IQ: A Smart History of a Failed Idea
by Stephen Murdoch

A Candent Issue That Still Remains In The Eye Of The Hurricane!

Advance praise for

IQ A Smart History of a Failed Idea An up-to-date, reader-friendly account of the continuing saga of the mismeasure of women and men.

—Howard Gardner, author of Frames of Mind and Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons The good news is that you won't be tested after you've read Stephen Murdoch's important new book. The better news is that IQ: A Smart History of a Failed Idea is compelling from its first pages, and by its conclusion, Murdoch has deftly demonstrated that in our zeal to quantify intelligence, we have needlessly scarred—if not destroyed—the lives of millions of people who did not need an IQ score to prove their worth in the world. IQ is first-rate narrative journalism, a book that I hope leads to necessary change.

—Russell Martin, author of Beethoven's Hair, Picasso's War, and Out of Silence With fast-paced storytelling, freelance journalist Murdoch traces now ubiquitous but still controversial attempts to measure intelligence to its origins in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. . . . Murdoch concludes that IQ testing provides neither a reliable nor a helpful tool in understanding peoples behavior, nor can it predict their future success or failure. . . . A thoughtful overview and a welcome reminder of the dangers of relying on such standardized tests.

—Publishers Weekly Stephen Murdoch delivers a lucid and engaging chronicle of the ubiquitous and sometimes insidious use of IQ tests. This is a fresh look at a century-old and still controversial idea—that our human potential can be distilled down to a single test score. Murdoch's compelling account demands a reexamination of our mania for mental measurement.
My Personal Review:
Psychometry is an attempt to measure the development of intelligence. Conceived by Binet (1857-1911) appropriated the methods of Broca's "craniometry" and Lombroso's anatomical stigmatization used them to fashion a smart tool in the form of mental tests. Developed in France, originally these investigations were devoted to find and identify the main obstacles to learning in low achievers at school. A scale of tests were allocated in order to the tasks that each age group was capable of. So, "mental age" was born as concept. But we had to wait until 1912 when the psychologist Stern proposed, instead, that the mental age, divided by the chronological age was the seminal seed of the IQ (Intelligence Quotient).

It's good to notice Darwin's evolution theory reached a boiling point state specially between 1910 and 1930 (the famous legal discussion of James Brady, which has been described with extreme detail in the film "Inherit the wind"), that was a key factor to redefine the IQ in terms of biological heredity. This issue emerged from the labs to the highest political spheres (debated in Congress in 1924) was partially to well-known Immigration Restriction Act for not to mention the uses and abuses of this discipline to define the perfect measures based on racist premises in the Nazi Regime. But there's still more. In 1972 the State of Virginia a law repealed legalized the sterilization of adults whose mental age was scored of 7, 8 or 9.

But the final dictate of resolution in 1927 of a Supreme Court literally pointed the ethical question in the center of the flame. Is it better to prevent the patently incapable rather to regard the expected hunger of a degenerate offspring dying of hunger because they were idiots?.

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