

## Review Essay

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### **The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions**

By Russell Jacoby and Naomi Glauberman, eds. New York: Random House, 720 pages

### **The Bell Curve Wars:**

#### **Race, Intelligence, and the Future of America**

By Steven Fraser, ed. New York: Basic Books, 216 pages

#### **Final Solutions: Biology, Prejudice, and Genocide**

By Richard M. Lerner. College Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 238 pages

### **The Mismeasure of Man: Revised and Expanded Edition**

By Stephen Jay Gould. New York: Norton, 444 pages

### **The Nazi Connection:**

#### **Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism**

By Stefan Kühl. New York: Oxford University Press, 166 pages

#### **The Race Gallery: The Return of Racial Science**

By Marek Kohn. London: Jonathan Cape, 322 pages

#### **The Science and Politics of Racial Research**

By William H. Tucker. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 371 pages

Reviewed by J. Philippe Rushton

Most of those engaged in the serious study of race today do so from either the "hermeneutical" or the "race-realist" perspective. At one extreme, those I have termed "hermeneuticists" approach race as an epiphenomenon, a mere social construction, with political and economic forces as the real causal agents worthy of study. Rather than research race, hermeneuticists research those who do. At the other end of the forum, those I term the "race-realists" view race as a natural phenomenon to be observed, studied, and explained. (Alternative and intermediate positions certainly exist, but the most heated debate currently takes place between advocates of the two polar positions).

The hermeneutical approach relies on textual, historical, and political analysis; the race-realist approach is empirical and employs a panoply of sci-

entific methodologies, including surveys, psychometrics, and genetics. Because the hermeneutical viewpoint sees inexorable links between theory and practice, its writings are often prescriptive and assume an advocacy position. The race-realist viewpoint is descriptive and typically avoids prescribing policy. To their opposite numbers, hermeneuticists come across as muddled, heated, and politically committed to "antiracism"; the race-realists come across to their opponents as cold, detached, and suspect of hiding a "racist" agenda.

All seven books reviewed here are written primarily from the hermeneutical viewpoint, and I am a race-realist. Having said that, let me then also say that I learned a lot from each of these books. Much of what I learned was history rather than science. I found

Jacoby and Glauberman's *The Bell Curve Debate* the most valuable because it allows some of the early writers to speak for themselves. For example, Francis Galton's 1865 essay "Hereditary, Talent, and Character" contrasts the taciturn reserve of American Indians with the talkative impulsivity of Africans. Galton described how these temperamental differences persisted irrespective of climate (from the frozen north through the equator), religion, language, or political system (whether self-ruled or governed by the Spanish, Portuguese, English, or French). Anticipating later work on transracial adoption, Galton noted that the majority of individuals adhered to racial type even after being raised by white settlers. Other essays include one by Galton's protégé, Karl Pearson, favoring eugenics, and an essay by the founder and first president of the American Sociological Society, Charles Cooley, which contains the original use of the analogy about "same seeds in different soils" to favor environmentalism. A curiosity is the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry that identifies a smaller brain and lower intelligence as characteristic of "the Negro." Later debates on IQ from the 1920s between Lewis Terman and Walter Lippmann also appear along with the views of such "Nordicists" as Carl Brigham and Lothrop Stoddard. This collection is also especially useful for providing in one place so many of the responses to *The Bell Curve*.

Unlike the balanced *The Bell Curve Debate*, Steven Fraser's edited volume *The Bell Curve Wars* comes across as rather partisan. It includes expanded versions of anti-*Bell Curve* articles that appeared in *The New Republic* of October 31, 1994, by editors of that magazine, yet curiously it replaces the essay by Charles Murray that appeared in that same issue with additional anti-*Bell Curve* reviews by Stephen Jay Gould and Howard Gardner. The most sober of the anti-*Bell Curve* essays is that by Thomas Sowell. He argues that if Jews, Italians, and Poles could rise up from their (allegedly) low scores in Brigham's World War I study then so