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AUTHOR Sadock, Geoffrey J.  
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## ABSTRACT

The broad and highly politicized debate about the causes of rising illiteracy in the nation fall into three categories: nurture, or inadequate elementary/secondary educational institutions; nature, or arguments about genetics and the unteachability of Blacks and other minority groups; and social science, or the idea that standard literacy tests merely represent the injustice of the system. While each idea offers its own rationale, what is clear is that measures to reduce illiteracy must be more than cosmetic. Such measures, while controversial, include: reintroducing grammar instruction; scrapping bilingualism; constitutionally declaring English as the nation's only official language; reinterpreting affirmative action so that it fosters colorblind equal opportunity based on merit; re-establishing a canon of texts selected on literary excellence alone; returning remediation, "foundation" learning, and differentiated degree programs to high schools; eliminating grade inflation; developing and using standardized examinations to determine both degree-track and advancement; and involvement of parents responsible enough to turn off television and demand homework. Community colleges are on the frontline of this battle for literacy, as they face growing percentages of students unable to perform at college level. Suggestions to stem the decline in literacy include: colleges should raise standards to ensure that students graduate with adequate skills to success; require at least a C (2.0) grade point average in "every" semester of a degree program; eliminate remedial and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs, requiring one standard English proficiency examination for all applicants; significantly reduce adjunct faculty hiring; and use transcripts that show all courses taken and grades earned, including F's (or R's). The "downsizing" so necessary in this era could be accomplished at the community college by returning to the norms that served the U.S. well in the past. (Contains 33 notes.) (KP)

**Defending Literacy: With Particular Consideration of the  
Community College**

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**Geoffrey J. Sadock, Ph.D.**

**Bergen Community College**

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Prolegomenon:

Defending Literacy

Geoffrey Johnston Sadock, Ph. D.

Background of the problem: What is literacy?

As the editors of *Adult Literacy in America* discovered, there are diverse definitions of literacy (signing one's name, completing five years of school, or scoring at a particular grade level on a school-based test) and many traditional approaches to measuring it (performance of single tasks or combining the results from diverse tasks into a conglomerate score) that prove arbitrary or unworkable in modern assessment methodology.<sup>1</sup> Later, through a "consensus process," they adopted the following practical definition:

Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.<sup>2</sup>

This definition, while useful for testing and statistical purposes, represents a modern narrowing of the concept and, especially for the humanities, a loss of part of its essential historical meaning. In this essay, "literacy" connotes not only skill in performing such tasks as locating specific information in a text, matching low-level inferences, synthesizing information from complex or lengthy passages, and using specialized knowledge, but also, as in earlier writers (Johnson, Lamb, Shaftsbury, Scott, etc.), familiarity with literature, or what Bloom and Hirsch refer to as the canon.<sup>3</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as, "The quality or state of being literate: knowledge of letters; condition in respect to education." Only later does it add, "especially ability to read and write." The first meaning the OED gives under "literate" is, "acquainted with letters or literature, educated, instructed, learned." The word is recorded in this sense as early as 1432. Understood as both skill "in using printed and written information to function in society" and as familiarity with the Great Books of Western civilization, it is clear that literacy is on the decline among entering freshmen in very late twentieth century America. Innumerable learned papers in academic journals, as well as a recent outpouring in the popular press,<sup>5</sup> give the grim statistics on illiteracy in writing, reading, and textual analysis. Any teacher of literature above the age of fifty or a broadbased survey of primary and secondary school reading lists can confirm the wholesale collapse of literacy, in the older canonical sense, among American students. How does one account for this in an age of duplicating machines, computerized research facilities, and free, accessible lending libraries?

## 1 Causes of the problem, an overview

In the present academic climate, writing candidly about the causes of this crisis in American higher education means risking having umbrage heaped upon one's head and being labeled "incorrect" or worse. The trend increasingly among nonconfrontational educators is to excoriate a "safe" cause, such as television, and avoid mentioning anything that could offend anyone's agenda. Certainly the thousands of hours of television watching to which the "latch-key generation" subjects itself can be considered a negative influence on their usage and intellectual discipline. But there are other forces working against literacy about which one seldom reads in *College English* or the *PMLA*. What follows is an unapologetic overview

### 1 The proliferation of audio-visual technology and devices.

Although it pains teachers of English to admit it, experience of the written or printed word has become passe for many young Americans. Many enjoy neither reading nor writing, nor do they really anticipate occasions when they will have to plough through such traditional genres as epics and full-length novels or write a five-page letter. The telephone, television, multiple-choice examinations (marked by Scantron), "pre-written" cards, films, videos, "instant" cameras, "head sets," computer games (i.e. Mortal Kombat, etc.), to say nothing of thought-obliterating rock, heavy metal, and rap pounding into their soon-damaged ears make the quiet interior struggle for verbal self-expression obsolete, if not futile. Instant fascination, achieved by bombardment of the eyes with larger-than-life cinematic images, and of the ears by thundering orgasmic noise, has replaced earlier generations' delight in verbal music, word play, and inventiveness. Pop culture fosters a kind of technology-based hedonism, which, like all hedonisms, gluts, then jades the senses, ending in lethal excess. Decadence is hardly new. History suggests a connection between falling standards and run-away self-indulgence.

### 2 Processing students rather than teaching them

This is a delicate and complex issue--a matter of professional responsibility, conscience, and perhaps self-betrayal, with deep and mangled roots. Among these are: teacher burn-out, a trade-unionist mentality (more concerned about preserving jobs than preserving high quality instruction) in faculty associations, nihilistic, radical rejection of traditional grading systems, open-enrollment at the college level, inflation of grades to allow substandard students to participate in athletic competition, overload teaching for increased income, "puffing" grades to suggest classroom "effectiveness," laziness, and reverse discrimination--an especially cruel hoax on minority students who most need vocational commitment and outreach. No experienced teacher today can assume that students who hold a high school diploma (or GED), or, worse, who have achieved a pass in the first semester

of a year-long course, have in fact received the foundation on which advanced study depends. This necessitates costly, time-consuming but theoretically unnecessary "back-teaching"--sometimes to elementary school levels.

3 Bloom and Hirsch, in *The Closing of the American Mind* and *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, both speak eloquently of the assault on the canon of English and American literature made by extremists with radical feminist, deconstructionist, Marxist, gay-lesbian, multicultural, anarchist, PC, black nationalist, Latino, and anti-Christian agendas.<sup>6</sup> The result, Yale professor Harold Bloom points out in his recent book mourning the demise of the canon, is that great texts have been tossed out because they were written mostly by dead, white, Euro-centric, heterosexual males, and, to use his gentle word, merely "periodical" texts have been included in the name of diversity and inclusiveness. A comparison of textbooks in long use before these revisions were made (between the early 1970's and the present) and those presently in use explains why students entering college in the 1990's are ill-prepped for literature courses and why they lack even a rudimentary *Zeitgeist*. Standard curricula until the Viet Nam era guaranteed that competent high school graduates had read, among British authors, Malory, Shakespeare, extensive passages of the King James Bible, Chaucer, Milton, Bunyan, Dryden, Pope, Burke, the Romantic Poets, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, Tennyson, Browning, Kipling, Conrad, Shaw, and many others; among American authors, Jefferson, Franklin, Tom Paine, Hawthorne, Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Cooper, Longfellow, Whittier, Twain, Melville, Henry James, Crane, London, O'Neill, Hemingway, Frost, Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, and others. It would be a rare freshman who walked into an English class today knowing even half of these names. My experience suggests that the majority have not read a dozen novels, a Greek, Roman, or Elizabethan play, or a handful of poems. Undergraduate apathy becomes explicable when one realizes that an average community college class listens to literary discourse through a profound cultural vacuum.

#### 4 Third World immigration and bilingualism.

America is and always has been a nation of immigrants but, until fairly recently, a well defined canon and instruction in English alone assured and speeded up both assimilation and literacy. This is still largely the case--conspicuously so among recent Russian, Korean, and Taiwanese newcomers--, except among the Spanish-speaking. Recent articles in leading newspapers and periodicals demonstrate that twenty years of bilingual education have impeded the "mainstreaming" of Spanish-speakers, the only group for whom this alternative educational structure was ever created.<sup>8</sup> Whatever the original mission of bilingual programs might have been, they have become a costly (10 billion dollars annually), self-perpetuating detriment to Latino aspirations to this country. Despite this failure, bilingualism continues under "enforced ethnic solidarity" and pressure from teachers of such programs. In New York City (1993), the cost of keeping this "bureaucratic monster"

"chugging along" was 300 million dollars. In return for this expenditure, the City got higher drop-out rates, lower reading levels, and virtual segregation of Hispanic students in all its bilingual elementary and high school programs.

5. Decline of the essay as the pre-eminent academic genre.

Instructors of composition have observed for over twenty years that more and more entering freshman have not been trained by the public secondary system to write three-part (beginning, "body," conclusion) essays. Rhetoric, as a subject, has not been taught in high schools for at least 30 years. Logic, argumentation, textual/statistical/scientific substantiation of allegations, explication, even comparison/contrast are very nearly or entirely unknown to most first-year students. Ironically, since most college libraries are now computerized, the majority of students do not know how to use secondary sources or conduct research. Many have never attempted a paper of more than 300 words and they do not, therefore, know how to develop an idea, complete an analysis, or prove a point. Rarely do they understand how to revise a rough draft or how to improve their prose style.

6. Ignorance of grammatical concepts and editorial remarks.

One of the worst frustrations of composition teachers on the college level is that their students are largely ignorant of grammar and of the terms editors use to point out grammatical error. The majority have never diagrammed a sentence, conjugated the basic irregular verbs in English, inflected (declined) the personal pronouns, defined the tenses, or comprehended the paragraph. Essential terminology (subject-verb agreement, diction, parts of speech, punctuation, syntax, sentence, fragment, run-on, dependent/independent clause, misplaced modifier, split infinitive, dangling participle) is virtually a foreign language to them. This forces instructors to suspend college-level work to go back ("back-teaching") and lay a foundation in literacy that ought to have been laid between the fourth and twelfth grades.

7. Abandonment of foreign language requirements. During and after the disappearance of grammar from grade and secondary school, college teachers could still assume that their students had had some exposure to grammar and linguistics because they had been required to study a foreign language for two or three years to earn an academic degree. By the early 1970's, foreign language requirements began dropping from high school curricula, even in Catholic schools, in the wake of Vatican II. By the 1990's, only 20% of American colleges and universities still required the study of a foreign language for the baccalaureate degree. The disappearance of such requirements, along with the absence of instruction in English grammar in high schools, results in incoming classes nearly half of which require remediation. (N.B., the GED has never required study of a foreign language)

8. Glamorization of *macho* illiteracy in adolescent culture.

Since Brando rode off into the sunset on his motorcycle in *The Wild One* (1954) (James Dean, in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), would be an equally good example), Hollywood, television, and the mass media have glamorized the inarticulate-literate stud as a cultural icon and demigrated the articulate-literate intellectual as a fundamentally un-American elitist and snob, occasionally as a fop or misfit. This stereotyping is pronounced in rock and heavy metal lyrics, and in gangsta rap, where illiterate usage is equated with manliness and racial pride. Black sit-coms, commercials, talk-shows, interviews, late-night videos, films, and recordings have almost established Black English (which does not observe the norms of standard English) as a second and equal national idiom, at least in the black community. So feared is the charge of racism that even the educated, in an educational situation, are reluctant to point out that bad grammar is bad grammar, and that it does not advance the careers of Black people or of Black culture any more than it did the careers of European immigrants and blue-collar whites.

## II Extent of illiteracy at the college level in the late 20th century

*Adult Literacy in America* (1933), using a rather narrow definition of literacy (the percentages would be lower if the literacy aspect were included) reveals some depressing statistics. "Twenty-one to 23%--or some 40 to 44 million of the 191 million adults in this country--" the authors write, "demonstrate skills in the lowest level of prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies." They also report that Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander adults were more likely than white adults to perform in the two lowest literacy levels. Summarizing their findings by race/ethnicity, they state (p. 32): "The average literacy of white adults is 26 to 80 points higher than that of any other nine racial/ethnic groups reported here."

The New Jersey Basic Skills Council, using standard placement tests, such as the NJCBSPT, minutely studied the literacy of entering students at all public community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. The Council reached conclusions similar to those Kirsch and his group reached for the nation as a whole. In 1987, 44% of entering full-time students "lacked the proficiencies needed to begin college courses that have freshman-level expectations in reading." In the county/community colleges this figure rose to 49% in reading, 41% in writing skills. In 1989, Bergen Community College (Paramus), one of the stronger Basic skills programs in the state system, identified 48% of its incoming full-time students as needing remediation.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the best efforts of the state, and of the participating administrations, the New Jersey Basic Skills Council concluded (p. 1), in 1991: "The percentage of students in need of remediation has not diminished significantly since the start of basic skills testing in 1978."<sup>11</sup>

In 1992, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) showed a disheartening trend in adult literacy proficiencies of its survey cohorts.<sup>12</sup> Using the NALS (National Adult Literacy Survey) data, ETS compared the performance of 21- to 25-year-olds assessed in 1992, and second with 28- to 32-year-olds assessed in 1992, who were 21 to 25 years old in 1985. The comparison was limited to groups who were living in households at the time of both surveys; adults in prison were excluded to make the samples more comparable. ETS found that the average prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies of America's young adults were lower in 1992 than they were seven years earlier. While 21- to 25-year-olds assessed in 1985 demonstrated average proficiencies of about 293 on each of the literary scales, the scores of 21- to 25-year-olds assessed in 1992 were 11 to 14 points lower: 281 on the prose and document scales and 279 on the quantitative scale. The average proficiencies of adults aged 28 to 32 who participated in the 1992 survey were also lower than those of 21- to 25-year-olds in the earlier survey, by 10 to 11 points across the three scales.

While many factors seem involved in these discrepancies, ETS tentatively identified 1) changes in the composition of the young adult population, 2) doubling of the young Hispanic percentage of the population in the time period (from 7% in 1985 to 15% in 1992), and 3) a significant increase of Hispanic individuals who were born in other countries and are learning English as a second language as the root causes.

### III An approach to overcoming illiteracy.

In this Prolegomenon, it is not possible to do more than list the steps this writer believes would reduce illiteracy. Each deserves protracted discussion and justification.

1. Immediate scrapping of bilingualism on all levels of public education.
2. Replacement, in primary schools (K--8th grade), of the so-called "associative learning" method of teaching reading by "phonics."
3. Constitutional Designation of English as the official language of the United States.
4. The requirement that Puerto Rico accept English as one of its official languages, and as the language of government, as a condition for statehood.
5. Re-establishment of a fair-minded, open-ended canon of great texts reflecting the Western literary heritage. The selection of such texts, subject to periodic review, is to be determined by literary merit alone, rather than by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, class or national origin of their authors.
6. The restoration of courses in grammar and rhetoric to the primary and secondary school curricula.



7. The use of more and longer writing assignments, with an aim at achieving mastery of the scholarly essay by the 10th or 11th grade.

8. Restoration of categories (general, technical, commercial, academic) and core course requirements to high school degree programs. The academic diploma would require at least two years of foreign language study and a state examination demonstrating minimum proficiency.

9. Elimination of the "social" pass for students who do not perform adequately on an objective, standard "exit exam," such as the New York State Regents Examinations, at the end of the second semester of composition.

10. Reduction of remedial, non-credit-bearing courses in state colleges from four to one semester.

11. Demonstration of fluency in written and spoken English as a condition for naturalization and "permanent resident alien" status.

12. Funding and encouragement of debate societies, forums, discussion groups, and theatrical presentations in public schools.

13. Parental commitment to decent, literate usage in the home. Parental control of access to MTV, videos, cable network, radio, and of obscene, illiterate, criminal, and otherwise objectionable and meretricious material--to the extent possible in this era.

14. Maintenance and/or establishment of "writing centers" (or "clinics") in all two- and four-year state colleges, in which substandard students can seek individualized tutoring.

Princeton, New Jersey

7 November 1994

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Irwin S. Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, Lynn Jenkins, and Andrew Kolstad, *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey*, Second Edition (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), pp. 1-4

<sup>2</sup> Kirsch, *op. cit.*, p. 2

<sup>3</sup> C. T. Onions et al., eds., *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume I (Oxford, London, New York, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 1638. Hereafter, OED.

<sup>4</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), pp. 25--43, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> See for example

Patricia Mangan, "Bi-lingual ed stirs furor," in *The New York Daily News* (Friday, October 21, 1994), p. 51

John Leo, "Bilingualism: *Que passa?*" in *U.S. News and World Report*, Volume 117, No. 18 (November 7, 1994), p. 22  
Bob Greene, "Our broken English needs fixing," in *The New York Daily News* (Wednesday, August 24, 1994), p. 50

<sup>6</sup> See Note 4, above

Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994), pp. 15-41

<sup>7</sup> See Note 5, above, and

Sam Dillon, "Report Faults Bilingual Education in New York," in *The New York Times*, Volume CXLIV, No. 49,855 (Thursday, October 20, 1994), pp. 1 and B4. Dillon makes clear that, while there are bilingual programs in New York City for students who speak Korean, Haitian Creole, Russian, Vietnamese, French, Greek, Arabic, and Bengali, none has been as long-running nor as comprehensive as the program in Spanish, which runs from Kindergarten to grade 12 and shows the lowest transition to English. Only five of ten Spanish-speaking students test out (of the Program) in three years, the report indicates. Dillon further notes that the Los Angeles Unified School District issued a report critical of efforts to educate students with limited English, according to the National Association for Bilingual Education.

<sup>8</sup> Kirsch, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv and 32

<sup>9</sup> Gerald Sircus, "Corrections in Basic Skills Effectiveness Report," letter to Dean Michael Redmond, Bergen Community College (October 18, 1991), Table C, p. 2. Unpublished.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony D. Lutkus, *Director, New Jersey: Effectiveness of Remedial Programs in Public Colleges and Universities*, Fall 1987--Spring 1989 (Trenton: New Jersey Department of Higher Education, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Kirsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25

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Defending Literacy: with Particular Consideration of the  
Community College

Geoffrey J. Sadock, Ph.D.

The Prolegomenon of this paper is an attempt to define literacy (in both its traditional sense and in the narrower sense used by educational testers) and to assess its decline among entering students in American two- and four-year colleges and universities. What follows is a summary of the problem and its proposed causes; an evaluation of the changes in public higher education that are taking place in the wake of the Republican-Conservative congressional landslide in November of 1994; and a consideration of measures designed to halt and reverse the present headlong slide into national illiteracy.

"Literacy," defined in the traditional way, is difficult to gauge. Its benefits are not apparent in late 20th century life; it seems not to impact upon the vocational performance of an increasingly technological work force; and radical feminists, deconstructionists, multiculturalists, Black nationalists, and others welcome the demise of such concepts as "great literary works" and "the Western canon." On the other hand, "literacy," defined as "skill in using printed and written information to function in society," is readily quantifiable; impacts directly upon employees' performance in the work place; and seems sufficiently gender-neutral and inclusive to rouse the concern of

the whole community. The debate has, therefore, focused on declining SAT, NJBSPT, CLEP, and other test scores. That these scores have plummeted during the last 20 years is now established beyond a reasonable doubt. The work of Kirsch, Lutkus, Goldman, and many others has provided statistical proof of the worsening illiteracy of ever-larger cohorts of high school graduates and entering college freshmen.<sup>1</sup> The popular perception of this dilemma has found expression in bitter, almost unending outcries for reform in the daily newspapers and weekly magazines.<sup>2</sup>

While there is little debate about the rise in illiteracy, there is broad and highly politicized debate about its causes. With many variants, the arguments fall into three definable categories: 1) Nurture -- our educational institutions, from kindergarten through the 12th grade, are culpable because of authoritarianism, mediocre teaching, inadequate "resources," crumbling buildings, and insufficient funding; 2) Nature (genetics) -- a democratic, compassionate society has mischanneled its wealth and failed several generations of students since the 1950s by hypocritically denying the unteachability of certain elements (Black, minority, etc.) in the American population;<sup>3</sup> Social Science -- the whole culture is so shot through with racism, bias, exclusion, and disenfranchisement that, even if standard literacy tests were valid for certain groups, their results represent nothing more than the injustice of the system and the need to go on opposing it with affirmative

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action, non-stigmatizing grades, and open access (and maintenance) in higher education -- despite the demonstrable need/expense of massive taxpayer-funded remediation.<sup>4</sup>

#### I.

Each of these arguments offers its own tortuous rationale and solution. The first, that our pedagogical assumptions and educational institutions are wrong-headed, archaic, and underfunded, has been voiced at least as far back as the 1930s, when John Dewey's "progressive" and relativistic theories gained wide acceptance and began influencing the public school system.<sup>5</sup> Dewey argued that truth was evolutionary rather than transcendental and absolute, and that education was a tool (or instrument) which should enable the citizen to integrate his culture and vocation in a pragmatic manner. His emphasis on democracy, social conscience, and experimentation rather than on "absolute" knowledge and rigid grading, has produced many of the practices that characterize American public education at the close of the 20th century. Among these are: the widespread inflation of grades,<sup>6</sup> the "social" pass, suspicion or rejection of objective test scores (i.e., SAT, BST, CLEP, etc.), abandonment of traditional, particularly religion-based primers, frequent revision of curricula to assure "relevance" to students' constantly-changing social circumstances, resistance to discriminating between intellectually accomplished and mediocre

students -- even when meritocratic principle would justify such discrimination, and greater concern for the social harmony of a class than for the realization of each individual's intellectual potential. Although Dewey cannot be blamed for all the liberal excesses of the present system, many of them are the logical outgrowths of principles he advocated. These include: a steady watering-down or emptying of content in humanities courses; the widespread refusal to differentiate, based on academic performance and/or examinations, among secondary students who should be directed into general, technical, commercial, or college-preparatory programs; and a pervasive anti-intellectual-elitism in all but the most celebrated technical and performing arts high schools. Access to the college classroom, even when an applicant can demonstrate neither the achievement nor the potential of a viable undergraduate, is now so much taken for granted as a citizen's right -- rather than an *earned* privilege -- that few counselors are willing to say to a would-be freshman, "You're just not college material." Ironically, the erosion of standards in testing both skills and acquisition of "hard" knowledge has been, under Dewey's continuing influence, accompanied by unprecedented expenditures on public education: America, at the end of the 20th century, spends more money than any other industrialized nation for less literacy. The children of foreign nationals who have attended American high schools are

regularly "left back" two to four grades upon re-enrolling in European, and, especially, Japanese schools at home.

The second argument, that race (genetics and biology) explains the current crisis in American education as well as the significant disparity among testing cohorts, is perhaps best exemplified by Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve* (1994). The argument is hardly new. It has roots in late 19th and early 20th century thought, in such writers as Joseph Arthur Gobineau, Herbert Spencer, H. S. Chamberlain, Carl Vogt, Otto Weininger, and Eugen Fischer.<sup>7</sup> In their own time, they were considered respectable theorists. Freud, who considered himself a scientist, not only read their work but also, as Bram Dijkstra makes clear,<sup>8</sup> confided in Weininger, much to the displeasure of Wilhelm Fleiss.<sup>9</sup> Today these men are associated with the brutality and psychopathology of European imperialism (as in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*) and with the monstrous crimes of the Third Reich. If they are mentioned in academic discourse at all, it is almost obligatory at once to excoriate their racism and pseudoscientific allegations.<sup>10</sup> Yet their insistence that a "large genetic component" lies at the root of such problems as differences in intelligence, "primitive" culture, and disproportionate percentages of poverty, imprisonment, and dependence on government aid among Black and other non-white people has never been wholly discredited by Western culture nor by reactionary elitists, such as T. S. Eliot,

Ezra Pound, and B. F. Skinner.<sup>11</sup> In America, since the 1960s, it has become extremely unfashionable to examine their "dangerous and inflammatory" suggestions on the relationship between class, race, genes, and intelligence. The "equalitarian dogma," democratic tradition, and conviction that we can fix whatever is wrong with society by pressing for radical environmental and political changes all bridle at the thought of innate and ineradicable differences among the races.

So offensive has such a notion seemed that *The Bell Curve* is only the second serious attempt to discuss race and illiteracy in the last third of this century. In 1969 Dr. Arthur R. Jensen published "How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement?" in *The Harvard Educational Review*.<sup>12</sup> The 123-page article drew a firestorm, won headlines in the mass circulation media, was reprinted in *The Congressional Record in toto*, and was introduced as evidence by Southern school boards fighting desegregation suits. It formed the basis of several White House policy discussions.<sup>13</sup> Written by an influential educator and published in a prestigious journal, the article was the most sophisticated presentation of the longstanding contention that Blacks are genetically inferior. Although there are too many separate issues to recount here, the core of Jensen's argument is summarized by Thomas and Sillen:

Jensen reviews the psychological and educational literature indicating that blacks as a group score lower [by @ 15 points] than whites on standard IQ tests. He concludes that the difference cannot be explained only by environmental factors, such as



poverty, discrimination, poor nutrition, and inferior schooling. Rather, he insists that genetic factors must also be "implicated." The average racial difference in inborn intelligence, Jensen further asserts, is not only quantitative in terms of IQ scores, but also qualitative. That is, he hypothesizes two genetically distinct intellectual processes which he labels Level I (associative ability) and Level II (conceptual ability). Jensen says that Level I, which is more proficient for rote learning and simple memory, is typically found among blacks, while Level II, which is more proficient for creative thinking and problem-solving is characteristic for whites. In Jensen's view, attempts to provide compensatory education for disadvantaged children have "failed" because they were based on the assumption that blacks could attain the same level and quality of intelligence as whites.<sup>14</sup>

Jensen was immediately set upon by his colleagues, who loudly and virtually unanimously decried his conclusions, methodology and statistical analyses, and even his summaries of earlier studies.<sup>15</sup> Some, such as Professor Lee Cronbach of Stanford University, and Professor Martin Deutsch of New York University, accused Jensen of manipulating heritability data, making erroneous statements, and distorting research reports. Dr. Cecil B. Brigham, noted Princeton psychologist, whose cited 1923 study anticipated Jensen's conclusions but whose 1930 repudiation of his own work Jensen failed to note, was remembered and praised for his "admirable" self-criticism by scholars working in the early 1970s.<sup>16</sup> Under death threats by several militant groups, as well as professional censure, Jensen withdrew from the debate, his name becoming synonymous with pseudoscientific myths and intellectual dishonesty.

In light of the opprobrium Jensen suffered and the fact that Murray and Herrnstein cover similar ground and reach similar conclusions, the question to be asked about *The Bell Curve*, is, what is new? Why did Murray and Herrnstein hope to retain their scientific, if not their social/political respectability 25 years after the Jensen debacle? Jason De Parle, writing in *The New York Times* ("Daring research or 'social pornography'?") provides several answers by mixing personal impressions of Charles Murray, the man [Herrnstein died in 1994 at age 64], with a review of the book's thesis and implications.<sup>17</sup> Although De Parle is loth to admit it, *The Bell Curve* and Murray's earlier book, *Losing Ground* (1984), are respectable from a methodological point of view. Of the latter he writes, ". . . the book . . . eroded the assumptions guiding American social policy. With 236 pages of charts and tables, it lent an aura of scientific support to an old suspicion -- that welfare and other social programs cause more problems than they solve" (p. 48). Later De Parle writes, "Even his [Murray's] most bitter enemies concede his formidable intelligence . . ." (p. 50). Unlike Jensen, Murray and Herrnstein seem not to be eager to embrace a conclusion that justifies a preconception. "They hedge their bet slightly," notes De Parle, "saying the evidence 'suggests, without quite proving, genetic roots' for part of the black-white difference. They even call the debate over genes a distraction from the more important issues" (p. 51). Elsewhere he uses such expressions as

"thick with statistics yet accessible, even lively, and steeped in good intentions," includes "eight chapters of original research designed to correlate low IQ with a variety of social problems . . .," "careful," and "they cite a . . . plurality of psychologists [who] indicated that genetic factors helped explain racial differences." *The Bell Curve* also acknowledges that "IQ tests have been used to support 'outrageous social policies,'" including the spread, by 1917, of forced sterilization laws to 16 states.

The persona Murray projects is also strikingly different from that projected earlier by Jensen. "The words are harsh," says De Parle, "but the voice is genial and oddly reassuring, suffused with regret" (p. 48). "Murray's persona in print is that of the burdened researcher coming to his disturbing conclusions with the utmost regret," yet he has the "ability to express, through seemingly dispassionate analysis, many people's hidden suspicions about race, class and sex. His writings comprise a kind of Michelin guide to the American underpsyche" (p. 50). Good will, disclaimers, a beguiling tone, and scientific procedure make *The Bell Curve* a far greater threat to the "equalitarian dogma" than Jensen's *Harvard Educational Review* article. Finally, predictably, because of the perceived tyranny of political correctness<sup>18</sup> behind many office and living-room doors, *The Bell Curve* has "all the allure of the forbidden."

Youth are likely to be drawn to it simply because it opposes the received wisdom of the political and academic establishments.

The third argument about illiteracy is raised almost exclusively by militant Blacks (especially by Black nationalists and Muslims) and, to a lesser degree, by radical feminists, deconstructionists, Third World advocates, and Hispanics. It holds that White Eurocentric notions of intelligence, testing, and literacy are invalid across a multi-cultural and "inclusive" spectrum. The inherited psychological and intellectual damage of nearly 300 years of slavery and segregation, institutional victimization, and exclusion, the argument goes, leaves America with an inexhaustible burden of guilt and an obligation to guarantee equality by whatever means -- long-term social engineering, time tables, quotas, set-asides, and preferential treatment ("reverse discrimination") -- necessary. Entitlement, rather than competence or, as affirmative action at first proposed, equality of opportunity, thus becomes the mechanism of advancement.<sup>19</sup> Proponents of this view regard entrance requirements, objective grades, the cost and relative ineffectiveness of remediation, and mounting complaints against policies that reject better qualified White applicants for jobs, promotion, and college-entrance in favor of less qualified persons of color with disdain. Since the injustices minorities have suffered in this country are grievous and longstanding, and since White culture's standard of literacy is patently worthless,

the least the U.S. can do in the wake of the civil rights movement is compensate its victims -- or their descendants -- by providing access and credentials. Illiteracy pales in the glare of moral indignation.

Although the third argument regards illiteracy, its causes and its cure, as a matter of social science, its underlying assumption -- that illiteracy results from environment ("nurture") -- is borrowed from the first argument. The difference is that radical liberals, their minds, as Jim Sleeper writes, "addled by leftist ideologies and conceits,"<sup>20</sup> call for pulling down all existing standards, admission qualifications, and curricula. The aspect of their thesis most offensive to rational thinking is perhaps their insistence not only upon the collective but also the *ongoing* guilt of White America. Shelby Steele, Roy Innis, Alan Keyes, and other Black conservatives are bold in pointing out that it is a mistake to imagine that most late 20th century Whites feel guilty about past discrimination, or that those who do can supply endorsement of entitlement policies indefinitely.<sup>21</sup>

## II.

It is clear that the causes of growing illiteracy are numerous and fiercely debated. Less difficult to estimate are the changes in attitude and policy that have been in play since the Conservative-Republican landslide in Congress in November of

1994. The roots of the "sweep" are too numerous and complex to be considered here but that widespread discontent with public spending on education is an essential aspect is undeniable. Cuts to education in general, and to radical-liberal experiments in "access" and "equity" in particular, were among the first acts taken by the newly-elected governors and legislators. The changes are most noticeable in large municipal college systems, such as City University of New York, in multi-campus state universities, such as the State University of New York, The University of Massachusetts, The University of Michigan, and The University of California, and in public community colleges. The chancellors and presidents of such institutions have been told to prepare for budget cuts of up to 25% and to rethink their policies on open admissions, college-level remediation, course content, "fudging" grades, special interests, protracted years of study,<sup>22</sup> special programs for unwed teen mothers, faculty accountability, the "fraud" and "hoax" of social promotion, and institutional direction. The changes called for are deeper reaching than even these appear to be; they extend to the mission and efficiency of the high schools -- which are perceived, with few exceptions, as egregious failures. CUNY Trustee, Herman Badillo, "a poor Puerto-Rican orphan who graduated [from] City College *magna cum laude*, as Bronx borough president fought open admissions in 1969, and who now oversees CUNY and the Board of Education (as Mayor Giuliani's adviser),"<sup>23</sup> sees the present

crisis on both levels, as "a golden opportunity to enhance CUNY degrees and the public schools' college-preparatory work."

Instead of accepting students who read at an eighth-grade level and spending years on costly remediation, as depicted poignantly in James Traub's *City on a Hill: Testing the American Dream at City College*,<sup>24</sup> Badillo proposes holding back and tutoring below-par children in elementary and middle schools, restoring objective examinations; eliminating remediation on the college level; and boosting illiterate underclass students' self-esteem by making them meet standards that command respect, rather than regarding them as victims in need of coddling and condescension. In California, the state university trustees have asked that the unclear distinction between secondary school and college-level achievement be sharpened and that high schools resume teaching subjects that are now found in freshman, sophomore, and even junior year curricula, especially in the community colleges. As a *Los Angeles Times* editorial put it:

If high school subjects must be taught again, should the teaching not be done in high school rather than in college?<sup>25</sup>

In addition to changes in public spending on education, "downsizing" in faculties and degree programs, grading, promotion, scholarship aid, and remediation that are already underway, there are going to be "reviews," from the White House to governors' boards, to state and municipal legislatures, of major policies dealing with illiteracy. These include

affirmative action (about which there is a furious debate and which provokes 1960s-style demonstrations almost daily),<sup>26</sup> open enrollment, bilingualism, "goals and timetables" (i.e. quotas) to engineer "diversity" in the work place, race-based admissions, and the credibility of our degrees, and programs designed, as Murray and Herrnstein write,<sup>27</sup> to assure the illiterate "a place as a valued fellow citizen," once he or she has been denied admission to a tax-supported college.

### III.

The measures needed to halt and reverse this country's slide into illiteracy will certainly have to be more than cosmetic; some will prove draconian and will stir up vociferous, acrimonious protest. But, as John Leo writes,<sup>28</sup> we have reached a divide between the American creed and the radical-liberal agenda where "something has to give." The first part of this paper lists 14 measures that would reduce illiteracy. The most important of these are: the reintroduction of grammar; scrapping bilingualism and Constitutionally declaring English our only official language (likely in the present political climate); reinterpreting affirmative action so that, by banning preferences by race, gender, ethnicity, and religion [Title VII, Section 703(j)], it fosters, as it was intended to do, "colorblind equal opportunity" based on merit; re-establishing a fair-minded, open-ended canon of texts selected on literary excellence alone;



returning remediation, "foundation" learning, and differentiated (general, technical, commercial, and academic/college-bound) degree programs to the high schools; elimination of grade-inflation and the "social" pass at all levels of instruction; the development and use of standardized examinations to determine both degree-track and advancement; and the involvement of parents (or surrogates) who are responsible enough to turn off the TV and demand homework.

Listing these measures is easy enough. What is needed here is a rationale to force the undecided, the morally evasive, and the entrenched opposition to accept and implement them. Perhaps a starting-point can be found in appealing to professional self-preservation. While academics and administrators quibble about pedagogical philosophy and the subtleties of political correctness, the federal, state, and local government has already implemented reform, and intends to do more. If educators do not wake up to the profound discontent with the *status quo*, to the embarrassment of national illiteracy, and to the frustration of meritorious Whites who are "penalized" because of victim entitlement, they soon will find themselves without jobs, without the little actual power that has been lent them to shape policy and run institutions. Politicians, citing economic necessity and perhaps the bedrock American belief that a college education is an *earned* privilege, not a birth-right, will find ways to empower administrators who are more responsive to the will of the

majority. Liberals of the 1960s who were clever enough to finish their degrees, infiltrate the educational establishment, and then become the educational establishment, are neither irreplaceable nor perdurable. The political process, the work et. ic, and credentials that command respect are.

A second appeal for these changes can be based on this country's political and economic credibility in the world marketplace. American technology, science, and medicine have remained viable precisely because the graduates of our medical schools and technological institutes have never gained admission, been "passed along," or awarded diplomas on the basis of entitlement or victim status. Illiteracy is simply not tolerated in those who aspire to such professions. Indeed, who would consult (much less undergo surgery by) a physician whose license represents nothing more than society's redress of social wrongs suffered by that physician or his ancestors? Would it were so in the humanities! Although political correctness has in a minor degree crept into the sciences, as biologist Paul R. Gross and mathematician, Norman Levitt assert in *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science*,<sup>29</sup> it is in the liberal arts that it has wreaked the worst damage on course content, admissions policy, and academic standards. What Gross and Levitt refer to as "the radical transformation of the humanities disciplines," over the past two decades, was accomplished by "imported French intellectual fashions --most

notably the ideas of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida's literary deconstruction techniques -- [which] have been combined in this country with radical feminist critiques, Afrocentrism, and a kind of mystical environmentalism in an attempt to challenge the very idea of meaning in human expression."<sup>30</sup> They are not kind in their dismissal of the methods and agenda of such a coalition as "unalloyed twaddle," "hermeneutic hootchy-koo," and "magical thinking" -- in short -- a "con game." If it is a con game, it is one with grievous consequences: nearly half of the entering freshmen in community colleges, and better than a fourth in four-year institutions, are functionally illiterate and require one-to-four semesters of remedial work and tutoring. Billions of dollars have thereby been wasted on ineducable low-intelligence students, for many of whom, in Murray and Herrnstein's words, "there is nothing they can learn that will repay the cost of teaching." Still more billions are spent by industry on "re-"training graduates whose actual skills and knowledge fall short of the expectations suggested by their diplomas. The humanities, which once not only assured the passage of our cultural identity from one generation to the next but also nurtured the moral conscience of our leaders, are reduced, in Herbert's phrase, to "an insignificant blob,"<sup>31</sup> in which neither *Lord Jim* nor a Cheerios boxtop is regarded as a privileged text.

A third appeal for implementation of these measures can be based on accountability and consumerism, or "truth in advertising." Since associate's degrees and the baccalaureate are increasingly perceived as (at best) roughly equivalent to the high school degrees of 30 years ago, or (at worst) as meaningless, why should students and taxpayers make sacrifices to pay for them? Why should students, additionally, delay their entrance into the "real" world, their acquisition of "real" (useful and remunerable) knowledge, to absorb "unalloyed twaddle"? Bluntly, if the "product" academe now offers the American public (except in its technological and medical schools) has no inherent worth, there is no reason to suppose the public will long buy it. Undergraduate enrollment is bound to fall if such a perception becomes fixed in the mind of the middle, lower, and underclass. Then, those who have supported programs and policies resulting in *rising* illiteracy, will find themselves not only without jobs but sitting alone in empty classrooms, a hollow wind blowing through dilapidated buildings on deserted campuses.

#### IV.

The debate about illiteracy and test score discrepancies will rage on. Meanwhile educators and administrators must cope with practical necessity. A final word about community colleges. If there is a front line in this battle for literacy, it is drawn right through the campuses of our community colleges. McGrath

and Spear point out, in *The Academic Crisis of the Community College*, that the community college has never really defined its identity and its objective.<sup>32</sup> Since the Republican Congress and many Republican governors, including Pataki of New York and Whitman of New Jersey, have a mind to cut spending on education, it is high time the community college define its role and justify, or reform, some of its present practices. At its best, the community college serves in two distinct ways: it allows university-level experience (and the hope of eventual transfer to four-year schools) to those whose economic circumstances and scholastic rank do not qualify them for admission to traditional baccalaureate programs; and it offers vocational-technical degrees (and certification) in such areas as nursing, radiology, hotel-motel management, dental hygiene, respiratory therapy, accounting, banking, business management, computer programming, commercial art, science technology, and horticulture (among others). Both functions fulfill the goal of producing "a valued fellow-citizen."

As the first part of this paper makes clear, however, open enrollment (based merely on holding a high school degree or GED) burdens the community college with a growing percentage of students who are not and probably never will be able to perform at college level. This necessitates the expenditure of millions of dollars on remediation, counselling, "mentoring" programs, repetition of courses, and "skills" staffs, who rarely teach

university courses. It forces the community college to determine who is and who is not "college material," a determination that should properly be made, first, in the seventh or eighth grade, and, later, confirmed in the sophomore or junior year of high school. Statistics suggest that every student who scores a passing grade on a Basic Skills Proficiency Test is *theoretically* able to perform in a composition course but, since grade-inflation and "processing" (the "social" pass) are endemic to the system, many below-par, borderline dysfunctional students are "mainstreamed" without a realistic hope of surviving. The same frustrating pattern is observable in mathematics. Since many community colleges will, out of misconceived kindness or social justice, allow a failing student to repeat courses several times, recording only his or her final passing grade, it is not uncommon to encounter students who have taken eight or more years to complete a two-year degree. This practice also falsifies both the student's grade point average and diploma, since he would long since have become a drop-out under normal ("real" life) circumstances.

Legitimizing and strengthening the community college depends upon the adoption of the following measures: demonstration, on a standardized entrance examination,<sup>33</sup> of at least 12th-grade proficiency in reading and mathematics; maintenance of at least a C (2.0) grade point average in every semester of a degree program; virtual elimination of remedial ("skills") courses;

elimination of English as a second language (ESL) (all applicants for admission would be required to take the same English proficiency examination); significant reduction in adjunct faculty hiring; greater articulation of two- and four-year college degree programs; reasonable time limits (two to four years) for completion of an associate's degree; and transcripts that show all courses taken and grades earned, including F's (or R's).

Dropping ESL and skills courses will prove a bitter pill for the community college to swallow. Most community colleges have tenured faculty in these areas; faculty associations (unions) are fiercely determined to defend both the principle of tenure and existing job "lines," and many who teach these subjects are dedicated and hard-working. But remediation is not a college-level subject and does not belong in institutions whose purpose is to produce transfer students or vocational-technical-commercial professionals. Remediation and ESL belong in the secondary school or in government-run programs for immigrants. Historically, non-English-speaking immigrants were required to prove that they had mastered the rudiments of English before they could become citizens. This must again become the norm. Only later, after they had studied English in a private, church- or community-supported course, and could demonstrate literacy on the same examination required of native-born citizens, could they aspire to a college education. Similarly, the GI Bill did not

send incompetents to our universities. It sent qualified veterans, who could not otherwise have afforded to study, to university, where, their test results suggested, they could not only survive but excel. The "downsizing" so necessary in this era could be accomplished at the community college by returning to the norms that served America so well in the past. The immigrants and veterans who persevered on this testing ground emerged with degrees that meant something. Why? The institutions that granted these degrees were in the business of educating, not conducting a sociological experiment.

Unlike private institutions, whose endowments allow them to follow pedagogical fashions, community colleges are wholly dependent upon public funding and tuition for their survival. If taxpayers perceive that their money is being wasted, and if potential students ("buyers") perceive that their degrees are of little or no value in the marketplace, the community college will go the way of Prohibition, the New Jersey Department of Higher Education, Head Start (and possibly affirmative action) -- another noble failed experiment. Its epitaph: "Here lies a community college. Its life was in education but it drowned in a morass of social engineering and political agendas."



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Irwin S. Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, Lynn Jenkins, and Andrew Kolstad, *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey, Second Edition* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), pp. 1-4.

Anthony D. Lutkus, Director, *New Jersey Effectiveness of Remedial Programs in Public Colleges and Universities: Fall 1987-Spring 1989* (Trenton: New Jersey Department of Higher Education, 1991), p. 1.

Louis Goldman, "The Betrayal of the Gatekeepers: Grade Inflation," in *The Journal of General Education*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (1985), pp. 97-121.

"Dr. Demo," "The Lowdown on Literacy," in *American Demographics* (June, 1994), p.6.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example:

Ying Chan and Patricia Mangan, "City Flunking on Regents," in *The New York Daily News* (Tuesday, March 7, 1995), p. 20.

Karen Avenoso, "SATs indicate ill-literacy," in *The New York Daily News* (Sunday, March 12, 1995), p. 13.

Mortimer B. Zuckerman, "Fixing Affirmative Action," in *U.S. News & World Report*, Vol. 118, No. 11 (March 20, 1995), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

See also:

Jason DeParle, "Daring Research or 'Social Science Pornography,'" in *The New York Times Magazine*, (Sunday, October 9, 1994, pp. 48-53, 62, 70-71, 74, 78, 79.

<sup>4</sup>Jim Sleeper, "Spending less for better City U and public schools," in *The New York Daily News* (Thursday, March 9, 1995), p. 43.

Patricia Mangan, "Student-promotion policy hit." *The New York Daily News* (Wednesday, January 25, 1995), p. 10.

Michael Finnegan and Denene Millner, "SUNY hones meat ax," *The New York Daily News* (Wednesday, March 16, 1995), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>John Dewey, *The School and Society* (1899; rev. ed 1915); *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938; *Freedom and Culture* (1939); *Knowing and the Known* (with A. F. Bentley, 1949).

See also:

P. A. Schilpp, ed., *The philosophy of John Dewey* (1939); and Sidney Hook, *Education for Modern Man*, (1946).

<sup>6</sup>Mangan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Arthur Gobineau, *Compte de, Essai sur l'inegalité des races humaines* (1853-55); English trans., *The Inequality of Human Races*, (1915).

<sup>8</sup>Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siecle Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 104, 160, 163-172, 204, 209, 212, 218, 274-75, 278, 280, 368, 387, 401; see also Chapter VII, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup>Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1988), pp. 55-63, 78, 81, 82, 86-87, 154-55.

<sup>10</sup>An early and influential American exponent of race as the key to civilization and intellectual promise was Joseph LeConte, see his *Evolution: Its Evidences, and Its Relation to Religious Thought* [1888/1891]. 2nd rev. ed. (New York: D. Appleton, 1897).

<sup>11</sup>What today would be identified as stereotypical racist preconception long remained in medical, psychiatric, and psychological literature. See Alexander Thomas and Samuel Sillen, *Racism and Psychiatry*, Intro. Kenneth B. Clark (Secaucus, NJ: The Citadel Press, 1972), Ch. II, *passim*.

<sup>12</sup>Arthur J. Jensen, "How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement?" *The Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 139 (1969), pp. 1-123.

<sup>13</sup>John Neary, "A Scientist's Variations on a Disturbing Theme," in *Life*, Vol. 68, No. 22 (June 12, 1970), pp. 58b-58d, 61, 62, 64, 65.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas and Sillen, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup>An exception was J. J. Eysenck, in *Race, Intelligence and Education* (London: Temple Smith, 1971), who defended Jensen.

<sup>16</sup>Thomas and Sillen, *op. cit.* p. 36.

<sup>17</sup>De Parle, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-53, 62, 70, 71, 74, 78, 80.

<sup>18</sup>Richard Bernstein, *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1995).

See also: David H. Hirsch, "Leaning Left from the Far Right" in *Academic Questions*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 1994/5), pp. 74-79.

<sup>19</sup>Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America*. (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1991), Intro. and Chapter I, *passim*.

<sup>20</sup>Jim Sleeper, "Spending less for better City U & public schools," in *The New York Daily News* (Thursday, March 9, 1995), p. 43. See also: Keith Walters, "Whose Culture? Whose Literacy?" in *Diversity as Resource: Redefining Cultural Literacy*, ed. Denise E. Murray. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1992, pp. 3--25.

<sup>21</sup>See Steele, *op. cit.*, and E. Davis Brewer, Jr., "Presidential Hopeful Alan Keyes Speaks," *The Dartmouth Review*, Vol. 15, No. 18 (April 12, 1995), p.6.

<sup>22</sup>According to Sleeper, "Just 17% of Bronx Community College students graduate [from] that two-year school in less than [sic] eight years." See Note 20, above.

<sup>23</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>24</sup>James Traub, *City on a Hill: Testing the American Dream at City College* (Reading, MA: Addison-West, 1994).

<sup>25</sup>Sleeper, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup>Al From, "In affirmative action, keep eyes on the prize -- equal opportunity," in *The Daily News* (Monday, March 20, 1995), p. 27.

See also: Gerald Parshall, "Corporate America's white, male hierarchy," in *U.S. News & World Report*, Vol: 118, No. 12 (March 27, 1995), p. 8.

John Leo, "On Society: Endgame for affirmative action," in *U.S. News & World Report*, Vol. 118, No. 10 (March 13, 1995), p. 18.

Dean Chang, Patricia Mangan, Chris Oliver, and Paul Schwartzman, "Violence erupts at CUNY Protest," *The New York Daily News* (Friday, March 24, 1995), 1-3.

<sup>27</sup> Murray and Herrnstein, *op. cit.*, p.70

<sup>28</sup> Leo, "Endgame," *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

See also:

Wray Herbert, "The PC Assault on Science," *U.S. News & World Report* (March 13, 1995), pp. 64, 66.

<sup>30</sup> Gross and Levitt, cited by Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert, *op. cit.*, p.70.

<sup>32</sup> Dennis McGrath and Martin B. Spear, *The Academic Crisis of the Community College* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), Chapter I, *passim*. See also, Howard Dickman, ed., *The Imperiled Academy*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993.)

<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the ETS (Princeton, New Jersey) could devise a less demanding version of the SAT, designed for use by the community colleges, or accept lower scores on the present examination.