

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Monday, August 14, 2006

Dean Svend Hylleberg  
at [dekan.sam@au.dk](mailto:dekan.sam@au.dk)

Dear Dean Svend;

I have now had a chance to review the University reports regarding Prof. Helmuth Nyborg at:

[http://www.sam.au.dk/forskning/nyborg\\_report.pdf](http://www.sam.au.dk/forskning/nyborg_report.pdf)

[http://www.sam.au.dk/forskning/nyborg\\_oversaettelse\\_rapport.pdf](http://www.sam.au.dk/forskning/nyborg_oversaettelse_rapport.pdf)

[http://www.sam.au.dk/forskning/nyborg\\_oversaettelse\\_kommissorium.pdf](http://www.sam.au.dk/forskning/nyborg_oversaettelse_kommissorium.pdf)

I have also reviewed his responses.

I do not find any reason to change my original letter of December 10, 2005 regarding this matter and it is attached as part of this letter.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr.  
Professor of Psychology  
Director, Minnesota Center for Twin and Adoption Research

CC:

rector Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen at [rector@au.dk](mailto:rector@au.dk)  
[helmuthnyborg@msn.com](mailto:helmuthnyborg@msn.com).

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December 10, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter in support of Prof. Helmuth Nyborg regarding his research on human individual differences.

As I understand it Prof. Nyborg is being investigated for "premature publication" of findings regarding sex differences in IQ – reporting in the media before a full publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The material he discussed with the press had been presented at the 2001 meeting of the International society for Intelligence Research (ISSIR). I also understand that a 30 year longitudinal study has been interfered with by confiscating the research protocols and setting up a committee to re-examine the calculations and methods.

My comments below regarding the treatment of Prof. Nyborg are influenced by my considerable familiarity with his scientific work. I have read many of his papers dealing with topics within my professional competence (individual differences and group differences). I also reviewed his recent edited book (Bouchard, 2004). In my opinion Prof. Nyborg is an outstanding scholar and scientist.

I find the behavior of the Director of his institute outrageous and a manifestation of the "Illiberal Liberalism" that currently permeates many institutions of higher education. It is a form of "soft" authoritarianism designed to suppress inquiry into topics considered too dangerous to know. I note here that this illiberal behavior on the part of universities is shared with many conservatives who are also afraid of knowledge and would suppress research of all sorts.

I believe it is unlikely that the University of Aarhus applies the "premature publication" standard to the vast majority of its faculty. This is a double standard designed to squelch research on unpopular topic. Most institutions, including my own, encourage the dissemination of knowledge and many institutions prepare press releases regarding findings long before publication. The meetings at which Prof. Nyborg presented his findings were open to the press. Does the policy prohibit dissemination of findings at open scientific meetings? There is no question that Prof. Nyborg may be wrong, as all scientific research is fallible. If he is wrong there are many scholars who will be willing to challenge him in scientific journals as well as the press. Reporters can easily find

people who are willing to challenge unpopular findings. Academic freedom has no meaning if directors of institutes simply cave in to politically correct pressures from interest groups with no interest in anything but their own ideological position, and interfere with ongoing research projects.

I am in strong agreement with my friend and former colleague Prof. Sandra Scarr who wrote:

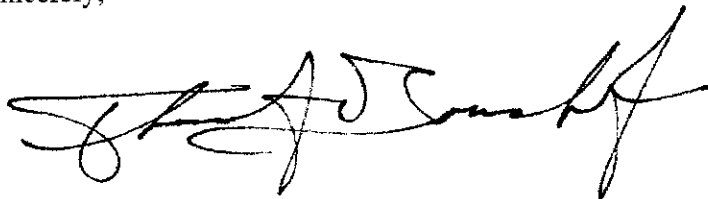
“In my view, there is no danger so great as the suppression of knowledge. There is nothing we could learn about ourselves that would justify abridgment of scientific inquiry. There are methods of investigation that pose unconscionable threats to the participants in research. Methods should be subject to regulation. But there should be no regulation of scientists’ rights to think, propose, and conduct ethical investigations on any question, however, distasteful it might be to others.” (Scarr, 1981, p. 513)

A similar view was put forth by another scientist who “tasted the forbidden fruit” of nuclear knowledge.

“There must be no barrier to freedom of inquiry. There is no place for dogma in science. The scientist is free, and must be free, to ask any question, to doubt any assertion, to seek for any evidence, to correct any error.” (Robert J. Oppenheimer, *Life*, October 10, 1949)

Political decisions should be made at the level of funding. This is where society and institutions properly sets their priorities. Political decisions about individual projects and intervention at the individual project level once funding has been granted and research program approved is a perversion of academic freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr.', written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr.  
Professor of Psychology  
Director, Minnesota Center for Twin and Adoption Research

Bouchard, T. J., Jr. (2004). Review of Nyborg, H. (2003) The scientific study of general intelligence: Tribute to Arthur R. Jensen. *Intelligence*, 32, 215-219.  
Scarr, S. (1981). *Race, social class and individual differences*. Hillsdale, N. J.: Erlbaum.