

**Uses and abuses of Intelligence: Studies Advancing Spearman and Raven's Quest for Non-Arbitrary Metrics.**

*John & Jean Raven (Eds.)*

Edinburgh: Competency Motivation Project,  
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What is intelligence? During my 40-year career in educational psychology this is the question which I have asked both my students and myself.

For the past 20 years or more the debate has been dominated by Howard Gardner's concept of multiple intelligence. Before that the idea of unitary intelligence dominated: in particular Spearman's (1904, 1923) concept of a general intelligence: *g*. Raven and his colleagues hold to the latter and do not even deign to consider Gardner's alternative view. (However, they do cite Spearman's off the cuff comment that every child is a genius at something.)

There is an interesting preface at the start, discussing the broader issues of intelligence – if from a purely Spearman/Raven perspective. However, unfortunately for the general reader the sub-title gives a more accurate description of the rest of the book than the main title. It is a very technical discussion of the construct validity, use, etc., of Progressive Matrices tests in various countries: Romania, South Africa, etc.

The book is divided into six parts. Part 1 provides an introduction to the model. This includes a chapter by Irene Styles linking Piaget's model of cognitive development with general intelligence. As this is my main specialist area, this chapter interested me the most.

Part 2 examines practical measurement issues over 75 years, focussing mainly on Romania. Part 3 examines stability and change in Raven's Progressive Matrices

norms across time and culture. This is the 'meat' of the book, containing 10 of the 26 chapters. The data from several different countries (including South Africa, Lithuania, Kuwait, etc.) are presented.

Part 4 looks at outstanding conceptual and measurement issues, e.g. the higher scores of Asian Americans on average when compared to other ethnic groups. Part 5 moves into even more controversial 'Emerging Applications' such as predicting driver behaviour and detecting children who 'malingering' when they take Raven's tests. Part 6 covers so called 'Outstanding Ethical Issues' such as convicted murderers on Death Row in some US states who are mentally retarded.

Unfortunately there is no final section which ties the arguments of this multifaceted book together. It is even more astonishing that an index is not included. In such a complex book it is an essential aid to readers.

I kept a set of Raven's tests in my office for nearly 30 years in order to explain the unitary concept of intelligence (relatively unaffected by culture) to Education students. This book is of considerable interest to those within the Raven/Spearman/unitary intelligence movement. I do recommend it to colleagues who work in psychology departments who teach and/or research in the area of intelligence. I also recommend it to EPs who have an interest in the technicalities of testing. However, I can't really recommend it to colleagues involved in teacher education as the authors do not consider the implications for teaching (or even the measurement of pupil abilities) in schools.

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