



PERGAMON

Personality and Individual Differences 26 (1999) 1143–1150

PERSONALITY AND
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Book reviews

Ronald J. Samuda, *Psychological Testing of American Minorities: Issues and Consequences* (2nd Edition), SAGE Publications, London, 1998 (ISBN 0-7619-1215-0) 276 pp., price £14.99.

The author is Professor in the Center for Psychological Studies and Director of the Institute for Cross-cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy at Nova Southeastern University, Florida. The first edition of his book was published 23 years ago, in 1975. Now, in 1998, the second edition will provide many of its older readers with a sense of déjà vu of the 1960s and '70s. It echoes the tones of a whole speciality that sprang up in psychology, sociology, and education during that period, invoking *ad hoc* theories, ideology, myths and mantras to explain (or explain away) the psychometric evidence on the conspicuous deficits in scholastic achievement and mental test scores of certain racial minorities, particularly Blacks, in the United States. Though this line of thought still has some currency in the popular media and in Black Studies courses in many American colleges and universities, it is now virtually defunct in the serious journal literature of empirical psychology. Its tried-and-failed notions are all reiterated here, but without any critical examination or analysis based on the most relevant empirical evidence accumulated during the last twenty-five years. The fact is that, except for a dwindling minority who still cling to the reiterated dogmas of the '60s and '70s which are exhumed in this second edition of Samuda's book, the mainstream fields of psychometrics, differential psychology, and behavioral genetics have increasingly moved away from the prevailing doctrines of that previous era and have advanced in a quite different direction. Present-day scientific research on individual and group differences in mental abilities and their educational, social, and economic correlates does not pretend to explain the observed phenomena solely in terms of the, broad-brush sociological notions that were popular in the 1960s and '70s, such as racial prejudice, stereotypes, socioeconomic status, caste, black English, language deprivation, the culture of poverty, racial segregation, discrimination, elitism, inequality of educational opportunity, and cultural deprivation. In this book the whole litany of victimology is rehearsed again for a new generation of students. It is not that there is an absence of evidence for many of these social ills in our twentieth century society, but that they have utterly failed as explanatory mechanisms. Rather than *causes*, they are mainly *effects*. Claims of their causal importance are overwhelmingly contradicted by empirical research and analysis that controls for, and is able to rule out, the supposed causal effects of these conditions. They are found to be neither necessary nor sufficient causes of the average racial differences observed in test scores and educational achievement.

Moreover, the established fine-grain features of racial variation in various mental abilities (not just overall IQ) completely defy explanation in terms of sociological concepts.

Some quotations of Samuda's own words show his stance on testing and the American educational system. On what Samuda calls the "fallacy of IQ tests": "First among them is the claim that intelligence tests measure intelligence . . . such tests reflect the constructor's personal view of what constitutes intelligent behavior" (p. 30). ". . . when a test designed for one cultural group is administered to a different cultural group, the test automatically favors the first group and gives low results to the other group" (p. 8). "Test results can also serve to reinforce social roles by trapping poor and minority students in a vicious circle . . . doomed (by their lower test scores) from the very beginning to an inferior education, socioeconomically deprived students tend to drop out of school early, to accept their role in the larger society as unskilled workers, and thus maintain a life dependency on menial wages, or possibly, public welfare" (p. 9). Without recognizing the meta-analyses and numerous experiments in the psychological literature that have conclusively invalidated the teacher-expectancy, or so-called Pygmalion effect, on IQ, Samuda writes: "Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) provided evidence to illustrate the fact that whenever children, particularly minority children, are believed to be and are looked upon as being intellectually inferior and unable to learn or function at the same academic level as other children, they will indeed become intellectually inferior and uneducable, behave as such, and thereby confirm their teachers' original opinions. Unless white teachers are cognizant of the fact that they approach minority children with stereotyped preconceived ideas, mainly based on IQ scores, social class status, and simple prejudice, minority children will remain prisoners of a vicious educational self-fulfilling prophecy" (p. 89). "If we accept the proposition that there is no high command of university presidents; no coterie of willing admissions officers plotting to guarantee the intellectual genocide of nonwhites, then it follows that the disproportionately small numbers of minority students in higher education are a result of the system—a result as pervasive, as invidious, and just as effective as if there were a conspiracy" (p. 126).

The entirely new chapter in this book is the concluding one. It is a diatribe against *The Bell Curve*, the well known 1994 book by Herrnstein and Murray. Samuda writes: "*The Bell Curve* is most accurately described as racist, political propaganda, presented under the guise of scientific and psychological research" (p. 199). Its authors' "claims seem to be driven purely by elitist and racist beliefs" (p. 187). Six of the empirically most well established and generally accepted facts in psychometrics are listed by Samuda, who refers to them as merely the *assumptions* that Herrnstein and Murray used to support their "racist model of intelligence differences" (p. 176). In this chapter, titled "Rebuttal of *The Bell Curve*"^Δ, Samuda provides no evidential or reasoned rebuttal of the psychometric facts themselves, but only invective and calumny. *The Bell Curve*'s actual contents and arguments are grossly caricatured and misrepresented. We read such fatuous claims as: "Simply stated, they [Herrnstein and Murray] essentially recommend that those of lower intelligence should serve those of higher intelligence" (p. 175), "They [Herrnstein and Murray] imply that the majority of the White race is placed at the pinnacle of the intelligence hierarchy" (p. 186) and "Because Blacks need to be controlled by Whites, Herrnstein and Murray contend, it would follow that Asians should be controlling Whites; however, nowhere in the book do the authors arrive at such a conclusion" (p. 187).

Clearly, Samuda's level of discourse is simply not up to dealing with the serious issues that

Herrnstein and Murray tackled in *The Bell Curve*. His effort is just another exercise in the denial and obfuscation of the real problems.

Arthur R. Jensen

0191-8869/99/\$ - see front matter © 1999 Published by Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved
PII: 0191-8869(98)00125-1

G.H. Gudjonsson and L.R.C. Haward. *Forensic Psychology. A Guide to Practice*. Routledge, London (1998). £15.99 Paperback, ISBN 0-415-13291-6.

As the professions become increasingly entrepreneurial and forensic work for psychologists seems to be a burgeoning market, this is a timely publication stressing the professionalism required. In the historical preamble there is a strong sense of Haward handing the baton to the much younger Gudjonsson after an exhausting but ultimately successful race against legal prejudices. Haward likes the law: for me his apologies for it are over-kind. There is generosity also for psychology itself: not too many mentions of soft theory, unreliable evidence and the scope for genuine disagreements about inference and interpretation.

While for completeness sake some of the cautionary tales on lawsuits against psychologists by aggrieved clients and third parties in Chapter 4 have to be hypothetical, they will still send ingenu consultants post haste to check the size and quality of their professional indemnity cover. Better still, inexperienced practitioners should study the invaluable sections on professional and ethical issues, prevention being the best form of insurance.

I found the description of the various forensic roles illuminating, although the defensive discussion of the advisor role begged a number of questions and I am no wiser about why some psychiatrists are friendly and some hostile to psychologists.

I enjoyed both the major technique chapters; the one on testing for the largely successful rearguard action on faking results and the one on psycholinguistic analysis because of Haward's long experience admirably distilled.

Perhaps the civil law needed a book on its own. Nevertheless, the reader gets a useful tour d'horizon. I especially liked the point about out of court settlements robbing the psychologist of any official record of his (perhaps) decisive effect—room for another specialist journal perhaps?

The Criminal Cases chapter is similarly short and dense. The system description and 'issues' list are both useful and I too would have singled out offender profiling for cautionary comment.

The final section on testimony after the wealth of preceding detail, caveat and exhortation runs the risk of anticlimax (cross examination can be 'stressful'), but there are other sources for learning court-craft.

In sum, an excellent read and an invaluable *vade mecum* for the aspiring 'expert'.

Barrie Irving

0191-8869/99/\$ - see front matter © 1999 Published by Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved
PII: S0191-8869(98)00203-7

Paul Britton. *The Jigsaw Man*. Bantam Press, London (1997). x + 445 pp. £16.99 Hardback.

The initial appeal of this book was that it promised to offer an independent and scientific examination of many of the U.K.'s most recent notorious crimes. I anticipated that the author, an