PSYCHOLOGY/EDUCATION

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All these and other topics are explored in this volume, by way of a debate between Gardner and his critics.

"Gardner is a force in psychology and education who deserves the full attention of both admirers and critics. I'm an admirer who believes that the concept of multiple intelligences serves as a heuristic scientific hypothesis, which moreover is in accord with contemporary brain science and genetics."

—Edward O. Wilson
Author of *On Human Nature*

"A lively and thoughtful presentation of Howard Gardner's ideas along with well considered criticisms of them by leading scholars."

—Jerome Bruner
Author of *Acts of Meaning*

"Howard Gardner's work is astonishingly diverse, imaginative, occasionally improbable, always engaging—the kind that calls for conversations deep into the night over good brandy. Howard Gardner Under Fire *is the next best thing, showing from many perspectives how rich a dialogue he has provoked."*

—Charles Murray
Co-author of *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*

"This examination of Gardner's wide-ranging and influential ideas provides a dazzling intellectual banquet."

—Mindy Kornhaber
Co-author of *Multiple Intelligences: Best Ideas from Research and Practice*

Photograph by Magda Schaler-Haynes

Dr. Jeffrey A. Schaler (www.schaler.net) is a psychologist, psychotherapist, teacher, and writer. He wrote *Addiction Is a Choice* (2000), which became the centerpiece of a controversial John Stossel TV documentary. Dr. Schaler teaches in the Department of Justice, Law, and Society at American University's School of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. He is Executive Editor of *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social*. His edited volumes include *Peter Singer Under Fire* (2007), *Szasz Under Fire* (2004), *Drugs: Should We Legalize, Decriminalize, or Deregulate?* (1998), and *Smoking: Who Has the Right?* (with Magda E. Schaler, 1998).

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Schaler

HOWARD GARDNER UNDER FIRE

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The Rebel Psychologist Faces His Critics

Edited by Jeffrey A. Schaler

HOWARD
GARDNER
Under Fire

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HOWARD GARDNER Under Fire

The Rebel Psychologist Faces His Critics

EDITED BY

JEFFREY A. SCHALER

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To Samara Orli

Being no Michelangelo or Mozart does not condemn one to be uncreative. . . . The best solution is to find a project that will benefit humanity, in line with your limited talents, and to make the most of your situation.

— Walter Kaufmann (1973)

To us mind must remain forever a realm of its own which we can know only through directly experiencing it, but which we shall never be able fully to explain or to 'reduce' to something else.

— F.A. Hayek (1952)

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About the Authors

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Howard Gardner is the John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He also holds positions as Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, Adjunct Professor of Neurology at the Boston University School of Medicine, and Senior Director of Harvard Project Zero. The author of over twenty books translated into twenty-six languages, and several hundred articles, Gardner is best known in educational circles for his theory of multiple intelligences (MI), a critique of the notion that there exists but a single human intelligence that can be assessed by standard psychometric methods. His recent books, available in paperback, are *The Disciplined Mind: Beyond Facts and Standardized Tests*, the K–12 *Education that Every Child Deserves* (2000) and *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (1999). In 2004, two new books were published: *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing our Own and Other People's Minds* and *Making Good: How Young People Cope with Moral Dilemmas at Work* (with Wendy Fischman, Becca Solomon, and Deborah Greenspan).

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Mark Runco earned his M.A. and Ph.D. (Cognitive Psychology) at the Claremont Graduate School. He soon earned the Young Scholar Award from the National Association for Gifted Children. A few years ago he earned the E. Paul Torrance Lifetime Achievement Award from the same Association. He is Past President of the American Psychological Association's Division 10 (Psychology and the Arts) and founding Editor of the *Creativity Research Journal*. He co-edited the *Encyclopedia of Creativity* (1999). Currently he is Professor at the California State University at Fullerton at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration in Bergen.

Jeffrey A. Schaler is General Editor of the *Under Fire* Series and Executive Editor of *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social*. Schaler taught psychology at Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Conservatory of Music from 1993 to 2003, and is now professor in the Department of Justice, Law, and Society at American University's School of Public Affairs. He is the author of *Addiction Is a Choice* (2000), and has edited or co-edited several books, including *Drugs: Should We Legalize, Decriminalize, or Deregulate?* (1998), *Smoking: Who Has the Right?* (with Magda E. Schaler-Haynes, 1998), and *Szasz Under Fire: The Psychiatric Abolitionist Faces His Critics* (2004). In 1999 the Center for Independent Thought awarded him the Thomas Szasz Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Cause of Civil Liberties.

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For her help with many facets of preparing this manuscript for publication, I thank Lindsay Pettingill. I also thank Mindy Kornhaber, Seana Moran, and Ellen Winner for useful suggestions about my responses. Editor Jeffrey Schaler has been a great help throughout the planning and execution of the volume.

H.G.

Many years of conversation with my friend Ernest H. Bradley contributed significantly to my thinking on these and related matters. I appreciate Howard Gardner for trusting me. David Ramsay Steele continues to be a great Editorial Director.

J.A.S.

Introduction

JEFFREY A. SCHALER

Howard Gardner, a name to conjure with among today's public intellectuals, is most celebrated for his conception and development of the theory of Multiple Intelligences, which has revolutionized educational thinking. But Gardner has also made outstanding original contributions to the study of leadership, of creativity, of child development, and humanly-fulfilling work. All of these topics are explored in this volume, by way of a debate between Gardner and his critics.

It's in the theory of intelligence that Howard Gardner has made the biggest splash. Intelligence is an area charged with emotion. In the deep conflicts it stirs up, a test of intelligence is more like a test for HIV than a test of blood pressure. I have frequently encountered people whose problems-in-living were bound up with their perceptions of their own intelligence and its assessment. I will mention here a couple of cases out of many.

Years ago, an undergraduate student of mine was about to graduate and he looked somewhat down. I asked "aren't you happy you're going to graduate in a few days?" He said "I'm not happy at all." I asked him why. He explained "I've hated college for the past four years and it's only since I've taken the last few courses with you that I've been excited about what I'm actually learning. Now that I'm finally excited, college is over. I was just beginning to enjoy college."

I was touched and decided to talk to him more about why he was so unhappy in other classes. He told me that he was bored. His grades were always among the highest in the class. I noticed that he didn't seem to study much for exams in my courses and still wrote outstanding answers to exam questions. At one point he told me how much he hated the exams. When I questioned him about this, it came out that he had several times, in high school and college, been falsely accused by his teachers of cheating.

His family was poor. He had grown up in a rural area of New England. His parents had separated and at times he and his mother and siblings lived out of their car. He was asked to come to school on Saturdays. He despised doing so, but his mother and the school administrators insisted. I asked him why and he explained this was because of his scores on a certain test. "What test?" I remembered asking him. He said he didn't like to talk about it because people thought of him differently when they knew about his scores on this test. To make a long story short, he had scored 170 on an IQ test. What was odd, too, was that his physical dress and appearance—back then, punk-rock style with a black belt full of chrome skulls—was nothing like one might expect of someone we might consider, with an IQ so high, well into the genius category. What is being "highly intelligent" here? What does it look like?

A second story comes to mind. A man in his forties came to me many years ago for counseling. He was very depressed. It seemed clear to both of us that if he went back to college and got a master's degree, he could improve his prospects as a teacher. I'd suggested Johns Hopkins University, if for no other reason than that it had a good master's program available for adults who already had jobs. Since he'd been out of school for so long, apparently the admissions department at Hopkins insisted that he take a few courses to see how well he performed before they formally admitted him into their graduate program. I discovered that he was taking two courses more than those required during the probation period. He received A's in all those graduate courses.

He continued to see me in what evolved into analysis while he worked on his master's degree. He would weep in each of our sessions, saying over and over again how he couldn't do well in class and couldn't do what was necessary to complete the master's degree successfully. He was especially upset over one course in particular. He was convinced he could not pass this course. I looked at the work required, and told him that I thought it was difficult, but emphasized that I also thought he was clearly "smart enough"; what he needed to do was put in more energy studying and less energy whining.

One day several weeks later he told me that he was ending his analysis with me. I asked why and he explained that he had visited an "educational psychologist" who told him that his distress at not being able to do well in school was a symptom that he should not be tackling strongly intellectual work, but should be focusing his educational training on vocational skills, skills that did not require much intellectual effort. He was apparently "traumatizing" himself. She recommended he go for an IQ test.

I told him I thought this was the last thing he should do. He asked me why. I asked him, "What if you find that your IQ score is below average? Is that proof that you're not smart? And if your IQ score is higher than average, what will that mean to you?" I asked him to consider how his problem was not that he was dumb, but that he *believed* he was dumb. He said his mind was made up, we shook hands and said goodbye. As he was walking out the door of my office, I asked "How did you do in that one course you were so upset about." He paused and said rather sheepishly "I got an 'A'."

I expected never to hear from him again. About a year later, I found a message on my phone machine: "Jeff, this is X, I just want you to know that I received my master's degree from Hopkins, I have a new position of teaching responsibility I said I could never achieve, and I want to thank you for everything you taught me." To me, his story was a perfect example of someone whose belief about his ability had more to do with success and failure than his ability itself.

Gardner and Multiple Intelligences

Prior to Gardner's *Frames of Mind*, there was little sustained theoretical opposition to the reigning paradigm of IQ, in which it is supposed that intelligence is a single concept known as 'g', exhibiting itself in scholastic attainment and detectable by a narrow range of puzzle-solving tests. Gardner transformed the discussion of intelligence and education by making a powerful case that there are several different forms of intelligence, some of which express themselves in activities not traditionally considered strictly academic.

Using eight criteria to demarcate separate 'intelligences', Gardner at first identified seven:

1. linguistic intelligence;
2. logico-mathematical intelligence;
3. musical intelligence;
4. bodily-kinesthetic intelligence;
5. spatial intelligence;
6. interpersonal intelligence;
7. intrapersonal intelligence.

Because Gardner sees individual humans as combining these intelligences in differing magnitudes, the multiple-intelligences (MI) approach leads to a greater appreciation of individual uniqueness. It

views individual humans in a multidimensional, rather than unidimensional, way. And this, I believe, is definitely for the better, especially when we consider the self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing quality of assessments of 'intelligence'. Schools teach courses emphasizing that students solve certain kinds of problems and think in certain ways. People who do well in activities thus conceived tend to get college places and promotions, and to have more of a voice in how others will be evaluated. Rich rewards accrue to the individuals Herrnstein and Murray termed "the cognitive elite," while those talented in other ways may find themselves unrecognized and unvalidated.

MI theory quickly became very popular with educationists, less so with theoretical psychologists. It has been disputed whether all seven are really separate intelligences, or (from a contrary viewpoint) whether the list could easily be extended. Suggestions for other kinds of intelligence include naturalist intelligence, spiritual intelligence, existential intelligence, and moral intelligence. Howard has accepted naturalist intelligence, but still has his reservations about the others.

Intelligence is useful, it seems, only in terms of what people can and can't do with their lives. The demands a society places on a person to become a producer may require certain skills and not others. The task of growing up is to develop a marketable skill. This is something that is not achieved through intelligence, *per se*, but through a combination of many different factors. First and foremost, it seems to me, are effort and discipline. When we teach people that they have a limited ability called intelligence, they seek to live up to this label or identity. In this sense, believing what a person can do seems to have much more to do with motivation and success in life than intelligence or luck. If one doesn't have the will to act on one's intelligence, it seems that intelligence, whether singular or plural, loses its effectiveness. Howard has written on the importance of creativity, and I agree with him here for the most part. In my own work as a therapist, professor, and writer for over thirty-three years, I find that motivation and "meaning-making" are more the keys to leading a good life, a rewarding life, and ultimately the "intelligent" life.

Multiple Accomplishments

When I first met Howard Gardner, I remember, as we were planning this book, and planning whom to invite to contribute to it, that Howard did not strike me as the kind of person who thought there were two kinds of people in the world at all—for instance, those who went to Harvard and

those who went to college somewhere else. I remember a few remarks we exchanged as we ate lunch together. People think they're special because they went to a certain school, much like people think they're special because they've scored well on an intelligence test. However we view it, intelligence is something highly valued throughout the world, much like going to Harvard and teaching at Harvard will always be. People like to find ways to make themselves feel important.

Howard Gardner has moved on from his multiple writings on multiple intelligences, and MI is certainly not the only contribution he will be remembered for. While his other achievements are described more fully in this volume, we should especially note his theoretical work on creativity, leadership, and personal development.

Just to touch on a few of Gardner's contributions:

In *Creating Minds* (1993), Gardner provoked a Gestalt switch in public understanding of creative genius. He analyzed the lives and achievements of seven diverse personalities (Freud, Einstein, Stravinsky, Eliot, Martha Graham, Picasso, and Gandhi) each of whom founded "a new system of meaning," and each of whom sacrificed some personal fulfillment in pursuit of their revolutionary missions.

In Project Zero, inspired and launched by the late Nelson Goodman, Gardner has conducted and directed research into children's artistic development, yielding many controversial conclusions and providing new ideas for educators.

The GoodWork Project, begun in 1995, is a broad empirical investigation of the experiences of professional workers in a range of occupations. Its ongoing research seeks individuals and institutions most conducive to work which is good both ethically and technically, as well as engaging for the workers. The Project seems ideologically motivated by a pronounced hostility to economic freedom, which I cannot share.

In *Changing Minds* (2004), Gardner made a popular application of findings in cognitive psychology to explain how people's deep-rooted convictions can be changed. He catchily identified seven elements necessary for intellectual transformation: reason, resonance, redescriptions, research, real-world events, resources, and resistance. The book has been found highly stimulating by a wide range of readers, from business leaders to social psychologists.

In the varied endeavors he has undertaken, Howard Gardner has combined broad erudition and a concern for rigorous research with an unpretentious formulation which immediately engages the interest of practical people going about their everyday lives. His conclusions have always been hotly debated, and many of the debates around Howard's

work are still heating up. He is therefore perfectly suited for the *Under Fire* format, in which a leading controversial thinker is confronted by leading critics, and gets to have the last word—at least within the covers of this volume.