

is only moderately keen on Verne, from the vantage point of the current major genre of science fiction—so that Aldiss provides some very useful context in which to measure Verne. Interestingly, Wells and Verne acknowledged and assessed one another candidly in their own comments. Wells noted that Verne's anticipatory stories deal almost always with actual possibilities of invention, discovery, and imaginative but often very accurate forecasting. Verne in turn attributed to Wells' writings a degree of scientific knowledge far ahead of the present—but not entirely beyond the limits of the possible. These comments are paraphrased from the authoritative book by Peter Costello on Jules Verne, a source also extensively cited by Lynch. The relative emphasis of the two writers could probably not be expressed better. The span of prospective science appearing in these past works of Verne (and Wells) should clearly appeal to readers of this Journal, since that science and its contexts generally reflect extrapolations of contemporary science, and some estimates of the impacts of those extrapolations on society and on our understanding of what scientific explanation and exploration must confront.

I recommend Lynch's book for its appealing and informative overview of Verne and his major works. It is well written, discusses both the negative and positive features of Verne's writings (in Lynch's view, the positive must be said to strongly dominate), and will be a very useful companion to refresh the memories and enthusiasms of those who once read Verne and wish to recapture some of their earlier forays into imaginative adventure. I suspect that reading Lynch might even inspire newcomers to peruse Verne's works for the first delightful time. Surely no higher praise can be offered for this nice volume from Twayne's World Authors Series.

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A Question of Intelligence: The IQ Debate in America, by Daniel Seligman, New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, 1992, 239 pp. \$16.95.

Let me give you an idea of the low esteem that eugenics currently has. At the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN) there were six innocuous American Library Association posters hanging in the UST library honoring Americans who have influenced our times. After about one year of obscurity, the Margaret Sanger poster was noticed by a right-wing student who reported this to Assistant Bishop Carlson who put pressure on the UST president who put pressure on the provost to order the chief librarian to remove the poster. She refused, the president waffled and within a short time the local twin cities newspapers ran

features on the flap. Forced to do something, the president, amidst applause from the liberals and deep resentment from the conservatives, anemically supported academic freedom and reluctantly declared that the poster would remain in spite of his intense dislike of Sanger.

As a matter of fact, a few days after his feeble public announcement, when the people from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* came to write a story on the fiasco, the offending poster was discovered to have been stolen. (In a perverted spirit of diversity, the poster of Malcolm X was also stolen.) As of this date, although a replacement has been ordered, the unmounted 17" by 23" poster has not been received or repasted with masking tape back on the wall.

The bishop, the president, and the rich benefactors who jumped ship, were on record as being upset not at Sanger's successful campaign for birth control but rather for her espousal of eugenics! I suppose that in an era where lurid, personal sexual habits are freely and openly discussed on nationwide TV, criticizing someone for liberating women from an endless cycle of child bearing strikes the overwhelming majority as antediluvian; better to be politically correct and issue a red-herring charge that she wanted to murder the lame, the poor, the handicapped, the undesirable. Or in the current vernacular, the eugenically challenged.

But as I like to say, there is no idea so discredited that someone who appears as sane as the next person can't espouse it with enthusiasm and religious zeal. Daniel Seligman, the author of *A Question of Intelligence: The IQ Debate in America*, has the capitalist credentials of sanity: he was a senior staff editor for Time, Inc., a senior editor of *Fortune* and is currently a columnist for that magazine. Nevertheless, an *ide'e fixe* is an *ide'e fixe* and his obsession with IQ leads him to write, "Despite its problematic public relations, the eugenics movement has some stubborn facts and considerable logic going for it."

He shrugs off the "problematic public relations" because "the eugenics movement is guaranteed to face a barrage of cheap shots featuring references to the Nazis." Seligman writes "So in principle, we can assume that the America of 2050 would be a better place to live if, between now and then, the high-IQ population had more kids than the low-IQ population."

And where can one find all those high-IQ parents begetting all those high-IQ *Wunderkinder*? "I spent some forty years as a writer and editor on Fortune magazine and during this time met hundreds of CEOs . . . I cannot recall ever meeting a CEO who did not come across as highly intelligent." For him, IQs "tell us that people at the top in American life are probably there because they are more intelligent than others—which is doubtless the way most of us think it should be." An amazing assertion considering the hard and ample empirical evidence to the contrary.

Seligman's position can be summed up by: $IQ = Intelligence$; $IQ_{White} = IQ_{Black} + 15$; $IQ_{Rich} > IQ_{Poor}$, followed by a eugenics pleading for preventing breeding of the masses and promoting breeding of people like him and the CEOs.

As with all capitalists, he distrusts government but in his case it is primarily because government has dysgenic welfare programs which restrict abortion,

encourage low-income women to have children, push affirmative-action programs which stimulate "highly educated married women to invest more heavily in their careers and less heavily in raising families." On the other hand, he favors the entrepreneurial thrust of private enterprise and the free market to promote the high-IQ baby of choice: "But it does at least seem possible that the political failures of the eugenics movement will be followed by a kind of invisible, unorganized triumph off in the private sector" where entrepreneurial scientists will give us the ability to abort any fetus below genius level.

To justify his fixation on eugenics, Seligman gives a wondrously biased version of the IQ debate where, in his distorted perspective, the hereditarian position is always "compelling" and "persuasive" whereas the environmentalists have a "political agenda," presumably hidden and self-defeating. The lay reader would be hard pressed to realize that Seligman's fawning presentation is prejudiced in the extreme.

The vast majority of people who believe that g loading and reification [by which I mean improper use of factor analysis to infer causality and physical existence in the brain of the abstract concept, general intelligence] are nonsense, draws his ultimate condemnation: emotional and therefore unscientific commitment. Yet, on the flimsiest of grounds, he asserts that Cyril Burt was framed, giggling is genetic as is also—and I am not making this up—dipping buttered toast into coffee, not to mention liking John Wayne movies and Chinese food. And he can claim of the U.S. military, "It is a regime almost without discrimination and almost entirely without reverse discrimination," a stunning remark given the military's current homophobia and past racial practice.

But if you've spent forty years hobnobbing with CEOs, your judgment is apt to be warped. Sanger embraced eugenics as a means to further her ends of protecting people from the burden of too many children. For Seligman, eugenics is his emotional rationalization for maintaining his comfortable *status quo* which he sees as being under threat from the masses and, ironically, from high-IQ people who don't suffer from problematic public relations.

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The Rebirth of Nature: The Greening of Science and God, by Rupert Sheldrake. New York: Bantam, 1991, 272 pp. \$21.95 (c) (available from The Sourcebook Project, P.O. Box 107, Glen Arm MD, 21057).

Reading Rupert Sheldrake's *The Rebirth of Nature* brought to mind a macabre joke I heard several years ago at an environmental conference: Ques-