

However, no one is sure of the best ways to change the environment in order to improve IQ, and since more than half of individual IQ differences appear to be due to genes anyway, environment changes have to be drastic to have any effect.\*

Moreover, there is no assurance that changes would be permanent. The most intensive Head Start programs reportedly raise preschool children's IQs by as much as 15 or 20 points, but the gains usually disappear by the second or third grade. Even if all IQ differences due to environment could somehow be eliminated, the differences due to heredity would remain. Also, if new environmental techniques to raise IQ were ever dis-

covered, they would be likely to work just as well for people who have high IQs by virtue of their genes. Differences in IQ score are therefore something that will persist no matter how carefully environment is adjusted.

The heredity/environment question is also part of the debate over the link between IQ and success in life. Everyone agrees that smart, successful people tend to have smart, successful children. People who think IQ is mainly influenced by environment argue that this is because successful people give their children a good environment. They point out that children who grow up in \$200,000 houses have higher IQs than children who grow up in \$30,000 houses. They

come close to suggesting that a more expensive house would raise a child's IQ. People who think that IQ is largely hereditary argue that people are successful *because* they have high IQs, and are likely to pass on genes for high IQ to their children.

Test data show that for every social and economic class, if a son has a higher IQ than his father he is likely to move up and if his IQ is lower he is likely to move down. IQ thus appears to affect social class more than the reverse. ●

*In the next issue, in the concluding part of his review, Mr. Jackson will report on the authors' conclusions about race and IQ.*

## Self-Esteem at the Checkout Line

by Marian Evans

In so many ways, California leads the nation. A year ago it broke new ground when it established a state commission to discover how government might promote self-esteem among its citizens. Now, in cooperation with the federal government, California has launched a pilot program that should boost the self-esteem of food stamp recipients and cut administration costs. San Diego County will simply send them checks rather than issue stamps. Excitement for the program seems to have caused a San Diego County official to scramble his syntax. "Food stamps [are] a put-down and a humiliating thing to have food stamps in a grocery line," he said. Californians on the dole can now look the checkout lady straight in the eye. Perhaps the resulting surge of self-esteem will propel them off food stamps and into jobs.

Just as we remain to be convinced that a jail term should be agreeable, we doubt that receiving government charity should be altogether agreeable either. But such old-fashioned scruples aside, the old system had an advantage that this one does not: food stamps could be spent only on food.

Of course, since welfare recipients, in a practice known as "smoking the check," can choose to spend their allowances on crack cocaine, perhaps the spirit of fairness requires that food stamp recipients should have the same freedom. The residents of the District of Columbia are estimated to spend more money on cocaine than on food and drink, so perhaps the new, spend-'em-on-anything "food" checks are nothing more than a subtle acknowledgement of how times and manners change.

Let us not, however, be too nostalgic for the disciplines of the past. Indeed, food stamps are meant to be used only for food, but when enough of them are about, the rules begin to bend. In Puerto Rico, for example, where proportionately more people receive food stamps than anywhere else, the little coupons have become a kind of second currency. Even prostitutes, we are told, are willing to price deals in food stamps. We have no data on how payment in food stamps affects the self-esteem of their customers. ●



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\* To put it in slightly technical terms, assuming IQ heritability to be 60%, in order to get a change of one standard deviation (15 points) in IQ it would still take a 2-1/2 standard deviation change in IQ-relevant environment (whatever that might be).