is both a [history](#) and critique of the statistical methods and cultural motivations underlying [biological determinism](#), the belief that "the social and economic differences between human groups—primarily [races](#), [classes](#), and [sexes](#)—arise from inherited, inborn distinctions and that [society](#), in this sense, is an accurate reflection of biology".

Gould argues that the primary assumption underlying biological determinism is that "worth can be assigned to individuals and groups by *measuring intelligence as a single quantity*". Biological determinism is analyzed in discussions of [craniometry](#) and [psychological testing](#), the two principal methods used to measure intelligence as a single quantity. According to Gould, these methods possess two deep fallacies. The first fallacy is [reification](#), which is "our tendency to convert abstract concepts into entities". Examples of reification include the [intelligence quotient](#) (IQ) and the [general intelligence factor](#) (*g* factor), which have been the cornerstones of much research into human [intelligence](#). The second fallacy is that of "ranking", which is the "propensity for ordering complex variation as a gradual ascending scale".

# The Mismeasure of Man



**Stephen Jay Gould**

author of *Ever Since Darwin* and *The Panda's Thumb*

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