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EDITORIAL

## Lack of logic

*Book falsely links intelligence with race*

A new book called "The Bell Curve" is dredging up old, faulty arguments that link intelligence to race. Richard J. Herrnstein, a Harvard University psychologist (who died in September), and Charles Murray, a politically conservative social scientist, authored the book, which argues blacks are genetically inferior and therefore doomed to social and economic underachievement.



Charles Murray

According to the Oct. 24 Newsweek, the authors say the connection between race and intellect justifies unequal social status.

In the 850-page book, Murray and Herrnstein compare black and white IQ scores and conclude blacks consistently do worse on such tests. They then use their statistics to blast affirmative action and liberal social policies, such as welfare.

Sound familiar?

Throughout history, people have used statistics to paint certain races and nationalities as inferior. Statistics can be used or manipulated in such a way to support nearly any argument.

In the 1830s, craniometry, or the supposedly scientific measurement of skull sizes of blacks and whites, was one of many studies that sought to justify slavery.

And although Adolf Hitler is an extreme example of race-based ideology, his "master race" beliefs are not out of line with this "new" book.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of "The Bell Curve" is the simple fact that it assumes lower black IQ scores are the cause of disproportionate poverty and other social discrepancies. Logically, the lower scores are merely the effect of such conditions.

Another fundamental wrong is the book's insistence on equating IQ scores with intelligence. The tests, which include questions on number patterns, puzzles and language, are written from a white middle-class bias and measure "social" intelligence.

One example of culture bias from an IQ test is a question, "Your mother sends you to the store to get a loaf of bread the store is closed. What should you do?"

According to author Richard Schaefer, the right answer is to go to the nearest store and try again. But for rural and inner-city children that may not be possible. The nearest store in the city may not be willing to extend credit and the closest rural store could be miles away.

For people from rural and inner-city areas, the proper answer might be to return home, but that would be considered incorrect.

Ultimately, the losing argument for the book is the fact that a Harvard psychologist — a man who taught at one of America's most "prestigious" and mostly all-white colleges — could come up with such a theory in 1994.

This realization calls into question the entire concept of what we perceive as intelligence and whom we deem intelligent.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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DEB McADAMS

## Sexual policies censor opinion

A professor told me I looked nice the other day. Then he quickly explained himself. He hadn't intended anything inappropriate, and he didn't want his comment to be construed as sexual harassment. He spent several minutes qualifying a four-word sentence.

You look nice today. There's no way he could have known that I used to work with men who greeted me by grabbing themselves or humping shovel handles.

I would complete these charming exchanges with such remarks as, "You'd better enjoy it. It may be the best you ever get."

They would grunt, snort and chortle, and someone would pay me the supreme compliment of calling me "one of the guys."

When I first walked into the Southeast District Maintenance Shop of the Lincoln Parks Department, I had a few things to learn.

I was the second woman to work there full-time, and I was the only one at that time. They had nicknamed the last woman "Sasquatch," because she was big and mean. They nicknamed me "Tits," because I have an aversion to wearing bras.

I learned that, no matter how small or insignificant, a lot of men will fixate on a braless boob faster than laser beams travel.

Some of the guys in the shop reached the electrifying conclusion that not wearing a bra meant I wanted to have sex with them. Never mind that any bra that isn't custom-made fits me like a torture device. Never mind that these self-perceived macho studs resembled missing links.

After all, what red-blooded, American woman can resist a layer of fat as big as a tractor tire hanging over a man's belt? Show me the woman who can control herself at the sight of 3 inches of dirty butt crack.

These guys didn't always behave



*A discrimination policy provides a structure for complaints of sexual harassment, but it doesn't take the place of gender equity in positions of authority.*

like simple-minded Neanderthals. Sometimes they were extraordinarily sensitive. They very much loved their lunches, for example, and lunches were absolutely off-limits in the practical-joke realm. They also loved the pornographic centerfolds inside their locker doors.

Each morning, I got a good look at a bleached-blond, named something like "Candy Jar," leaning over a split-rail fence displaying her girlish parts in full color.

"That's gross," I would say, everyday.

"Oh, Deb, you're just jealous," the guys would say.

So I went out and found a frontal nude fold-out of a particularly well-blessed, animated young man, and I taped it to my locker door. Suddenly, the macho studs turned prissy.

"That's gross," they would say.

"You guys are just jealous," I replied.

The shop supervisor asked me to take it down. I asked him when he was going to take down his Cushman calendar, which had photos of semi-nude women draped over utility vehicles.

He coughed and ask me not to leave my locker open.

I coughed and said "lawsuit."

But the last thing we all wanted was a lawsuit. I needed the job.

Even a lawsuit in my favor would have created an unbearably hostile work environment.

I would have been considered weak for not being able to handle the situation on my own. Our behavior towards one another would have been dictated by a policy. There were times when I would have appreciated the relief, but it also would have prevented us from knowing what the other was thinking.

I knew which guys were sexist bigots and which ones were decent human beings.

Discrimination policies are generally inadequate because they can't change the preconceived notions infecting our society at every level. From a parks maintenance shop to the Supreme Court, men believe women enjoy sexually aggressive behavior, and women believe they can't tell those men to go to hell.

A discrimination policy provides a structure for complaints of sexual harassment, but it doesn't take the place of gender equity in positions of authority. It doesn't teach young men not to have sex with young women who are too drunk to know what's happening. It doesn't teach men how it feels to have their job security depend on sexual compliance.

If we don't want to be afraid to tell someone they look nice today, we can't rest on our discrimination policies. We have to learn how to talk to one another.

McAdams is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

P.S. Write Back

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