

issue, and it would be a great mistake to be sidetracked into all the emotional upsets that go on in discussions of racial differences. We should be quite careful to dissociate eugenics from it--eugenics' real concern should be with individual differences.

In her article "Test Scores as Measures of Human Capital" in Intelligence and National Achievement, Barbara Lerner stated: "We sent more of our young people to school for longer periods of time than any other nation in the world, and they emerged with more diplomas than any other people on earth." But despite all this education, SAT scores in the U.S. have been declining steadily, our relative economic productivity has dropped, and on tests of math and science the only students whose average test scores have been lower than those of Americans have been those in underdeveloped countries. What are the major causes?

CATTELL: The current decline in educational achievement is, like most things, multiply determined. The evidence points, first, to about 50-100 years of genetic decline in ability. It doesn't take much--perhaps a one-point decline every 30 years--to reduce substantially the percentage in the upper range of IQ. With our present mean IQ of 100, 1 person in 250 would exceed an IQ of 140. If, however, the average dropped to 85, you'd have only 1 in 8,000 who would exceed an IQ of 140. We must suppose that academic standards are much affected by the percentages of high IQ individuals, and that their becoming more scarce will lower academic performance. So part of the remedy for this problem definitely lies in eugenic practices.

But there are some environmental factors as well, such as the failure to do "streaming" in schools, in which

children of much the same ability level are put together. And I think something in the way of general idleness and slackness has gotten into the system since the 1960's which could account for a part of the decline, particularly in the more precise subjects like mathematics.

In your autobiography, you wrote that you have always been intrigued by great people. What constitutes greatness?

CATTELL: Greatness is something that is surely very different in different areas such as politics, art, music, and science. What I think is fundamental, however, is creativity and an ability to break away from conventional views, a combination of high intelligence with high ego strength. Great people are largely responsible for whatever progress society makes, yet they actually take quite a beating in the process. So qualities of endurance are necessary as well.

What would you consider to be the mean IQ necessary for a country to support a true democratic system of government?

CATTELL: It depends upon just what you mean by "a true democratic system of government," but generally I would say that we can not go much below what we have today and still maintain a real democratic system.

How do you think the irrational opposition to the idea of genetic influences on human behavior came into being, and why does it persist?

CATTELL: One might suppose that all one had to do to overcome this opposition was to point to striking research in behavior genetics. But this research has been around from some time, and still the opposition persists. For example, there are five successive studies of criminal behavior cited in my 1982 book. They show that if a man in