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ABSTRACT

"The Bell Curve" by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles A. Murray has ignited a fierce academic debate. They assert that IQ as measured by tests has replaced family wealth and status in determining jobs, income, class, and place in American life; that whites average 15 IQ points higher than blacks; and that high-IQ ruling elites, with fewer children than low-IQ nonwhites, are increasingly restricting nonwhites in ghettos because of their social problems. This article sets these controversial themes into the context of a brief history of IQ and testing, examines the views of some noted admirers and critics of the book, summarizes Murray's response to his critics, and places IQ and race issues into a social context that considers socioeconomic and political trends. Murray contends that the book does not make as aggressive a case for genetic differences as critics argue. Critics see "The Bell Curve" as a threat to equality of educational opportunity, and their distress affirms the belief that all people deserve an equal chance. "The Bell Curve" increases fears about race and class relations. (Contains 151 references.) (SLD)

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The Bell Curve: Does IQ and Race Determine Class and Place in America?

by
Franklin Parker

Abstract: Highly Controversial Book on IQ and Race

Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve*, 1994, ignited one of the fiercest academic debates in the last 50 years. Its controversial themes on IQ and race are that, 1- intelligence as measured by IQ tests has replaced family wealth and status in determining jobs, income, class, and place in American life; 2-whites average 15 points higher IQs than blacks; 3-high IQ ruling elites, with fewer children than the low IQ nonwhite majority, are increasingly restricting nonwhites in ghettos because of the latter's rising crime, drug use, and illegitimate births.

This article: 1-sets the book's controversial themes in the context of a brief history of IQ and testing; 2-examines, from over 150 reviews, both admirers' views and critics' charges of faulty research and bias against blacks, welfare, and affirmative action; 3-looks in depth at five critics' charges; 4-gives Murray's reply to these charges, 5-places IQ and race issues in perspective as a clash over American values; 6-relates the book to 1980s-90s U.S. conservative socio-economic-political trends; and 6-concludes by relating IQ and race to America's historic ideal of equality of opportunity.

Bell Curve Praised

Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles A. Murray's *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), one of the most controversial academic books of the last 50 years, ignited a fierce academic debate. The following short quotes of praise from reviewers (followed by critical quotes) show the dimensions of this debate. First, *The Bell Curve* praised.

"I'm a strong defender of *The Bell Curve*. I think *The Bell Curve* has been subjected to the most vicious lynching of any book since *Making It*" [Norman Podhoretz's 1968 memoir. He is past editor, *Commentary*] (Norman Podhoretz 1995)

"Murray and Herrnstein were right about one thing - it pays to choose your parents carefully" (Adler 1994, 1991)

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"*The Bell Curve* is not an argument for racial discrimination. It is an argument *against* racial discrimination...sanctioned by university and media and government and corporate elites; [and against] racial preferences and quotas."(Barone)

"Herrnstein and Murray are right in saying that there is no proven way to raise IQs on a consistent basis."(Besharov)

"'The Bell Curve' makes a strong case that America's population is becoming dangerously polarized between a smart, rich, educated elite and a population of unintelligent, poor and uneducated people."(Browne)

"To those determined to use the coercive power of government to achieve equality of results, in education, social standing, income, etc., ...Herrnstein and Murray are saying they are hopeless Utopians...certain to end in failure and frustration. *The Bell Curve* is a bullet right through the heart of socialism."(Buchanan)

"*The Bell Curve* has much to offer. Its excellent analysis of the transformation of the American elite deserves high praise...as do its cautious and modest proposals for reforms."(Genovese)

Bell Curve Criticized

Now, short quotes from critical reviewers follow:

The Bell Curve...is scientifically flawed [reported a panel of experts at Howard University, a traditionally African American university in Washington, DC]. ..."The book uses data selectively and then ignores any data that contradicts its point of view." (Book)

"Save for a few racist eugenicists and half-baked opinions, the consensus among scholars is that Murray and Herrnstein are wrong." ..."The fact that most African-Americans have descended from people who endured more than 300 years of bondage and discrimination seems to have been of little significance to Murray and Herrnstein."(Boyd)

"Unsure whether they are addressing ordinary...readers or professional scholars, [*Bell Curve* authors] offer either too little or too much information."(Browne)

"There are other kinds of 'intelligence' that are crucial to determining a person's performance in life...[including] common sense, experience, intuition, creativity and...social intelligence."..."In any field such as art, technology, teaching and science, creativity is at least as important as IQ..." "The book is an exercise in rhetorical brinkmanship."(Allman)

"A tendentious tone abuses science to promote far-right policies " ... "As the country lurches to the right, many people will be seduced by the text's academic trappings and scientific tone into believing its arguments and political inferences well supported. Those readers should think again " ... "The work is a string of half-truths " ... "The arguments stem from the same tradition of biological determinism that led, not so long ago, to compulsory sterilizations in the U S and genocide elsewhere " ... "*The Bell*

Curve plays fast and loose with statistics in several ways." ..."The book exaggerates the ability of IQ to predict job performance."(Beardsley)

"It offers a conservative attack on the liberal egalitarianism of the 1960s." ..."*The Bell Curve*...comes from a cold and dark place in American thought " ..."If you take this [book] seriously, eugenics is just around the corner."(Bellicose)

"What if racial differences in IQ are the result of over 200 years of slavery and more than 100 more years of discrimination and oppression?"(Besharov)

"Clever Arguments, Atrocious Science" ..."*The Bell Curve* is a house of cards constructed to push a political agenda--an attack on affirmative action, the welfare system, and schools that fail the gifted. ...To couch their opinions as scientific truth is downright dangerous. *The Bell Curve* could trigger insidious discrimination....Now, the slamming [of doors of opportunity] will be justified on the grounds of lower intelligence. That's not the kind of America we want."(Carey)

Christian affirmations of the intrinsic and equal value of each individual as created and beloved by God find little support in *The Bell Curve's* totally secular worldview. Here cognitive elites...need not recognize any...obligations to share with their neighbors or worry about a just society....The whole book seems morally and spiritually tone-deaf."(Callahan)

"*The Bell Curve* will undoubtedly give encouragement to both the crudest and the most subtle form of racism."(Fischel)

"For black children who need a load lifted from their backs, Murray and Herrnstein just add more baggage, delivering a gloomy message of predestination and a racial caste....[Does] Charles Murray [have] the IQ to understand why one sentence from Einstein is worth more than everything in *The Bell Curve* ('Genius is 90 percent sweat')." (Reiland 1994, 1995)

"*The Bell Curve* is not only sleazy; it is, intellectually, a mess."(Ryan)

Why Critique *The Bell Curve* ?

Seldom does such an 845-page book full of charts and tables on IQ and race stay on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 15 weeks. It happened to *The Bell Curve* because it touched a raw nerve about status, class, job, income, and especially U S race relations. It appeared just before and heralded the November 1994 conservative Republican Party election victory in Congress. It marked conservative gains before the 1996 national elections. It coincided with recent right of center U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Liberals see it as part of the conservative reach for power in the early twenty-first century. In the mid-1990 climate of congressional cutbacks, liberals see the book as an effort to reverse post-World War II gains made in race relations and in equality of opportunity.

Critical reviewers fault the book's controversial themes, especially (1) that fixed IQ has replaced traditional family status and wealth in determining one's place in life, and (2) that class and racial strife is inevitable as rich high IQ white elites rule and increasingly curb welfare, crime, drug use, and illegitimacy excesses of low IQ poor of all races (Herrnstein and Murray). Critics say the book favors better schooling for rich white high IQers at the expense of poor low IQers' schooling, welfare, and affirmative action. The authors are faulted for favoring continued and increasing high IQ rich white rule over the mainly non-white low IQ majority. The book, say critics, uses the current confrontational mood on race and crime to cut government benefits for low IQers (Herrnstein and Murray).

What *The Bell Curve* is About

"This book," the preface begins, "is about differences in intellectual capacity among people and groups and what those differences mean for America's future." (Herrnstein and Murray, p. xxi; Gould 1994, 1995). The Herrnstein-Murray book makes the following six controversial main points :

First: intelligence (as measured by IQ tests) has replaced family wealth and prestige in determining one's job, income, social class, and future, and that of one's children. Any small IQ gain made by enriched education is soon lost.

Second: all IQs fall into a normal bell curve distribution of 5 per cent highest IQs of 125 and over (Class I cognitive elites), 20 per cent bright IQs of 110-125 (Class II), and 50 per cent average IQs of 90-110 (Class III). Left of the middle bulge are 20 per cent dull IQs of 75-90 (Class IV) and final 5 per cent very dull IQs of 50-75 (Class V).

Third: racial differences in average IQ, found to be constant since 1900 (despite occasional high IQs in every racial group), determine and explain U.S. socio-economic class and race divisions. These racial differences, say the authors, show that East Asian American IQs average three points higher than Caucasian (whites) IQs, and that white IQs average 15 points higher than African-American IQs.

Fourth: high IQ whites became ruling elites through generations of better home nurture with good books and fable talk and more education in better schools and universities. These advantages led to their higher socio-economic status, which is passed on to their children, who largely intermarry.

Fifth: the fact that the high IQ rich have fewer children in relation to the growing lower IQ majority heightens tension over race and class differences.

Sixth: the worst-fear scenario, already happening, that to be safe from growing low IQ violence, crime, drug abuse, and illegitimate births, the cognitive elite increasingly restrict and control dullards in ghettos.

Authors' Own Words

On cognitive elites' becoming increasingly isolated from the dull-witted majority, the authors write: There is "a deteriorating quality of life for people at the bottom end of the cognitive ability distribution." (Herrnstein and Murray, p. 509)

On why *The Bell Curve* book was written (to make us realize we are split into white naves and black have nots): "Inequality of endowments, including intelligence, is a reality. Trying to pretend that inequality does not really exist has led to disaster." (Herrnstein and Murray, p. 551)

On the futility of welfare and affirmative action: "Trying to eradicate inequality with artificially manufactured outcomes has led to disaster. It is time for America once again to try living with inequality, as life is lived..." (Herrnstein and Murray, p. 551)

Author Richard J. Herrnstein

Some insights into *The Bell Curve's* intentions can be seen in the authors' careers and writings. Richard J. Herrnstein, Harvard psychologist, died of lung cancer September 13, 1994, a month before publication of *The Bell Curve*. Born to Hungarian immigrants in New York City, he graduated from City College of New York. At Harvard he studied under behaviorist B. F. Skinner (1904-90), taught in and chaired the Harvard psychology department, and was a nationally known writer on IQ and genetics. His article on intelligence in the September 1971 *Atlantic Monthly* held that IQ, being genetic, made inequality inevitable in jobs, class, and income. His pronouncements on the genetic nature of IQ and the unworkability of affirmative action and welfare led to physical harassment by 1970s student protesters. (Brimelow)

Co Author Charles A. Murray

Political scientist Charles Alan Murray is Bradley Fellow, American Enterprise Institute, "one of the most conservative social policy think tanks in the country." (Haynes) This Iowa-born son of a Maytag executive earned a Harvard B.A. degree (1965) and worked in Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural health. A political science Ph.D. degree earned at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1974) led to work at the American Institute for Research (1974-81), Washington, D.C. There, evaluating federal welfare, he found that poverty levels varied with the national economy, regardless of remedial programs, and that remedial programs, including Pres Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs, had little lasting effect, were useless and a waste of taxpayer money. Murray affirmed the trickle-down theory: that tax breaks for industry stimulate production and the benefits trickle down to ordinary workers. Subsidized by conservative think tanks, including the conservative Heritage Foundation, he published in 1985 *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980*. (Murray 1985), citing the failure and waste of

government antipoverty programs Murray was the Reagan administration's favorite social scientist. *Losing Ground* anticipated many *Bell Curve* findings. (Murray 1985)

Murray's Anti-Welfare Findings

U.S. policy on welfare changed, Murray found, from limited and temporary aid for the needy to near permanent government handouts expected as a right by have nots. That change, Murray found, resulted from mid-1960s-70s anti-Vietnam, anti-big business, anti-government student protesters; from President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs; and from civil rights movement demands. Over-sensitivity to the plight of the poor led to unwise expansion of federal welfare, compensatory education, and affirmative action programs.

Murray's *Losing Ground*, 1985.

Murray's *Losing Ground* described "Harold and Phyllis," a needy couple expecting their first child. Before the mid 1960s, they would have married, worked at entry-level jobs, and received minimum government aid until they found work. After the mid 1960s the couple's welfare payments increased if they were unmarried, had illegitimate children, and if Harold became an absentee father. This shift in welfare into an expected right, and often generational, Murray labeled as "a domestic Vietnam." He lamented that this wrong mindset had made welfare more attractive and rewarding than the work ethic.

Liberals assailed the book in 1985 for wanting to scrap welfare and affirmative action. But growing anti-welfare sentiment revived interest in *Losing Ground*, which was republished in 1995. (Brimelow)

Brief History of Testing: China

An overview history of IQ, testing, and race begins with ancient China's civil service. Examinations based on Chinese classics, then thought to hold essential wisdom, selected the best minds to administer that vast society. Britain and most modern countries adopted and modified China's competitive test-based civil service selection system.

Plato's *Republic*

Plato's classic, *The Republic*, described a utopia ruled by philosopher kings selected through continuous testing to find the brightest and best minds. Schooling and testing from ages six to 20 selected the brightest for higher schooling from about 20 to 30. The brightest of these were again test-selected for special schooling from about 30 to 35. The best became key administrators, ages 35 to 50, and the most successful of these became ruling philosopher kings--the Einsteins, Eisenhowers, Gandhis, Fords, and Shakespeares of their time.

Below the few best top rulers were administrators at various levels. At the bottom were the laboring majority with limited civil rights. Girls as well as boys from any class

could by ability rise to the top or drop to the bottom. Platonists have since believed that selective education according to ability allows people to do tasks they like and are happiest doing and that this selectivity makes for efficiency and social order. Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* is in the Plato tradition of rule by elites on the basis of intellect or IQ

Intelligence and IQ

Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 1859, with its survival of the fittest theme, stimulated interest in measuring human intelligence. Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton's (1822-1911) *Hereditary Genius*, 1869, stated that "Ability goes by descent." He favored eugenics, or selective breeding, to benefit mankind (Measuring)

James McKeen Cattell studied at Wilhelm Wundt's psychological laboratory, University of Leipzig, Germany. He later studied individual differences with Galton in England. At the University of Pennsylvania, Cattell established the first U.S. university psychological laboratory to measure individual differences. He taught at Columbia University and in 1890 coined the term "mental tests"

Alfred Binet (1857-1911)

French psychologist Alfred Binet thought Cattell's mental tests were too narrow in measuring only sensory and memory processes. Binet's experimentation with tests to measure the higher functions of imagination and comprehension came to fruition in 1904 when the Minister of Public Education asked him to devise tests to identify children with learning difficulties. Large classes and inflexible curricula in French public schools gave teachers little time for slow students. Binet set up intelligence tasks for normal and subnormal Paris school children ages 3 to 11. The Binet-Simon age-graded tests of 1905, improved in 1908, proved reliable and useful.

Binet's tests to identify students needing help were not meant to measure intelligence, which he believed was complex. Not himself a genetic hereditarian, his tests were reshaped to serve hereditarian views.

Stern, Goddard, Terman

German psychologist William Stern in 1911 introduced the "mental quotient" concept, dividing a child's mental age by chronological age which, when multiplied by 100, is today's IQ.

H. H. Goddard translated the Simon-Binet scale into English in 1910 and verified its reliability in Vineland, New Jersey, schools. Goddard held a hereditarian view and saw intelligence as a single unit.

Lewis Terman, a Clark University graduate student, was impressed by the Binet-Simon tests. As psychology professor at Stanford University, Terman published the 1916

Stanford revision of the Binet-Simon tests, which became the standard intelligence test. Goddard, Terman, and others turned Binet's tests--originally to identify and help the learning disabled--into tests believed to measure inherited intelligence (Gould 1995)

World War I Army Tests

In 1917 Harvard's Robert Yerkes and his committee of psychologists developed and administered the World War I Army Alpha tests (arithmetical reasoning, number series completion, and analogies). The Army Beta tests used similar questions in pictorial form for illiterate recruits. Nearly two million recruits took these tests.

The Army Alpha and Beta test results showed that immigrant recruits on average scored lower than native-born recruits, that more recent southern and eastern European immigrants scored lower than western European immigrants, that black recruits scored lowest of all, and that the average Army recruit had a mental age of 13.

Despite doubts about the validity of the Army Alpha and Beta tests, intelligence test use increased as immigration and industrialization grew. Such tests were used in public schools for tracking bright, average, and slow students, and in industry for efficient job placement.

Racism and Elitism in Testing

Some mental testers urged restricting immigration to brighter northern Europeans and excluding lower ability Mediterraneans. Journalist Walter Lippmann warned that racism and elitism are inherent in intelligence tests. His 1923 *New Republic* article said that we "cannot measure intelligence when we have never defined it." (Seligman 1992: Question, p. 52) Scientists Leon Kamin, Stephen Jay Gould, and others have since warned that IQ tests are elitist, unscientific, and racist. (Kamin 1974; Gould 1981)

Eugenics, U. S. and Germany

Intelligence testing declined in revulsion over eugenics practiced in parts of the U. S. during the 1920s and '30s. In and out of state institutions, low IQers thought to be feeble-minded were lobotomized and sterilized, often without their consent. The horrors of Nazi Germany's race policy (1933-45) increased unease about intelligence testing.

Varied Opinions on Testing, World War II and After

The new test makers were careful not to call their tests intelligence tests. Over nine million World War II recruits took the Army General Classification Test. The popularity of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of stages of human development encouraged testing, which was further encouraged by those wanting to measure gains made in Project Head Start and other early childhood education enrichment intervention programs.

Anti-testing sentiment came in the 1960s-70s from student protesters and from some educators and politicians who saw IQ tests as racist, undemocratic, and unreliable.

Conservatives reacted by tying anti-IQ testers to the communist threat. The USSR, bent on remaking human nature and not believing (in theory) in giving anyone special advantage, disavowed IQ tests.

Arthur R. Jensen, 1969, and Other Geneticists

University of California-Berkeley psychologist Arthur Jensen's 1969 *Harvard Educational Review* article, "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" began with: "Compensatory education has been tried and it apparently has failed."

Jensen emphasized the fixed genetic determinant of intelligence. He said that enrichment programs do not boost the IQs of deprived children. Because up to 80 percent of IQ is genetic and any educational enrichment is soon lost, compensatory programs fail and are wasteful. Jensen, like Herrnstein later, was physically threatened by student radicals and forced to have bodyguards on and off the campus. (Jensen, 1969)

Jensen, son of a San Diego businessman, has degrees in psychology from the University of California-Berkeley, San Diego State University, and Columbia University. After working with British psychologist H.J. Eysenck at the University of London, he became educational psychologist at the University of California-Berkeley.

Echoing Jensen's view of IQ as genetic and fixed was Stanford University physicist William Shockley, Nobel Prize winner as co-inventor of the transistor. Shockley's advocacy of eugenics also provoked liberal opposition. (Seligman 1994, *Trashing*; Samuelson 1994) *The Bell Curve* revived in the 1990s the controversy on IQ and race which Jensen, Shockley, and others aroused in the 1960s -70s.

Five Critics: I-Howard Gardner Believes in Many Kinds of Intelligence

Now the views of five respected critics of *The Bell Curve*. First, Harvard educational psychologist Howard Gardner is disturbed by Herrnstein and Murray's "academic brinkmanship." The authors almost embrace, then do not fully endorse, intelligence tied to genes. They say that affirmative action should be abandoned and that low IQers' childbearing and immigration should be curtailed. Gardner fears class warfare as *Bell Curve* readers identify with high IQers and distance themselves from low IQers

Gardner questions *The Bell Curve's* assertion that genes explain social class. Longer schooling may lead to a higher IQ. IQ and school success are affected by parental attention, nutrition, and individual motivation. Many factors besides IQ, including luck, account for one's socio-economic status.

Herrnstein and Murray mention, says Gardner, but do not credit findings that IQ has risen worldwide in this century, an increase that cannot be explained by genes alone; that IQs rise among African Americans who move from the rural south to the urban north; and

that when poor African American children are adopted into higher socio-economic status families, their aptitude and achievement improve

Psychometricians, Gardner writes, are "intoxicated with the IQ test." He doubts the notion of a single measured intelligence, believing that there are many kinds of intelligence other than the linguistic and logical skills measured in IQ tests. Training and inborn talent, he says, account for chess and musical experts, whose skill depends on practice. Genes may regulate human behavior, but learning alters the way genes function. Intelligence is learned as much as it is inborn. Parental and teachers' expectations affect IQ.

Gardner cites Harold W. Stevenson and James W. Stigler, *The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education* (Stevenson). Chinese, Japanese, and American students tested had about equal IQ scores. East Asians learn more, not because they have higher IQs, but because they attend school more days, study harder in school and at home, have better prepared teachers, and have parents who prod and coach them.

Herrnstein, Murray, and most Americans believe that lack of ability causes failure. But East Asians believe that lack of effort causes failure. Success or failure depends, not on our genes, but on demands we make on ourselves, says Gardner.

Gardner calls Herrnstein and Murray dangerously confrontational in setting up an us-against-them mentality (high IQers vs. low IQers), with the threat to cordon off and control low IQers in ghettos. He criticizes the authors for not crediting successful social and educational intervention programs with deprived children, as described in Lisbeth B. Schorr's 1988 *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage* (Schorr) written in part to counter Murray's anti-welfare *Losing Ground* (Murray 1985). Other successful intervention programs include Interaith Education Agencies, City Year, Teach for America, Jobs for the Future, and others. Successful intervention programs cast doubt on *The Bell Curve's* gloomy message that aiding the poor is futile. It is callous to write *The Bell Curve* and omit studies of workable intervention programs for the poor, said Gardner. (Gardner)

2-Alan Ryan Cites Authors' Obsession with IQ and Welfare Waste

Second critic Alan Ryan sees Herrnstein as obsessed with genetic heritability of intelligence and Murray as obsessed with wasteful welfare programs. The resulting politics in their book, Ryan added, is "at best slightly mad and at worst plain ugly" (Ryan).

Herrnstein began as a disciple of behaviorist B.F. Skinner, who believed that a controlled environment shaped behavior. Herrnstein was later captivated with Charles Spearman's *g* factor in tests, which supposedly correlates with intelligence. Skeptics say *g* explains nothing. Herrnstein's acceptance of *g* only matters, says Ryan, because if

"reinforced his [Herrnstein's] fascination with ethnicity." Wrote Ryan: once you find that criminals' average IQ is 93, then you believe that low IQers are doomed social misfits

Murray sees the widening rich-poor income gap as leading to an American "Custodial State," says Ryan. High IQers live in walled-off well policed enclaves with decent schools. Poor low IQers are shut off in urban slums. Ryan says that Herrnstein believed that the bottom 10 percent of low IQ whites is heading for the same degradation as the black underclass.

Ryan's interpretation is that Herrnstein's mysterious *g* in intelligence, combined with Murray's view of a cast-ridden America, led them to write "what people already think in their heart of hearts:"...that blacks and white trash are born irremediably dumb, that African Americans have been over promoted and given unfair advantage, that smarter white workers have been displaced by incompetent blacks under federal affirmative action. These *Bell Curve* themes come from Herrnstein's gloomy prediction of America's declining intelligence combined with Murray's prediction of pending fascism.

3-Nancy Cole Says *The Bell Curve* Slights the Power of Education

Third critic Nancy Cole (Educational Testing Service president and former education dean at the Universities of Pittsburgh and Illinois) says *The Bell Curve* slights the role of education. If IQ alone determines one's place in life, then little is left for school, learning, education, teachers, and teacher education. Vast public and private schools and the education industry are all wasted efforts. This is simply not true.

The Bell Curve authors, Cole said, would educate only the high IQers and neglect the rest. "I find that a dangerous...social policy... The influence of this book is almost totally negative," she said.(Cole 1994, 1995)

Cole would never hire Herrnstein and Murray as teachers because their "beliefs in inherited immutable capabilities...are contrary to the basic role of the teacher " *The Bell Curve*, she said, makes leaps of unproved inference not substantiated from its selective data

"I am [sorry] the book is out there," she said. It hardens the views of those already negative about human possibilities. It justifies those who do not want to provide learning opportunities for all children. "The most dangerous thing about this book is that the authors attempt to absolve us from dealing with the fundamental issues of race, class, and poverty " We must do more, not less, to improve learning for all children.

She concluded that the book does a disservice in implying that race and class opportunities are dictated by a fixed IQ score. The book is negative and harmful regarding social and educational policies. Its appearance was timed politically to support

conservatives wanting to restrict immigration of low IQers and wanting to cut public education costs (Cole 1994, 1995)

4-Charles Lane Says *The Bell Curve* is Racist and Divisive

Fourth critic Charles Lane found racial bias in *The Bell Curve's* sources. He detected sympathy for, but no specific endorsement of, eugenics. The book cited five articles from *Mankind Quarterly*, an anthropological journal founded in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1960, and notoriously pro-white and anti-black. Seventeen researchers cited in *The Bell Curve* also contributed to *Mankind Quarterly*, ten of them present and past editors or on its editorial board. (Lane, Mercer, Rosen and Lane)

Mankind Quarterly's founding purpose was to counter "communist" and "egalitarian" influences. One *Mankind Quarterly* founder championed South African apartheid. Another was active in U.S.A. White Citizens' Councils and testified before the U.S. Supreme Court against the 1954 *Brown* desegregation decision.

Some *Mankind Quarterly* articles were by scientists who had been pro-Nazi. One editorial board member was Josef Mengele's academic mentor. The quarterly is financed by the Pioneer Fund, founded in 1937, a New York foundation allegedly pro-Nazi, pro-eugenics, and white supremacist (Reed 1994, 1994). A Pioneer Fund letter in 1989 proposed that the U.S. abandon integration because "raising the intelligence of blacks...still remains beyond our capabilities." Pioneer Fund President Harry F. Weyher has denied that the fund ever supported eugenics research, despite the interests of its founders and early directors (Mercer)

The Bell Curve cites studies by 13 scholars who received over \$4 million in Pioneer Fund research grants. These include Arthur R. Jensen and psychology professor Richard Lynn, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, and *Mankind Quarterly's* associate editor

Richard Lynn's research in South Africa and the former Belgian Congo compared black African lower IQs to higher African American IQs. He attributed the higher African American IQs to their admixture of white genes. Lynn is also a source for stating that East Asian IQs average a few points higher than white IQs, a finding which is disputed.

Critic Lane admits that "Herrnstein and Murray aren't answerable for every belief of every member of the racist crowd they rely on for so much of their data." But he faults them for not disclosing the racist views of their sources and for re-introducing eugenics thinking.

5-Robert J. Samuelson Says the U.S. is a Meritocracy where Ability Counts

Fifth critic *Newsweek* writer Robert J. Samuelson, challenged *The Bell Curve's* concept of a cognitive elite. "If the Founding Fathers ever envisioned an ideal social order,

it was surely a meritocracy: a system under which people succeed mainly on the basis of ability and effort."(Samuelson 1994, 1995)

"And yet, the meritocracy is now under furious intellectual assault," wrote Samuelson, in books like *The Bell Curve*, whose thesis is simply not true. Instead of cognitive elites ruling a caste society, Samuelson pointed out, consider the vast increase of U.S. managers and professionals. Between 1940-93, when the labor force slightly more than doubled, managers quadrupled from 3.8 million to 15.4 million, engineers quintupled from 300,000 to 1.7 million, lawyers increased from 182,000 to 777,000, and physicians from 168,000 to 605,000.

"We don't live in a classless society," wrote Samuelson, "(and never will), but we do live in an enormously fluid one. . . [This] is the central point that [Herrnstein and Murray] miss or minimize."

Samuelson added that "the success of the people at the top does not cause the poverty of the people at the bottom." Of 2,729 top executives at 208 major corporations in the mid-1980s, 17 percent did not go to college or were college dropouts, and 28 percent had bachelor's degrees from nonprestigious colleges.

"The image of a pampered elite that can easily program its own future is vastly overdrawn," wrote Samuelson. . . "Whatever its defects, [our] meritocracy is a huge advance over the preceding barriers of race, sex, religion, and ethnicity. Life is unfair. . . [and] always will be--but it is not rigged, at least not in America "(Samuelson 1994, 1995)

Varying Opinions on IQ Testing

After Nazi horrors cast a pall on genetic studies on race, many scholars focused more on education-acquired skills (nurture) than genetics (nature). Post-World War II economic growth encouraged western nations to try to eliminate poverty, crime, substandard housing, and other problems. In this attempt to improve society, social scientists turned to planning and remediation. Nature-oriented geneticists turned from human subjects to fruit flies, ants, and honey bees.

Disillusion with social planning occurred in the 1980s-90s after governments, relying on liberal social scientists, failed to solve such social problems as poverty, crime, and drug abuse. As more was learned about how genes work, genetic scholars gained more acceptance in American universities. Their new studies attributed income inequality partly to genetic differences, suggested that the brain structure of girls differed from that of boys, and offered other genetic explanations for human differences and difficulties.

In this climate when genetic studies became more acceptable, Arthur Jensen, Richard Herrnstein, and others boldly declared that IQ determined class and income and

accounted for national strengths and weaknesses. Charles Murray pointed to the failure of compensatory education and the waste of welfare. Herrnstein and Murray, implying that biology is destiny, said that government policy should favor high IQers and reduce and control low IQers; otherwise, America and western civilization will decline (Old) Critics opposed these views. Murray answered the critics.

Murray Answers *Bell Curve* Critics

Murray's answer to critics is that *The Bell Curve* is moderate in its language, claims, and science and that its statistical analysis is standard and straightforward. Yet hostile critics call him and Herrnstein pseudo-scientist racists with wrong conclusions from faulty research methods. Critics say (mistakenly) that their motive is to eliminate federal welfare programs. (Vangelis, Murray 1995)

Critics' hysterical opposition to *The Bell Curve*, Murray says, comes from our national obsession with race, which dominates all U.S. social policy discussion. He quotes reviewer Michael Novak's explanation for the extreme attacks: "The sin attributed to Herrnstein and Murray is theological: they destroy hope," the hope that government can solve problems of race, poverty, and crime.

Murray says that critics unfairly exaggerate what *The Bell Curve* says about race. This exaggeration Murray attributes to the liberal left's own "psychological projection onto our text." The left believes that society caused racism, poverty, and crime and that the only remedy is government welfare and compensatory programs. Hope is all the left has to believe in, says Murray. (Murray 1995, Novak)

Attacks on *The Bell Curve*, says Murray, are really attacks "against the psychometric tradition on which it is based": that is, on Charles Spearman's *g* factor of cognitive ability. Biologist Stephen Jay Gould's book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, and his *New Yorker* article rejected psychometrics as a false science. But Gould's denial of Spearman's *g* factor, Murray asserts, "has been thoroughly discredited among scholars." (Murray 1995)

Murray says that what he and Herrnstein actually wrote about genes, IQ, and race is that both genetic and environmental factors determine the average 15 points higher white over black IQ score. He and Herrnstein, he says, did not make as aggressive a case for genetic differences as the evidence suggested.

Despite *The Bell Curve's* over 1,000 sources, critics pick a dozen so-called tainted racist sources, all published, incidentally Murray writes, in respected and refereed journals. Critics label *Mankind Quarterly* and the Pioneer Fund as racist. Yet their present management is above reproach, even if some called their founders racist.

Murray thus counters with seeming logic *Bell Curve* critics' charges of the book's racism, that it confuses correlation with causation, neglects enriched remedial education programs, and other charges.

Murray says that the avalanche of critical attacks on *The Bell Curve*, many of them wild and unsubstantiated, makes the book more widely read and more influential in a national reexamination of welfare policy. Murray concludes that when the controversy over *The Bell Curve* dies down, its findings will stand the test of time.

Bell Curve Exposes the Liberal-Conservative Clash over American Values

One explanation for the furor over the book, its controversial themes, critical reception, and the raw nerve it touched about IQ and the future of race and class relations is that it reflects a conservative-versus-liberal clash over American values

The founding fathers embraced hard work, free enterprise, free markets, and laissez faire government. Elite Calvinists always promoted big business, international corporations, profits, and--recently--testing and IQ for economic efficiency. This business ethic was challenged in the 1960s-70s by new liberal baby boomers whose mindset came from affluent suburban rearing, greater educational opportunities, and 1960s-70s anti-Vietnam, pro-civil rights activism.

Better educated Americans, and especially their children, removed and alienated from the Puritan ethic, formed the 1960s-70s student protesters. Levels of education have increased dramatically in this past half century. The percentage over age 25 with four or more years of college rose from 5 percent in 1940 (3.4 million) to 20 percent by 1985 (27 million). Fifty percent of high school graduates now enter some kind of college: about 25 percent graduate from college. Professionals in the work force rose from 4 million, 1950, to 16 million, 1980. U.S. doctorate degrees granted rose from 382 in 1899-1900 to 33,000 in 1976-77. In 1982 about 750,000 Americans held doctoral degrees. (Snyderman, p. 252)

The assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King, Jr., sensitized the new concerned liberals. The civil rights movement radicalized them. Anti-Vietnam War and anti big business views galvanized them into rebellion. They opposed IQ and testing as racist and unfair. They favored affirmative action and compensatory education to level the playing field and give have nots a long denied advantage.

A clash still exists between the Puritan ethic and concerned liberals, between nature and nurture, between IQ testers and compensatory education advocates, between haves and have nots, between political spokespersons for high IQers and low IQers. This clash occasionally flares, as with Jensen in 1969 and with *The Bell Curve* in 1994-95

Race Dilemma in Current Context

Recently, Americans were horrified at Rodney King's brutal beating by Los Angeles police, mesmerized by the O.J. Simpson murder trial, shocked at the racial division uncovered by that jury's not guilty verdict, and await in uncertainty the consequences on race relations of the October 16, 1995, Million Man March in Washington, D.C. *The Bell Curve's* themes and influence must be viewed in the context of these and other socioeconomic-political events.

Bell Curve and the Crucial Role of Education

Critic Nancy Cole and others fault *The Bell Curve* for neglecting the role of education. In contrast, the theme of George Bernard Shaw's play, *Pygmalion*, and its musical stage and film versions, *My Fair Lady*, exalts the power of education to improve the human condition. Speech teacher Professor Henry Higgins bets his friend, Colonel Pickering, that he, Higgins, can make a lady out of a London Cockney flower girl. He teaches her good speech and better manners. Through the magic of education, he passes her off as a regal lady.

Conclusion: Will Equality of Opportunity Prevail?

Most *Bell Curve* critics agree that using IQ and testing for diagnosis and improvement is helpful. But using IQ and testing to categorize people is unfair and undemocratic. We are not trapped by an iron law of nature. We came into the world unfinished. We can and do improve ourselves and our children. Education, more than IQ, has the power to improve, uplift, and ennoble.

Critics see *The Bell Curve* as a threat to equality of educational opportunity. Their hue and cry against the book affirms the belief that all people deserve an equal chance. *The Bell Curve* increases fears about, rather than resolves, race and class relations.

Resolving race and class conflicts requires tolerance, good will, and--above all--extending rather than limiting the American ideal of equality of opportunity.

End

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END

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Author of twenty-four books, over a dozen encyclopedia articles, and many journal articles--Parker's most recent work is *George Peabody, A Biography*, a 1995 revision of the 1971 edition by Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville. Published on the bicentennial of George Peabody's birth year (born 1795), the book tells of the life of that Massachusetts-born merchant, international banker (founding root of the House of Morgan; J.P. Morgan's father was Peabody's partner), and of Peabody's influence as educational philanthropist (established the \$2 million 1867-1914 Peabody Education Fund for public education in the 11 former Confederate states) and as founder of the Peabody Trust, which still provides low-cost housing for 26,000 low-income workers in London, England.

Franklin Parker lives at Uplands [a retirement community], P.O. Box 100, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578 U.S.A., where he and Betty Parker are active researchers and writers.