

See also:



"Lesbianism is a necessary political choice, part of the tactics of our struggle, not a passport to paradise." Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, 1981, in *Love Your Enemy*. London : Onlywomen Press.

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"....As all ideologies do, 'radical' feminism sidestepped the trivial issue of whether, factually, it was right or wrong that women are universally discriminated against and subject to conditioning which makes them unable to perceive themselves as discriminated against: '....many women do not recognize themselves as discriminated against; no better proof could be found of the totality of their conditioning' (Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*)." Johanna FAUST, 1986, *The Soul of Woman under Socialism*. London : British Association of Libertarian Feminists.

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"Twenty-three survivors of the Jupiter cruise ship disaster completed the Impact of Events Scale.... [The ship sank off Athens, October 1988, after a collision, and four

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BILLINGSGATE, n. The invective of an opponent. [*The Devil's Dictionary* A.B.]

## The Racial Genetics of Intelligence:

### The *Gadfly* Interview with Dr. Robert Gordon

*Christina Papavasiliou*

Dr. Robert Gordon of Johns Hopkins University calls himself a scientist. *Time* magazine calls him a eugenicist. Many of his students call him racist.

Gordon is one of the dozen or so university professors who have been subsidized by a non-profit foundation called the Pioneer Fund to do research on the genetics of human intelligence and race. Their findings indicate that blacks test lower than whites on IQ tests. Many of them have concluded that lower intelligence is for the most part a genetic trait - independent of social and economic background. Gordon has concluded that it is responsible for many of this country's social problems, including illegitimacy, unemployment, and violent crime. *The Bell Curve*, a new 800-page sociological tome which compiles and supports the results and views of these professors, was the catalyst which caused a longtime dispute within the scientific community to explode into the media with enough force to brand these men Professors of Hate. Co-authored by the well-known social scientist Charles Murray and the late psychologist Richard J. Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve* is selling out of bookstores across America. Despite the opposition that Gordon and his colleagues have faced, they continue to publish material that the media often refers to as unproved and inflammatory.

The *Gadfly* recently spoke with Dr. Gordon about his views in the wake of the recent turmoil.

#### ***Gadfly*: What was the focus of your research?**

Gordon: My research dealt primarily with the consequences of lower intelligence, such as crime. I have found that there is a definite link between lower intelligence and higher crime. IQ level and crime rate are inversely related.

#### **Do you think that IQ tests are valid in measuring intelligence though?**

I think IQ is a very good variable in measuring intelligence. It's an accurate measurement of a person's abstract reasoning ability - ability to think about abstractions in a logical manner. In this way, having a high IQ increases the options that an individual has. Abstract reasoning ability also indicates how well an individual is capable of thinking ahead in a situation and considering the consequences of an action. This is why I've concluded that one with a high IQ doesn't turn to crime as easily. If someone with a low IQ sees a pair of shoes on another person's feet that he likes, he will be much more likely to neglect the

deaths resulted.]  
....greater early intrusion [of ideas, thoughts and images] was associated with later symptom scores  
....other work has shown that dysfunctional thinking is activated is activated by stressful life events for those with a prior history of depression (Miranda, 1992, Cognitive Therapy & Research 16). It is suggested, therefore, that prior depressive personality might be important in moderating the relationship between early intrusion and later symptoms in so far as it is a marker of dysfunctional or negativistic thinking. ....other research has shown more guilt-provoking causal attributions to be associated with intrusion."  
S.JOSEPH et al., 1995, Behaviour Research & Therapy 33.

obvious consequences of murdering for the shoes than someone with an above average IQ. Because he lacks the ability to logically evaluate his actions as clearly, he will be less likely to conclude that the pair of shoes are not worth risking a lifetime in a state penitentiary.

**The controversy concerning this book and your research is growing because many people believe that it's racist. How do you respond to this view?**

People like to make a big start over the dangers of the results of this research. It's a sensitive issue because there are clear and consistent results that people just don't like.

**Do you believe that black people, on average, are genetically less intelligent than white?**

If IQ tests measure intelligence... well, you can't overlook... black people score an average of 18 points lower than whites.

**How much of a difference can 18 IQ points make in a person's life?**

Well, that depends on the range that you're talking about. If it's between 140 and 158, there's really no major difference. Both individuals will have the ability to be very successful in society. If it's between 115 and 133, that might be the difference between whether or not a person will be accepted at MIT. In the range of 82 to 100, you will have one person who will most likely enjoy average success in a professional career to another who will most likely attend an OK college - certainly not one of the best colleges, though. Now when you reach the point where you're talking about 18 points below 80, you're talking about the difference between a person who's serving fast food and a person who is severely retarded.

**How accurate would you say that this 18 point difference between blacks and whites really is?**

It's very accurate. It's a well known and accepted figure. These statistics are based on tests taken in huge samples where the standard error is very, very small. Most people round the figure down to 15 points. So 15 to 18 points is very accurate.

**But how conclusive are the test scores? Even in *The Bell Curve*, several examples are listed of standardized tests which are racially and culturally biased against blacks.**

The items in an IQ test are ranked in order of difficulty, and the blacks who test low on the test generally miss the same items, the ones ranked as most difficult, as the whites who test low. Their errors are not sensitive to any particular items.

**But how can we be sure that it's genetic? Can't it be argued that environment in a child's developing years is a factor which will determine his IQ?**

If we include the parents of the child when we speak of environment, then yes, in the very early stages of life. For example, children born to unwed mothers tend to score, at rates of 1 to 10, at the lowest level. But the most persuasive data that I've seen shows that after that early stage in a child's life, changing the IQ is almost impossible. The research that I've done on crime suggests that a family with low IQ levels will certainly contribute to the delinquency of a

child. And the family's genetic background almost always has a determining effect on the child's intelligence and ability.

***The Bell Curve* states that intelligence is 60% hereditary. It goes on to say that the most reliable tests have shown that it's actually a much higher figure, but this is the one that they use to avoid controversy. Do you agree with this figure?**

I agree that it is the most defensible figure. It is an intermediate figure that I think might be true.

**In your research were you aiming toward establishing a genetic basis for racial differences in intelligence and crime, or did your data lead you to the conclusion?**

Some of my early work was rather serendipitous. But the way that I work is I set up a hypothesis and test it on data. If the hypothesis can't be invalidated by data then it stays, if it is invalidated you chuck the hypothesis. My current hypothesis has not been discredited.

**Rolling Stone magazine ran an article entitled "Professors of Hate" in last month's...**

I have the article.

**How do you respond?**

It's just namecalling. It's some journalist doing a hatchet job, who is not in the least interested in science.

**Have you encountered any opposition like this at the university?**

The black student union has already called for me to be fired.

**Have you said anything to defend yourself against them, or against Rolling Stone?**

I don't think I should have to defend myself. I've offered to meet with the students, although I'm not sure whether that would accomplish anything. I am certainly not going to back down from my scientific publications. I don't see any reason for people to get snobby or defensive about their IQs. There's always going to be somebody brighter than you are if you look far enough. And there will always be some blacks that will be more intelligent than some whites. Some people have got to bring their emotions up to date. These things can't even be discussed or studied anymore, even if there is some basis for finding truth there. Among serious scholars and psychometricians, this difference in average IQ level between black and white is hardly a subject of serious dispute.

**Many of these people believe that research like this is racist. Do you in any way think that it's better to simply avoid pursuit of this knowledge in fear of the dangerous consequences?**

Do you?

**I'd have to say no. Are you a racist?**

No.

**Do you think it would be racist to refuse to hire a black person?**

You mean to reject a black person because he were black? Yes! That would be racist.

**What about to assume that his IQ is lower because he is black, and to hire a white person instead, "playing it safe," so to speak? Would that be racist?**

Yes. That would be racist.

**Aren't Asians supposed to be smarter than whites?**

I haven't done research on that specifically, but other people's data definitely show higher non-verbal IQ figural analysis for Asians. And I don't lose sleep over that myself! In fact, I rather like it. I like to hear that there are a lot of competent people out there. The Chinese culture respects competence.

**Do you think our culture respects competence?**

Yes! We have to. I mean, when it comes down to it, you want to get what you pay for. When you want something done, you find a competent person to do it.

**I'm sure you're familiar with the term "eugenics?"**

Oh, yes, it's the attempt to improve the human race through genetic and environmental means.

**Today, the terms "eugenicist" and "racist" are used interchangeably. What do you think of this trend?**

People too reflexively associate it with Nazi Germany. If you take the definition, there's nothing wrong with it.

**A late Professor William Shockley of Stanford University, who also did subsidized research for the Pioneer Fund, had once expressed an opinion that people with low IQs should be payed to be sterilized. Do you think that is a good idea?**

I think that's a rather shocking proposal! I would prefer not paying people. [Laughter] I do think that if we could persuade people with lower IQs not to have as many children as they are having, there would be obvious benefits. As far as black people are concerned, I don't know. If they care about the future of their race, they might be willing to go to some trouble to accomplish that. I think it's right to give them the proper information in order for them to do that.

**Don't you think that view is unfair to people with a lower IQ?**

What you could try to do is try to find a way to combine their satisfaction of parenting and family life with this goal to improve the mean intelligence of their race. I mean, I don't think you need 14 children! It's a question of how people are willing to help for this cause.

**What exactly do you think they could do?**

It's very complicated. High IQ people tend to have children of slightly lower IQ...

**Did you say lower?**

Yes, because of the natural phenomenon of regression toward the mean. Ask one of your professors about it, he'll explain it to you. Anyway, high IQ people

have children of slightly lower IQ, and lower IQ people have children of slightly higher IQ. If the people on the bottom were having considerably more children, as is happening today, the trend of the mean would be downwards. And studies show that today, black women with higher IQ and with more education are having less children.

**Do you think it's fair to demand political action based on the results of your research?**

I think there certainly should be discussion of political action on this basis, but I don't have any say in this matter. Those of us who do research don't have any say at all - we don't have our thumbs over the power button.

**Do you have anything to say to those who are insisting that you are a racist?**

No. Everything can be called racist nowadays if people don't like it, or sexist, elitist, or whatever else-ist. I mean, do you want to let me get to the bottom of this or do you want to namecall? Books like this are written for adults, and unfortunately there don't seem to be many left in the media nowadays.

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