

**Protection, Entitlement, Social Class, IQ, Values, and Talent  
(A comment on “Make it #10”)**

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**Abstract and Summary**

This paper is a response to the large section of the July/August 2022 issue of *The Psychologist* which was devoted to summarising the outcome of a working group devoted to *Make it* (Social Class) #10 (a protected characteristic).

The first part of this paper discusses problems with the notion of “protected characteristics”, entitlement, and safetyism more generally.

The second part summarises research on social mobility, its relationship to IQ and values, and the ways in which these relationships result in enormous harms being imposed on Low Socio-economic groups.

Among other things, it is shown that, from a scientific point of view, both IQ and Social Class are extremely robust concepts ... and the relationship between the two equally robust.

However, whereas the dominant concern of those who wrote the materials in the *The Psychologist* seems to have to have been with the barriers encountered by the upwardly mobile, it is here argued that more attention needs to be paid to the plight of the downwardly mobile.

It is argued that the solution to these problems is to be found, not by “protecting” the working class but, in part, by developing an alternative framework for thinking about individual differences.

This would make it possible to, for example, implement educational programs which would nurture the huge range of talents that are available instead of setting out to arrange pupils in what is, essentially, a single order of “ability” that is linked to our hierarchical social structure.

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As I read through the first 37 pages of the July/August issue of *The Psychologist*, I kept finding myself thinking, or, more precisely, feeling “I don’t like the sound of this”; “What’s more, it makes virtually no mention of the huge amount of traditional research relating to education, intelligence, values, social class, and social mobility.

Part I of this paper, deals with the first set of issues. Part II with the second.

## Part I: Problems with “protectionism”.

As I read through the material I kept finding myself thinking "This is not about 'protection'; it's about 'special entitlement'".

A feeling of special entitlement has infected large sections of the LGBT+ campaign and especially the current activities of “Stonewall”. Under the guise of “protection”, the latter has morphed into an extraordinary organisation which seems to have assumed a right to impose enormous harm on others<sup>1</sup> and, in like manner, managed to secure contracts to prepare, hard-to-obtain, lesson plans and other material for teaching about race/sexism in schools. These incorporate *as if they were facts* large chunks of Critical Race Theory and thus result in unacceptable indoctrination of the young instead of nurturing a capacity to question and debate.

More generally, as I made clear in my response to the Consultation which preceded the introduction of the Scottish Government's *Hate Crime Bill*<sup>2</sup>, I object to the current craze for safetyism/protectionism. As I note in that document, this is somehow linked to a network of thoughtways at the centre of which is the belief that one has a right, even a duty, to impose whatever one believes to be good and right on others regardless of the values and wishes of those concerned or, indeed, the long-term social consequences. Such thoughtways lie at the heart of fascism.

Other thoughts included the observation that persecution of gays (especially of children by their parents) was (and continues to be) way, beyond anything that has reached my ears in relation to social class. What is more the Gay organisations' response to the Scottish Government Consultation reveals that “protection” is often something of a mixed blessing, having several seriously negative effects. This prompted the thought that one might, not unreasonably, infer from the film *Call me Troy*<sup>3</sup> that the “protection” of gays might perhaps, after all, have been best be left to the gays themselves rather than usurped by authorities.

Backing up a bit, when I was a student in Aberdeen (and my wife in Nottingham) *most* students were from "working class" backgrounds. Indeed, all my friends from that period were. There was no call for special treatment (although it could be argued, first, that many had grants, and, second, that the 11+ had created a protected environment which the creation of “comprehensive” schools has destroyed.)

What is more, the orchestration of special treatments to facilitate “success” in what is, in many ways, a destructive<sup>4</sup> system (instead of reform of the system) has contributed to a situation in which there are now more administrators and specialists than teachers in the “educational” system.

Then again, as I was mulling all this over, the word "Monklands" kept coming into my head. Monklands is the most multiply deprived area in Europe. It constitutes a unique cluster of interacting deprivations and forms a special category of its own in socio-economic statistics. As expected, it had the lowest scores of any area of the UK in our standardisation of the *Raven Progressive Matrices*. Yet – and I am reluctant to name names – at least one of the senior figures in psychology comes from there. Not to mention the three who might have come from somewhat similar backgrounds who wrote about their experiences in the opening pages of the September Issue of *The Psychologist*.

It seems to me that our main concern should be, not with smoothing the passage through the current “educational” system of those who want to move out of Monklands and places like it, but to trace, understand, *and respect* the route whereby people move *into* it.

None of these authors shows much interest in *downward* mobility ... or even, really, in the plight of those who end up in the kinds of horrific secondary modern / comprehensive school environments which still exist in certain places. (Although the issue is mentioned by one of those whose letters were showcased in the September Issue.)

I suspect that few of those whose thoughtways are summarised in the July/August Issue has much first-hand knowledge of what the schools or communities just mentioned are like. In which context it is worth mentioning that, in the course of our research in such communities, I was repeatedly struck by the fact that a number of those we interviewed seemed to have a much better understanding of how the system worked – and what the problems were – than the bureaucrats who were drafting policies – based on middle class thoughtways – in an effort to remediate those problems.

As can be seen from our *Parents, Teachers, and Children: An evaluation of an Educational Home Visiting Project*<sup>5</sup> the SES differences in values are stark. Yet many academics with whom I have shared our results have not only been incredulous that anyone (*viz* working-class mothers) could think like that, but go on to say that, even if they do, they *should* not.

Some of the writing of the those who contributed to the July/August Issue resembles that of those middle-class bureaucrats who inflicted programmes like the Educational Home Visiting programme just mentioned on the mothers concerned. (This sent middle class teachers [who were also mothers] into working class homes to demonstrate to the working-class mothers how to nurture “cognitive development” in their children. This despite the fact that some of those mothers were quite clear that they did not want anything of the sort: “Oh. No. I wouldn’t want that. Goodness knows what he might come across poking about in books”). It also resembles that of those who prepared the questionnaires to be used by “named persons” to require parents (against, in the last resort, the threat of imprisonment) to adopt approved (*viz* “middle class”) child rearing behaviours in bringing up their children (see Scottish Government *Named Persons* scheme<sup>6 7</sup>).

But now to change my theme a little.

Despite their references to social context, there is little evidence that those involved in this movement are seriously concerned about reforming the school system in order to cater adequately for a cross section of pupils having widely varying values and abilities. (As some readers will be aware, I have written extensively on this theme over the last half century. A summary will be found in my book *Managing Education for Effective Schooling: The most important problem is to come to terms with values*<sup>8</sup> or, more briefly, in a more recent article in *Educational and Child Psychology* entitled *Closing the gaps*<sup>9</sup>).

Everything I have said so far may be, and has been, dismissed as expressing a “particular point of view”.

But, even if it is, there seems, as mentioned earlier, to be a neglect of the much larger literature on the interaction of social class, education, intelligence, and social mobility ... and, as I will show later, values.

I guess this may be deliberate ... I mean, merely thinking in these terms may be interpreted as simply showing that I have not grasped the points being made by the proponents of Critical Race Theory.

Be that as it may, I cannot help feeling that there should be at least some mention of this body of research.

**Part II: Research on Social Mobility and its relationship to IQ and values.**

The amount of social mobility in our society is generally underestimated. And that mobility is strongly mediated by level of education attained. As can be seen from the following table<sup>10</sup>, high Socio-Economic-Status (HSES) fathers are (or were at the time) generally unable to keep the social status of their sons up if those sons drop out of the educational system after completing secondary school. Likewise, sons of unskilled workers move up if they do complete secondary education.

**Relative Social Status of Persons Completing Secondary School but then Terminating Their Education**

Father's Status		Son's Status (%)		
		Higher	Same	Lower
1.	Professional and high administration	-	28	72
3.	Inspectional, supervisory, etc.	18	25	57
5.	Skilled manual, routine non-manual	52	36	12
7.	Unskilled	94	6	-

Clearly, the social mobility evidenced by authors of the three letters showcased in the September issue of *The Psychologist* are represented in these data.

Level of education attained is widely treated as a surrogate for IQ.

But, if we dig into this we find some surprising things. For example, two thirds of social mobility ... *both upward and downward* ... in both Scotland and the USA ... is accounted for by 11 year-olds IQs<sup>11</sup>.

And how come there is so much downward mobility if the tests are as biased toward middle class knowledge as the authors of the articles in *The Psychologist* claim<sup>12</sup>? And how come the within-family variance in IQ scores amounts to about two thirds of the population variance?

But, and here is a, rarely discussed, catch. If one studies the well-known SES variance in values (people occupying high socio-economic status positions typically embrace activities like thinking for oneself, originality, taking responsibility for others, and initiative; in contrast, people occupying low socio-economic status positions stress

toughness, strength, obedience, and having strict rules and moral codes to guide their lives<sup>13</sup>) one finds that the *within-family* variance in children's values covers much of the range found in the general population of adults<sup>14</sup>. And that variance in children's values anticipates the values of the groups with whom they will end up, not where they came from. In other words, an "explanation" of social mobility (both upward and downward) in terms of values is almost as tenable as (although much less well documented) as an "explanation" in terms of IQ.

At which point it becomes clear that our basic problem is to respect, nurture, and capitalise upon the huge variety of values and multiple self-motivated competencies<sup>15</sup> that are available.

And so we arrive at what seems to me a basic question: **What are we trying to do?**

Deary and Bartholomew<sup>16</sup> published sections of transcribed conversations between Spearman, Thomson, and Thorndike while they were working on, I think, the Moray House Intelligence test. Spearman kept asking the other two what they were trying to do. He never got an answer. But the life-trajectories of those who wrote the three letters published in the September Issue illustrate that the resulting tests did what the other two were, implicitly (*viz* "getting clever boys from poor backgrounds into good jobs"), trying to do very well. But they do not do what Spearman implicitly suggested that they might be trying to do ... *viz* recognise and nurture the diverse talents of the pupils. Spearman wrote elsewhere that neither measures of his *g* nor the tests from the correlations between which that *g* had emerged had "any place in schools" because they diverted everyone's attention from the goal of education – which is to "draw out" the diverse talents of the pupils. However, he also noted that, behind this, lies the problem that these talents "cannot be identified using any of the procedures in common use". The result is that neither pupils nor teachers can get credit for possessing or nurturing these diverse talents – which has the further result that the sociological functions of the system drive out its educational functions. Actually, fixing this problem requires a paradigm shift in the way we think about individual differences<sup>17</sup>. And so we see that psychologists do indeed have a major responsibility for the situation that was so starkly visible in secondary modern schools and is still endemic in many comprehensive schools today. But to suggest that it inheres mainly in neglect of social class seems somehow diversionary.

The problem is to fix the system<sup>18</sup>, not to make arrangements to ensure that some "discriminated-against" groups are better able to compete in the system as it is.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, James Dreyfus (2022). *Stonewall Has Abandoned Gays & Lesbians: The role of Trans Radical Activism*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg5T9Gxfok0>

<sup>2</sup> Raven, J. (2020). Submission to Scottish Government Justice Committee re Scottish Government Hate Crime Bill. <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/Response-to-scottish-govt-hate-bill.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Call Me Troy* Full Documentary | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIwqxma4jE0>

<sup>4</sup> For a summary see eg Raven, J. (1994). *Managing Education for Effective Schooling: The Most Important Problem Is to Come to Terms with Values*. Unionville, New York: Trillium Press (also available at [http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/fulllist.html#managing\\_education](http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/fulllist.html#managing_education) and [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292320504\\_Managing\\_Education\\_for\\_Effective\\_Schooling](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292320504_Managing_Education_for_Effective_Schooling)).

<sup>5</sup> Raven, J. (1980). *Parents, Teachers and Children: An Evaluation of an Educational Home Visiting Programme*. Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Research in Education.

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- <sup>6</sup> Scottish Government. (2014). *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, 2014*. Norwich, England: TSO (The Stationery Office) [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/pdfs/asp\\_20140008\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/pdfs/asp_20140008_en.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> To set this in context, it is important to note that the most widespread infringements of human rights (viz to life, liberty, and happiness) are those perpetrated by governments nominally acting in the interests of the group concerned or the long-term public interest. Witness the horrendous policies nominally introduced to protect us from COVID (often unthinkingly embraced and enforced by middle-class psychologists) as well as many others documented in my response to the UK government's consultation on proposed changes to the Human Rights act. (See <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/Response-to-proposed-Reforms-of-Human-Rights-Bill.pdf> )
- <sup>8</sup> *Opus Cit.*
- <sup>9</sup> Raven, J. (2018). Closing the gaps. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 35, 96-107. Also available at: <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/Closing-the%20gap-2017-short-E-CP-as-published.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> Extracted from a huge table in Hutchinson, B. (1969). *Social Status and Inter-Generational Social Mobility in Dublin*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.
- <sup>11</sup> Eg Hope, K. (1984). *As Others See Us: Schooling and Social Mobility in Scotland and the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Also Deary, I. J. et al. (2005). Intergenerational social mobility and mid-life status attainment: Influences of childhood intelligence, childhood social factors, and education. *Intelligence*, 33(5), 455-472.
- <sup>12</sup> Relevant here is the fact that the scaling properties of the *Raven Progressive Matrices* are virtually identical across most SES and ethnic groups in the UK and USA – and, indeed, across countries: The correlations between the item difficulties established separately in these groups are mostly .98 and above. In other words, despite the huge differences in mean scores, the test works, and works in the same way, in all of these groups. In technical terms, there is no “differential item functioning”. It also has similar predictive validity. What this means is that the huge differences between groups are “real” and have to be recognised and explained, not dismissed as being due to such things as “test bias”. See e.g. Raven, J. (2008). Stability and change in RPM scores over culture and time: The story at the turn of the century, Chapter 8 (pp. 213-257) in J. Raven & J. Raven (Eds.) *Uses and Abuses of Intelligence: Studies Advancing Spearman and Raven's Quest for Non-Arbitrary Metrics*. Unionville, New York: Royal Fireworks Press. Also available at <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/UAChapter8.pdf> and [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255565943\\_Change\\_and\\_Stability\\_in\\_RPM\\_Scores\\_Over\\_Culture\\_and\\_Time\\_The\\_Story\\_at\\_the\\_Turn\\_of\\_the\\_Century/comments](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255565943_Change_and_Stability_in_RPM_Scores_Over_Culture_and_Time_The_Story_at_the_Turn_of_the_Century/comments).
- <sup>13</sup> Eg Kohn, M. L. (1977). *Class and Conformity: A Study in Values*, (Second Edition). Chicago IL: Chicago University Press.; and Kohn, M. L., Slomczynski, K. M., & Schoenbach, C. (1986). Social stratification and the transmission of values in the family: A cross-national assessment. *Sociological Forum*, 1.
- <sup>14</sup> For a summary see Chapter 1 in J. Raven & J. Raven (Eds.) *Uses and Abuses of Intelligence (opus cit)*. Also available at <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/UAChapter1.pdf> and [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340665403\\_Uses\\_and\\_Abuses\\_of\\_Intelligence\\_Studies\\_Advancing\\_Spearman\\_and\\_Raven's\\_Quest\\_for\\_Non-Arbitrary\\_Metrics](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340665403_Uses_and_Abuses_of_Intelligence_Studies_Advancing_Spearman_and_Raven's_Quest_for_Non-Arbitrary_Metrics)
- <sup>15</sup> Raven, J. (2020). *Recent Research Supporting a Specific-motive Based Model of Competence*. (Extended version). <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/Raven-Mottus-Prague-1-21-20-EXTENDED.pdf> also available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344947791\\_Recent\\_Research\\_Supporting\\_a\\_Specific-motive-based\\_Model\\_of\\_Competence\\_Extended\\_version](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344947791_Recent_Research_Supporting_a_Specific-motive-based_Model_of_Competence_Extended_version)
- <sup>16</sup> Deary, I. J., Lawn, M., & Bartholomew, D. J. (2008). A conversation between Charles Spearman, Godfrey Thomson, and Edward L. Thorndike: The International Examinations Inquiry Meetings 1931–1938. *History of Psychology*, 11, 122–142.
- <sup>17</sup> See Raven, J. (1997). *Competence in Modern Society: Its Identification, Development and Release*. Unionville, New York: Royal Fireworks Press. [www.rfwp.com](http://www.rfwp.com) (First published in 1984 in London, England, by H. K. Lewis.)
- <sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, this is easier said than done – and the barriers go way beyond those stemming from the deficits in the way we tend to think about the nature, development, and assessment of competence. There have been numerous demonstrations of the viability of alternative ways of organising the educational process (one of which is summarised in *Managing Education*). But all

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are, in the end, negated, not only by the deficits in psychological theory just mentioned, but by a poorly understood network of social-sociological forces. In my opinion, these are not best conceptualised and understood in the manner embraced by those who have written on Critical Race Theory. Instead, they are to be understood by mapping the network of social forces which continuously undermine what may be called “organic” social relationships (which make efforts to develop and utilise the multiple talents that are available) and replace them by hierarchical arrangements. The process is, perhaps, best described by Murray Bookchin in *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005). It remains to map, measure, and harness these social forces in a manner analogous to the way in which Newton enabled us to conceptualise, map, measure, and harness the physical forces acting on a sailing boat (see eg Raven, J., & Gallon, L. (2010). Conceptualising, mapping, and measuring social forces. *Journal of Sociocybernetics*, 8, 73-110.

[http://www.unizar.es/sociocybernetics/Journal/journal\\_1\\_2\\_2010\\_1.pdf](http://www.unizar.es/sociocybernetics/Journal/journal_1_2_2010_1.pdf) (Earlier version available at <http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/scio.pdf>)