

A Letter from the South

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This letter came, in its earliest form, even before subscribers had received their copies of the Winter issue. Mr. Brazziel had been following the Jensen controversy ever since Dr. Jensen spoke to the American Educational Research Association in 1968. When news of the Harvard Educational Review article reached Mr. Brazziel through local publicity (newspapers and the coverage in U. S. News and World Report) the correspondence printed below began. In subsequent issues of the Review we expect to print further letters and comments from our readers.

Sirs:

Thirteen years ago plaintiffs brought suit in Federal District Court to integrate the Louisiana public schools. The main argument of the defense attorneys and the superintendent of public instruction was that "white teachers could not understand the Nigra mind" and, therefore, would not be able to teach them effectively in integrated classrooms. The defense quoted heavily from the theories of white intellectual supremacy as expounded by Henry Garrett and Audrey Shuey

Last week, a scant five days after Arthur Jensen made headlines in Virginia papers regarding inferiority of black people as measured by IQ tests, defense attorneys and their expert witnesses fought a suit in Federal District Court to integrate Greensville and Caroline County schools. Their main argument was that "white teachers could not understand the Nigra mind" and that the Nigra children should be admitted to the white schools on the basis of standardized tests. Those who failed to make a certain score would be assigned to all black remedial schools where "teachers who understood them could work with them." The defense in this case quoted heavily from the theories of white intellectual supremacy as expounded by Arthur Jensen.

It will help not one bit for Jensen or the HER editorial board to protest that they did not intend for Jensen's article to be used in this way. For in addition to superiority in performing conceptual cluster tricks on test sheets, the hard line segregationist is also vastly superior in his ability to bury qualifying phrases and demurrers and in his ability to distort and slant facts and batter his undereducated clientele into a complete state of hysteria where race is concerned.

Jensen and the HER editorial board will modestly admit that they have superior intellects and I am sure they realized the consequences of their actions. Questions now arise as to why they decided to raise this issue, in this way, and at this time.

Fortunately, doubts about the ability of black and yellow people to master war, finance, science and technology are waning rapidly in both white and black minds. The imprecision of standardized testing is now clear to most literate people and the criminal use to which they are put in schools is also becoming clearer. Black history has made people aware that white people did *not* give America such things as the stoplight, the shoe last, heart operations and sugar refining but that black people did this. That John Smith did not develop corn and tobacco but learned to grow these crops from the Indians. And the beat goes on. People are now witnessing with their very eyes the fact of black youth finally given a half of a chance at education and jobs and being able to make exotic formulas for bombs and napalm as well as anyone else. As a result of all of this, I think the present set-to might be the last go-round for white supremacy psychological theory.

I would hope the Jensenites could alter their stance and approach and try to bring some good out of this situation after all. They might work their way out of ethnic learning styles by broadening their research to include all ethnic groups. We have some rather learned men in our area who believe that English-Americans are atop the pyramid of abstract learning abilities with Welsh, German, French, Belgian, Norwegian, Swiss, Finnish, Danish and Swedish occupying the next nine rungs in the order listed. After the top ten have been given their just due, these gentlemen give a smattering of attention to the rest of Europe and proceed to ignore the rest of the world. The Jensenites might try to clear this up in some way. They might even look into intra-group differences within the top ten. I would suspect that many would be found and that it would be healthy to make this known at professional meetings, in the journals and in the news media.

We also have a religious wing in this group who suspect that English-American children who are brought up in Southern Baptist churches perceive things differently and might really deserve the top spot upon the pyramid. Southern-

English-American-Episcopalians regard these assertions with a great deal of amusement. But who really knows? We all will if the ethnic learning line of research is extended logically to include every possible ethnic, regional and religious stock.

Also in the status research vein, we need research on the effects of racism and caste status on learning. The Jensenites can provide this by following Robert Coles and others around in Mississippi and South Carolina to study the parasitic worm and starvation situation among black children. Autopsies of a few who died might yield valuable evidence on the brain damages wrought by malnourishment. The team could change themselves into black people ala John Griffin and run the hostility gauntlet as they tried to find some information in the local library. Or the hilarity gauntlet as they made application for a professional or skilled job. They could fly as black men to Boston or Oakland and make the same applications to the craft union nearest the airport. Or they could try to get a tenured appointment in the Harvard Graduate School of Education, or a spot on the HER editorial board, or simply a rank higher than assistant professor among the 7,000 member Harvard faculty.

The Jensenites could give the same black injections to their children, enroll them in a different school and record what happens to them. Children learn efficiently if listening, reading, discussion, peer-group interaction, library resources and teacher-pupil interaction are all used efficiently. The investigators might be very interested in the change in quality in the last four areas for their now black off-spring and to see who is to blame and how the situation can be improved. To add a spicy dimension, low IQ scores could be substituted in the transfer folders.

Creation of multi-ethnic and multi-racial tests would also be a method of bringing some good out of the situation. If the only way to make *exactly* the same score on test items is to be of the same race, economic class, ethnic stock, and religious persuasion as the committee that developed the instrument, then we either must make intensive efforts to inter-marry, re-distribute income and institute religious purges and programs in this country or we must try to integrate more multi-racial and multi-ethnic material into the instruments. Said in the words of Dr. Nathan Wright, the Newark black power theorist, we must try to "dehonkify" the instruments.

Or we might decide that making *exactly* the same score is not important for all races and religions and come up with an Ethnic Success Quotient for tests based on validation studies of all of the hypenated groups we are going to study. Under such a system a Richmond born, Episcopalian, of English stock, from a family with an income of \$12,000 would be declared below average if his Binet score

was below 120. A score of 100 would relegate him to success quotient oblivion as a low normal. The Beaufort County, S. C. black children with worms might have a success quotient of 90 based on performance of adults from this sort of situation who somehow scrambled up the ladder. A black 100 score in this county would indicate a ESQ of potential genius.

Finally, in this vein, the Jensenites might make their most important contribution if they could somehow join with Earl Schaefer of the National Institutes of Health and others at the Universities of Florida, Western Michigan, etc. who are fastening on early infant stimulation and teaching as the key to agility on standardized tests. (The problem, of course, may be in getting the Schaeferites to join with the Jensenites given the Klan types who have embraced the latter as their own). Schaefer has already published some fine results of efforts with black children. The logic here is simple and very much in the vein of Cronbach's rebuttal to the Jensen paper, i.e., if you want black kids to think like white kids, imprint this type of thinking habit early (5 days to 2 years of age) with simple thinking, concept cluster tasks. White teachers can enable black parents to learn how. White disadvantaged children are being imprinted in the same manner in some studies. Ethnic and religious backgrounds have not been treated as yet. There might be a problem or two here regarding people who might want to imprint their children with their own brand of thinking or who have deep affection and preference for certain racial, ethnic or religious ways of thinking. Other parents might not want the new imprints to attend their schools on an integrated basis or live in their neighborhoods and play in their recreation centers. Something in the imprinting would thus be lost in this sort of forced isolation. But I am certain these reservations can be swept aside in the name of psychological research and the cognitive homogenizing process can progress.

Now for a closer look at some of Jensen's theories about black IQ. To begin, I received a form letter from Jensen in response to a request for clarification of his *real* stand on the implications of racial genetic inferiority that seemed to shine through the somewhat hazy statements of conclusion of his paper at the AERA, implications which the press quickly translated into flat statements of white intellectual supremacy. His article was based on this paper and gave the same impression to the press. (See Joseph Alsop, *Washington Post*, March 11; *Virginian-Pilot*, March 12: "Yet there is no use being mealy-mouthed about it. Dr. Jensen is really saying that in *addition* to the handicaps wickedly imposed by prejudice and discrimination, the average black American begins the race of life with a detectable genetic handicap").

Jensen's letter was addressed to the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* which he feels misinterpreted his position. The following are excerpts from the letter:

Obvious differences in inborn mental ability 'between races'—these are a reporter's words. They certainly are not mine. The quotation marks, attributing this phrase to me, are therefore wrong. Furthermore, the statement is quite indefensible. The complex *causes* of objectively measurable differences in mental abilities among individuals or between different socioeconomic and racial groups are not at all 'obvious'.

Although my study of the existing evidence has led me to the position that intelligence differences among individuals, social classes, and racial groups are conditioned by both genetic and environmental factors, the estimation of the relative contributions of these influences is a problem of great technical and practical difficulty for researchers in behavioral genetics, and the research so far has been inadequate as a basis for definitive conclusions about racial differences in intelligence.

Jensen's treatment of the racial aspects of IQ in his article comes to the same point of inconclusiveness. It is very, very unfortunate that he, or the editors, failed to include a clear statement to this effect. Truth squad operations such as this letter and the rebuttals by psychologists in the HER Spring issue will never get read.

Jensen's second error in my estimation was to lean heavily on the Coleman Report for data on black inferiority. This report has been heavily criticized for inaccuracy. The most notable criticism is contained in the Winter, 1968 issue of the *Journal of Human Resources* in an article by Bowles and Levin. Sampling procedures, lack of cooperation by big school systems, failures to match black-white sample by curriculums, over-reliance on administrators' contentions that black-white facilities were indeed separate but equal (black parents in Eutaw, Alabama must have thought the research team had been smoking pot when they read the conclusions of the report) and crudeness of statistical measures were all analyzed as weaknesses which, when added to the fact that the study was made in pre-ESEA days, relegated it to the status of a 737 page, million dollar pilot study. On page 292 of the report, the authors state similar disclaimers, especially regarding the precautions necessary in interpreting their statistics.

In regarding as law this report's conclusions that the average black kid can get no further than a 9th grade operating level after 12 years of public school, Jensen ignores completely (or is unaware of) the record being compiled by the JOBS program of the National Alliance for Businessmen. These gentlemen take black drop-outs, place them on the job half-time and in reading and math classes half-time; they produce a two-year gain on tests every six weeks.

Jensen's major error, I believe, was his inconsistency in following a definite line of reasoning regarding the separation of gene linkage and pre-postnatal ravages of protein malnutrition. The latter is the most intensively researched thesis these days with NIH teams leading the way. Jensen did not even mention this line of research which (together with research in infant stimulation) I believe has answers for 42% mental retardation found in low-low (Jensen's level V) income black children and a lot of the other differences. In a half-starved brain like these kids have, how are we to really know if high or low IQ genes were linked? Jensen did not tell us how.

Jensen calls compensatory education a failure. So did reporters of the *Washington Post* who in turn received and printed a report by the ESEA staff of the Virginia Department of Education calling their allegations inaccurate and stating that they had hard data to back their claims. In response to a request for same, I received tables for statewide pre-post testing of 10,200 pupils in 15 school districts for 1967-68. The data show average month's increase in grade equivalency per month of 1.06 of instruction or an average overgain in achievement of more than a half a year per pupil as a result of compensatory education. Children scoring in the lowest decile had decreased from 41% to 28%. In the second quartile the number jumped from 8% to 16% and the drop-out rate had decreased by 63%. The officials noted that age-grade decrement had been scotched and that they believe that they had convincing evidence that their Title I program was a success. And this from one of the more conservative states in the Union and one with a record of slow starts in educational innovations. School people, it seems, are just now learning how to run compensatory programs. Or really try to. The first report to the President of the National Advisory Council on Disadvantaged Children noted this reluctance to really plan and implement on the part of many school systems. They quoted one superintendent who stated flatly that "it was useless and a waste of money to teach those jigs anything." Let us all hope he has since initiated a good program and that he doesn't read Jensen's article.

In drawing conclusions from 200-300 comparative studies of black-white IQ, Jensen failed to consider that all of the pre-1948 studies and most of the post-'48 studies failed to give attention to the deprivation axioms made popular by the University of Chicago group (Davis, Eels, et al) and until recently almost no psychometrists gave attention to the fact that white examiners in a black classroom are, in many, many cases, getting an invalid test performance. Their color, voice, manner, gestures turn many kids off, and they refuse to try. *This phenomenon is growing in intensity and must be dealt with.* How are you going to have a

valid test session with kids who read in black papers and magazines that white researchers are sending their kids to Harvard by over-studying the black communities with federal grants? Or with kids who received a leaflet from a community group blasting tests as an “unfair tool of colonialists who control the black community”?

I believe that Jensen is wrong and I hope he does not do too much damage. I believe the HER editorial board should publish the rebuttals in the same issue with future attacks on the Negro. Rumors abound that attacks on the Negro church are planned. This will scotch the sensationalism of the press caused by the lag in time between issues. Indeed, the rebuttals will never be read by reporters, much less printed.

Jensen failed to take into consideration the black infant mortality rate as a factor in black infant supremacy on the motoric area of the Bayley Scales. This rate is three times that of white infants. Black kids must literally undergo a survival of the fittest test to be born, once conceived, and to stay alive.

Jensen has a serious contradiction in his analysis of tests and studies of black IQ. After offering half dozen or so studies to document his thesis that black kids don't do as well on IQ tests as white kids, Jensen closes his paper by stating that IQ tests fail to measure the full potential of black kids.

Jensen failed to consider the 1969 report of the Research and Evaluation Branch of Project Head Start in writing off Head Start gains as transitory. According to this report of several studies of the maintenance of gains, the investigators concluded that the gains were maintained when the children were enrolled in first grades or kindergartens in middle-class schools. Edmund Gordon of Teachers College and John McDavid of Miami led the team which wrote this report.

Jensen, like other psychologists, is completely incapable of un-raveling what would have to be un-raveled in order to separate genetic from environmental influences where American black and white people are concerned, to wit:

1. If 90% of the black people in America have ancestors that include white people, how can we tell when black genes or white genes make for a wrong mark on a test score sheet?
2. If a large per cent of white people have black ancestors, who are they? Are their samples controlled for this factor? Which genes, black or white, make for right marks on a test score sheet?
3. How can we parse out the effects of brain damage, brain stunting (due to malnutrition) and lack of early stimulation? Which accounts for a wrong mark on the test score sheet?

4. How can we parse and measure the degree of access and *welcome* of black people to cultural learnings?
5. How can we parse and measure the interest in and acceptance of the white “way of life” by black mothers and children? One can’t get good scores on a “way of life” test like IQ unless one lives and accepts this life fully.
6. How can we develop indices which show comparability of school strengths, weaknesses and emphases? The school assessment study by Tyler’s group is just getting underway over loud cries from many school people.

Jensen failed to consider the learning styles of black parents and the origins of these learning styles when he made white-black comparisons on associative and problem-solving learning. If you go to many rural schools in the south today, you will find the associative type of learning proceeding as it has for many, many years—for both races. This is the learning heritage of most big city black parents. They pass this style on to the kids early and it shows up in test profiles. If conceptual learning is viewed as a gradual acculturation process and offered early in school careers, these kids can be made to think. Jensen’s exhortations to teachers to rely completely on associative learning might preclude this ever becoming a reality, however. Before any more articles are published, I think Jensen should do more work in the area of black history, demography and culture and that he should try to get into the area of racism and isolation and the big role they play in differences. There really is merit in his actually taking the black injections and getting first-hand information. He would only have to be a black man for two months.

Jensen’s “g factor”, the main basis of his claims for white supremacy, cannot be accepted as the mysterious phenomenon he postulates. Even little children now know from their television science that if something really exists, scientists will isolate it and measure it—especially before making serious conclusions about it.

I believe Jensen made two good points. One is that IQ tests don’t show the full learning potential of kids who are poor and black. I was happy to learn that he had invented a test which does a better job. We should all buy it. He should make millions. The other is that intensive instruction rather than “cultural enrichment” is necessary to make these kids learn if they are locked in neighborhood schools. Unlike Jensen, I believe that they can proceed from associative learning to abstract reasoning if the instruction gradually brings them to this point. And even with this, I believe black kids will continue to think and score test items differently until full equality is achieved. Black kids screen out much of the curriculum and perceive the rest differently. Consider perceptions of Tarzan and the British Em-

pire, for examples. Of course some black nationalists feel that it is a blessing that black people don't think like white people. As long as they can handle modern technology, make war, manipulate stocks, etc., I don't guess it really matters.

I believe the most potent strategy in the end will prove to be a combination of early stimulation and imprinting, and integrated schools with teachers who are free of racial and social class prejudices. IQ tests will also be eliminated from the schools. This is the strategy on which Neil Sullivan based his cross-bussing operations for the Berkeley schools. This may account for some of Jensen's concerns and reservations and perhaps, for his article. Pettigrew and others presented evidence in their work for the Civil Rights Commission that the earlier black children were placed in integrated schools, the closer they came to white norms on achievements tests. In turn, the white children came closer to perfection in their social learnings while losing no ground in test proficiency. The black children pick up the mysteries of Jensen's "g-factor" through association, I suppose, while the white children pick up the mysteries of "soul."

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