

Review of: "The equality agenda: a clear case of smoke and mirrors"

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REVIEW

This is a terrific essay. In it the author argues and demonstrates the multidimensionality of social inequalities in contemporary Britain and the US, and illuminates clearly the difficulties that occur when inequality is considered only as a consequence of ethnic, racial, and other such cultural and subcultural differences, and not as a primary result of differences in economic opportunity and social class .

The discussion is particularly powerful in its analysis and consideration of changing conceptions of affirmative action and employment bias. The work of Herrnstein and Murray is ably fitted to this task, and is then powerfully driven by the tales the author recounts of her experience in the schools of Derry. (I realized that one of the reasons I appreciate this paper is that it so directly addresses themes I sought to think about in my first book, *PRIVILEGE IN AMERICA*, and one of my last, *BREACHING DERRY'S WALLS*.)

I've got three main points of appreciative critique: First, I'd suggest a reworking of the introductory paragraph. I don't see the point of paying all this attention at the outset to the extraordinarily goofy argument presented by Murray the second in his 2020 book. I assume the summary of the paper writer is correct by attending to Murray's assertion "that much of contemporary society is obsessed with a particular idea of diversity and equality that is all-encompassing and all-consuming." But, as the schoolyard expression puts it, 'Who cares?' How much of society is so obsessed? Especially in the two societies of concern in this paper--sure there are Trumpers and Thatcherians--but, really how much do they care and how much do they matter ? I'd just dump the mention of Murray the 2nd and say that somewhere in the musings of what passes as conservative thought these days there's an interest in topics of diversity and inequality, and writers like Murray the 2nd who claim some particular but highly shaky ground in their putative analysis of the problems.

My second point has to do with storytelling, which is not only the great strength of Irish culture, but also wonderful and refreshing when it appears as a basic social science method of analysis.

And, thirdly, I'd be even happier with this paper if it brought its conclusion powerfully and directly to several simple points of emphatic conclusion. (That reminds me that it might be good to do a bit of retitling: maybe make the subtitle a question?). And, there's a new I've noticed some social scientists using these days--I can't really remember it at this point but it's something like "trans-sectionality". It means that you have to think about more than one thing at a time, and isn't this what figuring out how class and race and gender other dimensions of social diversity fit together and how the

problems occasioned by them can ultimately be resolved? Anyways, great paper and keep up the good work. I'll look forward to your further work. Maybe there's a book that lurks in the extension of this paper...

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