
Book Reviews

Intelligence is not a statistic: the pseudo-science of the 'bell curve'

by Dennis Speed

The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life

by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray
The Free Press, New York, 1994
845 pages, hardbound, \$30

The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions

edited by Russell Jacoby and Naomi Glauberman
Times Books/Random House, New York, 1995
720 pages, paperback, \$15

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a reactionary campaign against the achievements of the civil rights movement of the just-assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King, was spearheaded by the release of a series of publications that sought to rejuvenate the hard-core racial inferiority outlook of the Southern Confederacy, in a modern, "post-industrial" guise. The discredited eugenics arguments of the 1920s, and even of the 19th century, were exhumed and recycled. This was done as a leading component of the campaign for the "social policy" of what became known, through its advocacy by Nixon adviser (and now U.S. Senator) Daniel Patrick Moynihan, as "treating America's urban centers"—and the populations therein contained—"with 'benign neglect.' "

In the immediate aftermath of the Newark and Detroit riots of 1967, and the April 1968 nationwide riots immediately following King's assassination, international operatives, such as the Club of Rome's Alexander King, sought to work with their American counterparts to tie together the floundering anti-Vietnam War movement, the "student movement," and the decapitated civil rights movement, into a battering-ram against the spread of scientific and technological progress.

Indeed, a "dumbing down" process had already begun, in part through the early-1960s introduction of "new math." Somewhat later came the fraudulent Meadows-Forrester *Limits To Growth* computer study, which purported to prove that "the world is running out of resources."

As each newer, and dumber, idea was introduced, people's intelligence diminished. Individuals, typified by the denizens of think-tanks such as the RAND Corp., who were designing radical depopulation programs for every sector of the world, including the United States, argued that contrary to what the civil rights movement claimed, in fact people of different skin colors have different "levels of intelligence."

In this irrational world of "small is beautiful," collapsing economies, assassinated heads of state, and depopulation wars such as Vietnam, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the belief that all people, regardless of skin color or some other accident of birth, possessed the same intelligence—and therefore the same responsibility to improve the world. Instead, militant "studies" movements of every stripe appeared, largely because students no longer possessed the capacity to comprehend universal ideas.

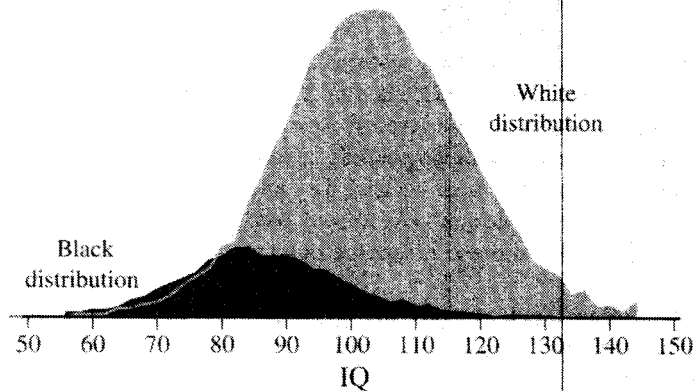
Populist refrains abounded, such as "the money spent in space has to be brought down to Earth and spent in the ghettos." The all-too-predictable result of that particular slogan, was that the space program was cut, the ghettos got worse, and serious science education became virtually nonexistent in the nation's schools.

Meanwhile, thousands of African-American students, with temporary access to America's university system as a result of King's work, fought militantly on the campus for what was referred to at the time as "a Black studies curriculum." That, however, was *their own* perceived agenda, and it was professedly not the agenda of the university officials, such as the deans of admissions, who had recruited them, nor of the foundations which usually assisted in paying their tuition.

What post-industrial age gurus Alexander King, Julian Huxley, Kenneth Clark, and others hoped to induce, was that the "minority" students in American, and European,

The black and white IQ distributions in the NLSY, Version II

Frequency distributions proportional to the ethnic composition of the U.S. population



Herrnstein and Murray's The Bell Curve is liberally smattered with suggestive graphics such as this one, designed to lead the gullible to the conclusion that racial differences in "intelligence" are genetically determined.

colleges, including much of the future leadership of Third World countries, would reject the very idea of universal human progress as some sort of "western cultural imperialist" value, and would therefore stop fighting for the improvement of the conditions of life of the world's population. And then, their rejection was to be regarded as "proof" of the "genetic cultural inferiority," masquerading as the "unique cultural difference," of these populations. This would provide the proprietors of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, etc., with a convenient way of denying their own responsibility for the collapse of living conditions worldwide.

Such justifications were to be supplied, in large measure, by these students themselves in order to achieve the exact psychological "spin" required. Thus the "social sciences," such as "ethnology" (the actual name for the field today known as "anthropology"), were used to castrate any effective opposition by the newly militant "Black Power" advocates, or the moribund civil rights movement, to acquiesce in the already-decided-upon Nixon administration social policy of "benign neglect." The "knife" to be used in the surgical procedure, was provided by the militant victims through their own "term papers" on "the Black psyche," "the Black aesthetic," "the Black voice in music," "basketball, music, and the Black aesthetic: a psychological history," etc.

While "Black Power" advocates blithely enjoyed their brief popularity on the New York cocktail party circuit, the "culture files" of several intelligence agencies and their branches, such as the London Institute for Race Relations, went to work. Through the dissemination of the writings of "purgative violence" advocate Franz Fanon, by means of the conduit of the "Black Power" movement, a shift away from Dr. King's work was achieved among students. The content of that "paradigm shift" was not only toward violence, but toward the *ad hominem* rejection of western values.

Simultaneously, the Federal Bureau of Investigation,

whose head, J. Edgar Hoover, had employed the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith and various "covert operatives" to stalk Martin Luther King, and who had also, in his youth, headed a campus chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, used such creatures as the late Meyer Kahane, and his racist Jewish Defense League, to "work the other side of the street." At Harvard, the psychology department began to churn out the racist screeds essential to the "waving of the Confederate flag," against which the enraged troops of the post-King, Fanon-inspired "Black Power" movement would be deployed.

The racist Arthur Jensen

Such a person was Arthur Jensen. Jensen's 123-page *How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?* released in 1969, was part of the manure that prepared the ground for justification of "Days of Rage" against the racists of "the System"—and justification for the repressive police measures that followed the "Days of Rage."

For those who were unable to follow Jensen's tendentious treatise, two authors, a Briton and an American, Eysenck and Herrnstein, supplied the "Cliff Notes" version of a "guide for the perplexed." Finally, in case one might have entirely missed the point, there was William Shockley, the Nobel prizewinner who advocated paying people with low intelligence quotients for their consent to be sterilized; and Harvard's Edward C. Banfield, author of *The Unheavenly City*, who proposed that welfare mothers and unwed mothers be encouraged to sell their children.

Already in those days, the same idea that underlies Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve* was becoming fashionable—namely, that there exists, if not a difference between "cognitive intelligence" and "affective intelligence" (as is advocated by their colleague, Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner), at least a clear gulf between the "cognitive elite" and the majority of African-Americans,

who, Herrnstein and Murray contend, are less intelligent. This, they say, is demonstrated by a 15-point difference in the average-distribution (or “curve”) on IQ tests, between African-Americans and whites. Further, the authors contend that the higher IQs among African-Americans occur among those with lighter skin, as a “group.”

Last year, the *Washington Post* reported a survey done by a teacher in a Washington, D.C. class of 29 elementary school children, 24 of whom were African-American. Children were found to hold the following beliefs, among others: 1) “Blacks are poor, and stay poor because they are dumber than whites”; 2) “Black people don’t like to work hard. White people are smart and have money. Asians are smart and *make* money.”

Similarly, author Hugh Pearson recounted in a recent article that “by the time I reached sixth grade, I was determined to enter junior high school at the highest level of the tracking system. So I applied myself in class and registered the greatest improvement in test scores of any student in my predominantly white school, only to hear a black classmate say, ‘I guess you think you’re like the white students now.’ ”

We can see from this example that the damage which many think Herrnstein and Murray’s book would do, has in fact already been done—not *despite*, but largely *because of* “multiculturalism” and its attack on “western values” such as literacy, or, more importantly, technological and scientific progress (referred to by Bertrand Russell in his *Icarus, Or the Future of Science* as “white science”).

In *The Bell Curve*’s final chapter, “A Place for Everyone,” the authors reveal their own vision of a multicultural utopia: “The broadest goal is a society in which people throughout the functional range of intelligence can find, and feel that they have found, a valued place for themselves. For ‘valued place,’ we offer a pragmatic definition: *You occupy a valued place if other people would miss you if you were gone.* . . . Nonetheless, millions of Americans have levels of cognitive ability low enough to make their lives statistically much more difficult than life is for most people. How may policy help or obstruct them as they go about their lives? Our thesis is that it used to be easier for people who are low in ability to find a valued place than it is now.

“In a simpler America, being comparatively low in the qualities measured by IQ did not necessarily affect the ability to find a valued niche in society. Many such people worked on farms. . . . People who would score 80 or 90 on an IQ test could be competent farm workers. . . . Much the same could be said of a wide variety of skilled and unskilled trades. . . . Inevitably, with technological advances, the niches for the less intelligent have shrunk.”

In this utopian world, similar to that imposed by the Emperor Diocletian during the death throes of the Roman Empire, it’s “back to the plantation” for the “cortically challenged” and darker-skinned, if only such a beneficent fate might still be arranged for them in time by the “cognitive elite.”

Try as they might, no multiculturalists could, on the basis of their own “pluralist” outlook, actually refute what is propounded here by *The Bell Curve*. That is why the political agenda of the recent “Conservative Revolution,” though it may be hated by many, holds such sway over many people’s thinking. “You’ve got to admit that they have a point, even if we don’t want to put it exactly that way,” one will hear liberal-minded folk saying. “After all, how many white people do you see panhandling in New York City?” (Though with the recent collapse in the value of investment-house financial paper in Wall Street, that argument may quickly lose even a vestige of truth.)

Not one race, but humanity is the target

In order to combat such prejudices, an immediate “boosting” of the U.S. population’s true intelligence—as opposed to its IQ, which is a mere test result—is required. Boosting test results is easy; getting people to think on a higher level is considerably more difficult, though even Herrnstein and Murray concede that it is not “genetically” impossible. This intelligence boost can be rapidly achieved by doing what any creative thinker does, namely, divesting oneself of illusions and misconceptions that have, perhaps, resided in the mind for years.

For example, “benign neglect” and its “bell curve” variant is, in a real sense, only secondarily racist. As pointed out by the late Allen Chase, author of *The Legacy of Malthus: the Social Cost of the New Scientific Racism*: “Far from being aimed at ethnic, social, and racial minorities, scientific racism has from its early 19th-century origins been directed at the majorities of the populations of England, France, Germany, the United States, and other industrial nations. The original victims . . . were as white, as Anglo-Saxon, as Protestant as was the noted British political economist who gave scientific racism the first of its historically devastating pseudo-laws of demography and biology.”

Actually, Parson Thomas Malthus had plagiarized his *Essay on Population* from the work of the Venetian Giannaria Ortes, who had attacked the American Benjamin Franklin for a 1750 essay advocating massive population growth for the American colonies as a primary source for the increase of wealth. Just as Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* had been published in 1776 in *opposition* to the American Revolution, Malthus’s work was used against the opposing school of economics, called the “American System,” which saw *the development of the creative powers of reason of the labor force* as the primary source of wealth.

Contrary to the misconceptions of the multiculturalist, it is not “the West” or “the European” who is the source of his problem. It is an oligarchy, comprised of families in Europe, America, and other parts of the world, such as the British monarchy, which believes that the majority of the world should be slaves, especially if they are of darker skin. Those who know that all men possess the same intelligence, argue

against the enslavement of mankind, and are therefore the mortal enemy of the oligarchy. It is this oligarchy which hates the West and its values. If one allies oneself against the idea of progress, then in doing so, one allies oneself with this anti-western oligarchy, on the side of slavery.

So, the multiculturalist is not enslaved by "the European," but rather by the fallacy of his own anti-western axioms, shared with his oligarchical oppressor. It is through this slave mentality that he is subject to manipulation, at the hands of would-be British empiricists, such as Herrnstein and Murray, *who do not even know what intelligence is*. But after all, no real intelligence is required to manipulate the victim of multiculturalism. All that is required, is a familiarity with his "affective," i.e. "emotional" state—his psychological profile, which predetermines all his thoughts and actions.

The oligarchy hates the Florentine Renaissance, the American Revolution, the idea of scientific and technological progress, and its global spread through the agency of western culture. Those who guide oligarchical policy, know that such ideas are the only reason why over 5 billion people are alive on the planet today. The last thing they want to see, is the dark-skinned masses of the "great unwashed" adopting and reproducing the principle behind these ideas—that *man is made in the image of God, and is perfectible specifically through his reason's apprehension of the laws of God's creation*.

The Bell Curve's use of mounds of statistical data (correlation coefficients, factor analysis, and regressive functions) has intimidated some reviewers. The effectiveness of this "baffle them with buffalo chips" approach, primarily rests on

most Americans' mystical reverence for the unchallengeability of statistics, algebra, and formal logic, as criteria for arriving at "true evaluations" of all sorts of things, when such methods are in fact incapable of telling us anything useful about intelligence as such.

But underneath the fluff, the book is an elaborated rehash of Herrnstein's own 1970s restatements of Arthur Jensen's 1969 repetition of several eugenics theories—theories which had already been disproven in the 1920s, and had in fact been refuted much earlier, in the realm of philosophy, by Plato and others.

Even in the 1970s, as shown by some of the articles in the 1995 anthology *The Bell Curve Debate*, competent researchers and thinkers, such as Harvard astrophysicist David Layzer, refuted the epistemological premises of much of Jensen's 1969 argument. In short, there is no credible contemporary reason why anyone, including Herrnstein and Murray, could seriously entertain any of these "pseudo-science" diatribes as more than a useful, if embarrassing, clinical study of hysteria as a mass phenomenon.

Yet that is precisely what they do, even going so far as to defend the work of the notorious J. Philippe Rushton (*Race, Evolution, and Behavior, A Life History Perspective*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994) of the University of Western Ontario, who claims that intelligence is inversely proportional to the size of the genitalia.

Some of Herrnstein and Murray's critics, such as Stephen Jay Gould, competently refute the statistical evaluation of intelligence supplied by the authors, on the grounds of their (in the opinion of this author probably willfully) faulty em-

Fraudulent even on its own terms

From Stephen Jay Gould, "Mismeasure By Any Measure," reprinted in The Bell Curve Debate, pp. 11-12:

The book is also suspect in its use of statistics. As I mentioned, virtually all its data derive from one analysis—a plotting, by a technique called multiple regression, of the social behaviors that agitate us, such as crime, unemployment, and births out of wedlock (known as dependent variables), against both IQ and parental socioeconomic status (known as independent variables). . . .

Indeed, almost all of their relationships are very weak: Very little of the variation in social factors is explained by either independent variable (although the form of this small amount of explanation does lie in their favored di-

rection). In short, their own data indicate that IQ is not a major factor in determining variation in nearly all the social behaviors they study—and so their conclusions collapse. . . .

Herrnstein and Murray's correlation coefficients are generally low enough by themselves to inspire lack of confidence. (Correlation coefficients measure the strength of linear relationships between variables; the positive values run from 0.0 for no relationship to 1.0 for perfect relationship.) Although low figures are not atypical for large social-science surveys involving many variables, most of Herrnstein and Murray's correlations are very weak—often in the 0.2 to 0.4 range. Now, 0.4 may sound respectably strong, but—and this is the key point— R^2 is the square of the correlation coefficient, and the square of a number between zero and one is less than the number itself, so a 0.4 correlation yields an R^2 of only .16. . . . *These very low values of R^2 expose the true weakness, in any meaningful vernacular sense, of nearly all the relationships that form the meat of *The Bell Curve*.*

ployment of regression analysis, factor analysis, and statistics in general. Yet there is one notion, either unknown or overlooked by all of these critics (see box). Layzer gets a bit closer to the truth, by showing the internal “logical inconsistencies”—otherwise known as fakery—with which Jensen’s paper is imbued. But even his happy attempt misses one crucial fact.

What is intelligence?

Statesman Lyndon LaRouche, in his paper “The Fraud of Algebraic Causality,” published in the Winter 1995 issue

The idea that mathematics represents the final word in “objective truth” is about as wrongheaded as asserting that a microwave dinner represents the final word in cuisine.

of *Fidelio* magazine, takes aim at classroom mathematics and formal-logical systems as inherently incapable of generating creative thought. This is not to say that mathematics is not useful. The idea, however, that mathematics represents the final word in “objective truth” is about as wrongheaded as asserting that a microwave dinner represents the final word in cuisine. A microwave oven can be useful in meal preparation, but no one should confuse its use with fine cooking.

Similarly, no one should confuse the use and mastery of formal mathematics with thinking. But thanks to the horrendous education received by what Herrnstein and Murray refer to as the “cognitive elite” in America’s colleges, there is ignorance of the elementary fact that mathematics is completely incapable of representing any fundamental, creative idea.

IQ, the reader should note, is a statistical result arrived at through a method of inferring, through a mathematical procedure called factor analysis, that something called “intelligence” exists. From the introduction to *The Bell Curve*, we quote the following: “By the end of the 19th century, mental tests in the form that we would recognize today were already in use throughout the British Commonwealth, the United States, much of continental Europe, and Japan. Then, in 1904, a former British Army officer named Charles Spearman made a conceptual and statistical breakthrough that has shaped both the development and much of the methodological controversy about mental tests ever since. . . .

“Spearman’s statistical method, an early example of what has since become known as factor analysis, is complex. . . . Insofar as two items tap into the same trait, they share something in common. Spearman developed a method for estimating how much sharing was going on in a given set of data. From almost any such collection of mental or academic test

scores, Spearman’s method of analysis uncovered evidence for a unitary mental factor, which he named *g*, for ‘general intelligence.’ The evidence for a general factor in intelligence was pervasive but circumstantial, based on statistical analysis rather than direct observation. Its reality therefore was, and remains, arguable”—in other words, unproven.

The text continues: “Spearman then made another major contribution to the study of intelligence by defining what this mysterious *g* represented. He hypothesized that *g* is a general capacity for inferring and applying relationships drawn from experience. Being able to grasp, for example, the relationship between a pair of words like ‘harvest’ and ‘yield,’ or to recite a list of digits in reverse order, or to see what a geometrical pattern would look like upside down, are examples of tasks (and of test items) that draw on *g* as Spearman conceived of it. . . . This definition of intelligence differed subtly from the more prevalent idea that intelligence is the ability to learn and to generalize what is learned. The course of learning is affected by intelligence, in Spearman’s view, but it was not the thing in itself.”

IQ, then, is the estimate of the capacity to arrive at some series of correct deductions, which appears to correlate statistically with the results of the same procedure administered to many other people, whose test results are compared. Layzer informs us: “Thus the statement, ‘A has an IQ of 100,’ means that half the members of a certain reference population scored lower than A on a certain set of tests, and half scored higher. . . . (IQ tests are so constructed that the frequency distribution of test scores in the reference population conforms as closely as possible to the normal distribution—the familiar bell-shaped curve—centered on the value of 100 and having a half-width or standard deviation [the square root of the variance] of 15 points.)”

Of course, the inference made, in real life, may or may not be correct, though it may be consistent with the body of “experience” from which it is drawn—which experience may or may not be valid. IQ’s validity, it seems, even if we grant its existence, rises and falls with the validity of the deductive method. But what if deductive method itself, the method of inference, is fatally flawed? What if it can be demonstrated that deductive method cannot be used as the criterion for the establishment of truth?

Edgar Allan Poe’s fictional detective C. Auguste Dupin might be observed, in the mind’s eye, to tease Sherlock Holmes, that “it would then be elementary, my dear Holmes, that the investigative methods for the discovery of truth that you British insist are correct, are worth considerably less than even your recipes for cuisine.”

Knowledge versus ‘information’

There is a great distinction between using statistical correlations to discover something about human behavior, which may under some circumstances have some validity, and attempting to “quantize” intelligence, especially if you don’t know what intelligence is.

The comprehension of any new, revolutionary idea, means that that new idea is in principle communicable to the rest of the human race. This does not happen in “language” or “information,” which is one of the reasons why it cannot be quantized. It happens, as LaRouche states, through the reliving of the act of discovery of the idea, in the mind of both the person who teaches the idea, and the person to whom the idea is taught.

The “substance” of the mind—its ability to hypothesize—is forever changed, and improved, if the *hypothesis of the idea* presented to “mind” is grasped—i.e., not just the idea itself. Otherwise, the student will say, correctly, “I had it for a minute, but then I lost it.” To grasp the hypothesis of a revolutionary idea, those axioms of belief which exclude the very existence of that idea, must be subjected to merciless scrutiny and be overthrown. Therefore, intelligence can only be “measured” by its *transformation* through new hypotheses, thus invalidating any “quantization” assigned to it.

In other words, if it’s intelligence, it can’t be “quantized.” However, we owe the reader some explanation as to why the *method* behind the faulty reasoning of the IQ cult must needs refute any contention that these fellows have the least idea of what intelligence is.

In 1931, the 25-year-old mathematician Kurt Gödel demonstrated in his paper, entitled “On Formally Undecidable Propositions of *Principia Mathematica* and Related Systems,” that a formal-logical mathematical system, perfectly constructed, could not at the same time be both complete and consistent. In his two famous theorems, he showed that he could create a formal-logical statement, rendered in a perfectly constructed arithmetic, that asserted and proved, in effect, that the statement *could not be demonstrated to exist in the formal-logical system which generated it*.

This meant, in turn, that there existed at least one statement (also called a “formula” or theorem) which, if the “arithmetic” of the constructed system were consistent, could not be demonstrated to exist, and therefore could not, by definition, be contained within the system. But how could that be possible, if that “undemonstrable” statement had been generated in a precise, “demonstrable” way, by the system and its rules (axioms)?

Further, even if the new formula were added to the system, Gödel showed, the same process that generated the first non-demonstrable statement, could generate another, on the basis of the previous rules (axioms) of his system. Therefore, his arithmetic system, in its perfect consistency, was *essentially and necessarily* incomplete. If it were true for his system, however, Gödel showed, it would be true for *all* systems of arithmetic so rigorously constructed.

Finally, Gödel showed that he could represent “meta-mathematical” (literally, “above mathematics”) statements in his system, which could be demonstrated to be “true”—that is, logical—for the system, but which *also* could not be demonstrated to exist within that system. For example, the statement “Arithmetic is consistent” was formally represent-

able in Gödel’s arithmetic-system as the proposition “ $A \supset G$.” The statement reads, “if arithmetic is consistent, then the formula G (Gödel’s undemonstrable formula) cannot be demonstrated” (that is, it cannot be demonstrated to be either true or false).

Here, Gödel “sprang his trap” for Bertrand Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*, and for all formal-logical systems. An earlier axiom of Gödel’s arithmetic system, the “Rule of Detachment,” had stated that if two formulas, 1) “ S_1 ” and 2) “ $S_1 \supset S_2$ ” (which reads, “if S_1 , then S_2 ”), exist, then the formula 3) “ S_2 ” can be derived from the first two formulas. “ S_2 ” can, according to this rule, be known, i.e., *demonstrated*. Ironically, however, in the formula “ $A \supset G$ ”—which states, “if arithmetic is consistent, the Gödel formula G is not demonstrable”—the *opposite*—is not only proven, but of necessity, proves another, much more devastating point. For, if the *second* part of the proposition “ $A \supset G$ ” cannot be demonstrated, which was earlier proven to be so, neither can the proposition “ $A \supset G$ ” be demonstrated.

The implication? If Gödel’s arithmetic is perfect, and if his representations of “meta-mathematical” statements are consistent with the rules of his system, then he has proven that *it is not possible to demonstrate, in a perfect formal-logical system, that arithmetic, the most basic of formal-mathematical systems, is consistent*. In short, Gödel proved, in the language of formal logic, that formal-logical systems, including mathematics, cannot explain themselves.

The “rules of inference” at the bedrock of the axioms, and the resultant theorem-lattice that forms any logic, are not sufficient to give us knowledge of the creative-mentative process that originates the logic. Thinking, therefore, is not comprehensively representable in any such system. Thus it would be a fundamental contradiction to claim that the intelligence which cannot, as demonstrated in Gödel’s case by rules of inference themselves, be represented in the system, can be represented in a lower-order mathematical procedure such as factor analysis, or that it can be correlated to a slaphappy and probably nonexistent statistical result, such as IQ.

All useful branches of mathematics are the product of creative processes that shape the domain out of which these expressions of that fundamental creative process “erupt.” This is what is properly known as the domain of Reason, which is transcendent of any “logic.” Reason, hierarchically, is superior to logic, just as a circle is hierarchically superior to any of the polygons that may be constructed within it. Once this is recognized, it should be clear that any attempt to “quantize” intelligence, is like trying to pour the Pacific Ocean into a hole on a California beach with a measuring cup.

The divine spark has no bell curve

Fundamentally, therefore, not only are *The Bell Curve*, and all such products, tautological; the authors are themselves desperately in need of an education that no thirteen-year-old in America should leave home without. The bias of

the text, amply in evidence, is well cited by the following excerpts:

“John Locke . . . did not accept the Hobbesian choice between despotism and anarchy. He conceived of people in a state of nature as being in ‘a *state* also of *equality*, wherein all the Power and Jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another,’ and sought to preserve that condition in actual societies through a strictly limited government. What Locke propounded is especially pertinent here because it was his theory that the American Founders brought into reality.”

Here, we must interpolate that, on the contrary, the Founders did not “bring into reality” Locke’s worldview, but one far different. Instead of “Life, Liberty, and Property”—the formulation of Locke and other British empiricists—the Founders adopted the formulation stemming from the scientist and statesman Gottfried Leibniz: “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

Leibniz’s view was that the Creator had composed the best of all possible worlds, by the necessity of the perfection of His nature, since His creation could do nothing else but mirror His perfection—else He were not God. Man’s intellect allowed him to comprehend that since the Creator is the most perfect, He must needs be the most happy, and that man’s pursuit of God’s perfection, as knowable (and *only* as knowable) through His creation, would make man the most “happy of all sentient creatures.”

Leibniz was an implacable opponent of Locke’s view of man, as expressed in Locke’s *Essays on Human Understanding*, and as quoted by Herrnstein and Murray in *The Bell Curve*: “Now there is such a difference between men in respect of their understandings, I think nobody who has had any conversation with his neighbors will question. . . . Which great difference in men’s intellects, whether it rises from any defect in the organs of the body particularly adapted to thinking . . . or, as some think, in the natural differences of men’s souls themselves; or some or all of these together, it matters not here to examine. Only this is evident, that there is a difference of degrees in men’s understandings, apprehensions, and reasonings, to so great a latitude that one may, without doing injury to mankind, affirm that there is a greater distance between some men and others in this respect, than between some men and some beasts.”

This was the outlook that no doubt inspired Royal Africa Company founding member and East India Company employee Locke to co-author the constitution, not of the United States, but of South Carolina, the most radically racist of the American Southern slave states. On the topic of slavery, “philosophical radical and democrat” Locke states, in his *Second Treatise on Government*: “Nobody can give more power than he has himself; and he that cannot take away his own life cannot give another power over it. Indeed, having by his fault forfeited his own life by some act that deserves death, he to whom he has forfeited it may, when he has him in his power, delay to take it and make use of him to his own

service; and he does him no injury by it, for whenever he [the slave] finds the hardship of his slavery [to] outweigh the value of his life, it is in his power, by resisting the will of his master, to draw on himself the death he desires.

“This is the perfect condition of slavery, which is nothing else but ‘the state of war continued between a lawful conqueror and a captive.’ ”

Horrified by this worldview, Leibniz responded to Locke with the 700-page *New Essays on the Human Understanding*. This work, written primarily as dialogue, takes Plato’s *Meno* as its point of departure. Plato had developed his view of the nature of intelligence, as well as slavery, in this dialogue. He demonstrated that a slave-boy, with no previous knowledge of mathematics, could be taught the existence of different “species” of numbers, such as the “irrationals” (for example, the diagonal in a square), and their function, through geometric proof. Further, the slave was able to learn because he possessed the innate capacity, according to Plato’s protagonist Socrates, to know all things that men could know.

This capacity to know is generated through the possession of *agapē*, as St. Paul informs us in Corinthians I:13 and following: “Charity . . . rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. . . . For now, we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as I am known.”

It is the possession of that capacity for *agapē* which allows the teacher to educate, that is, to “lead out of” the student the infinite capacity for “divining” the universe. In this way, the “divine spark” that is in the possession of all men, as is implicitly stated by the Declaration of Independence, is realized equally in all men, though necessarily differently, because each individual is sovereign and unique. The “equality” is the equality of possession of the divine spark, the *Götterfunken* hailed by the poets Friedrich Schiller and Beethoven in the “An die Freude” (“Ode to Joy”) of the Ninth Symphony.

It is the pursuit of *Freude* that is meant in the Declaration of Independence—the happiness that comes with the labor to understand the creation, and to perfect ourselves in the image of that creation through discoveries and inventions, *especially* through skilled labor, advanced agriculture, and the development of infrastructure. “Value” is not given to the human condition because someone will, or might, miss you when you are gone. You must actually do something of value, for people who will *never* know you, to have truly lived.

The Bell Curve doesn’t quite make it. For Herrnstein, it would appear already to be too late. For Murray, we would hope that he might yet pass his Scholastic Aptitude Tests—or, rather, a “Sanity Aptitude Test”—so that the rest of his life doesn’t threaten to go by the boards. Whether he listens or not, our readers, who might continue to fulminate on “bell curves,” “curve balls,” and other curves, should take heed from the quotation often cited by Martin Luther King: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”